Ross Moody alerted me to an interview his father, Max Moody, temple president from 1978 to 1982, recorded with Walter Spalding of the Spalding Construction Company after a dinner party at the home of Max Moody in Kahala with Hawai‘i temple president Lloyd Walch on the evening of May 28, 1973.

While working on construction projects at Pearl Harbor with him during World War II Max had heard Walter Spalding say that he had built the Mormon temple at La‘ie. This greatly intrigued Max since it was commonly believed that Ralph Woolley had been in charge of its construction. Years later, in May, 1973, Max visited Walter and his wife Romalda at their home in Pacific Heights and expressed his concern that Walter Spalding receive credit as the contractor of record in the building of the Temple and to hear his story of the project. According to Max’s wife, Muriel, “it was Max’s intention to bring out the facts and to clarify the matter by setting the record straight.”

From this conversation Max invited Walter to come to his home in Kahala and tell his story, which Max tape recorded. A copy and transcript of the recording and Muriel’s notarized recollection in 1992 are in the BYU-Hawaii Archives.

Walter Spalding grew up in Washington State, the son of a leading Seattle architect. He graduated from MIT in 1910 with a degree in the new field of structural concrete engineering. After graduation, Walter, his father, and brother, Philip, formed the Spalding Construction Company in Portland, Oregon. On April 12, 1912 they won bids to construct the Marine barracks and officers’ quarters at Pearl Harbor, the Honolulu Iron Works building on Queen Street in Honolulu, the Naval Hospital at Pearl Harbor, and the Oahu Sugar Mill in Waipahu using reinforced concrete, which was Walter’s specialty.
While working on those projects in Honolulu in 1915, he was approached by the Salt Lake architectural firm of Pope and Burton to bid on building the temple in La‘ie. They came to him. Walter offered to build it for cost plus 5% which was a good deal since he usually charged cost plus 10% or 12%. Sam Woolley, the La‘ie plantation manager, offered his Hawaiian plantation workers as laborers, even though they knew nothing of concrete work. Walter agreed to use them but did have to bring out a few experienced tradesmen from Honolulu. Walter said Sam Woolley was “a very agreeable man to work with”.

The on-site foreman was a man named Beaton from Los Angeles. Spalding would come out once or twice a week by car over the Pali to check on progress, an all-day excursion. Walter said going to “La‘ie, in those days, it was like going to another island”. According to Muriel “It seemed to be a delightful time for Walter Spalding to think back on those early days and he chuckled a lot about his memories. The story of his travelling experience while making the trips to La‘ie and how long it took to reach his destination were of particular interest to Walter”. Walter recalled: “I remember it was a pretty strenuous trip. I had an old Overland car and it took several hours to get to La‘ie, because even if it was dry where you start out, it might be raining somewhere along the road, and roads were practically all red clay or red mud. If you didn’t have chains in those days you had to get out and push if your car got stuck. It was quiet a chore to get there”. Building supplies for the temple would come by rail from Honolulu around Kaena Point.

Walter said Ralph Woolley arrived after finishing college just as construction was getting underway. Sam Woolley asked Walter to hire Ralph, which he did. Walter said Ralph was good at checking levels and measurements. Muriel Moody said someone told her that since the local workers really had nothing to do with Walter Spalding and probably worked day in and day out with Ralph Woolley that in their minds and personal histories Ralph was the boss and therefore builder of the Temple rather than Spalding or his on-site manager, Beaton. Spalding said Guy Rothwell was the job engineer for Spalding Construction on the temple project. Walter recalled that at lunch they would go up to the Lanihuli Home and after some singing and prayers they had a
great lunch and he could start back to town. He said there were never any disputes and payments were made on time; all in all, a smooth operation.

As construction of the building was wrapping up, Walter said Sam Woolley offered to take him through the temple before it was dedicated since he wouldn't be able to after it was dedicated. Walter was very impressed with the baptismal font and the murals. He did remember red velvet drapes in the topmost room which created quite an effect. Walter “seemed proud and pleased after all those years as he described how Samuel E. Woolley took him through the building, explaining the reasons for the different rooms and the eternal work of the Temple”, recalled Muriel in 1992. When asked if he could recall a cornerstone, Walter thought there was but he couldn't be sure.

