

INTERVIEWEE: Clifford Groh

INTERVIEWER: Pamela Cravez

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SESSION #2, Tape #1, Side 2

PC: We're finishing the story of Bailey Bell in the 50's when Talbot had accused Bailey Bell of going through the District Attorney's files.

CG: I don't really remember the story that well, and maybe if I thought about it I'd remember it better, but my present recollection is that there was some kind of a criminal case, and the Assistant U.S. Attorneys, of course, prosecuted all Territorial criminal cases. Bailey Bell, allegedly during the recess, was going through a file that belonged to the U.S. Attorney at the Counsel table. He was caught in that endeavor by somebody, I don't remember who it was, but my best recollection is that it was the Deputy U.S. Marshal who, like the U.S. Attorneys, had an obligation to enforce Territorial law. So the U.S. Marshals had dual duty as the U.S. Attorneys did. But he allegedly caught Bailey rifling through this file, and so Talbot had Bell arrested in his office, handcuffed, and taken over to the jail, where he was fingerprinted. That's what I remember about the case except that Bailey was terribly upset. And that's all I really remember about it.

PC: Did he ever go after Talbot for putting the handcuffs on him?

CG: He went after him in the context of going after him in the Bar Assoc. for having been so badly mistreated, but I don't think he ever filed any cases or anything.

PC: Were there any special privileges for the U.S. Attorneys, things that you wouldn't have now. Were there any differences in the U.S. Attorney's office?

CG: Oh yes.

PC: Tell me about them.

CG: We had little identification cards which allowed us to go into

any establishment at any time to determine whether there was a violation of the Territorial liquor laws. So we consequently could use those I.D. cards to go anyplace, anytime and find out whether there were any violations of the laws. They don't have that privilege today. I have a great story about being an Assistant U.S. Attorney. I suppose it's fair to say that crime was, in some respects, more prevalent 30 years or 25 years ago than it is today. There was a section of town known as Eastchester Flats where the substantial amount of the black community resided. Every time you had a case and you asked the address of the defendant, they always said 18th and Karluk. When I first got here I conceived that there was a building there that must have been 50 stories high that everybody lived in. There were a number of all-night places, one of them was called the House of Joy. This guy who was an operator down there had a bar. His name was Frank Evans. He weighed about 300 pounds, big black guy. Every time I saw him on the street he always bowed down, he was fairly short, he bowed way down and said, hello Mr. Groh, hello Mr. Groh. I said, hello Mr. Evans. I left the D.A.'s office and I met him on the street one day, and he said, hello Cliff, and I said hello Frank, how come you're not calling me Mr. Groh anymore. He said, you aint got no power any more. End of the story.

PC: Did you really have power as an Assistant U.S. Attorney?

CG: Sure you did. Every Assistant U.S. Attorney, District Attorney, has power because they have the power to file law complaints, and we can shut people down, leave them in operation, or file charges or not file charges.

PC: Were there any campaigns to shut down any sections of town, or city campaigns to go after establishments?

CG: Sure, there were always campaigns. Judge Fitzgerald, now Judge

Fitzgerald, used to be Assistant U.S. Attorney Fitzgerald, and I closed down the Line in Seward. In the early 50's the Line was still operating. The communities in Alaska then, as the communities in Alaska now are usually split almost 50-50 on whether there should be Constitution #1 and #2 as to whether you should allow liquor in. In 1982 the fight was in the Native areas as to whether they should allow liquor or go dry. But in those days the fight was whether they should allow prostitution or not. On the one hand you'd have the church groups, and on the other hand you'd have the citizens that wanted it. And the community was split about 50-50. They appeared before a local Grand Jury, the people who wanted to close it down, and the Grand Jury would either threaten to indict us or we would close the Line down, so we closed the Line down.

PC: Are there any records of that?

CG: Sure. I think it's the United States of America v., all I can remember is Alley A or Alley B in Seward, and it was a number of houses that, under the law in those days, we could abate. I don't remember the statute specifically, but you could abate the houses and get an injunction against them operating. We went down there on a big raid and swooped down on them and caught part of the City Council.

