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Berkeley, California

THE GIRLS' CLUB, SAN FRANCISCO:
RECOLLECTIONS OF MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES

Interviews with

A. Appleton
Dorothy Schnitman
Jean Thayer/Barbara Stewart Mozley
Gwendolyn Powers Applegarth
Lenore Peters Job
Mast Wolfson
Herbert Schirmer
Hazel Gowan Salmi
Frederica Armstrong Rohrer
Crystal Lake Bermel
Sylvia Simons Marcus
Celene Sheldon Olsen
Pauline Harris Bogart
Flora Wolfsohn
Marion Brune Hayes Cain
Pendleton Williams Quast
Leah Selix/Adrienne Bonn
Ray Ann Iversen Demiris

Interviews Conducted by
Leah Selix and Adrienne Bonn
in 1972-73

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Mothers' Club luncheon, date unknown.

Photo courtesy of Adrienne Bonn



Eva Wolfsohn

Photo courtesy of Adrienne Bonn



Girls' Club production, early 1920's. Leah Selix, back row, third from right. Adrienne Bonn, seated on floor next to "man" in chair.

Photo courtesy of Adrienne Bonn

TABLE OF CONTENTS—THE GIRLS’ CLUB, SAN FRANCISCO: RECOLLECTIONS
OF MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES

VOLUME INTRODUCTION i

INTERVIEW WITH A. APPLETON

TABLE OF CONTENTS..... 1

Date of interview: MARCH 17, 1973

[Tape 2, Side A]..... 3

Family background and childhood in San Francisco, south of Market Street—The influence of Sidney Peixotto and the Columbia Park Boys’ Club—Garnet Holmes and drama, other activities—Finances of the Columbia Park Boys’ Club—More on Garnet Holmes—Working for John Galen Howard, dean of the School of Architecture, University of California, Berkeley—Meeting William C. Hays—Boys’ Club military drills—Club meetings—Singing—Description of Sidney Peixotto—Other Boys’ Club members—The neighborhood: saloons, junk stores, wooden sidewalks—Childhood jobs—Ethnic/religious makeup of neighborhood—More on Garnet Holmes and drama.

[Tape 2, Side B] 15

Working as office boy for architect John Galen Howard—Earthquake and fire of 1906—Attending University of California, Berkeley—Reorganizing the Columbia Park Boys’ Club after the fire—The board members—Growth of career, architect for Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco libraries—Wife, Hilda Appleton, and son, Robert Appleton—Flora Marx Wolfsohn—On developing an interest in architecture.

INTERVIEW WITH DOROTHY SCHNITMAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS..... 29

Date of interview: April 17, 1973

[Tape 16, Side A]..... 31

Earliest recollections of the Girls’ Club—Family background—Senior Girls’ Club, attempting to recall Girls’ Club members and activities—Eva Wolfsohn, other Wolfsohn family members, Men’s Club—Involvement with Jewish organizations in San Francisco—Trips to Israel in 1959, 1965 and 1968—Religious upbringing—Jewish population in the Mission, Richmond, and Sunset Districts.

[Tape 16, Side B] 47

Earthquake and fire of 1906—High school education—Employment as accountant and bookkeeper—Interviewer’s account of the significance of Girls’ Club members’ social connections with each other—More on involvement with Jewish organizations—Prominent Jewish families—Attempting to recall the people, including artists, who had an early role in Girls’ Club—On current level of daily activity, more on family, more on Israel.

INTERVIEW WITH JEAN THAYER AND BARBARA STEWART MOZLEY

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....63

Date of interview: May 29, 1973

[Tape 19, Side A].....65

Jean Thayer’s recounting of her introduction to the Girls’ Club through friendship with Queen Montgomery Stewart—Teaching sewing at the Girls’ Club—World’s Fair of 1915—Queen Montgomery Stewart and similarities with daughter, Barbara Mozley—Christmas at the Girls’ Club—Queen Stewart as Santa Claus—Barbara Mozley’s recounting of mother’s personality, background, role at the Girls’ Club—Mozley’s description of the Girls’ Club building—More on Queen Stewart’s personality—Father, Charles Stewart—Mozley’s involvement with arts and crafts—Concerts and lectures at the Girls’ Club, Eva Wolfsohn’s ability to “get anybody to do anything”—Wonderhill, the Wolfsohn family—Thayer’s further recounting of involvement with Girls’ Club—Meeting the Fleishacker family in Palm Beach—Mozley on her father’s feelings about mother’s activities—Father’s interests and law practice—Education and marriages—Queen Stewart and music, more on her physical appearance and temperament.

INTERVIEW WITH GWENDOLYN POWERS APPLGARTH

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....81

Date of interview: August 28, 1973

[Tape 1, Side A].....83

Artists Gottardo Piazonni, Joseph Rafael, and Ralph Stackpole and their connection with the Girls’ Club—Jewish funders of the Girls’ Club—Lack of religious overtones at the Girls’ Club—Description of Rachel Wolfsohn—Teaching ukulele to the girls—Mother, Laura Pride Powers: writing on California history—Establishing Merienda in Monterey—Founding the California Historic Landmarks League—Custom House Museum in Monterey—Eva Wolfsohn, Rachel Wolfsohn’s funeral—Impressions of Girls’ Club—Impressions of other members of the Wolfsohn family—Childhood in San Francisco—Earthquake and fire of 1906—Attending high school and college, marriage to San Francisco architect, George Applegarth—George Applegarth’s career—Views on women in architecture—Building for Heyneman on Bush Street.

[Tape 1, Side B]95

More on Heyneman building—George Applegarth’s active life until age ninety-six.

INTERVIEW WITH LENORE PETERS JOB

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....99

SESSSION 1, February 15, 1973

[Tape 22, Side A]..... 101

Early impressions of Girls' Club—Sister, Anita Peters Wright, and the beginning of her career as a dance instructor—The Peters Wright Creative Dance Studio—Three generations of dance professionals—Remembering Edith Heinrich—More on Anita Peters Wright's career—Teaching dance at the Girls' Club—Anita Peters Wright's form of dance, influenced by Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis—Daughter's and granddaughter's role at The Peters Wright School Creative Dance Studio—Recitals, students, style/philosophy of dance instruction.

SESSION 2, March 2, 1973

[Tape 22, Side A] 108

Anita Peters Wright in New York—Family background and connection to the arts—Retiring from teaching dance and dance performance of “Mother and Child” on eighty-second birthday—More on daughter—Judy Job, and her dance instruction career, more on granddaughter.

[Tape 22, Side B] 116

Artist Geneve Rixford Sargent and sons—Sargent's one-woman show at the de Young Museum—Mother and her death, father, siblings—Earthquake and fire of 1906, reconstruction—Anita Peters Wright and husband Dexter Wright—Dancing with actress Maude Adams—Peters Wright's dance troupe on tour—Hazel Salmi, Peter Stackpole, “Dance of the Hours,” at Ingleside Racetrack.

INTERVIEW WITH MAST WOLFSON

TABLE OF CONTENTS 129

Date of interview: May 16, 1973

[Tape 21, Side A] 131

Family background, sister Rachel's genius, sister Eva's death, childhood, father's death, brothers Mark and Julian, religion in the Wolfsohn family—The Girls' Club, the Barrett family—Cultural interests in Monterey area—Continuing career as physician—Son's education, career, and marriage—More on feelings about the Girls' Club.

[Tape 21, Side B] 142

Early days of the Girls' Club—Columbia Park Boys' Club—Disposition of Eva and Rachel Wolfsohn.

INTERVIEW WITH HERBERT SCHIRMER

TABLE OF CONTENTS 147

Date of interview: May 22, 1973

[Tape 15, Side A] 149

Joining the Columbia Park Boys' Club at age thirteen—Boys' Club director, Sidney Peixotto—Boys' Club activities, teachers, outings, baseball—Jobs as a boy, family members—Earthquake and fire of 1906—Marriage, family background, career—Life in Shafter, California, in the late 1930s and early

1940s—Influence of Columbia Park Boys’ Club on life activities, religious affiliations—More on family—Interviewer narration.

INTERVIEW WITH HAZEL GOWAN SALMI

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	165
------------------------	-----

SESSION 1, March 11, 1972

[Tape 13-1, Side A].....	167
--------------------------	-----

Reading a written account of the early history of the Girls’ Club—Ralph Stackpole’s sculpture at the Girls’ Club—The importance of having been exposed to art at the Girls’ Club—Attending the San Francisco Institute of Art at current site of Mark Hopkins Hotel.

SESSION 2, August 12, 1973

[Tape 13-1, Side B].....	174
--------------------------	-----

Personalities of Rachel and Eva Wolfsohn—The Richmond Art Center.

[Tape 13-2, Side A].....	174
--------------------------	-----

More on the Richmond Art Center—Teaching dance classes as outgrowth of Girls’ Club experience—Influence of Girls’ Club on development of the Richmond Arts Center—Working for photographer W.E. Dassonville.

[Tape 13-2, Side B].....	179
--------------------------	-----

More on W.E. Dassonville—Family background—Arriving in San Francisco on a lumber schooner—Living on San Bruno Avenue—The earthquake and fire of 1906—Mother and her book, *Wildwood*—Brother, husband.

[Tape 14, Side A].....	186
------------------------	-----

More on husband—Moving to Richmond, CA—Designing and building home—More on family background in Mendocino County—Family archives in the Bancroft Library.

[Tape 14, Side B].....	201
------------------------	-----

More on family in Mendocino County—Husband’s collections—Interviewers’ comments on Hazel Salmi.

INTERVIEW WITH FREDERICA ARMSTRONG ROHRER

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	203
------------------------	-----

Date of interview: March 6, 1973

[Tape 12, Side A].....	205
------------------------	-----

Family background, father’s work as artist—Joining Girls’ Club in 1912 and singing with Henrietta Blanchard—Wolfsohn family members—Girls’ Club board members and entertaining girls at country

estates—Drama teacher Gerda Hoffman—Geneve Sargent and sons—Hother Wismer—More on Henrietta Blanchard—Eva Wolfsohn’s funeral—Religion at the Girls’ Club—Swedenborgian Church—Burke family and elementary school—The Mission District—Performance by opera diva Luisa Tetrazzini—Influence of Girls’ Club on musical career, musicians who visited Girls’ Club, Edith Heinrich—Anita Peters Wright, Lenore Job—More on singing career and family.

[Tape 12, Side B]223
 Narration by interviewer based on further conversation with Frederica Rohrer.

INTERVIEW WITH CRYSTAL LAKE BERMEL

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....225

Date of interview: March 27, 1973

[Tape 3, Side A]227

Introduction to the Girls’ Club in 1915 —Description of Eva Wolfsohn—Anita Peters Wright’s ballet class and performance—Incident between Girls’ Club member and a soldier—Attending the World’s Fair of 1915, with artists Piazzoni and Stackpole—The senior girls’ activities, members Rose Goldblatt Stiller, Queen Montgomery Stewart and others, lectures/dinners for the senior girls—More on Anita Peters Wright’s dance class, Isadora Duncan—Joining the Rachel Wolfsohn Mothers’ Club—The doctors lecture series and Dr. Emge—Studying dance with Isadora Duncan’s student, Maria Von Sabern—Family background—The Mission District, the earthquake and fire of 1906.

[Tape 3, Side B]248

Aftermath of fire, more on Mission District: Wigwam Theater, Mission Dolores Park—Career—Meeting husband—Volunteering in the Coast Guard during World War II in Portland, Oregon—VJ Day—Remembering Stella Bonn—Children and grandchildren—Reading poem “Cupid and the Girls’ Club.”

INTERVIEW WITH SYLVIA SIMONS MARCUS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....265

SESSION 1, March 4, 1973

[Tape 8, Side A]267

Family background—The beginning of the Girls’ Club—Rachel Wolfsohn, mother and her role at the Girls’ Club—Siblings, family home in San Francisco—Father’s death—More on Rachel Wolfsohn’s personality—Financing of Girls’ Club—Eva Wolfsohn’s personality and role at Girls’ Club—Class issues, culture, and “taste” at the Girls’ Club—Activities at the Girls’ Club—Board members financial support of Girls’ Club—The earthquake and fire of 1906 and the destruction of the Girls’ Club building—Temporary site at home on Howard Street and building on 20th Street—Funding for the new building on Capp Street—Design of building—Girls’ Club dues—Goal of serving people of lower income levels—“Society girls” and community service—Rachel Wolfsohn’s death and Eva Wolfsohn’s move into leadership position at Girls’ Club—More on demographics of Girls’ Club members.

[Tape 8, Side B]	283
Special interests at the Girls' Club—Teachers remembered—"Simple elegance" and the influence of Rachel and Eva Wolfsohn—Senior Hi Jinks—Common bond between Girls' Club members—Sister Ellen's activities at the Girls' Club—Issues of morality—Poker games and horseraces—Edith Heinrich—Margaret Hall—The Community Chest—Sister Ellen's marriage—Mother's religious affiliations—Jewish members on board of Girls' Club—Views on religious identity in the Girls' Club—Visiting Gussie Wolfsohn in a convalescent home and reconnecting with Dr. Mast Wolfson,—Remembering other Girls' Club members.	

[SESSION 2, April 8, 1973]

[Tape 9, Side A]	298
Senior dinners—Welcoming tone of the Girls' Club—Simons family's years of membership—Men's Club—More on members of the Wolfsohn family—Ludwig Emge—Size of Girls' Club membership—Rose Stiller—Meeting husband, Luis—Loyalty at the Girls' Club—Current styles of dress/informality in San Francisco—Husband Luis' career in beauty supply—Naming the bobby pin.	

[Tape 9, Side B]	315
More on husband Luis' disposition; daughter, Ellen, and her career/family, daughter, Elaine, and her artistic nature; grandsons.	

INTERVIEW WITH CELENE SHELDON OLSEN

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	325
------------------------	-----

Date of interview: February 27, 1973

[Tape 10, Side A]	327
Funding for the Capp Street building after the earthquake and fire of 1906, a description of the building—Girls' Club classes, teachers, members—Family background—Parents' courtship, siblings—More on attending Girls' Club after earthquake and fire of 1906—Singing lessons at the Girls' Club—Career in singing, studying with professor Otto Fleissner, retiring from singing at age seventy-six—Marriage to Harold Matthew Olsen; daughters, grandchildren.	

[Tape 10, Side B]	341
Sister, Catherine Sheldon, and her involvement with the Girls' Club—Catherine's marriage to Edward Gnos—Schooling, typing classes at Lux College—Courtship, husband and marriage—Spending time in Healdsburg, CA—Mother's activities at the Girls' Club, Stella Bonn, Delores Mothers' Club—German families in the Mission District and elsewhere in San Francisco—The earthquake and fire of 1906—Furniture in the family—Parents' relationship—Christmas at the Girls' Club.	

INTERVIEW WITH PAULINE HARRIS BOGART

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	357
------------------------	-----

Date of interview: May 27, 1973

[Tape 4, Side A].....	359
-----------------------	-----

Introduction to the Girls' Club at age ten and its influence—Close relationship with Rachel Wolfsohn—Rachel Wolfsohn's memorial service in 1915—Studying piano with Albert Elkus—Receiving scholarship to attend University of California, Berkeley, from Girls' Club member—Importance of relationship with Albert Elkus—Connection to Kahn and de Young families—Mission District—Wolfsohn family members—Orchestra at the Girls' Club led by Hosther Wismer—The Sargent family—Wonderhill—Marriage to Zachary Paul Bogart, teaching music—More on Elkus family—Cohn family—Son, Paul Bogart—Retirement—Clarification regarding the Elkus family.

INTERVIEW WITH FLORA WOLFSOHN

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	375
------------------------	-----

Date of interview: January 27, 1993

[Tape 20, Side A].....	377
------------------------	-----

Involvement with Girls' Club—Family background, birth and education in San Francisco in early 1900's—The Wolfsohn family: parents, eight children, loss of family wealth—Mark Wolfsohn, his romance with Margaret Hall—Rachel Wolfsohn and Eva Wolfsohn and their impressive work at the Girls' Club—Husband Fred Wolfsohn—Daughters and grandchildren—Fred Wolfsohn's relationships with other family members.

[Tape 20, Side B].....	391
------------------------	-----

Mast Wolfson.

INTERVIEW WITH MARION BRUNE HAYES CAIN

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	393
------------------------	-----

Date of interview: February 1, 1973

[Tape 5, Side A].....	395
-----------------------	-----

Grandparents, mother's interest in cultural life—Father—Early interest in theater—Experience in drama at Girls' Club—Director Eva Smith Hackett—Writing scripts for children's theater as an adult—Playing piano in the Girls' Club orchestra—Developing lifelong friendships and leadership qualities at the Girls' Club—Frederick Meyers and the School of the California Guild of Arts and Crafts—Rachel Wolfsohn and her work with impoverished children—Conception of the Girls' Club—Comparison of sisters Rachel and Eva Wolfsohn—Mission District in the 1950s and 1960s—Class background of members of Girls' Club/membership fees—Activities: dance, gym class, choral

group, drama—Working with Mabel Gump and another skilled director—Schooling at Mission High School, Horace Mann Grammar School, Polytechnic High School.

[Tape 5, Side B] 409

Involvement with drama at Polytechnic High School—Demolay Dramatic Club—Continuing interest in theater after high school—Introduction to actress Margaret Anglin through Wolfsohn family connections—The decision to attend State Teachers College of San Francisco and not Stanford University—Creating drama department at the college—Sister Helen’s marriage to Joseph Hinchcliff—Teaching examinations—Securing first teaching job at Kate Kennedy School—Principal Anna C. Orr—Transferring to Farragut School and experimental work—Meeting future husband, Sam Hayes, at the Mountain Play—More on teaching career—Garnet Holmes, director of the Mountain play—Sam Hayes’ background.

[Tape 6, Side A] 421

Sam Hayes’ early work and theater life—His career in radio—Teaching at the Presidio Open Air School—Moving to Hollywood for husband’s career—Husband’s position as the Richfield Reporter—Leaving the marriage—Moving to Marin and teaching drama and music in a school in Novato—Founding the Novato Players and joining the Ross Valley Players—Radio work—Creative teaching year in Ross—Friendship with tenor James Schwabacher—Gifted students—Teaching drama at the Women’s Club in Sausalito—Artist Edward C. Day—Returning to the Girls’ Club as resident assistant to the director—Creating children’s theater productions, the impact of the Girls’ Club on children from impoverished backgrounds—Fire at the Girls’ Club in 1941 and the decision to leave, creating a home with in-laws, teaching at Roosevelt School in Vallejo.

[Tape 6, Side B] 430

Homemaker during the war years—Return to Marin County in 1948—Directing Marin Junior Theater—Changes in marriage—Position in drama at Dominican College in San Rafael—Continued work in children’s theater in Bay Area—Conflict between artistic life and stability, son’s polio and the decision to return to teaching in the public schools—More on Ross Valley Players, little theaters in the Bay Area, teaching privately at the Art and Garden Center, The Magic Circle Touring Company—The dream of bringing the best theater to as many children as possible—More on family.