Walter said the Hawaiians were great workers if you could keep them interested. “Each one would try to outdo the other in handling crushed rock and other supplies”. After his part of the job was completed about March 1917, Walter believed Ralph Woolley supervised the construction of the auxiliary buildings, finishing the interior, and landscaping. It seems the contract with Spalding Construction was just for the concrete core of the building and not for the whole project. According to his records, the building cost $135,000 plus his commission. Walter was called back to the Mainland in the summer of 1917 as a captain in the Army engineers and sent to France in November and stayed there until January 1919. Walter said the Spalding Construction contract was fully completed by the time he left Hawai'i.

When asked if he recalled a ship bearing lumber running aground in La'ie Bay he couldn't recall; however he said some building supplies such as lumber were extremely hard to come by since most shipping was directed to the war effort in Europe and supplies had to be transported across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and reloaded on the Mexican Pacific coast since the Panama Canal was not yet opened. (It was opened to shipping on August 15, 1914. Remember his recollections are 57 years after the fact.) He further said that the lumber used for forms usually had to be cut down further to one inch from what was normally shipped and that he didn’t recall La'ie having a sawmill, but maybe Kahuku did. Yet, at the same time, Gus Kaleohano told Clinton Kanahele that he participated in unloading the lumber from the ship that
ran aground off Goat Island and Viola Kawahigashi remembered the incident from her childhood.

He also said the on–site supervisor, a man named Beaton, was paid less than $250 a month. Walter said Beaton later went to work with Ralph Woolley building the Hawaiian Electric building but dropped out because of problems with liquor and women “not of his family”, leaving Ralph to finish on his own.

Of that time, Walter talked about the internment of German ships in Honolulu Harbor and of the University Club and the Pacific Club where all the professional men of Honolulu gathered. A highlight for him was as a young engineering officer in the Army was going to Fort DeRussy and of test-firing the 16” (really 14”) disappearing guns. Lt. Harold Dillingham would be the spotter on Diamond Head and Walter would pull the lanyard to fire the guns. The concussion of their firing would shatter the hotel windows of Waikiki.

After World War I, Walter worked in New York managing the Spalding Construction Company. During World War II he came back to Hawai‘i as the commander of the Navy Civil Engineering Corps at Pearl Harbor where Max Moody worked with him. After the war, he formed the W. T. Spalding Company & Associates in Honolulu, architects and engineers. He passed away on January 13, 1979 and is buried at Punchbowl. His wife, Romalda Bishop Spalding, a graduate of the University of Illinois and Columbia, was a noted educator who developed new techniques to teach reading, writing, spelling and speech used in Hawaiian schools. His brother Philip stayed in Hawai‘i and was a vice-president of Lewers and Cook, was president of C. Brewer, board chairman of Hawaiian Electric, and chairman of the UH Board of Regents. His home is now the Contemporary Art Museum in Pacific Heights.

Heretofore, it has been commonly believed, based on remarks in 1970 by Romania Hyde Woolley, Ralph’s wife, and Viola Kawihigashi, that Ralph Woolley, a single young man and a newly graduated mining engineer was placed in charge of building this significant structure. However, it seems that Walter Spalding and his company was responsible for at least the core concrete work that has withstood the test of time so
well as one of the first reinforced concrete structures in Hawai‘i. Though Spalding was called away to war before the whole project was complete, the iconic structure that sits so solidly on the hill in La‘ie was his contribution. Obviously, Ralph Woolley went on to a distinguished career as one of Hawai‘i’s leading contractors His work on the Temple and undoubtedly his association with Walter Spalding helped set him on that course.
Walter Spalding: Building of the Laie Hawaii Temple

May 28, 1973

MM: This is the 28th of May, 1973, and President Walsh and the Petersons and the Spaldings, Walter Spalding and Moodys are sitting down together after dinner and the purpose of our getting together, in one way, was to go back over the background of the Laie Temple, of which, President Walsh is now president. He is very much interested in the building of the Temple and we have with us Walter Spalding, the man who actually built the temple, which is quite a fortunate circumstance. I’ve known Walter… this is Max Moody… I’ve known Walter for many many years since the time we served together at Pearl Harbor. During World War II, he was my boss. At that time I had no idea he’d built the temple, but we have met on occasion since then, many times, and he has… had since informed me that he did build a temple, and of course we have popularly supposed that Ralph Woolley built the temple. So this is a chance for us to straighten things out, at least to some degree. Now Walter, I wanted you to tell us about your early life and background, and when and why you came to Hawaii.