PC: Did you, as Assistant U.S. Attorney, actually participate in the raid?

CG: We certainly did.

PC: Did you participate in a lot of raids, was that a common thing?

CG: There were so few staff people in the U.S. Attorney's office and the Marshal's office that we participated in quite a few of them. We raided a house of prostitution which was located approximately where Roger's Park School is presently located, called The Texas Playhouse.

PC: After you were in the U.S. Attorney's office, what did you do? For how long were you there? What years?

CG: I was there 1954 and part of 1955, and then I went into private practice.

PC: In 1955, the Integrated Bar Act passed. Did that have any kind of effect on your practice, or the tenor of the Bar at all?

CG: Well, I guess we now had a State-wide Bar Assoc. We had to set up disciplinary procedures. I served on some early disciplinary committees with Judge Ray Plummer. We also went to State-wide conventions. I don't remember when the first one was. I was an early member of the Board of Governors. And one year I was President of the State Bar. I think I was President in '59 and '60.

PC: Why was the Integrated Bar formed? Was there a lot of discussion about it?

CG: Yes. The primary idea was to take the disciplinary procedures away from the District Attorneys. It was unfair to basically, in view of the Stringer case, and in view of other cases, to have people who had power to administer the criminal laws and who were trying criminal cases on behalf of the Territory or the United States, to also have the disciplinary power over the lawyers who were trying cases against them.

PC: Were these certain certain people instrumental in founding the Integrated Bar?

CG: Well, the Bar was so small I don't think it made a heck of a lot of difference. Pete Kalamarides certainly was an important factor. It's my recollection that he was the first Executive Director and also had been in the Legislature that created it. And then there were certain older lawyers who were advocates of it, Stanley McCutcheon, Wendell Kay, and there were the younger lawyers who were in favor of it. As a matter of fact, I think we were all in favor of it, I don't know who opposed it. I don't think anybody opposed the Integrated Bar.

PC: When they set up the disciplinary procedures, did they take a lot of the procedures that the District Attorney's Office had used

CG: Didn't take any of it. I had a part in that and what we did was, we went to other States, found out what the heck kind of rules they had, and adopted them in.

PC: Was there an effort to be liberal or conservative or...

CG: I'd venture to guess that most lawyers who used them were very liberal to each other. They wanted to set up some machinery. I don't know that you could categorize it as liberal or unliberal. We wanted to set up procedures that were in the hands of impartial people so that we could administer the canons of ethics for the Bar.

PC: Who were the first people in charge of handling the disciplinary matters? Was it your committee?

CG: I think so, my best recollection is, and I may be wrong, but my best recollection is that Ray Plummer, Buell Nesbett and I sat on the first disciplinary committee, and when we got complaints, we would go through them and there was a procedure set up after it went through the disciplinary committee, it went to the Board of Governors, and then they would recommend to the court system as to what would be done.

PC: Were there as many proceedings such as disciplinary (unintelligible) and that sort of thing after the Bar was set up than before?

CG: I don't think so.

PC: Just that you would (unintelligible).

CG: Well, there were many, even before, but I didn't know in total numbers. But I don't think there was a great rash of disciplinary proceedings after the Integrated Bar was set up. But there hadn't been a great rash of disciplinary proceedings prior to one Assistant U.S. Attorney filing a lot of them either.

PC: When you were done with the U.S. Attorney's Office, what did you do?

CG: I went into private practice. / <sup>There</sup> had been a U.S. Commissioner in ex officio Probate Judge that I had a lot of practice before as an

Assistant U.S. Attorney named Gordon W. Hartlieb. And there was a City Attorney named John L. Rader, and so the three of us decided to form a firm in 1955. Rader was still City Attorney, Hartlieb quit the U.S. Commissioner and ex officio Probate Judge as his job, and I quit as Assistant U.S. Attorney, and we formed a firm, flipped a coin as to whose name was going to be first. I won the flip but he was so adamant that I let him go first. So we formed the firm called Hartlieb, Groh and then a few months later Rader came in, and it was Hartlieb, Groh & Rader.