INTERVIEW WITH PENDLETON WILLIAMS QUAST

TABLE OF CONTENTS 439

Date of interview: June 12, 1973

[Tape 11, Side A] 441

On name, “Pendleton”—Joining Girls’ Club at age eleven—Activities at the Girls’ Club—Eva Wolfsohn—Interest in drama and photography—Fire at Girls’ Club—More on photography—Marriage in 1928 and joining the Rachel Wolfsohn Mothers’ Club—Maria Von Sabern’s dance class—Husband Albert H. Quast and his career—Own career and hobbies—Influence of Girls’ Club—Evolution of Girls’ Club into the Mission Neighborhood Center—“Legend” of Rachel Wolfsohn—Daughters and grandchildren.

INTERVIEW WITH LEAH SELIX AND ADRIENNE BONN

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....455

Date of interview: January 23, 1973

[Tape 17-1, Side A].....457

Earliest recollections of the Girls' Club—Home life in the Mission District—Selix family music store—Merchants on Mission—Street in the 1910s-20s—Anecdote about the earthquake and fire of 1906.

[Tape 17-1, Side B].....468

Bonn family background—Father's work as a clothing salesman—Mother's job as saleswoman after father's death—Dining on Mission Street.

[Tape 17-2, Side A].....476

Girls' Club membership—Board members—Founders—Jewish background of those involved—The Capp Street building, designed by architect Bruce Porter—Rachel Wolfsohn's impetus in creating the Girls' Club—The Wolfsohn family—Eva Wolfsohn's role in and vision for the Girls' Club—Values instilled—Activities—Mothers' Club and Grandmothers' Club—Eva Wolfsohn's relationship with the board—Board member Fleishhacker's donation of the country club at Emerald Lake in Redwood City—More on demographics of girls who attended the Girls' Club, racial and class distinctions—Selix's responsibilities as a child, her father's attitudes toward work and recreation.

[Tape 17-2, Side B].....488

More on Selix family—Attending high school and employment—Activities at the Girls' Club for older girls: lectures, dances, parties—The evolution of the Girls' Club into the Mission Neighborhood Center—Fees/funding at the Girls' Club—Role of the Community Chest and its effect on the character of the Girls' Club—On interviewing other members of the Girls' Club.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN LEAH SELIX AND ADRIENNE BONN, March 17, 1974

[Tape 18-1, Side A].....497

[Tape 18-1, Side B].....505

[Tape 18-2, Side A].....513

LETTER FROM ADRIENNE BONN TO REGIONAL ORAL HISTORY OFFICE INTERVIEWER,
ESTHER EHRLICH 515

INTERVIEW WITH RAY ANN IVERSEN DEMIRIS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....517

Date of interview: April 17, 1973

[Tape 7, Side A].....519

Grandmother's and mother's membership in the Girls' Club—Artists Stackpole and Putnam—Reminiscences passed down about Rachel Wolfsohn—Girls' Club Christmas journal published in 1908—Christmas at the Girls' Club—Romance between Mark Wolfsohn and Margaret Hall; members of the Wolfsohn family—Wonderhill—Eva Wolfsohn's dogs—Activities at the Girls' Club—More on Wonderhill—The Girls' Club building—Father Peter Iversen—Bridge games with Gussie and Eva Wolfsohn—Whisk games at the Girls' Club—Influence of Girls' Club and Wolfsohn family—Gussie Wolfsohn.

[Tape 7, Side B]534

More on Gussie Wolfsohn—Childhood interests—Marriage at age forty-three, career, father's work, family background—On the power of reminiscing.

VOLUME INTRODUCTION--*The Girls' Club, San Francisco: Recollections of Members and Associates*

At the turn of the century, Rachel Wolfsohn founded the Girls' Club in San Francisco in order to provide a gathering place where girls, who might not otherwise have the opportunity, could engage in a range of cultural activities. In 1972, Ruth Teiser conducted an interview with Leah Selix and Adrienne Bonn, who were both long-time Girls' Club members and whose enduring relationship began there. In 1972, Selix and Bonn continued the project, interviewing eighteen people who had been members of or associated with the Girls' Club, capturing essential history of this cultural institution.

The tapes were deposited in the Bancroft Library but not transcribed. In 2003, Adrienne Bonn supported having the Girls' Club interviews transcribed and made available, in memory of Leah Selix. Papers and photographs from the Girls' Club have been placed at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Esther Ehrlich
Regional Oral History Office
Berkeley, California

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TABLE OF CONTENTS—A. APPLETON

INTERVIEW WITH A. APPLETON

Date of interview: MARCH 17, 1973

[Tape 2, Side A] 3

Family background and childhood in San Francisco, south of Market Street—The influence of Sidney Peixotto and the Columbia Park Boys' Club—Garnet Holmes and drama, other activities—Finances of the Columbia Park Boys' Club—More on Garnet Holmes—Working for John Galen Howard, dean of the School of Architecture, University of California, Berkeley—Meeting William C. Hays—Boys' Club military drills—Club meetings—Singing—Description of Sidney Peixotto—Other Boys' Club members—The neighborhood: saloons, junk stores, wooden sidewalks—Childhood jobs—Ethnic/religious makeup of neighborhood—More on Garnet Holmes and drama.

[Tape 2, Side B] 15

Working as office boy for architect John Galen Howard—Earthquake and fire of 1906—Attending University of California, Berkeley—Reorganizing the Columbia Park Boys' Club after the fire—The board members—Growth of career, architect for Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco libraries—Wife, Hilda Appleton, and son, Robert Appleton—Flora Marx Wolfsohn—On developing an interest in architecture.

INTERVIEW WITH A. APPLETON

[Date of interview: March 13, 1973]

[Tape 2, Side A]

- Selix: Mr. Appleton is an architect, and we are interviewing him. Mr. Appleton, we understand that you were born July 13, 1887, and that you were born in San Francisco. What was the occupation of your father?
- Appleton: My father was a carpet layer and a mattress maker. He became a mattress maker, or I really should say, he made mattresses over; he renewed them and that was his source of livelihood and I used to help him occasionally, ripping these old mattresses up, [preparing the hairs] to be restuffed in another covering.
- Selix: What was your father's full name?
- Appleton: Harry Appleton. He had four brothers and two sisters. I don't remember much about them, the brothers, but I do have a very clear recollection of visiting my father's sisters, who were the youngest in his family. They were at an orphan asylum called the—what was it? On McAllister and Divisadero, do you know the name of the old orphan asylum there?
- Selix: No.
- Appleton: No, you don't remember. Well, there was an orphan asylum out there. The circumstances which led to my aunts, whom I hardly met, being placed there, I'm not too sure about. I guess they couldn't afford to take care of them, and they put them there.
- Selix: Had they lost their mother at an early age?
- Appleton: I suppose so. I don't know. I've never seen my grandfather or my grandmother, my father's father.
- Selix: This was your father who was in the mattress business, though?
- Appleton: Yes.
- Selix: Was he born in San Francisco?
- Appleton: Well, I hate to tell you that I neglected ever asking my father anything about his past. Someone told us he was born in Berkeley, but I always thought he was born in New York; he may have told me that at one time, I've always remembered that. I don't quite know.
- Selix: Do you know what the ethnic and religious background of the family was?
- Appleton: They had no religion. They didn't go to temple. They didn't go to church. My father worked every day.

- Selix: But they were of a Jewish background.
- Appleton: Well, I would guess so, yes.
- Selix: Do you know what country they came from?
- Appleton: No. I have a vague recollection—my father once told me that he was born in New York. He was born in the United States. My mother was too; I think she was born in San Francisco. You know we never talked about family, in our family. We were considerably involved with today and it didn't mean very much where we came from.
- Selix: The past didn't mean a great deal.
- Appleton: We were living today and living hard to keep it going.
- Selix: Where did you live in the early days in San Francisco?
- Appleton: Oh, that's a story.
- Selix: Tell us about it.
- Appleton: I lived in a marvelous area. I was about nineteen years old at the time of the fire and everything before that fire was the most marvelous time of my life, don't you know, being a kid down there south of Market Street. At the time of the fire, I was working; I had graduated from high school.
- Selix: What high school was it?
- Appleton: Lick Wilmerding.
- Selix: Lick Wilmerding?
- Appleton: Yes. That had only been open maybe about four or five or six years, as I remember. I was in the class of '05 and I graduated. And I have to stick Peixotto in here, because Sidney Peixotto was one of the people that encouraged my parents to let me continue in school because all the boys I knew down there, including myself, intended to go to work after we got out of grammar school. Some worked as salesmen and some learned how to make gloves, and some learned how to repair shoes and things of that nature. I had never made up my mind which one of those I was going to follow, but Sidney Peixotto—
- Selix: Do you know what his background was; what country he came from?
- Appleton: No. The only thing I know about him is what I read about him; he never told me anything. He was in one of the Jewish groups who escaped from Spain during the Inquisition, either Spain or Portugal; I don't remember which.
- Selix: That is an unusual spelling of a name, and it's pronounced "Pishoto."
- Appleton: Yes.

- Selix: We understand that he was active in the Columbia Park Boys' Club and in fact he founded it in 1894.
- Appleton: He did.
- Selix: And he was active until 1926.
- Appleton: I don't remember.
- Selix: Do you remember Mrs. Peixotto?
- Appleton: His wife?
- Selix: Yes.
- Appleton: Well, he married very, very late in life you know.
- Selix: Oh he did?
- Appleton: Oh yes, yes. It's pretty hard for me to imagine him being married, but I know he was married and in fact I know he had a son, but the type of life he led did not indicate to me that he had a family living with him. He lived across the street from the Boys' Club in another whole flat with men who were interested in social circumstances.
- Selix: Do you know what sparked his interest in starting the Columbia Park Boys' Club?
- Appleton: What can I say? I think it was just his love of people and somewhere he was inspired to direct that love to the younger people, kids like myself. There was nothing of the [charge?] in the organizations developed before he got down there. We had no place to go; we had nothing to do after school was out, and I think he was inspired to see what he could do about organizing something for these boys when they got out of school. So they would have places in which to go and they might find things that interested them beyond the things they had just learned in school, more than just academic subjects that they took on in school.
- Selix: And what kinds of activities did he bring to the boys in the neighborhood?
- Appleton: The boys who attended the club?
- Selix: Yes.
- Appleton: Well, I can tell you the things I did there and you know, they were very helpful. I could tell you so much. I remember clay modeling, and I look back upon it as a wonderful experience, a wonderful, exciting thing to work with clay, and probably had a little aptitude somewhere; I didn't know that. We were taught to paint with watercolors. We were given the watercolors and brushes. No one held our hand, but we were inspired. We were shown watercolors, and I guess our teachers would say, "Do this and do that. Wouldn't you like a richer purple in here? Let's make several of these flowers, not just one," and so forth. We had a printing shop and we were taught to set type and print little programs, little tickets and things like that. Just thinking of the things that I—we had a

class in mechanical drawing and we had a class in letter illuminating. Do you know what illuminated letters are? You've seen them in manuscripts? I don't know who taught us that, but it was a delightful thing. We were given these prints in black and white and then we colored them; we thought that was a great achievement.

Selix: Did you have drama?

Appleton: Oh, all that went on on stage!

Selix: Do you remember who your coach was?

Appleton: Garnet Holmes.

Selix: Garnet Holmes, he founded the Mountain Players in Tamalpais.

Appleton: I went to the university and oh golly, I can tell you about Garnet Holmes; I'm going to tell you right now. He came down to the club and he coached us in some plays; we did some Shakespeare among other things. We did *The Taming of the Shrew*, I remember that, and we did a scene from *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which we loved; as kids we loved to do it. He taught us how to act and spent a lot of time with us, and we put these performances on; we loved it. And costumes, you know, we had an audience from the neighborhood, see?

Selix: Did you have an auditorium with a stage?

Appleton: No, we didn't have anything like that; nothing that we had down on south of Market Street in our original club could be called an auditorium. I can remember the day—let me go back and tell you, I met one of my friends one day down at the—let me go farther back. I remember as a little boy hearing drums in the distance and bugles occasionally; I remember it so distinctly. [sings melody of drum beats] I remember the melody way off in the distance. I often wondered—not often, but I wondered, “What are those things?” I was afraid it was the Salvation Army. We weren't very nice to the Salvation Army, kids weren't. Isn't that terrible? Anyway, I heard these drums and thought it was very interesting. One day one of the kids I was playing with—he was the brother of [Sammy Bone?], who became a very well-known baseball player; he played with the New York Giants, I think. One day, [David Cone?] [ed. note: Mr. Appleton clearly states “Bone” and then “Cone,” but since the boys he is referring to are brothers, they must have shared the same last name] it was, he said, “Listen, why don't you go down and join the Boys' Club? You'll have a hell of a lot of fun down there.”

Selix: How old were you then?

Appleton: I was perhaps eleven or twelve. I spoke to my parents, because he inspired me to join the club, and I spoke to my parents about it. I think my mother said, “No, you can't go down there. Those boys are fighters and I don't want you to get mixed up with them,” or something like that.

Selix: Where was the club located?

Appleton: On Seventh Street.

Selix: Seventh and what?

Appleton: Oh, it was in the middle of the block. Someone said it was on the corner before then and I think it was between Folsom and Harrison, on the west side of the street. I'm telling you about my going down there. You see, what happened—I went in; I was rather timid about it because I wasn't a very independent young man, young child, rather. I remember going—it was a flat. It had been a flat, I know that now, but at the time I didn't. I went up some stairs, there was a little dirty garden on one side of the stairs. I remember hammering on the door. They had a knocker on the door. I didn't know what the hell the thing was for, so I shook the door and it knocked by itself. I opened the door and walked in and there was a wonderful odor in there; I've never gotten over the sense of that smelliness, whatever it was. It was this smelly rubber, like rubber that you sometimes smell in a bathing establishment. There was rubber sheeting on the steps, and I always associate that rubber odor with the Boys' Club.

I went in and met Mr. Peixotto and I probably said, "I'd like to join the club." He gave me this beautiful look, and he said, "Well, maybe you can." I said, "I would like to. Some of the boys I know come here." He said, "Let's see what we have," and he had a little book in his pocket; he always had this thing. He said, "Well now, you can come on Friday night. I do have an opening and in fact, would you like to come this Friday night?" I was delighted because I was going to be a member of the Boys' Club, you see. But I had reckoned without the attitude of my parents regarding my going out at night; we were never allowed to go out at night. Even in the summertime it wasn't good for children to go out at night. So he put me on as a member of the club on Friday nights, and I went home and told my parents. My father said, "You can't go there on Friday nights. That's your bath night." I had forgotten that it was my bath night and I was heartbroken. I felt really badly about it and so my father said, "All right, another time you can go down and talk to him again." Well, the next day I went down to see him, and I always remember this, I said, "Mr. Peixotto, I told my mother I was going to be in a Friday night club." Mr. Peixotto had said that it was the only place they had for another boy. I told Peixotto about that and he said, "Well let's see, can you come on Tuesday afternoon?" I said, "Oh yes, I can come on Tuesday afternoon." So I rushed home. "I'm going to the Tuesday Afternoon Club." Within the club there were little clubs: the Monday Afternoon Club, the Tuesday Afternoon Club, and then the night for the big boys was the Monday Night Club and so forth and so forth. So we had perhaps—each group was maybe twenty boys.

Selix: If there were twenty in each group there must have been quite a large membership.

Appleton: With simple arithmetic, twenty by twelve. Well, there wasn't that many, then, because we didn't have 240 boys I don't think, at that time. Maybe it was about fifteen in our group. I can almost remember some of the names of these kids that formed one of these little clubs. Mine became the Tuesday Afternoon Club and I would go there. Of course, Mr. Peixotto had these programs all arranged. The people who came to teach us, to work with us, talk to us, were the most potent thing that we were exposed to there; that was the great thing, these people that we met.

Selix: Were they volunteer teachers?

Appleton: Oh sure, for sure.

Selix: Where did they come from?

Appleton: They came mostly from the San Francisco area, but I remember Tom McGlinn and [Gertrude Gordon?] were a marvelous pair of young people. When I first met them they were about sixteen or seventeen, possibly eighteen years old, and they were my friends all of my life, from the Boys' Club.

Selix: What did they teach?

Appleton: They taught art. Gertrude taught water coloring, which I loved doing, a very, very good friend. I remember a man named Dunn—I forget his first name—he and his wife came down and I always suspected they came from a very, very rich aristocratic family. One of the things I always remember, my first experience with the club that extended further beyond that, the people I met there always smelled nicely. Pardon me for saying that, but they smelled sweet, don't you know?

Selix: So they came from good backgrounds.

Appleton: That's right, and their hands were clean.

Selix: Did they have a board of directors?

Appleton: No, no such thing.

Selix: There was no board. How did Mr. Peixotto finance the club? Do you know?

Appleton: Well, it didn't cost that much in those days to run a boys' club. The rent on the place was—I don't have any idea, it was \$20 or \$25. We paid our rent in our flat where I lived up on Natoma Street, I think it was \$12 a month.

Selix: That was Natoma between what?

Appleton: Seventh and Eighth.

Selix: And Natoma is between Mission and Howard?

Appleton: That's right. It didn't cost very much to run the club. When Peixotto needed money—of course, one of the big things in a place like that would be the janitorial service. Peixotto lived across the street in a flat upstairs and his caretaker was Old Lady McCoy; that was her name. She was crippled or she seemed crippled to me. She was a bent-over woman who was always coming over from the flat that she took care of for Peixotto. She took care of the club, you see. Now I'm thinking of [costumes?] that she used to take care of too. I don't think the windows were ever washed; nobody ever looked out a window at the Boys' Club, they always contained all their interest within the club.

Peixotto didn't need very much money, I'm sure. I think he had a small allowance of his own. If it were \$100 a month I would be surprised; I'm only guessing at that. But he had some money because he would take us out to the park for a ball game and he'd pay our carfare, and we were always delighted to—we'd crowd onto the car, the cable car, and make a lot of racket. Kids do, don't you know, pounding each other and dropping this

and dropping that. And Peixotto would be the last one on and he would give the conductor the—the man who collected the fares in those days, \$1 or something like that, we would all wait for that, you see, and we would hear him go, “One, two, three...” We thought that was funny as hell. He didn’t need very much money. All the teachers, the academic aspect of the thing, were done by people who were interested in boys. I can’t remember all the wonderful people we met down there.

Selix: Did you have any sport activities?

Appleton: Oh yes, sure, we had everything [laughs]. Our gymnasium was sort of half down in a basement and that gymnasium was about—we called it “the gym,” of course—I’m going to guess, it was from this wall to that wall and it was about sixteen feet wide and it was about twenty feet long and had a low ceiling in it. You couldn’t do a handstand on the parallel bars because your feet would hit the ceiling before you could stand in place.

Selix: We had started to talk about Garnet Holmes and his influence on you.

Appleton: Let me tell you that. We worked on the *Taming of the Shrew*. We thought that was wonderful. Some boy took the part of the shrew, you know, and we thought it was funny. Then we did a scene from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; it was a scene in which some of the burghers, the town folks were going to entertain royalty. It was about Pyramus and Thisbe, if I remember; you probably know the story. They were lovers and they talk to each other through a hole in the wall; their love had to be transferred that way by [inaudible].