WS: Well, I’ll be glad to do it very briefly. It happened that my father was an architect, and he had formed quite a large knowledge of the profession in the State of Washington and organized the first American Institute of Architects chapter for the state. But he did not want his sons to go into architecture because on the West Coast it was either a feast or a famine in that profession, in those days especially. However, I’d gotten so interested in construction by going around to look at buildings that he had designed and going with him, I decided that I would want to follow in that general line, creating buildings and so forth, rather than just getting into some other field. So, I saved enough money and decided that I would go to MIT and finish up the engineering that I had started at the University of Washington. So I took my two final years at MIT and I followed architectural engineering and did a thesis in reinforced concrete design, which in those days was quite a rare profession in America. And after graduating, I took a year to work with the Hennebique Construction Company in New York.

Anonymous: What year did you graduate?

WS: 1910, and Hennebique, was the… the original Hennebique, was the Frenchman who really designed or invented, and you might say discovered reinforced concrete, and they had a New York branch. So I worked there for a time, but my father was anxious for me to come and join him. And he suggested that Seattle had come to rather dull times just after the 1910 exposition, in Seattle, and Portland was going very well. He suggested that I come join him as… and form the Spalding Construction company in Portland, and I did. We had an office in the Chamber of Commerce building, and the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce came up to the office with a role of plans and blueprints and said that the Navy was going to build a naval station at Pearl Harbor. So I looked over the plans and saw that they had greatly overloaded it with reinforcing steel and since the contractor who bid on the job was supposed to provide the structural drawings, I redesigned the building cutting out about a hundred and fifty tons of steel reinforcing and using plain round bars, which were very much cheaper than the patented bars that were
then common in reinforcing concrete. So the Navy accepted our design and our bid, and my father sent me down to Hawaii with my younger brother Phil to go ahead and build the building, which was, and still is, one of the large buildings at Pearl Harbor. So we arrived here on April 12, 1912 and actually had no business connections with any people in the Islands.

MM: Walter, what was the contract and arrangement that you had with your father, and with your brother, the name of your company when you started work here?

WS: Just Spalding Construction Company, it was a partnership, which officially was my father and myself and my brother was unofficially a partner in it as well. And my father stayed in San Francisco and in Portland, handling the purchasing, because everything, practically, had to shipped down here in those days, cement, lumber, steel. The only thing we could get here locally was the crushed rock and sand. At any rate, we built these Marine barracks and Marine officer’s quarters, all reinforced concrete, and then did the Honolulu Iron Works building on Queen Street and putting... paving of Kalakaua Ave. all the concrete paving and did half of the Oahu Sugar Mill at Waipahu, and soon had work on the other island. By the time we’d gotten well established either Mr. Pope or Mr. Buron of the firm, the architectural firm of Pope and Burton, from Salt Lake, came into the office and showed me the plans that they had for the Mormon Temple at Laie. And they wanted to know what... on what basis we would undertake... to build the building. And I said, “Well, we will make a very reasonable basis”, and I suggested cost plus a fee of five percent. Costs to include all expenses involved, as shown by bills and receipts and so forth to be settled every month. And uh... they drew up a contract which Mr. Samuel Woolley, who was president of the stake at Laie, said had to be signed by... in Salt Lake City, by the head of the Mormon Church. I think it was... seems to me it was Joseph Smith as I recall the name. At any rate, the contract came by... came back signed and we went ahead and built the temple.

Anonymous: What year was that Spalding?

WS: I think it was 1915. It was either that or 1916, but I think 1915. And, uh, I found... uh Mr. Woolley a very agreeable man to work with, and he had at that time something like five hundred Hawaiians, mostly full blooded Hawaiians, working on the sugar plantation that belonged to the Church and he wanted me to use these men. Most of them had no trade. They were neither carpenters nor cement workers or plumbers or anything of that sort, very few. However, I got a good foreman named Beaton from Los Angeles. I think we had him, at that time, working on some other job that was being completed. And so I sent him out to Laie to superintend the job and I’d go out once or twice a week. I remember it was a pretty strenuous trip. I had an old Overland car and it took several hours to get to Laie, because even if it was dry where you might start out, it might be raining somewhere along the road, and roads were practically all in red clay or red mud. If... you didn’t have chains in those days you had to get out and push if your car got stuck. It was quite a chore to get there. So it was always a full day’s work to go out and supervise and see what was needed. The railroad carried most of the supplies from Honolulu and went all the way around Kaena Point to Laie, and beyond. Everything except the crushed rock and the Waianae sand was carried around by railroad. There was
no way that a truck could even carry a good load over to the… Laie, in those days, it was like going to another island. And… however, we had a good… rented, an old style concrete mixer and we got everything set up… got the forms properly built and poured the concrete.