PC: Was it a three man firm.

CG: A three man firm.

PC: You didn't have anybody working for you?

CG: No.

PC: What kind of cases did you have?

CG: Anything we could get.

PC: Was it hard to get cases?

CG: Well, Rader always said that we were grubbing with the chickens in the yard and we were trying to get cases, and we did get cases.

PC: We were talking about how Hartlieb, Groh & Rader got business.

CG: We got it. There weren't that many lawyers in town so we could get some business. I just left the U.S. Attorney's office, so I got a lot of criminal cases on the basis of my reputation there. Mr. Rader was City Attorney and joined the firm in May or June of 1955 and so he brought some city business with him. Mr. Hartlieb had been the Commissioner and ex officio Judge, and had a lot of friends in town and got some business from there. And then I recall we basically represented the labor movement and labor lawyers are hard to find. I think within the first few years we probably represented the whole labor movement in Anchorage. Laborers, teamsters, carpenters, laundry workers, painters, the whole labor movement, and that's what we did. We also

did negligence work. I also did some criminal defense work and when I say we were grubbing in the dirt with the chickens, I'm serious about that. We were just hustling along and did our thing. Mr. Rader can tell you the story a heck of a lot better than I can, but we had a little office at Fifth and E Sts. where the National Bank of Alaska is. He needed a new floor in his office and we went down to the local lumber store and bought a 4x8 piece of plywood. We set it in there and it fit perfectly, that was the size of his office. Mr. Hartlieb's office had the heater in it, and I had to go through his office to get to mine. Mine wasn't a heck of a lot bigger than 4x8. Since Hartlieb was first on the (unintelligible), he had the biggest office and he also had the heater. But he didn't have a bathroom so we had to go to City Hall to go to the bathroom.

PC: How long did it take for you to build up the practice?

CG: When you build a practice up, you just do work for clients, and you get new clients and you settle their matters and they go away. But we were very busy and we all worked very hard. We didn't make an enormous amount of money but we made enough to live on. We had a Russian veto system in the firm.

PC: What's that?

CG: You have to have unanimity before you take any course of action. That didn't have to do with the trying of cases or anything, but it had to do with what investments we were going to make and whether we were going to switch kinds of clients or get into certain kinds of business. Frankly, it worked out fairly well. If you're reasonable persons and you can achieve unanimity, then everybody goes forward. But we were both social friends and law partners, and we sort of did all these things together.

PC: Just a question going back a little bit to when you were U.S. Attorney. How did the criminal defense work, how were lawyers

appointed to defend the criminals, because you were public defender at the time?

CG: The Court just had a list and if a criminal defendant was indigent, he would go down the list and the next guy in line would get the case. I certainly have handled my share of those, but most of the time if the defendant had money, he'd hired one of the top criminal defense lawyers in town. Most defendants had some money.

PC: Did you get paid if you were appointed by the Court?

CG: I can't remember what it was, but my best recollection is that it was \$25 an hour.

PC: Was that good or bad in those days?

CG: It was not equivalent to what we were charging.

PC: How long did you stay with Hartlieb and Rader?

CG: That firm, I think, lasted seven years. Mr. Rader took a leave of absence and became Alaska's first Attorney General. We, in addition to being lawyers, were businessmen. We were different in that respect from a lot of the lawyers in town who didn't understand business. We bought and sold lots of properties and so we supplemented our other income by law (unintelligible) by being in real estate.

PC: Was that more profitable than the lawyer end of it?

CG: If you sell one piece of property you make \$100,000, that's a lot of divorces.

PC: Had you started out with the intent of being both a business corporation or a business entity and a law firm?

CG: We certainly did.

PC: Who had the idea?

CG: All of us, it was a joint idea.

PC: Why?