Each of these boys wanted to participate in this little play and they were told by their coach, you see, “Oh yes, we have a character who will be the moon” and another one would be something else and one had to be a lion. He’d say, “Oh, I can roar,” and he’d describe how he could roar. Then one wanted to be the wall. He says, “Oh, I can do that.” Part of the speech was, “In this same interlude it doth befall”—in a dialect, of course—“That I, one Snout by name, present a wall; And such a wall, as I would have you think, With a cranny hole or chink, Through which Pyramus and Thisbe often whisper.” That was part of it, don’t you know. But we all thought, “I’m going to go into something else.” I met Garnet Holmes down there. Later on, I went to the University of California, and I was always interested in it.

Selix: Was Mr. Peixotto instrumental in your going to the University of California?

Appleton: Indirectly.

Selix: He influenced you to pursue a university—

Appleton: I hate to get off the subject but I met, through Mr. Peixotto, the grandest man in the world, John Galen Howard, who was the dean of the School of Architecture in Berkeley when I finally—I went to the university and I met John Galen Howard because Peixotto got me a job in John Galen Howard’s office; I was John Galen Howard’s office boy.

Selix: Wasn’t it wonderful?

Appleton: John Galen Howard. He smelled nicer than anybody else. He was the head of the school of Architecture for many years. He also had a private practice, like a doctor who practices medicine but then he teaches also. Well, he and I became very, very good friends, John Galen Howard. He loved me because they had a big office and most of the people in the office had come out from the East, from Boston and other cities I learned about. They all came from fine families, all aspiring young architects who came out here to get education away from home, and all of them, when they could, they came into Howard's office. I came into the presence of a group of educated, nicely famlied—if that's a word—people, and that had a tremendous experience. And there I met my greatest friend, William C. Hays, who was one of the designers in the office. I ultimately became one of his partners, but he went into business himself, too. That's getting away from the subject.

Selix: He was a practicing architect in San Francisco?

Appleton: Yes, William C. Hays. [It was an ideal thing?] to practice your profession, you see. He also opened an office. Anyway, down at the Boys' Club. How did I get off that subject?

You know, we had a military division down there. Call it what you will but we had—I know where these military suits came from. I'll tell you about the [rifle] family next door. But about the military, one of the activities—we had a company or two and we all had little uniforms and I think on late Friday afternoons we had a military drill. We used to go walking with our drums. I think James Phelan, one of the mayors of San Francisco, finally got us some rifles. It must have been a funny damn thing to see these kids trying to keep in step with a gun on their shoulders.

Selix: Those must have been the drums that you originally heard.

Appleton: There came a time when all the kids, like myself, we spent all our time down at the club. Oh yes, we loved it, don't you know? When you went there, you would go with the program. See, you went to our club, went to our club meetings, see, our regular Tuesday Afternoon Club, say, and we had our business meeting. We learned a little about parliamentary procedure. We had little elections and we voted for president for ourselves, and vice president and secretary and so forth. We learned those things and it was play for us to do this. We had a little room and little benches. Peixotto would always be at one of these meetings, you see. And I remember when the president asked if there was any new business and well, the kids, all they wanted to do is play baseball or something like that, and the presiding officer or the president would look at Peixotto hoping he would have something to say: "Mr. Peixotto, do you have any new business," something like that. He would say, "We're going to have a ball game and Mrs. So and So is coming." We were busy down at the club. Typically, we would get down there, pile into the club, have our little business meeting. Then we would go upstairs to our classes and when that was over we'd come down, and before we'd leave the club we would always sing; we'd always do some chorus, boys' songs.

Selix: What kind of songs?

Appleton: I wish I could remember. We had some—what do you call, these songs that are two sides, they sing opposite each other?

Bonn: Rounds.

Appleton: Rounds. That's right, we would have some of those. We loved those because I guess we shouted more than we sang. The same thing happened at night. We had business—we called it a business meeting—and then we went up to our workrooms and then when we came downstairs. We'd have charades then too! I'd forgotten that; that was very important. We learned something about the stage. Peixotto would say, "Listen. George, Joe, Peter and Howard, you get out of there; you fellows get down there now. We're going to be the audience and you make up a charade. Give us a show."

It took four or five kids. It was wonderful! Someone would say, "Well, let's have a Chinese laundry." "Oh, gee, that's great," and we'd throw rocks at it. "Oh no, let's do something or something," and they'd come up with little ideas, real simple things. "Let's play mother and father home and you beat me up, and then you be the father and you come and try to stop the fight and we'll fight you," you know, that kind of stuff. We had wonderful little charades, you see. We'd have a business meeting, we'd go upstairs to the workrooms and then we'd go downstairs—we had a little curtain. We'd push the parliamentary table and chairs out of the way and had a little curtain and the kids would sit up here. Peixotto, you'd hear him say, "You fellows keep quiet, keep quiet," because the kids were making too much noise. That would be one afternoon. Then we'd have military and then another afternoon we'd come for gymnasium. We were kept very, very busy.

Selix: What kind of a personality did Mr. Peixotto have? Did he have charisma? It sounds as though he might have had.

Appleton: No, he didn't shine. He was very humble, very humble. We loved him, don't you know.

Selix: But a well-educated man.

Appleton: Academically, I don't know, but he always spoke good English.

Selix: And a great humanitarian?

Appleton: Oh, great humanitarian, oh yes. Sometimes we boys would have problems, don't you know. He may find out we were out stealing fruit. He'd find that out and he'd say, "Don't do that. Don't do that." That's all he would say. He really wouldn't go into it. I don't want you drawing pictures about us going out and stealing fruit or anything like that. The first experience I had—if my children see this they're going to scold me. Anyway, I only had one experience, maybe two, stealing fruit. It was mostly a lark; it wasn't for the fruit. I was going to say "gang," but I don't like that. A "group" of us went out—I was one of the smaller kids and didn't know what they were going to do. We went by an Italian—I think it was an Italian—fruit store and one of the big kids grabbed a bunch of bananas. They'd hang outside, don't you know, and he started to run and we all ran after him. I was scared to death.

Selix: What did Mr. Peixotto look like? What was his physical appearance?

Appleton: I have pictures upstairs. He was a very sweet-looking man, blue eyes, if I remember, very kindly. He had nice color, very quiet, and the only type of suit he ever wore was a blue serge suit.

Selix: About how tall was he?

Appleton: About my size, five-foot-eight or something like that. One thing that I want to remind you of, too. He would have men come down and sometimes they would take residence in his flat where he lived, like I'm thinking of John M. Brewer, I think his name was. He was a teacher from Lick Wilmerding. He taught math, and he was interested in this type of social service, I'm sure he was, because he came down and he would come over. I don't know what he taught in the club but I saw a great deal of him, and I took math under him at Lick Wilmerding. So Peixotto had little or no social life. Of course, I wouldn't know if he was invited out to a cocktail party or anything like that, but I don't think so, he was there all the time; you could always go to the club and you'd find Mr. Peixotto. He had an office upstairs.

Selix: Did you have any brothers?

Appleton: No.

Selix: There were just two sisters?

Appleton: Yes. I had friends that were greater than brothers.

Selix: Do you remember the names of some of the men who went to the club with you?

Appleton: Of course I do. Charles Norton; I have a picture upstairs. Joseph B. [McEwen?]; he became a very well-known attorney. He used to live over here on Union Street; we saw them occasionally. He's gone. Jack [Lavelle?]; he was one of my pals for a while down there. Chum, they called them in those days, "My chum."

Anyway, down at the club we had boys whose parents ran—a few of them, it was very interesting—there were a lot of little saloons in our neighborhood; every other corner was a saloon. Now you have gas stations, but when I was a kid they were saloons. There would be a grocery store on the corner and then in back of the grocery store would be a little bar. There would be a side entrance to the bar, and it would say "Family Entrance." That didn't mean anything to me. "What the hell is 'Family Entrance,'" you know, but I learned that sometimes if someone wanted a drink or a pitcher of beer they'd go in the "Family Entrance" and not go through here. I remember Tim and Jack Sullivan, they were men who had these establishments on Natoma and Seventh, and we got our groceries there: crackers and flowers; everything is in bulk. I remember I used to steal pickles out of a barrel. The thing I looked forward to was getting all the pickles out of there when I grew up; now I don't eat them. That was the characteristic of the area, these bars. I knew some of the boys' families lived behind these bars, in the flat behind. The parlor would be turned into a bar.

Selix: Were there furniture stores in the neighborhood?

Appleton: Oh yes, sure, there were junk stores; there were no furniture stores.

Selix: Second-hand furniture maybe.

Appleton: I don't remember very much about the furniture, but I remember junk stores that they had. They were either junk stores or junk shops where you could take a half a sack full of empty bottles and get five cents or ten cents; you could save bottles. I don't know what they wanted them for but you could take them down there and you could get maybe half a penny a bottle. And we'd collect old wire and take the copper out of it. We'd burn it in the street and get a handful of copper—it would take months to do it—take it down there and get five cents or ten cents, which was a lot of money in those days. I remember asking my father—I heard this about some other kids down there, they got ten cents a week allowance and I didn't understand what allowance meant; they got it every week. So I approached my father and asked him if I could have ten cents like the [Lipman?] boys have and—fearful of asking him because I never had any money—but I was going to ask him. But just before asking him I said, “If I cut it in half I'll have a better chance.” So I asked him if I could have five cents of spending money as an allowance. Well, he said, “What's an allowance,” and I tried to explain it to him. I told him it was five cents to spend. He said, “No, you don't need that. You have everything you need.” I never had any money in my pocket, never had any money.

Selix: Did you ever feel deprived?

Appleton: No, oh no, never thought of it.

Selix: You lived well in your own home?

Appleton: Oh yes, sure. My mother, I can remember her expression all the time. She'd say, “Go down to Sixth Street to the butcher. Get a leg of lamb and get the change back.” She'd give me half a dollar. Now that change back was a very important thing because without that change back I couldn't buy the lamb. It may have been something else besides lamb, but I'd go, “Oh, it was thirty-five cents for the meat and change back,” so I'd give her the change back. The streets were wonderful. I can remember when sidewalks were wood, wooden planks. I remember that because we followed the workmen who were tearing up the sidewalks to put cement sidewalks in, hoping we'd find nickels or anything down between the cracks, don't you know.

Selix: The cement sidewalks were put in, in your childhood.

Appleton: Yes, that was quite something to have the cement sidewalks. We lived in quite a town, actually. It took me years before I pieced together what happened. They must have filled all the streets in some of these areas where I lived because they were too low. I don't know anything about what the engineering amounted to, but I know they must have filled all the streets because in front of a lot of these houses were little low gardens. We lived in one of them. We moved from place to place because you could jump over a little baluster and play, like a little wooden yard, you see, sunk down where the original floor was.

I remember the houses down there. I remember we would move occasionally from one place to another. We were going up in the scale of living and instead of paying nine dollars a month maybe we were going to pay twelve dollars a month. So I had a room—I think it happened twice in our moves—it was just a big closet. It didn't have a window

or anything in it, and I had a candle to read at night; I did a lot of reading. We had no gas or electricity. The light was from coal oil lamps. You've seen the coal oil lamps? Well anyway, we had coal oil lamps and one of my jobs was to trim the wicks, you know, the wicks have to be trimmed.

Another one of my jobs was to—my father had an expression for it. We'd buy matches in bulk, I think they made in Chinatown. They'd take a small block of wood and they'd cut it in two dimensions, I guess with a hatchet or something, and make a multitude of little sticks in there. Then they'd drop them into sulfur and put some [inaudible] on them, and you'd pick one of these things off and you could light it. We had little match boxes by the kitchen stove and they had to be kept with matches for the fire or something else, and one of my jobs was to pick the matches and fill the boxes; we had one up there and maybe another one over here [gestures]. I really liked doing it, the beautiful smell of sulfur, pick the matches. We only had one lamp and it was on the wall, a coal oil lamp like I told you about, which was the light in the kitchen.

Oh yes, the houses down there. I remember, they were mostly flats; they weren't houses per se but they were buildings that contained several families and the stairways upstairs were always outside. You'd walk up a very flimsy stairway—they were all done in wood—and there would be a balcony up there, and you'd go into the upper flats and the other flat was down underneath. You'd look down these streets and you'd see so many of these little stairways on the outside.

Bonn: Romeo flats.

Appleton: Well, I guess you could call them that. There weren't very many Romeos down there; everybody worked hard and had no time for love.

Selix: Do you remember what the ethnic and religious background of the neighborhood was?

Appleton: Well, it was a mixture. Very few people went to church.

Selix: There were very few churches?

Appleton: Oh no, there were churches down there, but I can't ever remember anyone saying, "I'm going to church."

Selix: The Columbia Park Boys' Club was not really a family club, it was for young boys and young men up to about what age?

Appleton: I think about fifteen.

Selix: By the time they were fifteen they were ready to go on to other things.

Appleton: That's right. They found other things that attracted them more, you see.

Selix: You had mentioned that Garnet Holmes was a great influence on you and that you almost became an actor.

Appleton: Oh no, don't say that. I didn't almost become an actor; I hope I didn't insinuate that. It put me in a position to have a grand experience at the university that helped me. We had an English Club over there and [inaudible] the English Club, and they put on a couple of plays a year, sometimes big dramatic things, sometimes smaller things. I joined—I remember I was really into the *Daily Cal's* tryouts for an English Club performance, or something like that. I was a freshman, I guess, and I went to try out, and who was sitting at the table listening to people and their applications was Garnet Holmes. He had been a coach of ours when I was in the Boys' Club; he didn't even know I was at the school, didn't know it was Berkeley. I just answered whatever questioned they had to offer. I always had a suspicion that he helped me get into the cast of a couple of plays over there; I've always had that suspicion, you see. He was a wonderful man. He could take a speech and you would read it and it sounded like conducting [inaudible]. "Oh, you're asleep. You're dead. Color this thing. You can color words the way you would color a picture," and then he'd tell you how to make these speeches. He was a wonderful, wonderful person.

Selix: Were you active with him after you finished the university?

Appleton: No.

Selix: That was the last of your drama experience.

Appleton: Yes. Except, well, I don't have to go into—it was too social.

Selix: Well, if it had to do with your drama experience I think it would be of interest.

Appleton: No, no.

Selix: After you were fifteen and you finished Lick Wilmerding, then you went to the university of—

Appleton: No, I went to work. I went to work for John Galen Howard when I got out of high school because—

[Tape 2, Side B]

Appleton: As I told you before, one of the things that was very, very important to us young people down there was getting a job after we got out of school, and many of us did not graduate from grammar school, as a matter of fact. We were concerned about getting a job after we finished grammar school, and I was too, but Peixotto prevailed upon my parents to send me to high school. I think he told them that he would get me a job when I got out of high school, and he's responsible for my going to high school. It was easy to go to school in those days. I walked to school from where we lived and walked home, and of course walked to the club every night I went down there.

Selix: Wasn't Lick Wilmerding a private school?

Appleton: Privately endowed. It was a public school, but it was privately endowed.

Selix: Oh, there was no tuition.

Appleton: No, no, there was nothing. They gave us our books—I never had any money—they provided all the materials we needed in our classes. It was a marvelous school, a marvelous school.

Selix: Yes, it was.

Appleton: I learned a lot there.

Selix: Then you mentioned that you went to work for John Galen Howard.

Appleton: I finished high school and the job that Peixotto promised my parents I would get was born in the office of John Galen Howard; I became his office boy.

Selix: And he was an architect?

Appleton: Oh yes, I told you about him. He was the dean of the School of Architecture in Berkeley. He was the head of the school there and he had an office in the city, and I worked in the city office; there sprung the great adventure. There was a lot of correspondence between the Berkeley campus and the [inaudible] offices over there. Howard was working on plans for buildings over there and some were under construction, as a matter of fact, so the office boy, which was my job, I carried correspondence over there for signatures, and I brought them back to the office in the city, and I took plans from the office in the city over there for various reasons. My job was pretty much traveling from the San Francisco office to the Berkeley campus. I got to know the president of the university pretty well, seriously.

Selix: Who was the president then?

Appleton: Wheeler. Benjamin Ide Wheeler. So that's how I got my job.

Selix: How long did you work in Mr. Howard's office?

Appleton: That's really interesting. I would say that I worked up to the time of the fire—I graduated from high school in 1905 and just about a little over a year I guess it is—the earthquake was in 1906, so it was maybe a little over a year I would say.

Selix: What are your recollections of the fire?

Appleton: Shocking, frightening; I became full-grown that morning. I was nineteen, I think, and I knew I had to take care of my parents, and living with us was two of my father's brothers who always lived with us. My mother took care of the whole household. Can I tell you a story? Once in a while I talk to people, we talk of old times, and I would say, "Well, the way we lived. We had a maid and all, and we had a cook who did the cooking, and a laundress and a great housekeeper and so forth." Their eyes would open and open and open, don't you know, and I would say, "It was my mother." [laughs] Now what did you say about—oh, I went to Berkeley and the fire came—

Selix: The fire came before you went to Berkeley?

Appleton: No, no. See, as soon as I got my job with Howard I was always going to work—

Selix: Oh I see, you were a student while you were working.

Appleton: No, when I started to work, I was a full-time office boy and I spent all of my time in there. One of my jobs was going over to Berkeley and that lasted up until the fire came along. That was a great thing in my life, in our lives, I mean. We left everything, that world behind us, the world we had lived in before the fire—

Selix: You were burnt out?

Appleton: Oh yes, oh sure.

Selix: Do you have recollections of exactly where you were when the earthquake hit and—

Appleton: I was in bed, about five o'clock in the morning, sleeping in the dining room on a cot. One of the details, we had a china closet against the wall and it was early in the morning, about five o'clock, and everything started rattling; we all knew it was an earthquake. I didn't know anything about earthquakes, but I knew what it was, but I hadn't experienced it before. My folks got very excited, and I think I indicated somehow by voice or action, "Take it easy. Take it easy. Everything is going to be all right." It was very frightening. I put some shoes and pants and things on and went down to go outside and the stairway that led from our little vestibule, which was maybe six or seven feet above the sidewalk, had collapsed, had fallen in. Being nimble and a young man I could jump around and get down to the street, and there was a lot of my neighbors around in their pajamas—nobody wore pajamas in those days—a lot of men came out in their underwear. We all slept in our underwear.

We didn't have a bath in our house. Did I ever tell you about the James Lick baths? Where we got a bath was up on Tenth Street, I think it was, and part of the old building was there. James Lick gave moneys to build a public bath house there, and you would get a bath, including towels and pieces of soap. I think it cost five cents. My father used to sneak me in, and we would get two baths for the price of one; that's funny. What were we saying now?

Selix: Well, you were telling us you went out on the street and your neighbors were there in their underwear.

Appleton: Yes. We heard murmurings all over around the place—people in the distance, you would hear [makes low murmuring sounds]. Down the street, on Natoma, a building collapsed, a really cheap brick building had collapsed and we went down there to see [inaudible] and I heard people crying down in there, "Get us out! Get us out!" Anyway, I'll tell you what happened.

