INTERVIEWEE: WALTER BURROUGHS  
Former Owner, Publisher, Editor of the Daily Pilot

INTERVIEWER: Samuel C. McCulloch  
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Unofficial UCI Historian

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SM: First, let me ask you, Walter, how it began. You as managing editor? Is that right?

WB: No, I was the principal owner, publisher and editorial director.

SM: Owner and director of the Daily Pilot. And you were interested in seeing a campus of the University of California come to this area. Now, could you start at the beginning and tell me what you remember of the background?

WB: Well, let me tell you why I was interested. A newspaper in a small area has to take the lead in getting certain developments that will help the area. Way back in 1927, I guess it was, when the campus came to UCLA from Vermont Avenue--it was the southern branch--then they changed it to the University of California, Los Angeles, and I watched it rather carefully. I, being in the newspaper business all my life, or on the fringe of it, at least in the publishing business, I thought there was an opportunity for a newspaper out there in Westwood. A man named Ed Zeus and I from Berkeley . . .

SM: How do you spell Zeus?
WB: Z-E-U-S. . . . came down and looked at it. And then, over the years, I saw the way that campus developed. So, when I started The Daily Pilot, which at that time was called the Globe-Herald and Pilot, I wanted to have a campus here, a major campus of some sort. I had no idea that we could get the university. I was interested in getting the Orange County campus for a state university, or at that time, state college it was called. Fullerton beat us out.

SM: Oh, is that right?

WB: Yes.

SM: You had a chance to possibly get what is now Cal State Fullerton located here in Newport Beach?

WB: That's right. And, of course, as I told you the other day, wherever we went trying to get a campus down here, people would say, "Well, it's too far." So, when we lost that, I heard, I think from Bill Monahan, that there was a campus scheduled for southeast Los Angeles County and Orange County. Clark Kerr, who was the president of the university, is a member of the Bohemian Club. I don't know whether you're familiar with Bill Monahan or not.

SM: No, I know who he is, that's all.

WB: Well, Bill Monahan was a sort of personal assistant to Clark Kerr, as he later was to Charlie Hitch. Well, Clark Kerr is a very fine man. I had known him slightly and known a great deal about him during World War Two when I was on duty first
at the San Francisco Ordinance District. My duties, in addition to other duties, were to act as the labor officer, to try to persuade people not to strike, not to interrupt production and so on. Also, having gotten an MOS as an industrial engineer, the chief of the district there wanted someone who had experience in selling and who knew something about industrial engineering, which naturally involves labor. So I first met Clark when we were attempting to get a place for the Kenworth Motor Company to continue manufacturing their Kenworth trucks. And then we decided it could be done in Yakima [Washington].

SM: How do you spell Yakima?

WB: Y-A-K-I-M-A. It's an agricultural area. Well, the people in Yakima didn't want anything over there. So I went over with some people from the Manpower Commission and from the . . . There was a Production Urgency Committee, but that was the War Production Board people. And before doing that, I did have a conversation with one of Clark's assistants, whose name I forget. Anyway, after Clark became president of the university, I met him at the Bohemian Club and we did rather well. In some year, I think it was 1958, at the summer encampment, I asked Clark if we couldn't get the projected campus for southeast Los Angeles County and Orange County down in the Costa Mesa-Newport Beach area, and, specifically, I suggested the Irvine Ranch. Well, he said, "Do you think you
could get a gift of a campus?" And I said, "Well, I don't know, Clark. I'm not on very good terms with the present heads of the Irvine Company." You want me to tell you why?

SM: Yes, I'd be very interested.

WB: Well, after I got out of the service on November 1, I called an old friend of mine who had been the landlord of a lithograph, rotogravure and printing plant in Los Angeles. He owned the building, I got to be very friendly with him, and he was a pretty old man. He was over eighty then, I mean, after World War Two closed. So I called him and asked him if I could borrow an apartment which he kept. He owned the apartment house and he kept an apartment for himself in Los Angeles. I asked him if I could borrow that apartment because I had no place to stay. We had sold our house in Cheviot Hills. He said, "Yes, but you'll have to pay rent." And I said, "Well, Jeff, naturally, I'll pay rent." He said, "Oh, I don't mean you have to pay me any money. You have to spend your weekends down at Corona del Mar with me." He was an old man and all of his contemporaries were dying off and he wanted somebody that could talk about the advertising business to him. He at one time had been president of Lord and Thomas. Well, he spent all of his effort--I commuted then--trying to figure out a way to tie me to the area, so I wouldn't move back to Los Angeles.