You mentioned Ralph Woolley, I think it was in that summer Ralph came from, I believe he had been at the University of Utah, where he was studying civil engineering and… so his father said he’d like to have him get on the job and act… check levels and uh… see that the plans were being properly followed, and he did. We had no difficulty there. It was good to have a check on it. Guy Rothwell was… I had him out there as practically the job engineer to do that very same sort of work, and the job went along at a pretty good clip considering the delays of breaking in a lot of Hawaiian labor to doing work that they were really not trained to do. Of course we had bring in some skilled carpenters and others from Honolulu, but very few really. I remember that I always went up to the… Mr. Woolley’s house where all those who were on the staff of the Church would meet for lunch, and there’d be a few prayers and sing a couple of songs and then you sit down and have a very good lunch and go back to work. (chuckles) Start home as soon as you could get through. At any rate, it was an interesting but rather strenuous day’s work to get that… keep everything right side up and keep the supplies all on hand. And… there was never any dispute or argument about any phase of it. It was… my brother kept the accounts and… we found no difficulty at all with Mr. Woolley or the others in the church there. So the… payments came along regularly and I remember he was telling me that there were twenty two thousand saints in the area that was tributary to this temple, and just before it was finished… he asked me if I wouldn’t like to go though and see what they had done on the interior, because they were going to dedicate it the following Sunday, or some… in a few days, and there wouldn’t be another chance then for me to see the whole interior and understand the reasons for these things. And I’ve never forgotten going through with him and seeing this great bronze bowl sitting on the backs of three bronze… four bronze oxen, one facing in each direction as I recall it. He told me that was the baptismal bowl where the… the ramps going around, which we built, going up and steps up in each section and in the rooms off these ramps were, I recall, some very beautiful mural paintings. One was the Garden of Eden and then similar such scenes in large scale. They had a French artist; at least he was trained in Paris, who had painted these. And that really is the… about my whole recollection of the… of the project. We didn’t run into any difficulties, so long as we could keep these men interested in working. And the Hawaiians, if you could get them interested were great workers. They really… each one would try to outdo the other in handling crushed rock and other supplies. I don’t recall how long it took to do it, but it went forward at a pretty good… pretty good rate considering the problems… and I know Mr. Woolley Sr. was very well pleased with the… with the job. I think Ralph Woolley went back… as I recall, he went back to finish his college term. At any rate he was on the job as… for several months, just running levels and checking on the dimensions. And he, I believe, later on, maybe it was a year or two later, built the reception rooms along the front of the building and did the landscaping which hadn’t been even started in my time.
MM: So you left… uh you left not long after the… uh temple was finished. You were only here a year or so were you afterwards?

WS: Well, yes I think it was started in about nineteen… in the spring of 1915. That’s my… my recollection, although I do not have any remaining records to show when that was, because we were doing work in all the islands, except that we didn’t do anything on the Big Island. And… I think that it was… I know that I went over to France. I was in the Army… had a captaincy in the Army Engineer Reserve, and… I went to France in November 1917, and was not… I was there until… the… January 1919, during the war, and… uh… then I went back after about a month in the States, I got out of the service. I went back representing Dwight P. Robinson and Co., a big New York engineering and construction company with the purpose of obtaining some of the reconstruction work in the devastated regions of France and Italy. So I was away then until 1920, and went back with the New York firm.

MM: That’s fine, there’s one or two more questions, possibly about the temple itself.

WS: Yes

MM: Do you remember how much it cost to build it?

WS: Well, I came across some old papers, and for some reason I forgot to put it in my pocket this evening, which had listed, I think it was my application for membership in the… well it may have been in the Civil Engineer Corps… I mean the American Society of Civil Engineers. At any rate, it ended in 1923, but on listing the things that I had done in an engineering way, I had made the building the temple at Laie on cost plus fee basis and it being a $135,000 project.

MM: That seems to be about right for those times.

WS: Yes.

MM: And you had a five percent fee on the job…

WS: Yes.

MM: How does that compare with other fees that you were charging?

WS: Well, I got twelve percent from the Honolulu Hawaiian Works for building the… half of the Waipahu sugar mill. I got… We build Queens Surf for the…

Anonymous: Deering.