My family stayed up in the flat, because you couldn't get out very well; the doors you couldn't open and close very well. The police came—oh, I heard the fire apparatus in the distance, and I wondered why the fire apparatus was coming up. I remember we went in the street and looked out and saw it in the distance, smoke coming out; this may have been five hours later after the earthquake. There was a fire somewhere. Well, to make that part of the story short, I think that night or that day our place burned down and we saw it; we saw the whole street burning from a block away or something. The police and the military kept moving us west all the time. My father decided he wanted

to save a mattress that he had, his favorite mattress. It contained fine, white horse tail hair, fine hair in it, see. I remember my dear father lugging this damn thing for a couple of days until we landed at Fort Mason over here. We were getting in a boat to take us out of the city, and the mattress fell in the bay. [laughs]

This is an interesting thing, on the way up—they call them the refugee trains that the refugees came in, and the people in the little communities, which the train would pass, would come aboard. [They apparently made the Red Cross' hands go in the air?] and they would bring food and stuff to us and I don't know, somewhere along the line, someone gave me a ham. We never had ham in our house; I must tell you that. Anyway, someone gave me a ham. We had a few things we were lugging, overcoats and things like that, and we landed in this house of this man who was a Jewish gentleman, and I had this damn ham I was dragging, for days, don't you know. I don't know what happened to it; that's the story about the ham. I'm way ahead of the story now. I was in, maybe a year, year and a half, in John Galen Howard's office, and I made friends very easily. Old men don't smell so good? I didn't care. We went up to Vallejo. See, the government would take you away from the city. They wanted everybody to get out of the city, anywhere you wanted to go. We landed on a boat that took us to Vallejo, because my father heard of someone that he thought he knew up there.

Then I remember—I'll tell you this story. One day Mr. Howard said to me—he called me by my first name; he wanted to call me Abraham and I couldn't understand that because my name's Abe. He asked me one day, "Couldn't you go to the university, go over there and do some work over there?" I said, "Well, I can't go over there because I have to work it out with my parents, see, with my family." Now Howard came from a very distinguished family. He was a scholar, a gentleman and a man of arts. He had a beautiful family, four little boys like that and a little tiny girl came a little later. A few weeks later he said, "You know, I had an idea." He talked about these things as if they weren't important at all, then it becomes "my idea." It didn't mean anything. He might have an ideas that you ought to keep your shoes shined. Anyway, he had an idea that I ought to go to school, a school of higher learning. I resisted but—. "We'll get you a job over there." Well, that's pretty good. That's what I needed, see. It was worked out so I could get a job. I made three dollars a day. This was big money. I had to make it to take care of my family. So I had a job while I went to the university, and I did very well; I wanted to indicate that to you.

Selix: You were a good student.

Appleton: I was a good student, yes. I met so many people whom I loved over there, fine men, don't you know, and they loved me, too. It was a rare experience with the other kids in the school. I learned fast and I liked people; I made wonderful, wonderful friends.

Selix: This was the School of Architecture in Berkeley?

Appleton: Yes, it was the School of Architecture. Or maybe a department of architecture.

Selix: Did you also have to take academic subjects?

Appleton: Oh sure.

Selix: You had a full academic schedule.

Appleton: I went to Berkeley, and I had two and a half years at the university, and I loved every moment of it. And all along the way I always met people whom I loved, a warm feeling. They're all gone now. I'm pretty much alone. I finally went to Europe; I went to Paris for about a year and a half. I tried to enter the Ecole de Beaux Art for young aspiring American architects, but it was a waste of time; I didn't pass the examination. The thing I did was what came out of my head, instead of going to the books and copying the books. That's the only thing I've done over there.

Getting back to our country here, I want to tell you this. After the fire—this is very important and I don't remember just when, I don't know how many years—but there was a man in our group called Hugo Callahan, who played an instrument and taught me to play the clarinet and so forth, he jumped in right after the fire to reorganize this thing, to keep the Boys' Club going. I remember we used to meet in some store downtown, Livingston Brothers or something. Callahan had a job there and he had a little space where we could meet, and we organized the board of directors to keep this thing going. I got involved in it in some way or other. In fact, the president of the United States, about a year ago, sent me a packet; he sent it to everybody, see, it doesn't mean anything. It indicated that I had served fifty years as a member of the board of directors of the Columbia Park Boys' Club. [inaudible] I cherish it, don't you know.

Selix: That was when you started as a board member was after the fire, when the club started at Livingston store?

Appleton: Yes, oh sure, after the fire. I don't know how long that was, how much time had elapsed. Some of the boys were growing up and they took some responsibility to keep this thing going, because we loved the club.

Selix: And your board of directors was made up of previous members of the—?

Appleton: Not all, we always had contacts somewhere with the bankers or the big shots downtown, if I can use that expression; we needed influential people. Finally after the long, long years of hard work and keeping this place going, we were able to build a clubhouse out on Guerrero Street, a wood frame building; it's a very inexpensive building.

Selix: Was that Guerrero and Nineteenth Street?

Appleton: Between Sixteenth and Seventeenth. We needed people who could bring other people to the board. You have to have a big board of directors for these things, you probably know; you probably know more about it than I do. You have to have influential people in there, like Louie [Sedrick?], whom you probably know. There have to have bankers, too.

Selix: Do you remember some of the other board members of the influential families in San Francisco?

Appleton: Now?

Selix: Well at that time, when you started in the—

Appleton: I can't remember who it was. I can't remember who would sit at the table with us talking. Peixotto would always be there, of course; I know that. Peixotto used to bring wonderful people there. I think Harvey Loy. Harvey Loy came to the Boys' Club and would do parallel things, the types of things Peixotto was doing. Harvey Loy had a good training in music. He played the piano, he played the organ and so forth, and he'd play for us sometimes, accompany us when we would sing. And this Tom McGlinn and Gertrude [Gorter?], Tom played the piano and decided to teach me to play the piano, but I took too long. Tom would play the piano, of course, after we had our meeting. We always sang before we went home. I could sing some of the songs now, but I dare not. I sing for Mrs. Appleton once in a while.

Selix: Oh, isn't that lovely.

Appleton: Sure [laughter]. [inaudible] I'm a ham.

Selix: After you finished your education as an architect, when and where did you open your first office, or did you go to work for someone else when you graduated from the University of California?

Appleton: I didn't graduate from the university; I went there for two and a half years. I went to work for various architects after that and then I went to Europe for a year and a half. Then one of my greatest friends who was going to school there—he had a lovely apartment in [inaudible] in the Latin Quarter. He came from a very wealthy, distinguished family in Oakland. I remember I said to him once—he's gone—I said, "Irving, you have so many things that I wish I had, fine books and nice family and friends," and he said, "I wish I had everything you have." I didn't know what he meant then. It took me years to know what he meant.

Selix: How do you spell his name?

Appleton: Irving Marrow.

Selix: And he was from an Oakland family?

Appleton: Yes, he's the architect of the Golden Gate Bridge. His name is on the bridge there, on the big plaque they have there. Do you know that there's architecture on that bridge? There's more architecture than you'd think. If you want me to get off the subject I—

Selix: We want to get to—then you eventually opened your own office.

Appleton: That's a long story. I found myself working in the office of my very, very dear friend William C. Hays, whom I mentioned. Bill Hays was probably fifteen years older than I am, and he had a very nice office. He instructed at the university also, and he did very nice work. He was a lovely man, warm-hearted. I worked with him for quite a while, a lot of years, and I decided—he didn't want me to leave, he wanted me to stay there—I decided it would be good for a young man to move out of his boyhood environment, even that very city, and start somewhere else, and I went to Stockton with Mrs. Appleton.

Selix: Oh, you were married by then.

Appleton: Yes, we were married. We weren't married for very long; our son was born up there.

Selix: How old were you about this time?

Appleton: I guess about twenty-four, maybe.

Selix: And you had recently married and then you moved to Stockton.

Appleton: Yes. I made a living up there, isn't that remarkable? I didn't know anybody when we went there, not a soul. We left a lot of very wonderful friends behind. [In Stockton, the people we knew were] mostly Jewish people. Our first contact with Jewish people, come to think of it. We met some of the so-called distinguished families.

Selix: In Stockton?

Appleton: In Stockton, yes. I thought, "This is interesting." I think the first contact I made—not that I went out to make contacts—was joining a little old synagogue, a little shul up there. We used to go to shul. We'd never belonged to any—That's the only thing I ever—. Anyway, it was delightful, a little tiny shul and the people were nice, and we got to know them. They were nice to us and when our baby was coming along, why they practically adopted us. Gosh, that was a wonderful experience, two years that were wonderful. Anyway, during these two years, the end of it almost [inaudible] I decided to stay longer. I met a lot of people. I met some of the architects up there.

Selix: Were you designing homes or commercial property?

Appleton: We were doing mostly homes, yes, stuff out in the suburbs. I worked for one of these public utilities up there. I met the president of the city railway system. I don't know how I met him but I did a little work for him. But I got a call from Bill Hays one night—we had our baby now—I got a call from Bill Hays one night and he says, "Hey, I need you." I said, "What do you mean Bill?" He said, "Well, I have a big job, and I want you to come back to San Francisco." "I can't Bill. I can't—". He said, "Abe, I don't want to hang up without telling you I need you." Two days later I called him and I said, "Bill I'm coming down. That's fine." He had a big commission, a big job to do, a bunch of school buildings, a very, very large contract.

Selix: In San Francisco?

Appleton: No, in Berkeley. I came down and worked with Bill Hays. He had a nice organization and one day he called me and he said, "Abe, are you enjoying what you're doing?" I said, "I don't know. Of course, I am. If I wasn't enjoying what I was doing, I wouldn't be here." "We're going to form a partnership here and you're going to be one of these junior partners, you and Joe Rankin, and we'll stay together for a long time. I can give you a very, very nice salary"—\$300 or \$250 a month, which was a lot of money in those days, and I stayed with Bill a long time. You look a little—are you scowling at me? [laughter]

Selix: No, I'm wondering what happened. Did you eventually leave Bill Hays' organization?

Appleton: Oh yes, yes, yes. In Paris I met a man, a San Francisco man. He came from a very distinguished family, the Hyman family. There were four boys and Sam, among them, studied architecture at Columbia, which is a fine school of architecture there. I met him in Paris, and we became friends. Then he came home and I met him again. He landed a big job through a family connection and I was—I don't know what happened there. Oh, I think I was with Hays—anyway, I landed with Hyman. It became Hyman and Appleton ultimately; that was the name of the firm. Sam and I were together until he died. I don't know how long that was, fifteen years ago, and I carried on. Oh, there was a wonderful, a wonderful, wonderful man in our office, a marvelous architect, younger than I am. He was a University of California man. He's retired now. Wolfard, his name is Harold Wolfard; the name of the firm became Appleton and Wolfard.

Selix: Did you do any public buildings or commercial buildings? What were some of the outstanding buildings that you did?

Appleton: Outstanding, our buildings aren't outstanding, necessarily. I'd like to tell you this, that I was the architect for the Columbia Park Boys' Club, which would be normal, to be expected.

Selix: Well, then you came full circle.

Appleton: Full circle, yes, very nicely said. Well, we did the Hall of Flowers. Do you know the Hall of Flowers?

Selix: In Golden Gate Park?

Appleton: Well, where else—[laughter]. Yes, we were the architects of that. And you know, that's part of the story. I got that job through the Columbia Park Boys' Club because on our board of directors there was a man who was the chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission, whom I knew very well because we were members of the board of directors. And the mayor of San Francisco at this time was on the board.

Selix: What was his name at that time?

Appleton: Elmer Robinson. Elmer called me up one day and he said, "Hey, I've got a nice job for you." I didn't even know he was an architect, as a matter of fact, because in our meetings we only discussed things pertaining to the club. He said, "I want you to go out and see Louis Soto. He's chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission, and you tell him that you're the man." I guess he said "man," maybe he said "boy." They had money to build this Hall of Flowers, so we got the contract for that. We did that, and we did ten or twelve libraries around the city, all very nice libraries.

Selix: They are nicely designed.

Appleton: Well, the nicest one is at the Marina. I had a nice experience down there.

Selix: Is that the one that's called the Golden Gate Branch?

Appleton: No, not that.

Bonn: It's the red-brick on the park.

Appleton: Yes, that's right. One day I was doing something down around there. My car was tied up in the gas station, so I thought I'd like to take a walk. I got to the area of this [inaudible] library down there, and I thought I'd go and look at it. I'd never been in it since it had been dedicated. The fact that it was a city library, and well, I knew a lot of people in the branches of the public library here that were involved in this work. I walked in there, and it was a beautiful morning, about seven o'clock. You could look through the windows out onto the grass. One of the girls came to the desk and said, "Is there something I can do for you?" I said, "No, thank you very much. I'm just going by and I thought I'd like to come in." "Well, make yourself at home." I said, "It's awfully nice in here, so quiet; it just makes you want to sit down and stay here and read." "I'm glad you feel that way about it. Just stay here." Oh, there was a table on the side over in one corner and about eight, ten, tiny tots; someone was reading to these children. I walked over and listened to this a little bit and watched the children. Anyway, I watched these darling children, and every once in a while she'd hold her book up and turn the page. So I walked back and talked to the librarian there.

[inaudible] "We love this place. Everybody wants to work down here, you see." That was very nice. I said, "That thing over there, that bronze plaque over there?" She said, "Well, that's the name of everybody who had something to do with this building." I pretended that I couldn't see. I said, "Is A. Appleton up there?" She said, "Oh, yes." "I'm Mr. Appleton. I came in to see the library. Can I get a book?" [laughs] That's the story.

Anyway, we had a nice practice. We did work in Sacramento, and we've done—well, I don't know if we want to get into this.

Selix: More buildings than homes? Have you done many homes in the San Francisco area?

Appleton: A lot of Sea Cliff homes, private homes. We did a lot of work for Harry B. Allen from Belvedere. He developed Sea Cliff when it was just sand dunes. He started doing some work out there, and it was good. I was inspired and I think one of the few times in my life I went into an office and asked him to give me an opportunity to do some work for him; professional people don't do that, you know. I never got a job by going in and asking. In fact, I never seeked a job.

Selix: Well, you haven't had to.

Appleton: No, but I had to seek it, not directly. Anyway, I met Harry—this is interesting—oh, a long story, dear Harry; he's gone now. All these people I [cared for?] are gone. He developed Belvedere.

Selix: Well, you did beautiful homes.

Appleton: Yes, we did.

Selix: Big large homes and beautiful homes. Sea Cliff is a very important—

Appleton: I don't like to speak in figures, don't you know. We've done a lot of work; we've done a lot of prime residential work here and over here and over here. We were very, very lucky. Oh, I must tell you a story about being lucky, very recent, too. [On a tour of the Mission here?] about a year ago—one of the last times Mrs. Appleton and I went out together, we went to a meeting of the Northern California Chapter of American History of Architects. So it was a social evening with the engineers club downtown, and, of course, I took Mrs. Appleton. We hadn't seen a lot of these people for a long time; I was the oldest one there. When I was introduced I said something, I don't know what it was, but I indicated the fact that I might be the oldest one here. I said, "I'm eighty-four." I was eighty-four then. I said, "I can be intimate with my friends, don't you know." It was the younger generation, but they knew me and I knew a lot of them. I said, "Mrs. Appleton, my wife, she's eighty-two." [laughter] They loved it.

But what I want to tell you is this, I told this story—and this really happened. We did a little alteration job for some people. A lot of these people, we'd do the work and never see them again—out on Clay Street. Some people there called us and wanted us to do something in their living room and the man of the house, he had his ideas—well, we did the work—I did the work; I made the drawings, don't you know. I only went by it once. I looked through the window; I didn't want to go in. [inaudible] And it was finished and accepted and all that and I got a beautiful letter, the day it was completed, a letter from the gentleman who was the head of the establishment, from a very nice family. It was a lovely letter—I can't find it again but it said, "Mr. Appleton, I want to thank you personally for doing such an attractive job. It was just what I wanted. Thank you so much. It is beautiful." The next morning—I'm telling the story, you see, in fact I think I read the letter with better showmanship, you see. And the next morning I had a call from Mrs. Mack, I think it was, and before she could say anything I interrupted her and said, "I just had a lovely letter from your husband about the fireplace." She said, "Yes, Mr. Appleton, it smokes," [laughter] and they [the people at the dinner to whom he told the story] almost fell off their chairs.

You have to know when to stop talking, see? This was all after dinner and after the little talks and things like that. I said to [my wife?], "It's time for us to go. I've never been so [inaudible] by anything, but I have to go." Half of the people there got up, you see. They got a cab for us. A few young women went out in the street, took Mrs. Appleton down and got her situated.

Selix: Lovely. I believe you said that you were an officer of that organization?

Appleton: Yes, I served two terms, for two years.

Selix: As president?

Appleton: As president, yes, I worked my way up. [laughs]

Bonn: Did you know Bruce Porter?

Appleton: Yes, I remember the name, and I've met him several times. He was a decorator, wasn't he, an interior decorator?

Bonn: He was more of a designer, an architectural designer.

Appleton: Was he? I met him, yes. I held him in awe because he had a great reputation and I think when I met him I was a draftsman or something like that.

Selix: He designed the Girls' Club building at 362 Capp Street, which is in the Mission District.

Appleton: Who, I did?

Selix: No, Bruce Porter did.

Appleton: Was he an architect?

Selix: Well, he was a designer architect.

Bonn: Not officially an architect, I don't believe.

Selix: Mostly a designer.

Appleton: An architect should be a designer, also.

Selix: You know, when Mr. Peixotto started the Columbia Park Boys' Club, Ray Wolfsohn was a friend of Mr. Peixotto's and when she saw what he was doing for the boys, she said, "Now we have to have a girls' club," and that was the beginning of the Girls' Club down in that same area.

Appleton: Her sister-in-law comes to our house here very often.

Selix: Flora Marx Wolfsohn?

Appleton: Yes.

Selix: I told Flora that we were going to interview you.

Appleton: Oh, she told me that the other day; she comes in to see Mrs. Appleton occasionally. We don't have company, per se. We have friends that constantly come to see us; it's a very important thing. I took Mrs. Appleton for a ride this morning.

Selix: Oh, did you?

Appleton: Oh yes, we can get around. We get her into a wheelchair. We help her. She walks into the elevator, we take it down, and we boost her into the car, wrap her up, and take her out. It was a beautiful morning.

Selix: Do you just have one son? Do you have any daughters?

Appleton: No, just one son.

Selix: Your son is Robert Oser Appleton and he is an architect.

Appleton: Yes.

Selix: Does he practice in San Francisco?

Appleton: We had a firm Appleton and Wolfard; he was a partner with Appleton and Wolfard for a while. He didn't practice independently. Because we are involved—I am, don't you know—because we are involved in some boards we never expected—. I say "we." He and the attorneys did a—there's firm called Appleton and Appleton, you see. I'm the Appleton and I carry the prestige of having a—well, he has a certificate, too. He's also a certificated architect, but he's not practicing.

Selix: I believe you said he was with the city?

Appleton: That's right, with the Bureau of Architecture.

Selix: In the city of San Francisco.

Appleton: Yes, he's an architect there. They have categories there: draftsmen. He qualifies as an architect.

Selix: How did you meet Flora Wolfsohn?

Appleton: [laughs] I met Flora's husband Fred.

Selix: Fred Wolfsohn.

Appleton: Yes, Fred the orthodontist. You must have gone to Fred because your teeth are nice and straight.

Selix: No.

Appleton: I met Fred at the Concordia Club I used to belong to the Concordia Club I don't know anybody there anymore, all my friends are gone; there was a gang of us and they're all gone.

Selix: You knew Fred personally, then, as a friend.

Appleton: Oh yes, sure, he used to cheat me at bridge.