CG: Just because we figured out it was a lot easier to sell a piece of property than to do 25 divorces. And we were knowledgeable in real



estate. Mr. Rader had left to become Attorney General and Mr. Hartlieb and I continued to practice law. Mr. Rader was also in the Legislature. We went into a variety of businesses, not businesses but real estate. We shied away from operating businesses, it's too hard to be there when the guy's counting the money so we'd buy real estate and sell that. We were acquainted with market conditions in Anchorage. We got a piece of property one time for \$45,000, the market went up and we sold it for \$75,000, the market went down, we bought it again for \$45,000, the market went up and we sold it again for \$75,000. So we made \$30,000 on that piece of property twice. I guess we were good at it.

PC: It sounds like you were. After you split up, what made you split up?

CG: What makes marriages split up, something happens. I think we split up in '62. Mr. Rader wanted to run for Governor. I didn't mind him running for Governor. He's a good friend of mine, he and I are still partners in various enterprises. But I didn't think I should practice law while he was running for Governor.

PC: Why not?

CG: Because political power is not assignable, and the fact that he was Governor wasn't really going to help me. I didn't want to work the long hours that I was working while he ran for Governor. But we weren't unhappy with each other in that respect, I just explained to him that I wanted to dissolve the firm if he was going to run for Governor, so I dissolved the firm.

PC: How did Mr. Hartlieb feel about it all?

CG: I think he agreed with it, really.

PC: Were either of the two of you political?

CG: We all were political in a sense. Mr. Hartlieb and I happened to be Republicans, Mr. Rader happened to be a Democrat, that was not

uncommon in Anchorage in those days. It was common, as a matter of fact. One partner would be a Democrat and some of the others Republicans. But that didn't have anything to do with it. Our friendship overcame all that. I subsequently, years later in '71, '72, '73, and '74 served in the Legislature with Mr. Rader in the Senate. We'd fight periodically on the floor but we always remained good friends. During that period of time, I guess we had a lot of big cases, I can't even remember them all. One of them was the United States v. The Anchorage Central Labor Council. We were still representing a lot of the labor movement, but in that case we got declared unconstitutional, or the Judge never really got to that question, the issue of contributions by labor unions to political parties. I had a whole lot of criminal cases, murder cases of all kinds, and I spent an awful lot of time in the courtroom. I guess mundane things like regular cases, divorce cases, foreclosures, etc. We concentrated on the commercial, our non-labor practice was basically commercial - banks, and that's what we did.

PC: Is the First National Bank of Anchorage one

CG: I've never represented the First National Bank of Alaska.

PC: You just maintain your office there?

CG: Yes.

PC: Was there a rivalry between the two banks? I've heard that lawyers have split between both banks, one bank and not the other bank.

CG: I think that's true, but that's inevitably true, I think. They're competitors, so there is a certain amount of rivalry.

PC: It didn't go back to some underlying stories?

CG: They're just competitors.

PC: After you split up, what did you do?

CG: I formed a firm called Groh and Benkert. He had been a law clerk with <sup>Hartlieb, Groh, &</sup> Rader. He and I formed a firm and we practiced

for a number of years.

PC: Did you have any other law clerks while you were with HGAR?

CG: Mr. Walton.

PC: Who?

CG: Pete Walton. We had a number of them, I can't remember what all their names are. There was Mr. Roth who was here and then left the State. Mr. Walton. I can't remember the names of any others.

PC: Who did you just form a partnership with?

CG: Ron Benkert.

PC: Did you keep doing corporate transactions and, it sounds more like real estate transactions.

CG: Corporate, real estate, some union.

PC: The impression I had was that you as a Republican would bear any strains with all this labor work? Republicans aren't usually representing labor.

CG: I don't know that that made a great deal of difference. During this period of time, in '55, I ran for the school board, and I was on the school board and I was President of the school board. I was on it for four years. I subsequently, as I indicated to you, went on the Board of Governors of the Bar Assoc. and was President for a year. I subsequently went on the City Council and was acting Mayor.

PC: You were acting Mayor? When? What were the circumstances?

CG: Mr. Rasmuson was the Chairman of the Board of the National Bank of Alaska and was the Mayor. He was gone all the time and so I was Vice Mayor, so I acted as Mayor most of that year. I spent time on the City Council and on the Borough Assembly. I was on the first Borough Assembly. Subsequent to that I was Chairman of the Charter Commission that unified the City and the Borough. Subsequent to that I was in the State Senate. Now, what was your question?