SM: That's a nice compliment to you, Walter.
WB: Well, I was very friendly with the old gentleman. Sometime when we're not trying to tell the history of UCI, I can tell you some anecdotes which I think will amuse you.

SM: I'd like to hear them.

WB: Anyway, he was trying to get a newspaper down here, so that he would tie me to the area. And, finally, the man who was his property manager persuaded a man named Ludi to sell the Globe-Herald in Costa Mesa.

SM: How do you spell Ludi?

WB: L-U-D-I. Well, it wasn't much of a newspaper. In fact, we couldn't find any of the alleged 500 subscribers. But nevertheless, we got it and we started to build a newspaper. We wanted it because although we could have started a paper, it's better to buy out what there is and not have to fight that thing. Well, Mr. Jefferson was an amusing guy. He had some property out on what was then called Palisades Road--it's now called Bristol--on the corner of Acacia and Bristol. He had a little grocery store. He didn't own the grocery store, but he owned a building in which there was a little grocery store. This was doing quite well, this grocery store, and the man operating it wanted a bigger store. So Mr. Jefferson applied to the county planning commission to give him an additional variance to expand the store. Opposing this was Brad Hellis, who was the general manager of the Irvine Company.
SM: H-E-L-L-I-S?

WB: H-E-L-L-I-S. He'll come into the picture a little bit later on. Well, he went to the planning commission and said no the Irvine Company didn't want a variance given there, and his only explanation was that they had plans for a business development across the street. So, of course, that was not the thing to do. Well, Mr. Jefferson, as I indicated, was a very smart old man. He didn't complain. All that he did was to wait a few weeks and then file an application to have his land rezoned as grazing land. And he said that just as it was across the street, and he would promise to run two head of sheep on his small . . . Well, of course, by this time I had the newspaper. I thought it was an amusing story, so we published it. And from then on, both the old man and I were on the blacklist.

SM: That's an interesting story Walter. So you said to Kerr that you weren't on good terms with . . .

WB: No, I didn't think I was on good enough terms to do very much.

SM: To ask for a gift.

WB: No. Anyway, Clark Kerr said, "Well, I don't want to take a position on this, but I wish that you would go see Bill Periera, who has done a study for the university on developing the criteria for an ideal university." He said, "I will ask Bill to talk to you and show you some of his reports." Well, Bill Periera was in the Union Oil Building at that time, he'd
just moved in, in Los Angeles, and he showed me not everything that they had done, but a great deal of the report that they had made to the Regents. I didn't tell you about this at the meeting the other day because this would have gotten interminably long, but I assume that you want me to . . .

SM: I do.

WB: . . . to give you details.

SM: Indeed, I do.

WB: He had indicated that there were seven sites that were possible, either two or three of which were on the Irvine campus. And he told me that we must be very careful not to lose it by being too ambitious. Well, I told Bill that I had never hesitated to wash an elephant, and so we went to work.

SM: Well, that's an interesting expression, wash an . . .

WB: Wash an elephant.

SM: Well, that's interesting. Where does it come from?

WB: I don't know.


WB: Anyway, about this time, we were trying to get the thing and I was trying to get the campus, and I was in contact with Clark Kerr, and particularly with my old friend Bill Monahan, who was his assistant. Bill Monahan is a most remarkable guy. He was president of the ASUC in 1924. He went to work for Dean Witter and Company, and a year later, after I had come to the campus, at Berkeley, he became Graduate Manager. Well,
occasionally, you run into a man with whom you can work very cordially. In other words, he's a man who didn't have any preconceived ideas. He was willing to listen and willing to do things. So Clark told me to keep in touch with Bill. Well, during these conversations, it became evident that although Clark didn't wish to take a position definitely for a campus here, that he preferred a campus, which is where the cemetery is now, because what he and Periera called "nobility of site." That was one of the two or three locations which Periera had indicated.

Incidentally, if I can refer to Periera's work, it was a wonderful job. They studied universities all over the world and they listed the things which made them great, not only great from the standpoint of location, but of its effect on the education of the students that were there.

SM: Yes, that's another thing, Walter. I'm going to ask Bill Periera for an interview and talk to him. And if he has a copy of that report, I might get one.