Bonn: Everything you're saying is going in.

Appleton: I'm only saying that for [my health?]. We used to play cards. Wednesday night we all— whoever wanted to—the men would go out; I don't go out any more. On Wednesday nights we would go down there for dinner. I used to go there early in the morning and go to the gym and swim, exercise and have breakfast down there, and walk downtown.

Selix: What was Mrs. Appleton's maiden name?

Appleton: Oser.

Selix: And what is her first name?

Appleton: Hilda.

Selix: Is she a San Franciscan?

Appleton: No, she was born in Chico.

Selix: Her family was in business in Chico?

Appleton: Yes, that's right. Her father established a firm there; it's still, [Payne's?] is still there.

Selix: Yes, the name sounds very familiar. What kind of a business was it?

Appleton: Women's clothes and—

Selix: Oh, apparel.

Appleton: Yes, I guess it was apparel; everything they have there you can wear [laughter].

Selix: What sparked your interest in being an architect?

Appleton: I didn't even know what an architect was. In high school, at Lick Wilmerding, they had a course called architecture. I didn't do anything at all pertaining to it, it was mostly mechanical drawing, as I remember, you see, and that's where I heard the word architect, but that didn't inspire me particularly. What inspired me was when I got a job in an architect's office! Now if I wanted someone to get me a job, the Hills Brothers for instance, I would have been interested in coffee. I worked there—I always liked to draw. This comes to my mind, I've thought of it several times. At school—I went to the Franklin Grammar School on Eighth Street, if I remember—

Selix: Eighth and what?

Appleton: Oh, down Harrison and Bryant down in there, there was a Franklin Grammar School. I remember looking out of the—I could see from my classroom window the dome of City Hall and I took my pen and I—I don't remember doing this but I must have drawn what I saw or drew what I thought would look like the City Hall, or just the dome, a simple form. And I remember, maybe weeks or months after—it was in the geography class—I saw a drawing of the City Hall and I was amazed that it looked like the City Hall. I don't know what that means but that was the first thing I can remember ever trying to draw something seriously. I remember in school I used to draw on the blackboard in different classes. I'm trying to remember the name of the art teacher we had that came around from school to school and taught us art; what it was I do not know. I was always drawing Japanese lanterns; you know these things with the bamboo and the black top and black bottom and so forth, and I could do that easily. I used to go down to the classrooms and show the children how to draw.

Selix: Did you have good perspective?

Appleton: No. Well, I had little knowledge of perspective in high school, yes.

Selix: Oh, you were taught perspective.

Appleton: Oh yes, that was form, which reminds me of an interesting story. I had this little instruction in perspective—

TABLE OF CONTENTS—DOROTHY SCHNITMAN

INTERVIEW WITH DOROTHY SCHNITMAN

Date of interview: April 17, 1973

[Tape 16, Side A].....31

Earliest recollections of the Girls' Club—Family background—Senior Girls' Club, attempting to recall Girls' Club members and activities—Eva Wolfsohn, other Wolfsohn family members, Men's Club—Involvement with Jewish organizations in San Francisco—Trips to Israel in 1959, 1965 and 1968—Religious upbringing—Jewish population in the Mission, Richmond, and Sunset Districts.

[Tape 16, Side B]47

Earthquake and fire of 1906—High school education—Employment as accountant and bookkeeper—Interviewer's account of the significance of Girls' Club members' social connections with each other—More on involvement with Jewish organizations—Prominent Jewish families—Attempting to recall the people, including artists, who had an early role in Girls' Club—On current level of daily activity, more on family, more on Israel.

INTERVIEW WITH DOROTHY SCHNITMAN

[Date of interview: April 10, 1973]

[Tape 16, Side A]

Selix: We are meeting in the home of Dorothy Schnitman to reminisce about the Girls' Club that was founded by Rachel Wolfsohn in San Francisco. Adrienne Bonn and Leah Selix will act as moderators.

Dorothy, what is your earliest recollection of the Girls' Club?

Schnitman: Well, we lived on Langton Street, south of Market, and our back stairs in the backyard faced the backyard of this area where the Girls' Club was.

Selix: Was that a private residence where the club was located? Was it an old home, a two-story home?

Schnitman: There was something upstairs, and I know there was a store downstairs. I think there must have been flats upstairs. I know it wasn't the ground floor.

Selix: What year were you born? What is your birth date?

Schnitman: 1888.

Selix: How old were you when you first became acquainted with the Girls' Club? The club started about 1900 or 1902.

Schnitman: It must have been about 1902. I was going to say before 1906. It might have been that.

Selix: Around about 1902.

Schnitman: I think so, more or less, because we were not burnt out there, I know that, you see. So, that's how I—

Selix: You were not burnt out?

Schnitman: In that house, you see what I mean? We had moved from there before the fire. That's how I'm trying to place it, you see.

Selix: Your home, at the time, backed the back of the Girls' Club building.

Schnitman: Yes, and we saw them playing games in the backyard, you know [inaudible].

Selix: In other words, the club was already in operation and you lived right in back of it, but you didn't know it for a while.

Schnitman: That's right, and I can't tell you how long. Maybe I became aware of it right in the beginning. I don't know how long it had been in progress.

- Selix: And when you went to the club, what were your activities?
- Schnitman: I don't remember those days, I don't know what we did, whether we played games or talked. At that age, I guess—I don't know what we were doing. All I can see is kids playing.
- Selix: Were you about fourteen years old?
- Schnitman: I guess, yes.
- Selix: You were a teenager.
- Schnitman: Well, teenagers in those days weren't teenagers today; don't forget that.
- Selix: I know, there is a big difference. How many children were there in your family?
- Schnitman: Four children; I'm the eldest.
- Selix: How many girls and how many boys?
- Schnitman: Three girls.
- Selix: Did all three girls go to club?
- Schnitman: Not at that time. After the fire, but they weren't active.
- Selix: I see, you were the most active.
- Schnitman: I was the active one. They went; me, the middle one, she was more active then, but the younger one—
- Selix: What was her name?
- Schnitman: Esther.
- Selix: Do you remember Rachel Wolfsohn?
- Schnitman: Very well, of course.
- Selix: Tell us all you can about Rachel.
- Schnitman: Well, I don't know where to start, what place.
- Selix: Well, what did she look like, and her personality, and the kind of a person she was.
- Schnitman: She was of medium height, very nice-looking person, a warm person I would say, and friendly. She was thoughtful, kind.
- Selix: How did you happen to be living in that neighborhood?

Schnitman: God knows [inaudible]. [laughter]

Selix: Was your father in business in that neighborhood?

Schnitman: No, it was a Jewish neighborhood, and I guess that probably was—

Selix: Was it predominantly Jewish at that time?

Schnitman: I wouldn't say it was predominantly, but there were plenty of Jews all around [inaudible].

Selix: They were. Was your father in business for himself?

Schnitman: A little later, before that, yes, he was. They had a—what do you call it—general merchandise store.

Selix: Oh, really? In that neighborhood?

Schnitman: On Folsom Street.

Selix: It was sort of a family business.

Schnitman: Yes, of course. That was near Folsom, I don't know just—

Bonn: Are you a native San Franciscan?

Schnitman: Just about.

Selix: Were you born in San Francisco?

Schnitman: No.

Selix: Oh, you weren't. What country did your family come from?

Schnitman: Russia. I wasn't born in Russia, born in New York on their way.

Selix: They stopped in New York and then—

Schnitman: That's right, and then they came here.

Selix: What was your father's full name?

Schnitman: Abraham.

Selix: Abraham Schnitman. And your mother's maiden name?

Schnitman: Mary Pullman.

Selix: Was she also from Russia?

Schnitman: Yes.

Selix: They had married in Russia in other words.

Schnitman: Yes.

Selix: What is your earliest recollection of the activities at the Girls' Club when it was in the lower Mission area?

Schnitman: I don't know. For a time there, then I sort of lost track of it, and then—I know after the fire or the day of the fire, they moved—people came with cups and [inaudible] to the Wolfsohn home. [inaudible] If that wasn't their home, I think it was lower flats [inaudible] somewhere around [inaudible-Washington?], and they had the club there for quite a time. I believe that from there, they moved into the building on Capp?

Selix: 362 Capp Street.

Schnitman: Well, I'm not positive about that.

Selix: They were at Twentieth and Capp for a while, and for a while they met in the home of Sylvia and Ellen Simons.

Schnitman: Did they? I didn't know that.

Selix: Yes, at Twentieth and Howard I think that was.

Schnitman: The Simons lived at Twentieth and Howard at that time?

Selix: Yes, they had moved down there. Of course, they were very active in the club from the very beginning. Did your mother take an active part in the club?

Schnitman: No.

Selix: She was busy with the business.

Schnitman: Yes.

Selix: If you don't remember the early part when it was down around Seventh Street, what are your first recollections of activities at 362 Capp Street?

Schnitman: They hadn't done—it seems to me they used to have some games, and they had the big hall, you might say an executive committee like—[phone rings] We had—it was a big committee of girls, naturally, they were all girls, and—oh, the club had a number of divisions, let's say. So, there would be the babies, somewhere under six years old I think, and then there would be the, what do you call—?

Selix: The grammar school. They called them the [Alice Freeman Palmer Girls?].

- Schnitman: Then they had the older—what were more like you'd call the high school girls, and then they had us girls at that time, we were the business girls. By that time, we were working, and they called us—I believe it was the Rachel Wolfsohn—wasn't it?
- Selix: No, that was the Mothers' Club.
- Schnitman: What did they call us girls?
- Selix: I think they just called the working girls the Senior Girls' Club.
- Schnitman: Was it? I can't remember, I know we had some title. Then they had the young mothers.
- Selix: That was the Rachel Wolfsohn Mothers' Club.
- Schnitman: The young mothers. Then they had the older mothers, see, their mothers.
- Selix: The Delores Mothers' Club, which later became the Eva Wolfsohn Mothers' Club after Eva died.
- Schnitman: I don't remember just exactly how—then they had the grandmothers, if you remember.
- Selix: Did they have the grandmothers in the very beginning? I think that came later when the women got older.
- Schnitman: Yes, as they got old enough to have a group for that.
- Selix: Yes, because it was the same families that grew under the club.
- Schnitman: The same families. And they had then, I believe that the grandmothers—I think might have become great-grandmothers by that time—but some of them still meet.
- Selix: I believe they do.
- Schnitman: I met somebody, I can't remember who, not too long ago, but I met someone and she said that they—
- Selix: The grandmothers still meet.
- Schnitman: The few who are left of the—well, maybe they would be the great-grandmothers, the oldest group. Some of the few who are left still see one another.
- Selix: I wish you could remember who that was.
- Schnitman: I can't remember just who it was, but I remember the situation.
- Selix: Well, tell us about this executive committee that was composed of the working girls. What decisions did they make?

Schnitman: Well, I don't know just what decisions, but we used to talk over all the matters that the club had. We'd have dinner, and then we'd talk over all the matters of the club, the plans and picnics or parties.

Bonn: A typical business meeting.

Schnitman: Friends of the parties and—

Selix: This was the group that met in Miss Eva's quarters for dinner.

Schnitman: In the dining room. I think that that—did you do that while Ray was there?

Selix: Well, we have no recollection of Ray; that was before our time.

Schnitman: Well, I'm just trying to figure if we did it while she was alive. I can remember, one thing I definitely remember, that Ray was alive but she was already ill. We used to have dinners. When Ray was alive, we would have a big dinner. Not this kind of dinner, a big dinner in the big hall.

Selix: A big senior dinner.

Schnitman: A big senior dinner. All the board was invited. They were beautiful dinners, and all the board was invited. We had speakers, and they were very, very nice affairs, very nice. At the last one of those, Ray had been very ill, but they got her up and put her in a chair on the balcony, so that she could see the whole thing, but she couldn't take part in anything. I don't think she even spoke then, but she could see the whole thing. Then after that she died. So, we had those dinners every once in a while, I don't remember how often; but those were really not business, those were just more fun.

Selix: Those were usually when you had a lecturer or speaker.

Schnitman: Something, we had speakers. Or the board members, you know, used to speak and things like that. But then after that, then we started this big committee business, and the senior girls got together, I think just once a month. Maybe it was more often. Maybe it was before every—we used to meet on a Wednesday, I think, and maybe before each meeting that we would get together up there, quite a few of us.

Selix: Do you remember the names of some of the members at that time?

Schnitman: Yes, [Buck?] and Sylvia Simon and—well, all of these girls, you know—

Selix: Ellen Simon and Rose Stiller.

Schnitman: Rose Stiller and Crystal Lake and those girls. You girls, you weren't in those things?

Selix: Well, later, our period was later.

Schnitman: Well, maybe Crystal Lake and Rose were later, too. The earlier ones, I can't think who—oh yes, [Nell Ray?]

- Selix: Beth Barret.
- Schnitman: And Barret, yes. Is Beth the one that was—there was a very sick sister.
- Selix: Nell Barret was very ill, yes.
- Schnitman: Yes that's the one. So, there's Beth Barret and—
- Bonn: Nell Barret was never able to come to club, she was—one time you think she came?
- Schnitman: Not in our time. I don't really know whether she got sick or—I don't know it was something that she had that was—
- Bonn: It was a paralysis.
- Schnitman: Something, some one of those paralytic things, but she never was in club while I can remember, but we always heard of her as being at home, and the club was always interested in her. I can't really recall who else came from that very early period.
- Selix: What were your interests at club? What activities did you engage in?
- Schnitman: I think general, general; just making the plans.
- Selix: Did you take part in drama, or music, or dancing?
- Schnitman: I can still remember that they had some kind of group dance thing that I was in, but I was never—
- Selix: Was that with Anita Peters Wright?
- Schnitman: Yes, that's right, we did have her doing something or other.
- Selix: Were you in her group?
- Schnitman: Yes. I didn't even think of that as being—but I can remember that we had her—and making the general plans.
- Bonn: Nell Ray. Was Ray her maiden name or her married name?
- Schnitman: She was never married, so far as I know, that was her maiden name.
- Bonn: Is she still living, I wonder?
- Schnitman: I don't know whether she's living; but in all these years, occasionally, I would meet her, and I met her—oh, and by the way, was Eva Olsen there in Ray's time?
- Selix: Oh, no, Eva Olsen came later, quite a bit later.
- Schnitman: But Nell Ray, she was never married. I don't know how long ago, but the last time I met her was on the street, and we talked for a long time.

- Selix: In what way do you feel that—
- Schnitman: Let me just interrupt, because I happen to think—[Alma Gotholm?]
- Bonn: She passed away.
- Schnitman: Yes, but wasn't she—
- Selix: She was an original member, yes, she was one of the girls in that group.
- Schnitman: Then she was one of the girls in that group, and her mother was always active in the Mothers'—
- Selix: Oh, really?
- Schnitman: Yes.
- Selix: Oh, that goes back a long, long way.
- Schnitman: Her mother was active in the Mothers' group in those days, and if you wanted to know the mothers—I can still see some of them, but I can't remember their names. First of all, your mother was interested in the Mothers' group.
- Bonn: Yes.
- Schnitman: And then there was—oh, her daughter, her daughter was Sylvia and played in all the plays. Who was that?
- Selix: [Mrs. Balon?].
- Schnitman: No, no, no.
- Bonn: [Haltman, Lieberman]?
- Schnitman: No. And her girl was very active in this, she was a husky woman, and she had two sons. One son—the only reason why I remember is because I saw her, well, I don't know how many years ago, but it's clear in my mind—two sons, and one stuttered so terribly.
- Selix: Oh, Baum, that was Mrs. Baum.
- Schnitman: That's right, that's right. She was active in the Mothers' Club and the daughter, right from the beginning, she was in the plays. Was it Sylvia?
- Selix: Sylvia Baum.
- Schnitman: Yes, she was active in the plays.
- Selix: In what way do you feel that Rachel Wolfsohn, or Eva Wolfsohn, or the Girls' Club influenced your life in any way?

Schnitman: I don't know whether it influenced my life, but in those days, there wasn't too much—well, there were no shows, no TV things, where the young people would go, so it was a center. It was a very good center for these young people to meet, to get together, for social purposes, and whatever goes with the social purposes, but otherwise they're not—and they used to have these long—they used to go on hikes and all the groups used to meet. On hikes, all the different groups—

Selix: You used to go to Willow Camp, didn't you, in the early days?

Schnitman: I never went to Willow Camp, but we used to go to Muir Woods a lot, and not only that, but we used to walk in the Golden Gate Park. We used to meet at Haight and Stanyan, and walk through the park out to the beach, walk through the park to the beach. In those days, it was safe. Oh, we used to sing along the way and all that.

Selix: That took in all the members of the club, didn't it?

Schnitman: Yes, that's right. It was a meeting place, an outlet for the members, because there weren't other things. There wasn't even Girl Scouts [of the USA] in those days, because I remember the Girl Scouts started later. I remember the Girl Scouts started—now, my youngest sister, I wanted her to join right in the beginning, but she wasn't a joiner. She was in high school, and I wanted her to join with her—quite a clique of girls, but she wouldn't. That's how I can place that.

Selix: It seems to me that I recollect a hike one time, or an outing, when we all went to Sutro Park. That's the one out at the beach, where the old house is, and the statues.

Schnitman: Yes.

Selix: And I remember you being on that picnic; that's one of the few recollections I have.

Schnitman: And I don't remember that particular picnic.

Bonn: That wasn't too long ago.

Selix: No, that was after Eva Wolfsohn had died. You had quite a long span of years in the Girls' Club.

Schnitman: That's right. It was intermittent; for a while there, I wasn't going.

Selix: You'd come and go sort of.

Schnitman: Well, I stayed a long time, but I know there were breaks in there that I just can't remember.

Selix: Well, in reading over the bulletin, you took the part of the president and—

Schnitman: That's right, I think I got out before the—

Selix: You were an editor of the bulletin.

Schnitman: I think so; I forgot about that.

Selix: And you wrote for the bulletin?

Schnitman: Yes, I did, but I forgot all about that.

Bonn: So, you were a leading light.

Schnitman: Oh, yes, a leading light.

Selix: Yes, you were. You were one of the leaders in the Girls' Club during a certain period.

Schnitman: I forgot about that, but I remember that we did that.

Selix: I have bulletins that go back to 1924.

Schnitman: Oh, isn't that wonderful. So, you've got better insight in that, because I forgot all about that. That's true.

Selix: What do you remember about Eva Wolfsohn?

Schnitman: She took over right away, and she took over beautifully, I mean no trouble. It passed onto her just as though she had been doing it all the time. She kept up really in the same manner, same ideas and so on, that Ray did. We used to go to shows, to the theater, to music things; we used to go to concerts and things.

Selix: Concerts and operas and—Eva always had tickets for performances.

Schnitman: Yes, and we used to go, and she had a lot of them, so we used to go—and she was very generous, very nice with them, and I always had them; she always gave me a ticket for whatever was going. I used to go to all those things. And we used to have the suppers while she was there. What else did we do?

Bonn: That was the Tuesday night suppers up in Eva's dining room.

Schnitman: Upstairs, yes, that's right. Let's see, when Eva was managing that, I think we called so much of the dinners that we had during Ray's time with the board. I'm not sure about that.

Selix: We had those in Eva's time.

Schnitman: With the board, too?

Selix: Yes.