WS: Yes, the Deering estate for Mr. Deering, and that was on a cost plus fee… I think probably ten percent. We built… the Baldwin Memorial Church on Maui and Harry Baldwin’s home and Sam Baldwin’s home, and those were all on, I think, cost plus twelve percent, because of the difficulty in handling a job on Maui in those days. You had to catch the steamer and count on spending a week going and coming and getting around. (chuckles) And… but I think that’s the only five percent job that we did. We did
quite a few… straight contract bidding jobs on all the islands, except the Big Island, and a… oh, put in the water supply system at Schofield Barracks, and… that’s… oh part of the Star Bulletin Building plant.

Anonymous: Were there any houses?

WS: Yes, we did the George Wilcox house on Maui… on Kauai and the first cannery for… at Kapaa on Kauai, for Albert Horner, and… the Navy Hospital building on Hospital Point, which was never used as a hospital, although it was quite an extensive building, but for some reason the Navy, I think, didn’t want to use it in that… location that it was on Hospital Point.

MM: It was later used as a hospital, Walter.

WS: It was?

MM: At the beginning of World War II it was a hospital.

WS: Well I remember that… that building had… marble panels… white marble panels from Vermont for all the wainscoating in the operating rooms, and one marble slab had to be shipped… I think it was seven times before we got one that had not been cracked. You see the ships had to come down to Mexico, unload on a railroad to go across the Tehuantepec Isthmus and be loaded on another ship on the Pacific side and come up the coast and then over to Honolulu, and… time we got it, it was very lucky that we got a piece of marble like that. They were pieces about seven feet square and an inch thick, or thereabouts.

MM: Mrs. Woolley, that is Ralph Woolley’s widow, Romania, tells about a… uh, a sort of a special thing that happened during the construction in which they were enabled to get some very badly needed lumber for the form work… on the temple out of a shipwreck or a loss of lumber at sea. Do you remember that President Walsh?… it’s how she described it.

LW: Yeah, she claimed that there was a boat that got off course and uh… caught on a reef there in… uh… what do they call it… Laie harbor… that little harbor there, and the captain told them that they could have all the lumber if they would just unload it and… so he could get afloat again. But they were out of lumber and they said that they were not able to get it and go ahead and finish because uh…

WS: Well, lumber was uh… was a difficult thing to get in Hawaii during the War, because the ships that did… uh… carry lumber mostly were sailing ships and uh… they uh… did not want… they wanted to get in the trans Atlantic trade which was much more profitable, where they could carry… uh cargos that were needed in the War, in France. And I do not recall that instance you speak of, and that it could easily have been because it’s one of the things that, probably Mr. Woolley, Sam Woolley, would’ve arranged with the captain to get it and it simply saved us trying to ship it around Kaena Point by the railroad. But I can’t say that I remember that, and yet it’s undoubtedly… could’ve… been so. Of course
for form work you have to have…mostly one inch lumber and two by fours, and uh… most of the shipping of lumber down here in… on… on sailing boats in those days was in larger dimensions which were sawed into whatever sizes were wanted in the market in Honolulu. So… it… uh… there wasn’t any way of cutting those… that lumber into the sizes that are needed for formwork… over at Laie, that I can think of. I mean there wasn’t any existing except such as the… might have been the Kahuku plantation had some kind of a saw mill.

MM: I used to uh… talk with Guy Rothwell, you remember him?

WS: Oh yes.

MM: …been dead a number of years now, and he used to tell me a little about the construction of the temple. Uh… one thing he told me in a humorous sort of way he got fired.

WS: (laughs)

MM: He and… uh… some others were smoking on the job and somebody had to take the rap, and he took the rap.

WS: Is that right?

MM: Do you remember anything about that at all?

WS: No I don’t seem to recall that. Uh…

MM: He was a non-Mormon so it was proper for him to be the one that was stuck with it.

WS: Well, that could do… uh… well, Guy was a… was a very independent fellow you know. Smart… fun… good engineering mind and a great worker, but uh… he probably would …uh… be the fellow that would run into restrictions like that. Not let… not let them control his actions.

MM: Well…uh the one conclusion that we could draw from this talk, is that your company, Spalding Construction Company, built the temple under a cost plus fee contract.

WS: Yes that is the case.

MM: And it’s quite probable that Ralph Woolley built the auxiliary buildings and the walks and …uh the walls and things like that at some later date.