WB: Well, I'm sure he has a copy, but I'm sure there's one at the university.

SM: Well, we'll have one here. Yes, that's true.

WB: No, I don't know that there's one here. There must be one at the Regents' file. You say you're going to talk to Clark?

SM: No, I've talked to Clark already. I'm going to talk to Bill Periera.
WB: Oh.

SM: I want to make a tape of him sometime this month.

WB: Well, anyway, Clark told me to work with Bill, so I got hold of John Murdy, who was a senator from Orange County.

SM: M-U-R-D-I-E?

WB: M-U-R-D-Y. John Murdy.

SM: Yes, you mentioned him in the talk.

WB: He was a bean grower here. Well, don't laugh.

SM: No, I'm not laughing.

WB: The raising of beans was a great industry here.

SM: It sure was. It sure was.

WB: So he said, "Well, let's talk to McFadden." Now, at this time, McFadden was not yet the President.

SM: He wasn't still a Regent, or was he . . .

WB: No, he had just completed a term as a Regent, whatever that agricultural board is, whose president serves on the Board of Regents. So he said, "Well, let's talk to McFadden. I think he has as much influence as anyone in Orange County." So we went over to see him and told him all of the advantages to the Irvine Company giving a campus--I think, at that time, we stipulated 1,000 acres--and pointed out that it wasn't really a gift, that it was the university would be making a gift to the Irvine Company because of what it would do for turning the Irvine Ranch into a profitable operation. In case I forget it, let me tell you about some of the specifics on this thing.
Well, McFadden said no, he wouldn't give a five-cent piece to the richest university in the world. So that was that.

John is a marvelous man, and he was, by far, the outstanding member of the state senate at that time. A little later on, when he came up for election, I was in Sacramento and he called my attention to the tremor that he had in his hand. And, of course, he wanted to know if he should run, and I said, "Yes, I don't care how much you shake, John, we need you." So we persuaded him to run for another four-year term.

Well, this didn't work out so well. So I rallied some of the people in the area, specifically, Paul Palmer, who was at that time the president of the Newport-Balboa Savings and Loan Association. He was the man that developed Lido Isle. I got him together with Howard Lawson, who was the man who developed the so-called Miracle Mile on Wilshire Boulevard, out on Wilshire and La Brea, both sides of the La Brea.

SM: Yes, I know it well.

WB: So, reluctantly, McFadden saw them. And they proposed that if he didn't want to give the land, that they would buy 11,000 acres, give 1,000 acres to the university and they would keep the balance.

SM: Who is they?

WB: A syndicate. Well, I guess that's the word. A group to be formed by Lawson and by Pappy Palmer.

SM: Okay.
WB: There would be no difficulty about that because they had great stature in the land development business. And McFadden said no. Well, all this time, I might say that it didn't surprise me any because, as I told you, I had met McFadden years before World War Two when he was in the agricultural business and he was attempting to raise ... I always forget the name of that.

SM: Avocados?

WB: No, no, the Japanese ... 

SM: Persimmons?

WB: Persimmons, yes. And, naturally, trying to sell persimmons in that day was like trying to sell kiwi fruit in this day.

SM: (chuckling) Yes.

WB: But we had a label salesman and he asked me to come out and tell Mr. McFadden how to sell these things. So I did, I explained that the small crop wouldn't support a national advertising, but that there was a possibility, by having instructions in use in folder racks at the point of sale. Well, McFadden knew it all, so I wasn't surprised when we came back to him with the university plan.

Many years ago, I became extremely friendly with one of the lawyers at Laub and Laub, which is a law firm in Los Angeles. And during the sixteen years that I commuted part-time to Los Angeles, I used to have lunch with him quite frequently. One day, I had lunch with him and with one of
their attorneys named Howard Friedman and told them what I was trying to do. So Howard said, "Well, that's very interesting." I didn't know why he said it, why he was particularly interested. A couple of days later, I got a call from him, and he said, "Did you know that we were attorneys for Joan Irvine?" I said, "No." "Well," he said, "we are. I have spoken to Joan and she said she would like to talk to you." Now, Joan Irvine . . . (telephone rings and tape is turned off)

SM: Joan Irvine?