PC: Was this while you were practicing with Mr. Benkert?

CG: No, this is when I was with Hartlieb and Rader, and with

Mr. Benkert and my subsequent friends. But that's a lot of years of public service.

PC: How did you manage to find time to do both that and practice?

CG: You run quickly. I'd always been in public service and I stayed in it, and I still practiced.

PC: Do you think there are as many lawyers now doing that much public service as there were in the early years?

CG: There isn't because all you have to do is look at the make up of the Legislature, the local public offices, and the present Municipal Assembly which is the combination of the Borough and the City. You have two lawyers that I can think of off-hand, I don't think there are any more than two - Josephson and Walsh. At one time, in the Legislature, it was basically made up of mostly lawyers and that isn't true anymore.

PC: Why?

CG: Well, because you can't run for the Legislature and be in public office and retain any semblance of a law practice, number one. Number two, there is very little glory in being in public office anymore. There wasn't ever much glory in it, but at least you were half-heartedly respected before if you were willing to devote your time to the office. I don't think that's true anymore. I can tell you why I don't think that's true, because the local press, maybe Watergate or whatever, has made performing public service a terrible chore, and because you're automatically assumed to be crooked, rotten, dirty, filthy and all that. And why take the grief of running for public office. Thanks to one of the Anchorage newspapers, there are no heroes in Alaska, everything is torn down. Instead of saying, Mr. Rader's a perfect example, he was in the Legislature and public office for 16 years and because he happens to disagree, he did a very valuable service, and because he happens to disagree with one of the local newspapers on the capital move issue, he was constantly denigrated, cut up, ridiculed. And the

fact, for example, that he passed the first Borough law, the fact that he single-handedly passed the abortion law, or at least fought the fight, the fact that he was a competent legislator for years is never recognized. If any one person is responsible for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline law getting through the Legislature, I was, but nobody knows that and nobody cares less. As a matter of fact, if we didn't have the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, neither you nor I would be here.

PC: Why couldn't you retain your semblance of law practice now and be in the Legislature?

CG: Because it takes too much time, and you can't be in two places at once. I served in one session in 1971 or 72 for 160 days. You can't be in Juneau for 160 days and then back here for 200 days and endeavor to maintain a law practice unless you have an extremely generous law partners who are willing to (unintelligible.) But there are none of those around.

PC: When you were with Benkert, what other things did you do besides public service, criminal and corporate work? Did you do any Native work?

CG: I certainly did.

PC: (Unintelligible).

CG: In 1966, Mr. McCutcheon and I, and I don't care what the Native history books say, I'm going to tell you what happened, and I have the records to prove it. We sat at the Quarterdeck of the Captain Cook and decided to create the Alaska Federation of Natives. We, at that time, were representing the Native village over here that had come into some wealth known as the Native Village of Tyonek. They collected \$14 million as a result of lawsuits that Mr. McCutcheon had filed against the Dept. of the Interior, and he got the \$14 million for the Natives. And after having been to that village and creating homes for everybody and everything else, we decided that we would try to organize

an Alaska Federation of Natives so we brought some leadership together, and all kinds of guys presently take credit for this, but I have the correspondence to prove that we did it, if anybody wants to see it.

PC: I'd love to see it.

CG: We wrote to various guys who now presently run around saying it was their idea, but that's not important. We used the Tyonek money to have the first State-wide Alaska Federation of Natives meeting which was held in October, 1966. I even have correspondence and memos between Mr. McCutcheon and me as to who we should make the first President of the Alaska Federation of Natives. Now, the people involved don't want to admit that, but that is the fact. Nobody had any money to do it except the Tyoneks, and it was through the Tyoneks, that's the way it was done. I wrote the first Constitution for the Alaska Federation of Natives which I incidentally copied from the Teamsters constitution. Nobody wants to admit that, but that's where it came from. You know the little triple symbol of the Natives, the three rings that look like the Olympic rings? Mr. Don Wright(?) and I took those off of Schaffer's beer bottle in New Jersey one time. And we put Eskimo and Indian and Aleut on the rings.