WS: Yes, I’m sure of that because, actually, I never saw… I don’t recall ever seeing those until I came back in the Second World War to Hawaii.
MM: This really doesn’t have anything to…uh… is there anything else you’d like to… do you want to talk to him?

LW: I was wondering if they ever… um had a cornerstone. Do you recall whether a cornerstone was placed in this temple or not.

WS: I’m not at all sure, but I do think there was some… I seem to have in mind that…that Mr. Samuel Woolley collected some things that he wanted to have preserved in a cornerstone in the temple. And whether that was actually done or not, I certainly couldn’t say. It wasn’t done with any… uh ceremony or… and… uh, in fact… no, I cannot… I cannot tell you that I’m sure of that.

LW: And then you mentioned you going through… now the temple was dedicated um…in…uh…on thanksgiving day, November 1919. You evidently were back just prior to that.

WS: Uh… no.

LW: 1919?

WS: In 1919 I was in France.

LW: (muffled)… went through after the full dedication and I was wondering if it was about that time.

WS: Well, no. We were still completing the construction. It had not yet been fully completed. Although, some of the interior and mural paintings were done, and I recall going in that upper room which has the long vertical windows. And as I recall it, there were red velvet hangings or… at least some kind of velvet hangings come down along those windows. So it made a very rich effect with those tall, lighted windows, in the… over the… over the central section of the temple. And uh… I was very much impressed with the… how… beautifully the building did develop, from the standpoint both inside and outside. And I think that Pope and Burton… I believe that was the name. I know Burton was, I think it was Pope.

LW: Burton I don’t recall.

WS: And uh… I think they’d done a very outstanding job, and I think they did the temple in Los Angles. I’m not sure.

LW: And Burton was a church officer.

WS: Yes.
MM: Well, this… uh, this preliminary dedication that you spoke about, after which outsider would not be allowed in the temple…uh… was probably not the… the final dedication. This occurred somewhere in 1917 if I remember about what you were speaking of.

WS: Yes, I’m speaking… it was in nineteen, I think, probably sixteen, 1916. Because I left in March of 1917 to go to Washington and then over to France in the First World War.

MM: But the building was fully completed at that time?

WS: Oh yes, fully completed… uh as far as our construction contract went, but none of the grounds nor other… work leading up to it had been done… when… when I left.

LW: Uh… there was some marble used in the temple. Was that also shipped around from Vermont?

WS: It must have been. You couldn’t get anything otherwise. You see, the Panama Canal was, I think, opened about 1918… something like that.

MM: At the top of the temple, on the outside is… uh… is four friezes, fundamental friezes.

WS: Yes

MM: …with some scenes for the Bible and The Book of Mormon and so forth. Were those… uh… were those there, at the time you finished your work?

WS: Well, I can remember seeing them, and whether we put them up or whether we merely prepared the background for them, I couldn’t tell you just now.

MM: But they were actually in place… when you finished.

LW: They must have been.

WS: I think so.

Anonymous: …during construction, because they’re planted right into the wall.

WS: Yes, I think they… they were part of the job, although, who designed them and carried them out… I know… they were not cast in Hawaii, in my opinion. You know, we didn’t have the facilities.

LW: I don’t know of anything else that I have.

MM: Uh… thank you very much Walter. Uh… there was another thing that you started to tell me… about… uh when we were talking before, and it really doesn’t have anything to do
with the temple itself. But, just for my own… uh… just for my own understanding of it. Maybe you’d like to go back over… uh… your relations with Beaton…

WS: Oh…

MM: …after you completed the job. He was your foreman on the job.

WS: Yes, he was the superintendent. I’ve forgotten now, what we paid him, but probably in the nature of… judging by what we paid others, I do know that Charles R. Forbes was another superintendent we had, and we paid him 250 dollars a month, and I think that Beaton was somewhat less. At any rate, Beaton… was uh… we were bidding on the Hawaiian Electric office building. I think I… that’s what I…