WB: Joan Irvine's real name is Athelie. She always wanted to be known, have the same initials as her grandfather who brought her up, so she took the name of Joan so she would be J. I., the same as her grandfather James Irvine and her father who was James Irvine III. He said, "Well, I'll give you her phone number. She'd like to talk to you."

SM: She had an unlisted phone number.

WB: Yes, an unlisted phone number.

SM: That's right, in Laguna Beach.

WB: In Emerald Bay.

SM: Emerald Bay, I see.

WB: So I called her and she said, yes, she was very interested in talking to me and wanted to get together with me just as soon as possible. And I said, "Well, today." She said, "No, I'm going over to Las Vegas to get married." As you probably
recall, Joan had already been married twice, so this wasn't any great deal, I suppose. "But," she said, "I'll come right back and have lunch with you on Monday."

SM: (laughter) Oh, gee!

WB: (chuckling) So I said, "Fine." I picked her up at her house in Emerald Bay and we had some difficulty finding a restaurant that was open, but it didn't make any difference because we talked all the time that I was looking for a restaurant. When we got to the restaurant and talked a little more, she said, "Yes, I'm extremely interested. But those damned old fools don't realize that it's the greatest thing that could happen to the Irvine Company to have the university. So let's see what we can do." She said, "What I need is a demonstration that the people of the area would like to have the university there. How can we prove that?" I said, "Well, let's have a mass meeting." Joan said, "Fine, how long will it take you to organize one?" I said, "Oh, a couple of weeks." "Not soon enough. I have to have it before Friday."

SM: (chuckling) Oh, gee.

WB: Well, I see that I'm not as well-organized this time as I was at the speaking . . . because I haven't mentioned Brick Power.

SM: That's right. Let's backtrack and talk about Brick and who he is and so on.

WB: All right. Well, very early in the deal, Clark said to me . . . In fact, this is when it became apparent to me that Clark
was on our team. He said, "There's another man in Orange County that's anxious to get the University of California down there. He's an alumnus and his name is Power. Do you know him?" I said, "No." As you know, I'm really a synthetic alumnus. I got to be an alumnus by being a graduate student at Berkeley. I'm telling you that . . .

SM: Where did you do your undergraduate work?

WB: University of Washington.

SM: Oh, at Seattle?

WB: Yes.

SM: Oh, yes, go ahead.

WB: So I said, "Well, all right, I'll meet him." I did so with considerable reservation because I've had experience in the past that where you try to have a campaign for something, and everybody does his own thinking, it won't work. On the other hand, I knew it was desirable that we have someone to be the man out front. The Santa Ana Register, of course, was very, very antagonistic to anything that I started because they were afraid that the paper which by this time had become the Pilot was going to hurt them.

I may say that if you're not running a very good newspaper and a good small newspaper comes into what you consider your territory it's perfectly understandable. However, I didn't want their antipathy for me to louse up our getting the university. So, when Brick and I first met, I was
somewhat concerned. Here was a man considerably older than I, and I thought he would probably want to grab the ball and run with it and he will probably run right into the ditch. Well, it didn't turn out that way. From the very first, Brick and I clicked, and as you unquestionably observed, we were very close.

SM: Absolutely. I noticed that.

WB: He always called me his boy and my daughter dubbed him Uncle Brick. And so, to the day that he died, I would part of the time refer to him as Uncle Brick and so on. He was a marvelous old boy. So Clark put together a team that worked very, very well. Well, Brick and I and my secretary at that time--I can't recall her name, you know. You know, this is a bad thing, to get over seventy and you don't remember names.

SM: Don't feel badly, I'm only fifty-seven and I can't remember names, Walter. Don't feel badly.

WB: Well, we can insert that later. We all worked very hard. I cozened the secretary of an organization called Amigos Viejos to let me have the list, which was strictly forbidden, but he saw the virtue of the thing, and we got and announced that there would be this meeting at the Villa Marina, which is now defunct. That's where the Shark Island . . .

SM: I know, I've eaten there. (inaudible)

WB: Yes. Well, it was the only place that they had a meeting room that we thought was big enough. Well, it wasn't big enough.
They filled every seat in the meeting room and they filled every seat in the restaurant and there was a crowd outside.

SM: You said about a couple of hundred, you thought.

WB: Oh, I think there were all of a couple of hundred. Well, we notified the . . .

SM: I mean a couple of hundred outside.