Schnitman: I can remember that we had them upstairs in her dining room. I don't know what else to tell you about Eva.

Bonn: Did you have any contact with any other members of the family?

Schnitman: Of the Wolfsohn family? Well, I mean I knew them, but I didn't have any social contact on the outside, but I knew them; I think I knew all of them.

Selix: Through the club.

Schnitman: Yes, just through the club, but not socially visiting with them back and forth, but with Gussie, yes, and the boys.

Selix: You remember Mark.

Schnitman: Yes, I remember Mark.

Bonn: Did the boys spend a lot of time at club?

Schnitman: No. The only one that spent some time was Mark.

Selix: He was there quite a bit; and in later years, he was very active.

Schnitman: Yes, he was there quite a bit. I don't really know what actually that he did so much, but he was there. His first Sunday was—do you remember Miss Hall?

Selix: Miss Margaret Hall.

Schnitman: That's right, Margaret Hall. I don't know that he participated in any particular—did he?

Selix: Well, when they started the Men's Club around 1924, Mark acted as the host, and he sort of organized that, and got the men together in the men's group. This was later, you know; they never had men in the beginning, or boys.

Schnitman: I know. I don't even remember the men doing anything too much when I was in it.

Selix: It started in about 1924.

Bonn: They had a nice group.

Selix: They didn't meet at the same time that we met, so you probably wouldn't—unless you had men in your immediate family, you wouldn't have been aware of it probably.

Schnitman: No, I wouldn't really. So, I didn't know about that. [inaudible] so far as Mark was concerned, but I don't remember any particular activities. All I can remember was that he was always there in the later years after he became so friendly with Margaret [inaudible]. But the others weren't there too much.

Selix: Now, you don't remember any classes or groups that you participated in, that you took part in?

Schnitman: I remember that they had a hat-making class, but you see I was never good with handcrafts, never.

Bonn: It was Eva Olsen then that had that class.

- Selix: Mrs. Williams, Pendleton Williams' mother—
- Schnitman: I remember that name.
- Bonn: She had the class?
- Selix: Yes, she taught—oh no, she taught lampshades. It was either millinery or lampshades, I can't remember.
- Schnitman: Some kind of handwork. I remember the name, but you see, I didn't go in too much for that kind of thing, because I'm not good at handwork.
- Selix: Well, you must have been strictly at the executive level then. [laughs]
- Schnitman: Oh, yes, that's right. I liked the lectures and everything like that.
- Selix: And the current events.
- Schnitman: Yes, the current events, and lectures, and things like that, because I wasn't good at anything else.
- Selix: You've been quite active in Jewish organizations in San Francisco, have you?
- Schnitman: Yes.
- Selix: What are the names of some of those groups that you've participated in?
- Schnitman: Now?
- Selix: No, from your early childhood.
- Schnitman: Well, way, way back, when I was really the youngest—I was always interested in Zionism.
- Selix: Oh, were you?
- Schnitman: My first activity was with the Zionist group, and in those days, it was a bad word; to say you were interested in Zionism, it was very bad.
- Selix: It was very inflammatory.
- Schnitman: Yes, people didn't like it, not the word [inaudible] vulgar about it, because it was our own Jewish people.
- Selix: I know.
- Schnitman: It was the upper crust—
- Selix: Didn't approve?

- Schnitman: No. They would say, “We’re supposed to be Americans, you know.” That they didn’t say, but that’s what they meant. That and the B’nai B’rith; I can remember I was the youngest in the whole B’nai B’rith, but I had to be active in something.
- Selix: How old were you when you started in that?
- Schnitman: I’d have to do some figuring. I’ll bet I wasn’t over sixteen.
- Selix: When you started? And that was an adult group, wasn’t it?
- Schnitman: They had no young girls. I had to join, because there was nothing else. Now they have all sorts of things, and now I’m not active in it, but I was for years and years.
- Selix: Did you collect money for Zion in—
- Schnitman: No, I’m no good as a schnorrer for money.
- Selix: My grandmother used to collect money for Zion.
- Schnitman: A lot of people did that, but they had the little boxes, the blue boxes, that they still have. Most people still have a blue box in their house that they pour in, put in their money. There were people who did that, but I never did that, because I never, never could try to ask money from anybody; I’m no good at that.
- Selix: What did you do in the B’nai B’rith [Selix pronounces B’nai, be-nigh]?
- Schnitman: Actually, it’s pronounced B’nai [be-nay] B’rith. Now I come to think of it the [inaudible] might call it B’nai [be-nigh], because they pronounce Yiddish and Hebrew different, but by and large, they call it the B’nai [be-nay] B’rith. I was right away active; the minute I got in, I was one of the chief cooks, and bottle washers, and making plans. I always was planning for affairs; that was my thing. They had a committee—I’ve forgotten what they called it. You know, like an executive committee.
- Selix: And you were on that.
- Schnitman: Right away, because I was planning all the affairs. I never would be a president, I never would take it; and they called me every name in the book, slacker and everything, because I wouldn’t. But I was the head of this committee, which made all the plans for the B’nai B’rith.
- Selix: And what kind of affairs did they have?
- Schnitman: Well, they were social, mostly social.
- Selix: Dances and card games?
- Schnitman: Lots of parties, and card games. I don’t even know what cards, but I still managed the thing and let somebody else do the details. I was really always good in those places, planning affairs. Then I was good at organizing them, having other people do the—

- Selix: That's a great talent. Do you think that the Girls' Club helped you to develop that talent, or do you think you were born with it?
- Schnitman: I think I was born with it, I really think so. I can remember those. For many years, I belonged to that B'nai group.
- Selix: That activity probably covered a longer period than your Girls' Club period.
- Schnitman: Oh, yes, that did, because I was always very much interested in Israel and Zionism from earliest girlhood, I guess you would call it, and I belonged to the B'nai B'rith. In the early days of the Palestine area that was fighting for statehood, which later became Israel, the B'nai B'rith, by and large, was not in favor of it; it was opposed to it. I was a very active member of the women's division; and as far as I can remember, we had this big meeting of all the divisions, men and women. They brought up—we were really discussing this subject. And since I had been in favor of the statehood and opposed to the attitude of the B'nai B'rith, which was more or less against it—at this meeting, the anti-factions were saying such impossible things, the sort of things that I couldn't stand anymore. I couldn't take it, so I walked right out of the meeting and did not go back for many years for that reason, because I couldn't take their attitude on Israel. However, though, Israel became a state; and after a good many years, the attitude of the B'nai B'rith changed. They are very interested now, and they go along and help in their way. They have a very nice building; they call the B'nai B'rith building.
- Selix: Where is that? Is that in Tel Aviv?
- Schnitman: I think it's Jerusalem, but I'm not positive about that. I think it's Jerusalem. It is a very nice building. At the time that I was there, it was new yet, but I believe that now they have developed some new activities there. When I was there, there wasn't too much going on; it was really more just a building, a nice building. I went to one or two—I don't know what they called it—not meetings, in our sense where you have discussions and that, kind of more getting together; and all I can remember was that they had some food there that you bought. I don't remember a speaker or anything like that. They didn't yet know how to do those things, but they do, do them here.
- Selix: When you went to Israel in 1959, and then you went again in '65 and '68, during those subsequent visits did you find much change in Israel?
- Schnitman: Oh, Israel changes from day to day. Israel changes absolutely from day to day, especially in those early years, because there was so much building going on: the streets, the sidewalks and the buildings. The streets and sidewalks were not complete at all; they were broken up in the areas where there was so much building going on. The people there said from week to week they didn't recognize a street. That's the way they started and they had so much building to do, you know.
- Selix: It must have been a very stimulating experience to visit Israel.
- Schnitman: Terrific, terrific, I think. And I believe they did not only then, but from all that you read and hear now from people who are observing people—I don't mean observant, but I mean observing people—there is no other country in the world that it's doing the things that Israel is doing in the short time.

- Selix: And so many innovative things.
- Schnitman: Everything, everything. Now it's almost like little America.
- Selix: Well, they're trying everything for the first time, too, aren't they, many of their experiments in living and communal living?
- Schnitman: Oh, sure. Of course, yes. Of course, they originally started out with the groups, which were communal situations, and that was their original plan, because many of those people object to this advancement. They are getting away from the kibbutz a very great deal. The younger people want to branch out, you know, and do things more like we do in America. Everything there they call the American style.
- Selix: Oh, yes, they're becoming very Americanized.
- Schnitman: Yes, very, very. And when I went there the first time, they didn't even have a big market like we have. When they opened their first one, they call the Supersol in Tel Aviv; that was a big supermarket for them. Of course, it was really big, they had a little of everything; of course, to us, it would be just like a corner grocery. And they were already having American packaged goods, cereals and canned goods they were getting. But after that—I guess it was already there on my second visit—they had a beautiful, big market in another section of Jerusalem I think. It's opposite the King David Hotel, so it has to be in Jerusalem; a beautiful market, a big one. They were trying to run it down the American style.
- Selix: Were you raised in an Orthodox environment?
- Schnitman: My family was more or less Orthodox, not strictly Orthodox, but more or less.
- Selix: And what temple did you attend when you lived at Seventh Street?
- Schnitman: Down there somewhere on Folsom or Howard, around Sixth Street maybe or so, there was an Orthodox temple.
- Selix: Do you remember the name of it?
- Schnitman: No, but I believe that that is the one that became—but I'm not sure—became that orthodox one that was here until very recently on Webster and McAllister, that that was the Kenesett Israel. I think that—after that burnt out, I guess, I think after it burnt down.
- Selix: The one at Webster and McAllister was a very small synagogue, wasn't it?
- Schnitman: Yes.
- Selix: I believe that's the one that my grandparents went to.
- Schnitman: Could be. I think that that is the same group that was way down there, because after that there were more. After that in the Mission—after the fire, yes, after the fire, many of the Jews moved farther out in the Mission, you know. The fire was up to about six feet, I guess, so all of those that lived out in the middle of Mission, a lot of Jews lived there,

and they built that other temple, the Orthodox shul; it's still there on 19th and Guerrero, I think.

Selix: Oh, and it's still there?

Schnitman: Oh, yes, still there and active. And in those days, like all the Shensons and the Dillers and the Langendorfs and all of them, they all supported that—

Selix: Did they live in that neighborhood in the Mission district.

Schnitman: And the Sugarmans and the furniture people.

Selix: The [Lockmans?]?

Schnitman: No, they were the German groups, Lockmans; these were more Russian Jews.

Selix: You're thinking of the Starlight Furniture—

Schnitman: No, the big factory, they had a big factory. Now, I know they might still be there, but I can't think of their names. But anyway, all those families supported the—

Selix: Do you remember the names of any of the other Jewish families who lived in the Mission?

Schnitman: Yes. Those were huge families, you know, Sugarmans and—I mean all of these and except this other family, that I can't think of now, which is a big family, and they all became well-to-do too.

Selix: And moved out of the Mission.

Schnitman: Yes, of course.

Selix: As your economic status improved.

Schnitman: That's right, then they all scattered around.

Selix: Many of them moved into the Richmond district.

Schnitman: There wasn't much else any other place to move in those days, you know, and then the Sunset opened up after that.

Selix: Well, the Sunset was sort of predominantly Catholic, wasn't it?

Schnitman: I don't know, but a long time after, up there, the Sunset became quite a Jewish—Irving Street and all those avenues way out there. Now it's very Jewish there. They've got all sorts of the Jewish delicatessens and butcher shops and everything, I think right now. I don't go there—

Selix: I understand that in the early days that there were many churches in the Mission district, practically every denomination: Catholic and—

Schnitman: Well, I think so because that was the big area.

Selix: That was the residential area originally.

Schnitman: Well, I don't mean in the mining days, but that was—the middle class or working class was all out there in the Mission. It was nice then, very nice.

Selix: What do you remember about the Mission district in those days?

Schnitman: I don't know, just a very nice working-class area, a lot of little stores, mom and pop stores, whatever you want to call them; they had everything right there. It was a very nice district.

Selix: You never really had to go downtown for anything if you didn't want to.

Schnitman: I don't remember about that, but anyway, it was very nice until the recent years; I think, until the war years.

[Tape 16, Side B]

Selix: Dorothy, what do you remember about the fire and earthquake?

Schnitman: Well, we were living on Folsom Street at Tenth, and my folks had a store there, and we were awakened in the morning. The whole family ran out in our nightgowns. The house that we were in was stood up, only that I think [inaudible] and dishes maybe, things like that, broke, but the building didn't cave in or anything. There was no fire there; the earthquake did not cause the fire there. That whole area—it was later in the day. See, the whole city didn't really just break up into a fire; they dynamited an area thinking they could make a firebreak, or whatever they called it; so where I lived, it didn't burn. If it hadn't been bombed like that, we would not have been homeless, but then we got out.

I remember that we saw people streaming coming from the lower area, Market area, or whatever you call that, everybody streaming up and coming away from that area. Then I—maybe already because the fire department, or the police, or whoever they were, came and ordered us out; so maybe they had already done that in the lower section, so that these people were leaving on foot. I believe that they came to us in our area there and told us that we've got to get out because we're going to bomb this. So we did; and we were lucky, a man came by in, what do you call them, like a little open pickup truck, no cover, but an open truck with one horse. He saw us standing out there, and he stopped. Maybe my father and mother asked him to take us because we were four kids, somewhere way out to get away from this area, so he did. We piled in there, and I remember I had no shoes. I had a pair of slippers on. I don't remember what the other kids had on. I guess maybe we put our coats on or something, and we had no shoes, because we had to get out right away. Maybe we fooled around at the beginning and didn't want to get out or something. Then they came with the guns, these—what do you call these?

Selix: Militia?

Schnitman: Militia. They came with guns, and said, “Get out,” so we got out. I remember I had slippers on. The only way I remember that is because we went with this man in his truck and took us way out to, what they called, San Bruno Road in those days, way, way out Mission area, took us there. And it so happened that my folks knew this family there, and they had a home, and they had the downstairs was like a finished basement. They had us living there, and that’s where we stayed. But then I must tell you about the man with this express truck. My father wanted to pay him, but he wouldn’t take a penny, and I’m sure he wasn’t Jewish, that I can remember, I don’t think he was Jewish. It’s funny how things stick because after all I was young, you know.

Selix: Well, I think that it’s so amazing, because there were so many people who needed transportation, that you were so fortunate to be the ones who were selected.

Schnitman: Well, it just happened. I guess they came by, and my father and mother, I imagine, must have stopped it; and I think I can remember them even saying something, I mean all together, that he didn’t care, he just wanted to help somebody. So as long as my folks stopped him, he’d just as soon help us as anybody else, you know.

Selix: How long did you live out there at—?

Schnitman: Oh, we were there—because it’s very hard to get to—there was no transportation either—it was very hard to get back in. I can’t remember, it must have been a matter of weeks. Where did we go, where did we live? I don’t know how we got it, but I know though it must have been—because we didn’t stop—we got in the Mission. What street was that? Twenty-fourth Street in the Mission then, from Mission and a few blocks up, like beyond Folsom, up that way, you know, not the [inaudible] way, the other way.

Selix: Oh, below.

Bonn: Treat [Avenue].

Schnitman: Well, I mean several blocks along in there. Maybe it was, because that didn’t burn, so maybe they had all these little stores and things there at the time. Because that was like, say, little Mission Street at that time, and my folks got a place in there.

Bonn: And that’s where you relocated after—

Schnitman: After coming from San Bruno Road, we went in there, and there was a store. My folks bought out a store right there, and there were two rooms in the back, and we lived in those two rooms; you couldn’t get anything else. We lived in those two rooms until around the corner, and I think it was Treat Avenue—I never would have thought of the name, but I think it was Treat—that this house was built, and I think it was a three-story flat. Before it was finished, my folks rented the flat, and that’s how we got in there.

Selix: And that’s where you lived when you went to the Girls’ Club.

Schnitman: Yes, that’s where life began again for all the activities and things. We lived there for quite some time, I don’t remember how many years, until we could move to—my folks

bought another store, moved from this place to Sixteenth and Valencia, where they opened a store. And then we lived on Sixteenth and Church quite a few years. Then from Sixteenth and Church, we moved to Dolores and Fourteenth, and we lived there for quite a few years. It was better living there, nicer living there.

Selix: Did you go to high school?

Schnitman: Yes.

Selix: Which high school did you go to?

Schnitman: The Girls' High.

Selix: Oh, did you, way over on Geary Street?

Schnitman: Yes, Girls' High. Then after that, later on, at some time, we were on Dolores, and I went to Mission High and took a lot of extra classes; that's where I did a lot of extra classes. I remember I studied languages there, French and Spanish.

Selix: What kind of companies did you work for? You were an accountant and a bookkeeper?

Schnitman: Yes.

Selix: Do you remember the names of some of the early companies that you were employed by?

Schnitman: I worked for I. Magnin.

Selix: How many years?

Schnitman: Several years.

Selix: [Alma Godding?] was—

Schnitman: That's right, yes.

Selix: Was she there when you were there? She was there, I think, her whole lifetime, her working lifetime.

Schnitman: I think so. She did the alterations. I think after I. Magnin, well, I was home working our store for quite some time. Yes, I was working in our store.

Selix: What did your father call his store? Did he use his name, or did he have a trade name for it?

Schnitman: I think he called it "The Modern" or something like that.

Bonn: It was a furniture store?

Schnitman: No, a general store and all that kind of thing. Then after he graduated from the general store to just men's; finally, in fact he finished up with just men's. After I wanted to do something, went out of the store, then I worked—I don't think I should put the name in—one of the big corporations—because this is on—I'm not going to say—for a good many years, one of our very big corporations here.

Bonn: Tell us about after your corporation experience.

Schnitman: Then I went to Washington D.C. and worked there during the war years.

Selix: That was the Second World War?

Schnitman: Yes. Wait a minute, was it the Second World War or was it Korea? Well, anyway, it must have been the Second World War.

Selix: Around 1939-40?

Schnitman: I went there in 1936.

Selix: Oh, the Depression years; that was before the war.

Bonn: The war started in—

Selix: Well, we got into it in '41.

Bonn: Our involvement with Japan was in '41.

Schnitman: I went there in 1936.

Selix: Were you in the government?

Schnitman: That's when I got in.

Selix: You worked for the government?

Schnitman: Yes. Then I stayed there until I quit altogether; I left there in '53, I think.

Bonn: You've been retired for twenty years then.

Schnitman: Well, I've been retired—yes, that's about it, that's about it.

Selix: You know, it's surprising how the paths of the members of the Girls' Club seem to cross.

Schnitman: Did they?

Selix: All through life, you know, you run into people that you knew at the Girls' Club. I remember that several years ago, a friend of ours, Charles Weisinger, was installed as some kind of an officer for the B'nai B'rith or on some committee, and we went there to attend it, and we met you that evening in the hall.