MM: You started to talk about…

WS: …I’d tell you about… well. At the time… uh, that those bids were prepared, I didn’t know that I was going into the… into the service. …that the war was so close at hand, and we bid, and we estimated the cost of the whole building, from the drawings, and I had Beaton come in to go over part of the labor costs in connection with it. And uh… so he was working in my office, which was in the Kauikeolani Building then, with my brother and myself, in estimating this bid that we were going to put in. And, he had full access to our figures. I don’t know that he had… I can’t remember of course to what degree he may have had access to them, but… uh… when the bids were opened, it… the firm that was… uh, I think called Beaton and Woolley, or Woolley and Beaton, put in the low bid, and it was somewhat below our bid. And that was the first intimation I had that… that Beaton had uh… decided to leave our (laughs) employ and go to work with Ralph Woolley. And uh… They were given the contract and the… uh… at any rate, it wasn’t very long after that then… then Mr. Beaton got into… uh… trouble through… becoming…uh… too fond of liquor and… of some women who were not members of his own family. (Chuckles) So that his wife… at any rate, I’m sure that he did not finish… uh… he broke up with Ralph Woolley and Ralph had to finish the Hawaiian Electric Company as best he could with other people he could hire. It was quite a… a sad story really. and, uh… very shortly after those bids came in… was the time that… uh… I got, word that they wanted me in… back in the Navy on active duty.

MM: Well Walter it’s just as well you didn’t get that job.

WS: Oh, yes. I don’t think anybody made any money out of it. (Chuckles)

MM: My Company was building the Bank of Hawaii job at the same time.

WS: Yes, Walker Moody.

MM: …Walker Noland at that time.
WS: Oh, yes. Walker…

MM: And they got down in the water that was so… so great they couldn’t pump it.

WS: Yeah

MM: They were throwing mattresses and everything else into it to try and stop it. And, when the Hawaiian Electric job started, they ran into the same water,

WS: Hmm

MM: …but they were further downstream and so their pumping efforts helped the Hawaiian Electric… uh… helped the Bank of Hawaii job.

WS: (Chuckles)

MM: But they, uh… they hardly ever got through with those problems… with water. It was a bad job. You’re just as well off that you didn’t get it.

WS: Oh, yes. I think it all worked out… as far as we’re concerned, much the better.

MM: Uh, did you…uh… did your company wind up then soon after that? Did your brother get into some other kind of business?

WS: Yes, he…uh… we were doing the… uh water supply system and reservoir at Schofield Barracks. That was the… uh… last sizable job that we had when I left, and we had it pretty well completed, but it was one of those jobs that it might still run on for several months before it could be… uh… really clear of it. And I was very keen to get into the War, for reasons that I can’t quite explain (laughs) today. At any rate, I just the age when I wanted to get right over there. I’d seen quite a bit of the German…uh… trouble here. I remember when a… the Japanese …uh caught a German schooner loaded with lumber off Honolulu harbor, and uh they took all the crew off the ship. Put them on shore. And uh… then the Japanese… uh … ship… or warship bombarded this schooner until it was… the whole thing got afire and went up in flames right off the harbor there. Made quite a spectacle. But, we had about six or eight German ships interned in Honolulu Harbor, and then the gunboat Gyre was caught and interned in the harbor. But the Japanese at that… in that war were on our side. (Chuckles)

MM: Well this has been a wonderful account, Walter. We appreciate it very much. Do any of you… the rest of you have any questions? It’s kind of hard to dig up the past you know, after fifty, about fifty five years now…

WS: Sixty…

MM: …sixty years.
Anonymous woman: Walter, did you go over the Pali… the Pali?

WS: Oh, yes.

Anonymous woman: …that’s the way you went, was out around that way?

WS: Yes, it was uh… about the only way you could do. I remember going up to Schofield Barracks. We all knew, I used to belong to the University Club, which was quite the…uh… thing for the younger men. While in the Pacific Club were the old… older English and German and Americans that belonged there, but… the legal fraternity and…uh most professional men belonged to the University Club. Later they affiliated and… became the Pacific Club, but… uh we used to go up there for meals right along, lunch anyway. And then we… we formed the coast artillery branch of the Hawaii National Guard, and had a Captain Barker of the… of the Coast Artillery to… as our controlling officer, and I was looking at a picture of our company that was taken on the steps of Iolani Palace in 1916, I guess it was. And uh… Harold Dillingham was a… second lieutenant and… uh… fellow we all know, an engineer… was another officer, but I was one of the younger men, about the youngest I guess, but I’m in the picture. And you know that there was Will Soper and a lot of… a lot of fellows that uh… well, Whitney the lawyer and… uh, White, White Sutton. And uh… then their pictures are in our group. We used to go out… practically all have gone…. I was one of the younger ones. At any rate, we’d go out every… I think it was once a week, to Fort DeRussy and… uh fire the sixteen inch disappearing guns. Only, we put in… they were put… they’d tow the targets out to sea about three miles, and uh… we’d have, I remember, Harold Dillingham had the group that went up Diamond Head to get the vertical reading on the target, and then there’d be the other fellows down in the substructure that’s now still standing at Fort DeRussy… um… down in the plotting room. (Laughs) I had the best job in the whole outfit I think. I had to… on the standard… see you had these… guns were as long as this room, or longer… great big enormous… sixteen inch. Whenever they fired them, on practice, all the windows in Waikiki broke… were broken.