WB: Oh, yes, yes. You can get a lot of people into the space of a parking lot, you know. Well, we had notified the Irvine officers that we were going to have this and so on, and not one of them showed up. So we explained what . . . or rather, Brick did, Brick gave the pitch to explain what this was all about, and announced that we were forming an organization called Friends of the University of California in Orange County. We asked everyone who wanted to see the university here to sign cards. Most of the people there signed cards, and then we put on a campaign to get people throughout the county to indicate that Orange County would like to have a campus of the university here. I don't really know from an exact count how many people signed those cards, but there were in the neighborhood of, oh, 45,000 to 50,000. It was a big bunch of cards.

SM: That's impressive! That's impressive!

WB: Well, we got some California alumni to . . .

SM: Help?
WB: Oh, yes. Brick was very active in the University of California Alumni [Association] and we held meetings with them and so on. However, I'm getting ahead of the story. Joan went to the meeting of the board of the Irvine Company and told them that there was a movement to get a campus of the university here, and she explained to them what the value of the university would be to the Irvine Company. They turned her down. Later on, they agreed that they would give 500 acres.

SM: Now, later on, is that after you've had your mass meeting and after you'd had the signatures?

WB: Yes.

SM: They still said they would only give, reluctantly give, 500 acres?

WB: Right. Remember, there was this constant feud going on between Loyal McLaren and Joan.

SM: Loyal McLaren was the chairman of the board, was he? The Irvine ... 

WB: Chairman of the board and he was also chairman of the [Irvine] Foundation. And Loyal is an all right guy, but, as you well know, Scotchmen, when they get their temper up, are not always reasonable.

SM: They're stubborn.

WB: (chuckling) Anyway, we had difficulty. So it became very apparent to Brick and to me that we had a lot of people that
had to be sold. The directors of the Irvine Company had to be sold, the Regents had to be sold. Because as I indicated the other day, they all said, "Oh, it's too far." And that depends on far from what? Well, Clark, of course, recognized that the center of population would shift down here. And if you're going to build a university to last 1,000 years, you don't build it where the center of population is now, you build it, hopefully, in what will be the future center of the population.

SM: Very wise.

WB: Well, he is a very wise guy. I won't try to give you every detail of every meeting that had and of every effort that we made, but it was very great, this effort. And Joan all the time pushing, pushing, pushing. We had some help from various people. Dick Hanna, who was a Democratic member of congress ... I think he was in congress by then. He had formerly been a member of the assembly.

SM: I think you're right.

WB: And when he and John Murdy and Bruce Sumner were in Sacramento, they were our representation in Sacramento.

SM: Oh, I know Bruce very well. Was he an assemblyman at that time?

WB: Yes. Well, he was an assemblyman before that. And he and John Murdy and Hanna, in spite of the fact that they didn't belong to the same political parties, would close ranks and
work hard for state action that would help Orange County. One of our adversaries was Pat Brown, the then governor. He was a very difficult guy. With Pat you never knew what his motivation was. Although I like Pat and used to see him every summer, I nevertheless always suspected that there was some motivation that was a little bit . . . Well, anyway, we won't go into Pat's philosophy.

Finally, Joan got the board to agree to up their gift to 750 acres. Now I think perhaps I'd better stop here and tell you about Myford Irvine.

SM: I'd like you to.

WB: Myford Irvine was the brother of Joan's father, the younger brother.

SM: In other words, Joan's uncle.

WB: Yes. He was kind of a pathetic figure. He didn't know anything about business. And I know whereof I'm talking because, as will presently appear, I talked to him a great deal. Of course, in Orange County he was afraid to talk to me because of the antipathy of the people on the Irvine Company. He was one of the ones that told me to talk to McFadden. I'm afraid I'm getting you mixed up here.

SM: No, no, I think I'm [following you].

WB: His father was a member of the Bohemian Club.

SM: Whose father?

WB: Myford's father.
SM: Myford's father was a member of the Bohemian Club.

WB: Of the Bohemian Club.

SM: Okay, I've got it.

WB: In fact, I believe that's the reason that Loyal McLaren was able to get the position that he had with the Foundation. Well, that isn't important to this story. Because Mr. Jefferson was on the. . . . I don't want to use the proper term. He was on the list. (chuckling)

SM: We know about lists these days.