- Bonn: At the Concordia Club.
- Selix: At the Concordia Club and not too many years ago.
- Schnitman: Oh, yes, that was late, late. Yes, that's right.
- Selix: Do you know the Weisingers?
- Schnitman: No, not personally.
- Selix: Well, this is rather an interesting point, because in 1957, I was on the board of directors of the Girls' Club, which had by then become the Mission Neighborhood Center, and I got Mrs. Weisinger interested in becoming a board member. And she did, and she was a wonderful board member and did a great deal of work for the Club. The last project that she and her husband were involved in at the Club was going through the files and collecting anything that was of historical interest for the Bancroft Library. And then it was only through circumstances that I got involved this past year in doing this tape recording for the Bancroft Library. So, you see, our paths cross and re-cross.
- Schnitman: It's fantastic.
- Selix: And do you know that if I hadn't met you that night at the Concordia Club, it never would have occurred to me that I would have been able to find you for this project. Your name is the first one on the list of people that I started to contact.
- Schnitman: Isn't that something? Indeed, it is; it's fascinating.
- Selix: Now, what were some of the other Jewish organizations that you were a member of? You mentioned the Emmanuel Sisters.
- Schnitman: Sisterhood. That's right. That was, you know, the same idea as the Girls' Club more or less; it's a center. Because in those days, they didn't have the distractions and attractions that the young people have today; so, I believe that their idea was to give these young people some place to go, you know. And it was modernizing too, because they came, most of them came from these real orthodox families, which maybe weren't too Americanized even in those days. And the heads of the Sisterhood, I mean the patrons, just like we had patrons, more or less were those same families. Because those old Jewish families, more or less, that's what they all were, but you see, they were interested in those things.
- Selix: Was it about the same group would you say that—
- Schnitman: More or less. I can't remember the names and who—but because there was just one group of all those families, the Sloss families, and the Fleishhackers, and the old Zellerbachs—that's kind of one big group.
- Selix: They were the German Jewish families of the city, and I think that they were the ones who prospered first.
- Schnitman: Yes, well, they were the first ones here; they were the pioneers.

- Selix: The German Jews?
- Schnitman: More or less, those families were the early arrivals.
- Selix: Oh, they were the early arrivals.
- Schnitman: When they came, they were poor, they were all poor, they were all peddlers and so on, but they had it in them to—they became all of our big bankers and big corporations, Alaska Commercial [Company], and all those people, the Slosses, all of them. It was those people who opened these various things. And I remember at the Emmanuel Sisterhood, they had a Sunday school, because I remember I went to that Sunday school at Emmanuel.
- Selix: Do you remember that Rachel Wolfsohn was involved in that at all?
- Schnitman: No, I don't think so.
- Selix: You don't remember that.
- Schnitman: I don't think she was. Now, I don't know whether her group was already started then or not, maybe not, I don't remember. Let's see, how did Rachel start it? She was a social worker, and who went in with her?
- Selix: Eva went in with her.
- Schnitman: No, I mean someone else.
- Selix: There was a Mr. Sidney Peixotto, who started the Columbia Park Boys' Club.
- Schnitman: Yes, that's right, that's right. She had a number of those friends. I remember there was this other fellow—I can't think of his name—he was an artist, I think. They were all very friendly with her.
- Selix: There was Gottardo Piazzoni, Joe [Joseph] Raphael.
- Bonn: Ralph [Ward] Stackpole.
- Schnitman: Yes, and there is another one. I can see him, but I can't think of his name. I think he [inaudible] a little bit different, if I can remember. He had a car, and in those days, that was something; he used to take some of us out. I can't remember his name.
- Selix: And he was an artist?
- Schnitman: I don't know whether he was really an artist, but he wasn't a mechanical man or something like that. I don't remember what his name was, but I can still see him. Ray had somebody else that—was it the Peixottos, who worked right in the beginning with Ray? That was before I knew them, but that was the story, that Ray had somebody else who was interested in working; I think it was Peixotto.
- Selix: It may have been, because Ray drew much of her inspiration from the Peixottos.

- Schnitman: Yes, and I believe that he—I think it was he, but there was a woman in that Peixotto family, too, if I remember.
- Selix: I believe it was Mrs. Peixotto.
- Schnitman: I'm not sure. Anyway, she had someone and then—is this on?
- Bonn: Yes.
- Schnitman: Then Eva sort of just came in, kind of like a helper sister. Now, what else?
- Selix: Now, you belonged to the Emmanuel Sisterhood and the B'nai B'rith. Were there any other organizations that you were active in?
- Schnitman: Not at that time, not at that time.
- Selix: Well, at any time of your life?
- Schnitman: Oh, since then, I think I've been in all the Jewish organizations.
- Bonn: Do you speak Hebrew?
- Schnitman: No, a word here and there. I can read it slowly, but I can't—a word here and there that I might recognize.
- Selix: Do you still go to temple?
- Schnitman: Yes, I go to temple.
- Selix: Is there one near here?
- Schnitman: I go to Sherith Israel at California and Webster. I mean I have my membership there, but I visit the others every once in awhile.
- Selix: How do you get around?
- Schnitman: Buses.
- Selix: Do you really?
- Schnitman: Sure, until this year. It never bothered me to go out at night anyplace I wanted to go, but not this year. This year if I go out, they've got to come and get me. Not my physical condition, that doesn't bother me, never bothered me. In fact, I've never had a physical condition until this last year.
- Selix: Until you had this eye surgery.
- Schnitman: The eye and the arthritis; the arthritis really has gotten so bad. But this year, I never want to go out at night.

- Selix: I haven't been willing to go out at night for many years.
- Schnitman: Well, it never bothered me until just about the last year; and all my connections are away from downtown. I'm practically the only one—the few people down here that I do know down here don't have cars nowadays, and it's a problem.
- Selix: It makes it difficult to get around.
- Schnitman: And the things that I really like and am really interested in attending, participating, are at night; most of them are at night. I just have a hard time, because you can't ask people to come way out of their way; they all live out in Richmond. If I lived in Richmond or Sunset, I'd have no problem. And you can't take a cab everywhere you go.
- Selix: No, you can't afford to do that.
- Schnitman: You can't. It costs you four or five dollars every night; and if you want to go three or four nights a week, it's expensive; so, you do without it.
- Selix: You've had a very active life, haven't you?
- Schnitman: Yes, I think so.
- Selix: And a very fulfilling life.
- Schnitman: Well, I don't know whether we ever feel fulfilled.
- Bonn: There's always something else you could have done.
- Schnitman: In my case anyway, I don't know, but so many ideas that you have that I haven't been able to come to first base with, because it's hard to get the right people interested in what you want to do. So, the word fulfilling is—well, the fact is—
- Selix: Is your sister, Minnie Holbert, the only other living member of your family?
- Schnitman: I have my younger sister, Esther, but she's sick, she's very sick.
- Selix: Did she marry?
- Schnitman: Yes, and she has one daughter.
- Selix: What is Esther's married name?
- Schnitman: Boughner, B-O-U-G-H-N-E-R. And she has just one daughter; the daughter lives in Berkeley. And by the way, have you heard of The Body Shop, the lotions and that kind of thing?
- Bonn: Yes.
- Schnitman: Well, near you the Union Street—she's got three or four places now.

- Selix: Oh, yes.
- Schnitman: That is Esther's daughter, Jane; she's the one who worked up this thing.
- Selix: She founded it.
- Schnitman: Yes, fantastic.
- Selix: What occupation was her father in?
- Schnitman: They had an automobile agency, not here, back east. But he died very young as the result of the—he was on the ship that sank in the war; he was in the war. What war, now, was that? The Second World War. On this ship—was it the *Lusitania*, or was it—*Titanic, Titanic*.
- Bonn: That was the First World War, before the first. The *Titanic*?
- Schnitman: I don't remember now; it was one of those big ships that went down.
- Selix: Well, the *Lusitania* was the other one, but that wasn't the Second World War. I guess we're not very good with [inaudible].
- Schnitman: I think it was the First World War, and that ship, you know—and I think he was the last one to get off, but it did something to him. Right after that that he married my sister. But they got acquainted here in San Francisco. He lived back East, but he came here, and they got acquainted here. And then he went into the war, and when this was all over, then he came back here and married, but then she had to go back there to live.
- Bonn: Is this Jane married?
- Schnitman: Yes.
- Bonn: What's her name?
- Schnitman: Jane Saunders.
- Selix: And she's the one who has The Body Shop.
- Schnitman: And Jane has The Body Shop.
- Selix: Is this a joint venture with her husband?
- Schnitman: Nobody.
- Selix: She did it on her own.
- Schnitman: This is Jane. And a fantastic figure [inaudible] never in the world; she had no business sense, no nothing. She never did—she was a homebody, you know, that kind of thing. Of course, she got married and all that part, but nothing like—all of the sudden, she got there and then she [inaudible] absolutely fantastic. It was started in Berkeley when they

lived there, and I was there this past week. She's so busy you have to make an appointment to go to see her. Honest to goodness, you can't see her. So, this week, Thursday, I went over there. She is an adorable girl, very tall and slim.

Selix: Did Minnie Holbert have children?

Schnitman: Yes, there's a boy and a girl. Minnie's husband was an optometrist.

Selix: In San Francisco?

Schnitman: Oh, yes, an expert, a very nice person. He died only about a year ago. He was very well known. They had a boy and a girl; and the boy is an optometrist in San Jose, and the daughter lives in San Rafael and is married.

Selix: What was your brother's full name?

Schnitman: Michael.

Selix: Michael Schnitman. What was his occupation?

Schnitman: He had worked for himself in office supplies, I guess you'd call it.

Selix: Wholesale office supplies or retail?

Schnitman: No, not retail, wholesale, I guess or whatever you'd call that, but he didn't have a store.

Bonn: Michael's not a Jewish name, is it?

Schnitman: Yes. In Jewish, you call it whatever you call it, but there are a lot of Michaels who are Jewish, first names. I happen to know some of them, too. We always called him Mike, but he's gone; he died in '65, I think. It doesn't seem that long ago that he died.

Selix: Does your sister Minnie like The Sequoias?

Schnitman: Yes. Of course, she moved there when her husband was alive.

Selix: Oh, they lived there together.

Schnitman: Oh, yes, but he died there. She likes it very much; they both liked it.

Selix: It's a beautiful place.

Schnitman: Yes, and they gave up their—they had a nice, big home, but they didn't want the big home anymore. They decided it would be easier and so on, and they liked it very much. They both liked it and she likes it [inaudible].

Selix: I understand that you were planning a trip to Israel this year.

Schnitman: Yes, I wanted to go. See, I'm not good in the heat; I'm not good in the warm weather. I get lifeless. Everywhere I go, anywhere, I like to go really early in the spring, at the end

of the winter; so, I'll have a longer period. And I was really planning to go, and really like to go, say, about the middle of March or so, because I've always stayed. I've never—

Selix: How long do you stay when you go?

Schnitman: My first time I was out of the country about six months.

Selix: You stayed all that time in Israel?

Schnitman: Almost, I was in Israel almost that time. The next time, I stayed a little over four months, and the last time, I stayed about two months.

Selix: You stay in a hotel when you go?

Schnitman: No, because it's too expensive. If you go anywhere, if you go stay a few days or a week, you can go to the Hilton and still live and eat. But if you want to stay any longer, unless you have relatives or something—but in Israel, they call them hotels, the little ones, but they are more glorified boarding houses. But they call them hotels, at least they did; I don't know what they call them now. And of course, in the beginning, you've heard only lately, but they have everything there, the Hiltons and all the others; everything is there now, but they are high priced and very beautiful too. But I always found a boarding house.

Selix: Well, spending that length of time there must have given you a great opportunity to become acquainted with the way of life.

Schnitman: I was, that's what I went for. I never was interested in traveling. I didn't care about going to any of these European countries on a tour; I always went independent. Because on a tour, they show you this building, that building, the outside, "You see that over there, see this over here," that kind of thing. Another thing is what did those buildings and those statues and all this kind of thing, what did they commemorate? They commemorated nothing but wars, didn't they, all of them, the Eiffel Tower or any of them. So what? I'm not interested in any of that. I don't care about the dead, I'm thinking about the life; so, I never was interested in those tours. I was always independent and I knew just exactly beforehand; I read a lot, I always read a lot, knew what I wanted to do, see. When you get into, like in up in Israel and the [inaudible], I took many of their tours. I lived right with the people and talked Yiddish most of the time. See, I can speak Yiddish. Of course, now there's quite a bit of English, but anyway, I wanted to really practice my Yiddish, so I spoke Yiddish most of the time. And there were so many people that come in there from all the other countries, and so once in awhile, I can speak a little Spanish, a little French, and then you use your hands, and once in awhile, you speak English. They loved for you to speak English to them. Sometimes it's so bad that you tell them to speak Yiddish instead [laughs]. So I had no trouble, no trouble at all.

Selix: Did you find—especially on your last trip—did you find that there were very many young Americans travelling in Israel?

Schnitman: Oh, yes, yes, there were many young Americans all over Europe. Well, I had to stop, not that I wanted to visit—you find an awful lot of young people who were traveling. They take these student tours, you know, and that, and some of them, their whole trip is two weeks. They've just got a vacation, and they have only two weeks. Of course, I can't see traveling that way. I did ask one young couple like that—it seems to me so; I don't know—anyway, they said we can't get anything else, so they take it. But most of them come from the East Coast where it's very cheap. They think nothing of spending their vacation on—and I guess they had these very cheap tours or whatever you call them.

Selix: People that we know say that a European vacation is cheaper than an American vacation.

Bonn: Maybe not now.

Schnitman: These students, they know how to go, and they can have a sleeping bag, and sleep on the floor, that kind of thing. Which of course, the young girls will do that too, but that's of course not anybody like me; I've got to have comfort. I don't have to go to the Hilton, but I have to have a real hotel, with a bed and a bath and all that, and my meals. There is a lot of them traveling; it's unbelievable.

Selix: Did you find that people other than Jewish people are interested in going to Israel?

Schnitman: Well, personally I don't know, but it's from what I read. Oh yes, I would say that; when I was in Israel, I met oceans of tourists coming from other countries, non-Jews. Oh yes, many, many, from all the countries. They have their churches there. Mostly what come are the church groups, and the various religions have their churches there. They were coming in big groups, I saw them. I tagged on with them every once in awhile if I was at a certain place, and they were there and they had the tour guide. Oh, I would just join the group, and they didn't know the difference. But yes, there is a lot of that, a lot of traveling. Even at the Israeli fair here, the Catholics of Israel had a big display, beautiful.

Bonn: Did you say March was a good month in Israel because it was spring?

Schnitman: Well, I don't know if anyone else would; but you see, I had to go early no matter what the climate was. But for me, it was good, because it wasn't cold coming from San Francisco. Maybe if you came from a warmer city or state, you might think it was cold, but I used to go around here just in my little suit, you know, the kind that I like to wear here, and hardly wore an overcoat; so for me, that was good. I've never had much rain there. I had a raincoat with me. I don't know that I ever wore it. So, I would go in March, April, May, until it got too warm in June. Of course, sometimes it gets hot there, they tell me, in May and June, but I was always lucky; I didn't have any severe cold or warm; so for me, it was very nice.

Selix: Do you have any other questions, Adrienne?

Bonn: No, I don't, Leah. [laughter]

Schnitman: You think you pumped me dry? But anyway, it's nice though, it's very pleasant. And let me tell you, they do have a lot of interesting things. You go to the new Knesset building, which is their parliament building—it's out of this world; it's so beautiful. Then they have the Mann Auditorium for music. I don't know whether they have it in this country, but the acoustics and the way they explained it to me—of course, I don't know too much about that part of it, but it's built so wonderfully. I don't understand it, but it is supposed to be famous. Then the Rose—what was his first name, the theatrical man that—

Selix: Billy Rose?

Schnitman: Billy Rose. He gave them—he built this museum and gardens there, the outside gardens with very modern statues, much of it in metal. To us, it's a little bit too modern, but that's what it is, huge place, and then the big building, the big museum. And downstairs—those things—the Jewish engineers or scientists or whoever thinks up all of these things, it's fantastic.

Selix: They're very progressive.

Schnitman: They are very progressive and have fantastic ideas, and they're not afraid to do it.

Selix: The architecture is very modern.

Schnitman: That's what I wanted to say. And they have a—I think it's in this building, the Rose Museum [Billy Rose Sculpture Garden at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem], I think, but on the lower floor—first of all, all of these buildings that have precious things in them are built so that the whole thing can go down in the ground, protected from destruction.

Selix: Really? From bombs and—

Schnitman: Yes, that's right.

Selix: Oh, isn't that remarkable.

Schnitman: They may pull some levers or something, and it goes down. And I think that this thing that I have in mind is in the Billy Rose Museum. They have very precious—is that where they have those scrolls?

Selix: Oh, the Dead Sea Scrolls [Dead Sea Scrolls are at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem]?

Schnitman: I think there, and that whole thing can just go right down underground, because those things are absolutely impossible to replace. So, they have those fantastic things. People who go on tours, they might be taken in, but they, in one half a day, they have to take in twenty places. So how can they really see and study all of this? But that's why I think that when I go, I really get more out of these places than most people. Another thing that's very interesting, in the museum—they are great in Israel, anyway, to see that the children progress, that they learn, that they study, you know—they have art classes for little kids in the museum. I would go in there, and I saw them, kind of a big open veranda like there they have. These kids, all of them, it's kind of windy and blowy, and

here they are, all of them, drawing with the scenes, what they see from the balconies there. You don't see that in San Francisco anyway.

Selix: Well, the museums here have art classes for children.

Schnitman: Well, I know that they do that. Well, anyway, I saw that. And what else can I tell you about them? And the Wall, of course, the Wall; the Wall is the most marvelous.

Selix: The Wailing Wall?

Schnitman: They call it the Western Wall now, and that is something, it's just something. It doesn't matter who goes or anything else, it just sends little chills up your spine.

Selix: Because it's so old.

Schnitman: It's so old, and it has so much meaning to it, history to it. When the war ended, the first thing that all those soldiers did was run to the Wall and said prayers and that kind of thing there, a terrific thing.

Selix: What is the religious trend in Israel? Are they going to the more Reformed—

Schnitman: That's a very fighting word.

Selix: There's lots of conflict, isn't there?

Schnitman: Lot's of conflict, and you don't blame them. I don't blame them; I can't pick sides, because I don't blame them. The Orthodox, of course—and they're awfully Orthodox, they are really Orthodox. I get all these—you get all these thoughts. The way they go into the Sabbath there is beautiful. For all of them, all of Israel, it's a beautiful thing. Friday—I mix all these things—it's a jumble that have to come into my mind—Friday at noon, everything shuts down, the city practically shuts down. All the workers go home, all the storekeepers are going home. The Sabbath is coming, you've got to get ready for the Sabbath. They market, and they have this splendid—they love flowers there, they love flowers, all the beautiful outdoor markets. I love their markets. I love markets anyway, out in the street, you know. Every big market will have those big flower stands too, and they are beautiful flowers. Imagine a desert where in a few years that these are all their own flowers, but they ship around the world; they've got that many. These markets are filled with flower markets, and everybody is walking home with a bouquet of flowers; everybody is going home to Sabbath and bringing a bouquet of whatever he's bringing. If you go anyplace, you bring flowers and that kind of thing. They go home, all the businesses close; and after mid-afternoon or so, there's no transportation. That's very Orthodox.

Selix: You have to walk.