PC: Who put the little (unintelligible).

CG: We put the Eskimo and Indian and Aleut on it, that's where the symbols came from. After we helped create the Alaska Federation of Natives, there was an argument as to how much the lawyer does and how much the people do. But that was our first meeting, and then I would become General Counsel for the Federation of Natives. Mr. McCutcheon and I represented almost all of the Native groups in the State except for three, I guess. We never represented the NANA, which is the Kotzebue group, and we never represented the North Slope, we never represented Fairbanks or Doyon, and we never represented Southeastern.

*See m.c.  
re: fees*

PC: Why not?

CG: Because they had other lawyers, they either got other lawyers or they had other lawyers.

PC: Who were the other lawyers involved?

CG: Barry Jackson from Fairbanks, Roger Conners, who is now on the Supreme Court represented the Aleuts, and Fred Paul from Seattle represented the North Slope. Our law firm represented Kodiak, Bristol Bay, Unalakleet, Nome, Eklutna, Kenai, Copper River, Cordova or Chugach. I don't know if there were any others, but certainly out of the 12 Regionals, we represented probably 8 of them.

PC: So was this your firm with McCutcheon? Was Benkert with you at the time?

CG: In 1966, maybe '65, we formed a firm called McCutcheon, Groh & Benkert. What had happened is that McCutcheon represented the Tyoneks and needed some help, and he approached me and we joined forces, made the firm, and our goal was going to be to represent the Natives, and that's what we did.

PC: Was this after the Tyonek settlement or does this go back? Did you ever join forces with the other attorneys?

CG: (Unintelligible).

PC: When?

CG: During the October 1966 Convention when Natives came in from all over the State, that was the first State-wide convention that was ever held, the other lawyers came in and we participated in a variety of conferences and discussions with the other lawyers as to how we should settle Native claims. So from the beginning we worked together.

PC: And what did you decide to do?

CG: There are all kinds of books written about this. The most definitive book on the subject is my own son's book which he wrote as senior thesis at Harvard. It's never been published but I'm sure you

can get a copy. But in any event, we could talk for four days on the issue of Native claims.

PC: Why don't you tell me about Mr. McCutcheon then. (unintelligible).

CG: Mr. McCutcheon was a brilliant young man. He was born in Anchorage, went through Anchorage grade school and high school, never went to college nor law school. He read law under Mr. Grigsby and he passed the Bar. He was always a very prominent Democratic politician. At one stage, his father and his brother, Steve McCutcheon who is a non-lawyer, and he, all served in the Legislature together. He was great political allies with Senator Bartlett and Gruening, maybe I should say Gruening and Bartlett. He was a good criminal lawyer. Because of his lack of formal education in the Bar he was not a brilliant brief writer. He was a trial lawyer. In the years that he and I joined up, because I had the formal background and could do the legal memorandum, and I was a fair trial lawyer myself. And so we joined together and went forward from there.

PC: Did he ever tell you why he went out of the criminal work to work with the Natives?

CG: I don't know that he ever told me. He was a great believer in helping the underdog, the minority, he always had a great deal of sentiment for the oppressed, and that was a natural thing for him. I suppose it was natural that he should drift into representing the Native groups. He was a dramatist. I'll tell you one story about him. Prior to Statehood, the big thing in Alaska was to oppose fish traps, salmon fish traps. He had a speech against salmon fish traps. I heard him do it, at least 30 times but he made me cry each time he gave it. It was that good a speech.

Tape #1 ends.

Tape #2, Side A

CG: In the Statehood movement fight, Mr. Atwood was Chairman of the



Alaska Statehood Commission, McCutcheon was on the Commission, he fought what he called the Seattle interests, the salmon interests, and I guess it was inevitable that he drifted into, after he got the settlement for the town, helping to create the Federation of Natives.

PC: I've spoken to other attorneys, of course, on different sides of issues. Do attorneys normally still, or did they in the earlier days, socialize together when they were on different ends of political issue?

CG: Yes.