Anonymous Woman: Oh no! (general laugher)

WS: The worst was outside the Moana Hotel, so they only… they only tested them once or twice (laughs), because it was too costly. But, we had uh… what they called three inch sub caliber that took these sections into the sixteen inch guns, and the guns were up in position to fire. It must have taken a… quite a machine to raise those things up, but… when they were up, we had these three inch… uh… sub caliber tubes set in and I had a telescope with a hairpiece on it, and I had the lanyard, and… uh… when I got my… when they all… actually make the corrections for the windage and for the altitude, the distance that would get telephoned called from Diamond Head, and get everything adjusted, including the… I’m not sure they had the…uh… the windage, and they had… well I guess they actually… barometric pressure didn’t change. At any rate, we were supposed to get all the corrections we could and we’d get the… those all set, and then I
would put the… watch… when I got the target on the crosshairs, I yelled “FIRE!” and pulled the lanyard and, bang she’d go up, and…

MM: If you missed, that was your fault for about fifteen hundred bucks uh?

WS: Oh I don’t know how much. (laughs) I never got a bill. No, I’d just say that they plotted it wrong up on Diamond Head. But I think they did pretty well with it, but it was lots of fun. (Laughing)

MM: Yeah, uh… I don’t know how many millions of dollars they were gonna spend to take those concrete structures down.

Anonymous Woman: Haven’t they done it?

MM: I think they’ve taken part of them down.

WS: Yes I think they’re slowly taking part of them.

MM: But uh… they were gonna take them down. In fact they got them down to about nothing and then they got some bids on it, and I think they were talking about seven or eight million dollars.

(Very muffled with everyone talking at once)

Anonymous Woman: What do you think about hotels going up there?

MM: Well, I think it’s good. It beats all those shacks that are all over the place.

WS: Yes, yes, it’s no use feeding the termites any longer there.

MM: Well, by golly, that was a great talk Walter.
Walter Spalding and the Building of the La’ie Hawai’i Temple
• President Max Moody
• President Lloyd Walch and wife
Ralph E. Woolley 1918
Guy Rothwell
Temple Construction
Almost Finished 1919

"The Temple at Laie, Oahu, T. H."
Feb. 1919.
La’ie Beachboys
Philip Spalding
Ralph E. Woolley
GUY NELSON ROTHWELL
ARCHITECT AND CONSULTING ENGINEER

After spending six years on the mainland at the completion of his course in architecture and engineering, Guy N. Rothwell in 1915 returned to Honolulu, the city of his birth, and is now one of the most active builders and consulting engineers in the territory.

Mr. Rothwell has served variously as engineer and designer with the Honolulu Iron Works, the Pacific Engineering Co., the Hawaiian Electric Co., Bowler and Ingvorsen, as consulting engineer for the City and County of Honolulu and is now handling the designs of several projected bridges for the city and county.

Among the local buildings which Mr. Rothwell has designed are the Griffiths, J. B. Castle and Boys’ Athletic halls at Punahou, the new Palama Settlement and the new Oahu Railway and Land Co. depot. He also supervised the building of the First National Bank building, Harris Memorial Church and many other public and commercial buildings and private residences, and the King St., Moanalua, Haleiwa and Wahiawa bridges.

During the World War Mr. Rothwell served 17 months in the Construction Corps of the Navy and one year with the overseas transport and cruiser force. He is a member of the American Legion, a past commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and holds memberships in the Commercial and Myrtle Boat clubs.

Born in Honolulu, Nov. 9, 1890, Mr. Rothwell is the son of John George and May (Haley) Rothwell. His education was received in the public schools of Honolulu, followed by a two-year collegiate course. In 1917 he married Mary Louise McCarthy, daughter of former Governor C. J. McCarthy, and they have three children, Frank Nelson, Robert McCarthy and Mary Louise Rothwell!