WB: Yes. (laughter) Myford stayed away from him, or didn't go near him. But somehow, and I can't tell you exactly how, I think it was. . . . Mike was a musician. Myford they called Mike. And he more or less fell out with his father because the only thing he wanted to do was to have an orchestra, a dance orchestra, which he did for quite a few years. And when Joan's father died, the old man put the arm on him and made him come down to the ranch. Well, somehow, he got acquainted with Mr. Jefferson. And I don't know how that was, but I think it may have come through a letter which he wrote to Oscar Hammerstein. The only thing that I know about that is that one day Jeff called me and said that he wanted to go up to a lecture that Hammerstein was giving on world federalism. Well, you remember this?

SM: Yes, sure.
WB: And when I got there, Myford was there, and they were quite cordial. Well, what happened was that the old man would have his man—the old man being Mr. Jefferson—take all the cars out the garage. He lived on Ocean Avenue in Corona del Mar and Myford could drive down Poppy, turn in the alley, run his car in the garage and close the door, and he would go into the house and he and Mr. Jefferson would play double piano. Mr. Jefferson was a moderately good musician. Years ago, he had composed several songs. And by years ago, I mean at the beginning of the century. He had composed several songs, one of which was a hit called "My Coal Black Baby."

SM: I remember that. I've heard that song. A long time ago.

WB: Well, I think that was it, but don't hold me to it. I think it was "My Coal Black Baby." So he and Myford would do this. Well, he told Myford he wanted him to get acquainted with me and Myford said, "Oh, no. I don't think I'd better do that."

But when Myford got into the Bohemian Club—it takes quite awhile, particularly for a nonresident, to get in—along about . . . well, a couple of years before he died, he didn't know anybody in the Bohemian Club. So he would come to the Grove, very briefly each year. And by this time, he and I had gotten acquainted and rather friendly, and he'd come up and sit down on our platform because he needed some . . .

SM: He needed some friends.
WB: He needed some friends. So I talked to him about this university thing, and he said, yes, he recognized that it would be a great thing for the company, but that he didn't run the company. He had the title of president but he didn't run it. So Myford died, I think it was 1959.

SM: That's about right.

WB: Yes, and at this particular time, before he died he told me, "Oh, you're not going to get that thing over. That board just isn't going to do it." Well, finally, someone on the board--I suspect Loyal McLaren--got smart. I don't know whether he got smart, he was always smart, but he decided that maybe they had better go ahead and try to get this university here. And during the dedication of this plan here, he and McFadden and all the rest of them were taking the bows [as if] it had been their idea from the beginning, which is great, I don't care.

SM: Except that I know that you deserve the credit. You know, it's not so happy when other people get the credit. They turn around and take all the bows after all the work has been done.

WB: (chuckling) Yes.

SM: But you were mentioning that one point, Walter, about the connection between Joan and her Uncle Myford. Was it just that she persuaded him that it was the best thing in the world to have a university or what?
WB: I think they both recognized it. Myford wasn't very great on business matters.

SM: That's what you said, yes.

WB: But he was willing to listen to reason, although not to take a position adverse to Mr. McLaren. I think that I should tell you that prior to the mass meeting, just prior to the mass meeting, Joan had succeeded in dislodging Brad Hellis as general manager of the company.

SM: How do you spell Hellis?

WB: H-E-L-L-I-S. I think his first name is Bradford. He's still alive. But this action that she brought, she alleged that Hellis and various of his pals were getting rich, or richer, at the expense of the stockholders of the Irvine Company. Laub and Laub issued a subpoena in duces tecum, I think they call it—in other words, produce all your records. The same thing that is happening to Mr. Nixon at the moment. And rather than do that, he agreed to resign as general manager of the Irvine Company.

Well, where are we?

SM: We've got them now agreeing finally to give 750 acres.

WB: Seven hundred and fifty acres. Well, about this time, Bill Monahan came down and said, "Walt, the Regents aren't going to go for this, because they think that they are doing something for the Irvine Company." I then got a tip—let's not say where the tip came from—that Pat Brown and a company
called the Capital Company, which was the owner, or one of the owners, of the Diamond Bar Ranch, which is over the hill here, were going to make a gift to the state of 11,000 acres of land. Pat Brown had . . .

SM: Eleven thousand or eleven hundred?

WB: Eleven thousand acres.

SM: That's a lot!

WB: Well, wait until you hear. The deal was, however, according to the information that I got, they would give 1,000 acres of this to be used for the university. They would have a lease on the balance of it to develop. Well, of course, it was a very smart deal.