PC: Were there any great chasms between political sides, or great rifts?

CG: No, I don't think so. Wendell Kay, for example, had a law partner named Paul Robison and Robison was a big Republican and Kay was a big Democrat. Robison would issue a press release blasting Kay and the Democrats, and Kay would issue a press release blasting Robison and the Republicans, and then they'd all go have a beer together.

PC: Is this true today, too?

CG: I don't think it's true to the extent today that it was then because it's a lot bigger now and the lines are probably more sharply drawn. I mean, I served in the Legislature with Chancy Croft(?) for four years. We were on opposite sides and the same side, but he and I really didn't socialize very much.

PC: Is it that it's a larger community and you don't have to socialize?

CG: I think that's right, but on the other hand I have lunch with Mr. Rader and we've been both partners and political opponents and a variety of things over the years. I guess it depends on the individuals. He and I have lunch together two or three times a month.

PC: After you worked with McCutcheon, or when did you work with McCutcheon then?

CG: He and I were partners for about six years, from '66 to '72. There were various other guys in that firm, it was McCutcheon, Groh

& Benkert, then it was McCutcheon, Groh, Benkert & Green, and then it was McCutcheon, Groh, Benkert, Green & Walter.

PC: Who are Green and Walter? Just give me first names.

CG: Bill Green and Karl Walter. And I think those firms lasted from sometime in '66 to sometime in either '71 or '72.

PC: Were you still doing corporate work at the same time and labor work, or had you devoted most of your time to the Native laws?

CG: No, we got off the labor work pretty much, we were doing a lot of corporate work. I had, in the meantime, created Security Title & Trust Co. which is downstairs in this building, so we were doing a lot of title company work, bank work, contractors, sort of a commercial practice.

PC: What happened in '72?

CG: We dissolved the firm.

PC: Why did you dissolve it?

CG: I keep dissolving these firms, right? Primarily because, for a variety of reasons it wasn't working so Groh, Benkert & Walter split off from McCutcheon. In the meantime, Native claims had been settled so we formed a firm called Groh, Benkert & Walter.

PC: Did you continue to do Native work or did McCutcheon keep the Native end?

CG: I think we both did it, but once the Claims Act was settled, there was a whole bunch of new people who came in to reap the spoils.

PC: A lot of Outside lawyers?

CG: Yes. John W. Hendrickson was in that firm at one time.

PC: Did he go with McCutcheon or with Groh

CG: No, he left before the split.

PC: How did you feel about all these Outside lawyers coming in?

CG: It didn't really bother me. There were a lot of other guys that were terribly upset about it. I really didn't think they were going to

do that much more than we could do, but they certainly had the desires and the national names, there was Justice Goldberg, Ramsey Clark, Weissbrodt from D.C.

PC: Who from D.C.?

CG: Weissbrodt & Weissbrodt, they were Indian lawyers. It was the Seattle firm coming in from every place.

PC: So did you move out of the Native field?

CG: I think so, yes. I was in the State Senate then, so I was gone. I was in the State Senate from '71, '72, '73 and '74, so I'd be gone for up to 5½ months a year in Juneau, and this is when the big fights were going on in the Legislature over the construction of the pipeline, so the sessions were very long and arduous.

PC: How did you manage to keep up your practice and your friends? At the same time.

CG: It was difficult. It ultimately resulted in, I think that contributed to the dissolution of the McCutcheon firm, and it also contributed to the dissolution of the Groh, Benkert firm.

PC: Did you weigh that when you decided to run for the Legislature?

CG: I guess I did, yes.

PC: So you weighed the firm vs. the State Legislature and the Legislature won.

CG: Yes.

PC: In 1974, what firm were you left with when you got out of the Legislature?

CG: I didn't dissolve right away because by this time, as a result of hard work, effort, intelligence and otherwise I had worked up until I had the finest clients in the State, and I represented Alyeska Pipeline, on the construction of the pipeline, and I represented Fleur, which is half of the construction of the pipeline, and I represented all kinds of other companies that had worked on the pipeline. We had a big practice, but the remnants of my Legislative days were still a problem,

so we dissolved the firm. And at that time, I had a lot of young men in the firm and so I dissolved the other firm and created a firm with these other guys, and those are the guys that are here today. And I don't think we did that until '76.

PC: So this is a fairly new firm.

CG: It's fairly new as far as everybody but Groh, he's always been here.

PC: Did you keep most of your clients?

CG: Sure. Not most of them, I kept my share of them.

PC: Like the Alyeska Pipeline and the ones that you'd mentioned earlier. Since 1976, have you been as involved in public service and doing everything else?

CG: Well, I took a stint as Republican National Committeeman, I don't remember what years those were, but I was Republican National Committeeman for two years. I think they were '76, '77. I'd been on the Central Committee of the Republican Party all the way through. In 1978 I made another try for political office.

PC: What did you run for?

CG: State Senate, only election I ever lost, but I lost it by 300 votes. Since then I've just been on the Republican Central Committee. I, of course, have been active in the reapportionment area, I sued Egan in '72, Hammond v. Egan, in '74 Groh v. Egan, in '76 Groh v. Hammond, and in '80 I was on the reapportionment (unintelligible), or '81 I guess.

PC: No more suits then, right?

CG: No more suits. But this last plan, I was on the Board so that's public service.

PC: Just looking over the Bar as long as you've been here, have there been major changes in the tenor of the Bar that you can point out?

CG: Other than the fact that it's so much larger, and that they get into what I conceive to be relatively petty disputes, I'd say no.

PC: Did you deliver the Bar exam?

CG: I wrote it. I wrote it and then graded it.

PC: Can you tell me about the procedure that was used or, tell me about the Bar exam, how you changed it?

CG: In the final analysis, as in the Legislature, you get very little effective volunteerism in these matters. I think it was the year that I was President of the Bar I couldn't get anybody to write it, so I of course bonded with the National Conference of Bar Examiners and got a whole bunch of questions from them, and just prepared the exam myself. Then I would appoint a Grading Committee and they would grade it and the Board would meet and decide if they passed or if they didn't. I considered that sort of fascinating, to write one. I think I wrote two of them, I'm not sure. I know I wrote one, I might have written two. And then of course originally we didn't even have any numbers system to keep the name of the examinee secret. We had them put their names on it and then we got to thinking that maybe that wasn't quite fair, so we set up the single number system and then we ultimately went through double numbers system.

PC: Was there any set procedure for Bar exams when you did it?

This is in '59, right?

CG: Yes, '59. Well, you hired a hall and you told everybody to come, and they all came down and took the exam. I did do one thing from it, though, I thought maybe it was unfair at the time but after I found out who was the brightest guy, I'd go try to hire him. The guy that impressed me the most ever was Pete Walton. It was an evidence question and he said, if you look in Volume VIII on page 265 of Wigmore, you'd see the answer, and so I went to Volume VIII, page 265 of Wigmore and he was right.

PC: Before you did the Bar, before you wrote it, how was it handled?

CG: Other guys wrote it.

PC: Was it just the Bar Board of Governors before you? They just handled it?

CG: They would have been appointed by the Examining Committee or the Preparation of the Bar Exam Committee or whatever we called it in those days. The House would get together, and if you had some help you'd use it, and if you didn't have some help you didn't use it. Ultimately, somebody had to take the responsibility of preparing it and giving it.

PC: Who were active in the Bar at that time?

CG: The Executive Director, I think, was either Pete Kalamarides or his secretary, one or the other. They ran it for a number of years. And when I was President of the Bar, her name was Carol Benney, I think. She was pretty much the person who did it. She did the mechanics, she couldn't prepare the exams.

PC: Were there a lot of people coming in at that time?

CG: I don't know what's a lot.

PC: In '52 when you were (unintelligible).

CG: Sure, the numbers have always increased.

PC: What I'm trying to get at is that with Statehood in '59, did you see a particular

CG: You can take the population booms of Anchorage, whether it's Statehood or whatever, and the number of lawyers are in proportion to the population. If it's a big population you get more lawyers.