SM: Like UCLA all over again, with the Janss Investment Company had the land around the university. Would it be the equivalent to that, Walter?

WB: Well, of course, the Irvine Company has the land around here.

SM: True, true.

WB: No, it would not be equivalent to that because Janss paid taxes on their lands. And if the state owned it and they had a master lease, well, it was about as sweet a real estate deal as I ever heard. As a matter of fact, maybe it was a good deal for the state. Because as Pat said, it would provide a continuing endowment for the university. But from my standpoint, I didn't want to see it go through.

SM: How far is Diamond Bar from here?
WB: Oh, it's about twenty-some miles.
SM: Towards Fullerton?
WB: No, it's beyond Fullerton. It's near La Habra and Brea, but a little farther north than that.
SM: It would put the university very close to the state college then.
WB: No, it's quite a ways over there. It's over the hill.
SM: I see.
WB: One of our reporters lives there. I don't know exactly how far it is, but it must be, oh, twenty-five miles. I don't know how good a location it was. So, anyway, Brick and I went down to see Joan, and it was then that that telephone conversation took place that I told you about. She got McFadden on the phone. By this time, Myford was dead. And if you want, after we get through with the chronology here, I'll tell you a little bit about Joan's relationship with her Uncle Myford. She got McFadden on the phone, and as I recall it, the conversation went something like this: "Listen, you old fool, we're going to lose the university because of your damned stubbornness." I may say that Joan swore like a trooper at that time. Someplace along the line, I think we persuaded her to desist. But she was very close to her grandfather and he tried to raise her somewhat as a boy, as I understand it, taught her to shoot and to ride and to rope
cattle and all this sort of thing, and also to swear.
(chuckling)

SM: Lovely.

WB: So she said, "Listen, you old fool, we're going to lose this thing. I want you to call every member of the board, get a phone vote that we'll give 1,000 acres. And then I want you to call Clark Kerr, but I want to have it on a conference call. I want Brick to be on the line, I want to be on the line at the same time you're talking to Clark, because I don't trust you." So that's exactly what happened. And then it was ... 

SM: In other words, they polled the members of the board. They then had a conference call to Clark Kerr.

WB: Yes.

SM: How interesting.

WB: And this was just somewhat before the July meeting of the Regents.

SM: This would be July 1960?

WB: Yes. Well, I went to the Regents' meeting, that is, to the part of it that was open to the public. And by this time, all the Regents ... Oh, correction. She also said, "And that we will agree to all the conditions that the university wants." Well, the conditions were, in large part, things that I had suggested, because I saw the horrible situation out at UCLA where the big houses moved in close to the university and
it became only a commuting university. So one of the conditions was that the inclusion areas would be developed for married student housing and for bachelor faculty, the junior faculty, and that 10,000 acres surrounding the 1,000 acres of the university would be developed for housing at a price that could be afforded by university professors. So she insisted that that go in there. Now Joan is very long-headed. She's a very fighting woman, and I think she would do much better if she would not fight all the time. But, nevertheless, in this particular case . . . Well, they all agreed, because by this time, although they had been almost unanimous in opposing the gift, now they began to realize what they had and they didn't want to lose it.

So I went to the Regents' meeting. Prior to this Regents' meeting, with some guidance from Bill Monahan, we went to see Regent after Regent and explained what the value was to the university. And the vote came and all of the Regents voted for it, except Norton Simon, who had just been appointed to the board. Norton Simon opposed it because he said that the Irvine Company was notoriously anti-Semitic, but, nevertheless, he only had one vote.

Now where do you want to go from there?

SM: Well, what I want to ask you, Walter, is how they got the actual site that they did and what the story is as to why they
didn't get the section up the way where the present cemetery is?

WB: Well, that was the location that was favored by Clark Kerr, if (inaudible).

SM: And Bill Periera, you said.

WB: Well, Bill Periera, yes. And it's pretty obvious if you go up there and see that gorgeous vista. Let's not say that Bill Periera favored it. His report was that that had the greatest nobility, was the term that he used. However, he did say that this site would be easier to develop because of the terrain. But we thought that we would not be able to sell this site to the Regents. So we knew that a group of promoters had made a deal with the Irvine Company to buy that land where the cemetery is to use for a cemetery, but it didn't occur to any of us that we wouldn't be able to get them to take another site. Well, it became rather evident that we might lose the whole university if we couldn't get that site, so Joan and . . . I don't know who she had approach this man--I can't remember his name, but he's the head of the Inglewood Cemetery--and explain to him that we had the chance to get the university here, and she suggested another site farther down the coast toward Laguna. They said no. By they, I mean this head of this organization. They were principally local people, as stockholders or as limited partners. I don't know what their corporate setup is. So she suggested that they
take this site farther down and higher up, which had an equally good vista. They said no, they wouldn't do that because it was a difficult road and no water. She said, "I will personally pay to build the road and to bring water to you." The answer to that was that . . . We had a reporter named Bill Beeler, and he was constantly watching this site. SM: How do you spell Beeler?
WB: B-E-E-L-E-R. The poor guy is dead now. He was a great reporter. He saw some trucks drive in there, so he drove his little car up to this area and he saw that they were digging some graves. There was a man standing there in civilian clothes, a couple of men that were dressed street clothes, and the rest of them were dressed in work clothes. And the man came over to him and said, "What are you doing here?" Bill said, "Well, I saw there was some activity going on. I thought maybe they were starting the university." And they said, "No. Lower your voice, this is sacred ground."
SM: (chuckling) Oh, dear!
WB: Well, Bill had his camera with him.
SM: (chuckling) Oh, dear!
WB: And that's what they were doing. There's a law in the state of California that if you bury a few bodies, the ground does become hallowed in some way. I don't know just what the . . . So Bill took his camera out and started to shoot a picture and they chased him off. So he immediately drove to
the airport. I was in New Orleans at the time, but Bill knew that he had carte blanche. And at that time, they had some helicopters out there. Bill chartered a helicopter, flew over this and got some pictures. They must still have the published pictures at the Pilot, although I understand they haven't preserved all of their records as well as we might wish. Well, you know, when you're publishing a small paper, the keeping of a morgue is very expensive—a morgue, being a library.

SM: Right.

WB: Well, this created quite a commotion, but these people wouldn't move. So then it was a question of whether this site could ... 

SM: The Regents would accept the site.

WB: Would accept it. Well, in fact, whether they'd accept anything. So we almost lost it because the nobility of vista had to go to some corpses. Bill Monahan and Clark then pushed for this site, and Bill Periera showed the . . . Clark was terribly disappointed, but Bill convinced him that this site would be as good as any.

Well, all right, we then come to the part where the Regents accepted it. The question was: Did the Irvine Company have the right to give the land? Because the majority of the Irvine Company stock was owned by the Irvine Foundation. And the indenture which established the
Foundation provided that there could be no charitable gifts made to state supported institutions. This is the Foundation.

SM: Yes.

WB: So we had to get the approval, get a court decision on the thing.

SM: Well, at that time, the full-time counsel to the university was very doubtful and so on. Bill and I talked to him and Brick talked to him rather more forcefully than we did. So they filed a suit, a friendly suit. By this time, the Irvine Company was strong for the deal. I say the Irvine Company. The directors were strong for the deal. It had been their idea in the first place.

SM: (chuckling)

WB: So they filed this suit, and, by golly, we found that Pat Brown . . . or we got an indication that Pat Brown was trying to persuade the attorney general to oppose this action, because he was still pulling not to have it here. Well, Brick got Charlie Pierson from Anaheim and he and I and Dick Hanna went out to the airport to meet Pat Brown. He was supposed to come in to Orange County Airport. But while we were waiting there, we got word that he wasn't going to do it and was going to land at El Toro. So we all chased over there, and there were a bunch of Boy Scouts who came to see the governor. And Pat was going to make a lecture at Retail Clerks' Auditorium over in Buena Park. So Dick went up to
him, dragged him by the . . . And he said, "Well, I'm sorry, I've got to go. Nice to have seen you gentlemen." Dick grabbed him by the tail of his coat, and he said, "Not yet, Pat. I want your promise that you will not allow anything to interfere with getting this title of the 1,000 acres over to the university."

Now, I think that about covers most of it.

SM: Well, I have another tape if you want it.

WB: Well, I don't know. It's whatever you want.

SM: Yes, I've got another tape if you want. Well, that pretty well covers it, as I understand it, and that covers what you said, Walter. Let's just . . .

END OF INTERVIEW