Schnitman: They walk, and they go home, they bathe, they dress and everything else. And Friday night is Sabbath meal, you know, and all that kind of thing, beautiful, just beautiful. I was very lucky, one year, I guess it was the first year, that this woman from Egypt, Jewish woman, that her family owned the—one of the utilities, telephone, or gas and electric, or whatever, they had there belonged to her family. They escaped. They had to

escape from there too, and they are happy to move here; and I was invited to her home, beautiful place, gorgeous rugs and things like that. You know the Arab rugs are so gorgeous. Every Friday night while I was there, I had Sabbath at her house with her family. And her daughter, only daughter—I think a son and a daughter—and her daughter was married to the consul or the ambassador to China, I think. I don't know what her son was, but her daughter is a famous pianist, very well known. I was lucky to have every Sabbath, every Friday night, to go to their house for Sabbath, you know. And Saturday there's no work. Saturday morning, if you go out on the streets—you get up early, you know, and you go out in the street, and see the families all dressed up, mom and pop and the kids dressed up in their Sabbath clothes. And they're walking along, and they meet their friends and so on, leisurely, just like a day in the park, something like that.

Selix: Are they on their way to shul?

Schnitman: You'll find some of them, and you'll find others on their way to shul. It's very, very interesting that Saturday you can't buy anything. It's awfully hard even to get anything to eat. They have arrangements—if you have to eat out, they have arrangements. You buy a meal ticket beforehand. Now, I don't know if that's today, but that's when I was there. So, they really keep Sabbath. But they do have what they call a taxi service for people and that. You can only get those—just like the Greyhound would be that stops at certain places, and you have to walk no matter how far—if you want to go somewhere, you walk to their station, that is if you are going to the outskirts like. Because I had to do that a few times, I went visiting my friends at Sabbath. So I had to walk to the nearest station, and there I got a—

TABLE OF CONTENTS—JEAN THAYER AND BARBARA STEWART MOZLEY

INTERVIEW WITH JEAN THAYER AND BARBARA STEWART MOZLEY

Date of interview: May 29, 1973

[Tape 16, Side A].....65

Jean Thayer's recounting of her introduction to the Girls' Club through friendship with Queen Montgomery Stewart—Teaching sewing at the Girls' Club—World's Fair of 1915—Queen Montgomery Stewart and similarities with daughter, Barbara Mozley—Christmas at the Girls' Club—Queen Stewart as Santa Claus—Barbara Mozley's recounting of mother's personality, background, role at the Girls' Club—Mozley's description of the Girls' Club building—More on Queen Stewart's personality—Father, Charles Stewart—Mozley's involvement with arts and crafts—Concerts and lectures at the Girls' Club, Eva Wolfsohn's ability to "get anybody to do anything"—Wonderhill, the Wolfsohn family—Thayer's further recounting of involvement with Girls' Club—Meeting the Fleishhacker family in Palm Beach—Mozley on her father's feelings about mother's activities—Father's interests and law practice—Education and marriages—Queen Stewart and music, more on her physical appearance and temperament.

INTERVIEW WITH JEAN WESTON THAYER AND BARBARA STEWART
MOZLEY

[Interview Session #1, May 29, 1973]

[Tape 19, Side A]

- Selix: Today is May 29, 1973, and we are meeting in Tamalpais Retirement Residence in Greenbrae in order to reminisce about the Girls' Club, which was operated in San Francisco at 362 Capp Street. The members of the group are Mrs. Jean Weston Thayer and Mrs. Barbara Stewart Mozley. Leah Selix will act as moderator. Mrs. Thayer, will you tell us the date of your birth?
- Thayer: June 24, 1888.
- Selix: And when did you first find out about the Girls' Club?
- Thayer: Through Mrs. Stewart because she was my next-door neighbor.
- Selix: Tell us about how you first met Mrs. Stewart.
- Thayer: I was in the Mother Lode Country at a mine, and the mine owner's wife asked me where I lived in San Francisco, and when I told her, she said a very dear friend of hers lived next door. And so from that, why, I looked her up when I came home and had a lifelong friendship from then on.
- Selix: What were your activities together?
- Thayer: Visiting the Girls' Club once a week and—
- Selix: You played golf together.
- Thayer: Yes, many of our social activities because we have the same friends.
- Selix: It was Mrs. Charles Stewart whose maiden name was Queen Montgomery Stewart. We always knew her as Queen Stewart at the Girls' Club. When you started to go to the Girls' Club with Queen Stewart what did you teach there?
- Thayer: Sewing.
- Selix: What kind of sewing?
- Thayer: Dressmaking.
- Selix: And for how many years were you active at the club?
- Thayer: I think between seven and nine, I can't tell you.
- Selix: And do you remember any of the girls who were in your class?

- Thayer: No. Sometimes I meet them on the street. [inaudible-I don't think so?].
- Selix: Do you still meet them?
- Thayer: Well, yes, [inaudible], you know. You see, many of the girls there worked in the Levi-Strauss factory.
- Selix: Oh, when it was on Mission and 16th, wasn't it? And they were your students.
- Thayer: I guess you'd call them students. It was more the idea of having a place for the girls to go when they [inaudible] because their homes were so crowded, and they had these evening classes for them and everything; it was a club for girls at that time.
- Selix: What can you tell us about the Wolfsohn family?
- Thayer: I can't tell you anything because I was not intimate with any of them.
- Selix: But you heard of them, you worked with Eva Wolfsohn.
- Thayer: Oh, yes, I knew them, yes. Of course, Eva was my friend.
- Selix: What can you tell us about Eva?
- Thayer: Well, she was a very dedicated person. Wouldn't you say that?
- Mozley: Oh, definitely.
- Thayer: I mean what else could you say about her?
- Mozley: She loved her work and [inaudible].
- Thayer: She loved her work; it was her whole life.
- Selix: We remember her as having been very dedicated to the girls with whom she came in contact, and she was a great inspiration to all of us.
- Thayer: Oh, yes, definitely.
- Selix: You said that your husband was in real estate and mining. What are your recollections of San Francisco in the early days?
- Thayer: It was a very delightful place. And of course, it was just before the fair, and of course, the fair was such an inspiration to everybody, you know, in every way.
- Selix: That was the 1915 fair.
- Thayer: Yes.
- Selix: Were you born in San Francisco?

Thayer: No, in Iowa.

Selix: Did your husband come from Iowa?

Thayer: No, Colorado.

Selix: What do you remember about the fair?

Thayer: Everything. It was just outstanding. [inaudible] There were so many innovations from everywhere, from flying, you know; there was some flying, of course, in those days. The French building [actually called the French pavilion] was an education in every way, the whole thing, the architecture. See, the war came right in the beginning of it, and so many of them didn't that were supposed to be brought over, never got to the fair. But the man that had the French building in mind was a [inaudible], a jeweler of San Francisco and had much to do with that building. He was able to go over and get everything assembled that should be brought to this county, so there wasn't— everything was a work of art, really, that was in the building. You know, it wasn't just a lot of jumbled stuff that so many times at some fairs you see that are just everything [inaudible]; it was lovely. And of course, there were other buildings, other exhibits, too, that were very fine. But they were the people that wanted racing, what they called the Grand Prix racing, they had automobile racing, and they had everything. Of course, the agriculture part was the farmers and people at that time, just outstanding. I've been to many fairs, and of course, there was nothing like that ever. 1915 was just outstanding, the background, and the place. When I lived up there on Russian Hill, when we first looked at that where the Marina is, there was nothing but a bog, you know, just all reclaimed land. There was nothing down there but cattails.

Selix: And cows.

Thayer: Yes.

Selix: There will probably never be another fair as beautiful as that one was.

Thayer: Well, of course, there have been so many new things in electricity. It was the first time that people had seen power juice. It sounds terrible; now I suppose we'd laugh at it, but it was a gorgeous sight to see. Now all the buildings everywhere are covered with lights, but it was delightful at the time and very inspirational.

Selix: What are your recollections of Queen Stewart?

Thayer: Oh, there isn't a day something doesn't come up.

Selix: You think of her everyday.

Thayer: Everyday.

Selix: Can you describe her personality?

Thayer: It's right here.

Mozley: Oh, no, it isn't.

Selix: Do you think that Barbara has the same personality as Queen?

Thayer: Yes, lots of times I'm talking to her, and I think I've called her Queen.

Selix: Well, our recollections of Queen are the times when she entertained us, when she played the piano and sang songs, and we still remember the songs that she sang. I always think of the one about the sweetheart who was pitting apples on the lilac tree. Wasn't that the way it ended?

Mozley: Yes, that was it, and there they were with apples on the lilac tree. Oh, there were several of them.

Selix: And Barbara, how many years did your mother play the part of Santa Claus at the club?

Mozley: I think she played it as long as I can remember. I don't know the dates that she stopped going to the club. I'm sorry, I can't remember. Maybe somebody would, but I think almost every year she did—sometimes she was regular Santa Claus, sometimes she was Mrs. Santa Claus, sometimes she was a Santa Claus from a foreign country. That was part of the Christmas thing, people would wait to see what she would do.

Selix: Well, of course, Christmases at club were a very exciting event.

Mozley: They were.

Selix: And I think that Queen Stewart is probably the most wonderful Santa Claus that I have ever known in my whole life, because I was a child when I saw her as Santa Claus for the first time.

Mozley: Well, this is my memory, of course, too.

Selix: What was the date of your birth, Barbara?

Mozley: 1914.

Selix: Then you were a year old when the fair was here.

Mozley: But I don't remember it; it began in 1914.

Selix: What other recollections of your mother?

Mozley: Well, my mother, of course, lived for quite a long time, but I remember even, Jean, as you said, she had an unbelievably delightful disposition. She was almost always in very good humor, loved people, and could sing and play—everyone that remembers her I'm sure remembers her singing and her playing the piano almost at the very first. She was an amazing person to live with. She wasn't a very good housekeeper, but that was a minor detail, if there were a flaw, which there has to be [laughs]. And of course, I inherited that, too, but she was just a delightful person. Anyplace you would go, there was always be somebody calling, running down the street to say hello. This could be

here, in New York, in Paris, anywhere; somebody would suddenly say, “Oh, Queen, what are you doing here?” Somebody would go to the other fair that I remember, the Treasure Island Fair—what was it?

Selix: 1939 and '40.

Mozley: I would finally say, “Well, look, I’m going to meet you at four o’clock, let’s go our separate ways,” because every place we would go, people would stop and talk to her, and we could never get anywhere.

Selix: Well, then she was really a San Francisco personality; she belonged to the whole city.

Mozley: She seemed to.

Selix: And in what way did she reach so many people?

Mozley: I think just her delightful personality; she loved people, just loved people. She could talk, but people could always start talking with her, and she listened to problems and helped solve them; she was very helpful.

Selix: What was her ethnic and religious background?

Mozley: Her father was French and her mother, I believe, was of Dutch extraction. Her mother was from New York. Her father had been a minor official in the French government to the—first, I think, to the Caribbean and then to the United States. I really don’t remember, or know, if they were married in New York and came here, or came here and then were married. However, my mother was born in the Bay Area as was my father, so I’m a real San Franciscan.

Selix: What was your mother’s full maiden name?

Mozley: There was a first name and Eugenie; she was named after Queen [Empress] Eugenie, the French queen. Montgomery, and then from the very first they called her Queen.

Selix: She never used the name of Eugenie, did she?

Mozley: She may have when she was a girl, but I think she even had it officially changed. She signed checks and all the documents, everything, “Queen Montgomery Stewart” or “Queen Stewart,” and signed them in purple ink.

Selix: And didn’t she always dress in lavenders and purples?

Mozley: I was really ready to come and suddenly remembered I had nothing purple, so I had to go back and dig out a purple scarf. If we were going to talk about all of this, I knew I had to have something purple, or it just wouldn’t work. She loved purple, from the fairest shade of lavender to the deepest drop of purple ink, that was her favorite.

Selix: And those were the only colors that she ever wore that I can remember.

- Mozley: Well, she would wear other colors, but she always had something purple on; people would remember the purple rather than anything else. I can remember a few other things, but she just adored purple.
- Selix: She was a very much beloved person at the club, and she made a great contribution to the life at the club.
- Thayer: She certainly did.
- Mozley: I've heard people say this so many times when they would meet me, and we'd always talk about the things she did. I can remember going there. Of course, that was when I was a little girl as well, and how happy everyone was to see her. And I liked going to the club, because of course, I guess they all enjoyed her, and so everyone would take care of me while she was doing the other things. But it was a beautiful building; I don't know if you have any other descriptions of the building.
- Selix: Well, give us your description of the building.
- Mozley: I can't remember the architect, if I ever knew. But it was so well designed in my idea, so far ahead of its time, for the ideal, with the workrooms and the meeting rooms and the auditorium, the cooking areas, library, and a little corner place to get off alone and talk, and a lovely, central garden. The thing I can remember when we first were talking and coming back outside [inaudible] I could recall, it was made almost all of wood, and the fragrance of the wood was always there. We would walk in the door, this beautiful fragrance of wood, good wood, was there always and I just loved that. And walking up the wooden stairs and all around the little corridors, and looking down at the garden at different times.
- Selix: And the wooden fires and the great fireplaces.
- Mozley: Big fireplaces with the fires; and at Christmas time, the smell of green plus the smell of the wood.
- Selix: The building was designed by Bruce Porter.
- Mozley: I didn't know, but I knew it would be someone where they were really a very fine architect.
- Selix: Yes, he was a very famous designer, and artist, and writer.
- Mozley: No, I recognize the name, but I couldn't pull it out of my mind; I probably heard it many times when I was little.
- Selix: Did you ever attend the Christmases when your mother was Santa Claus?
- Mozley: I did many times. I don't remember the first one, maybe I didn't go at first. But I know I remember just being overjoyed knowing she was going to be Santa Claus, or Santa Claus' helper she would say to me, and just being thrilled seeing her come out, and everybody being happy, seeing everyone enjoy it so because I could see a lot. Even when I was a little girl, I felt how much people enjoyed her.

Selix: Did she teach anything at the club?

Mozley: I think she worked with the sewing group, this I remember, and I think she also worked with some of the—well, not really the drama groups, but perhaps, on the concerts when they were having—Vaudeville isn't the word, but some of those things, she would work with the girls. She used to have a little sewing group, but I think mainly she just loved to go and talk to all of them. There was a grandmothers' group and the young mothers' group. I used to love the grandmothers' group because I always got cookies from there.

Selix: What was life at home like with your mother?

Mozley: Oh, it was just delightful; she had a marvelous sense of humor. My father was rather temperamental and volatile, and she just flowed along with this, and not let it worry her, just very easy going in the good sense of the word, and delightful, and always encouraging people to do things. All of my friends just loved her. Just a few days ago, last month, we had some people, and some I hadn't seen for quite a few years, and almost immediately they began talking about my mother, and my father, and all the fun we used to have. They take us all on picnics and hikes, and she [inaudible] with the best of us too.

Selix: What was your father's full name?

Mozley: Just Charles Stewart, he didn't have a middle name.

Selix: What was his occupation?

Mozley: He was an attorney in San Francisco. He went to the University of California. His father had been an army officer so, well, he came from a large family; all the family lived in different parts of the United States. He was born in Fort Point in San Francisco [inaudible]; he's a real San Franciscan.

Selix: What year was he born?

Mozley: I think in 1864. I came along very late in his life as you can see. I think my mother was born in 1881 or '82.

Selix: Is there any story behind the fact that she always called him "Uncle Charlie?"

Mozley: Well, he was older than she was, and he apparently had been a friend of the family, and at that time, they didn't use first names for people. I know when I was a little girl, all of my mother's close friends I would call "Aunt," as "Aunt Jean," and Eva Wolfson, I called her "Aunt Eva." So they called him Uncle Charlie because he was an older, close friend. This went on for five years, and then finally, when he did ask her to marry him, she had called him Uncle Charlie for so long she just kept on doing it. That was a real thing for a lot of people, they just couldn't understand why anybody would call her husband Uncle Charlie, but you call people pet names and—

Thayer: [inaudible] When they were traveling, people would try to figure it out, because in those days, they just weren't so broad as they are now. People [inaudible] because they couldn't figure it out for a while, you know.

- Mozley: People that didn't know. It was just like a nickname that keeps on and on and on. She always called him that so—
- Thayer: I always called him Uncle Charlie, and my husband called him Uncle Charlie.
- Mozley: Everybody did.
- Selix: We always heard him—I mean I can't ever recall meeting him, but we always heard him referred to as Uncle Charlie all through the club.
- Mozley: I know. And some of my friends were quite mixed up about it; they couldn't understand it either. I'd have to explain it at great length, and they'd think, "What's the matter with them, they don't know what to call people?"
- Selix: Up to what age did he live?
- Mozley: He was just about ninety; he outlived my mother by five or six years.
- Selix: And how old was your mother when she died?
- Mozley: Well, I can't add that well but she died in '52. Someone can subtract or add, that would be around seventy, early seventies, I think.
- Selix: We see Hazel Salmi quite often, and she was very active at club; and as a matter of fact, you knew Hazel also. As a matter of fact, it was Hazel who gave us your name and address when we wrote you that letter.
- Mozley: I haven't seen her now for a year or so. I guess it's been a couple of years, but I went over and had lunch with her at one time; and again, I'm just lazy, I don't write letters enough to keep up with people. But she and Martin were very good friends of the family. I can remember when I was, again, a little girl going to see them and their son Douglas, and playing with him over the years [inaudible] off and on.
- Selix: Hazel told us that the night before she went to the hospital to have her son that you and your mother had been there to visit her.
- Mozley: I wouldn't remember that but my mother would have, because I was maybe two or three years older than the little boy, but that was all. I wouldn't remember that, although I remember going to visit them. I remember him when he was, say five or six, and I would have been seven or eight; that's when I first remember Douglas.
- Selix: Have you ever had a career of your own?
- Mozley: I taught school in San Francisco for several years before my first marriage, and then my field, if anything, was crafts, art and crafts. During the summers, I taught at the recreation school at the University of California for many years until they ceased having the crafts department in it, which is maybe six or eight years ago. I still just casually keep up with arts and crafts. I've been doing some painting with a friend recently, and I enjoy doing that sort of thing.

- Selix: That's what we do on Mondays; we go to Hazel's, and the three of us paint.
- Mozley: Oh, really?
- Selix: Oh, it's a great day.
- Mozley: I can see why. I'll have to start going over on Mondays.
- Selix: Yes!
- Mozley: Oh, I'd love to.
- Selix: Well, I'm sure Hazel would love to have you.
- Mozley: Well, you have another member coming [laughs].
- Thayer: You tell Hazel that I'll see that she gets there, because I have to—
- Mozley: She has to keep after me.
- Thayer: I have to keep after her to keep lessons—
- Mozley: If I don't keep going, well, then I don't do well on my own; I like people and like to be with people so I—
- Selix: Well, we find that unless we set a special day to do it, it doesn't get done.
- Mozley: That's exactly right; that's the way it is with me, too.
- Selix: This all sort of goes back to the Girls' Club, all this activity, and our interest in cultural things and art, one thing and another.
- Mozley: I can remember going there to some of the concerts and lectures. There were, besides the sewing and cooking, things that they did; they had a great series of concerts and lectures it seems to me, because I can remember, again, being dragged as a little girl and almost sleeping through some of them. But in thinking back on it, why, I realize that a child wouldn't enjoy some of the things, but for adults and young adults, why, they would enjoy them very much.
- Selix: Of course, we didn't know Rachel Wolfsohn, but Eva Wolfsohn had the reputation of being able to get anybody to do anything that she wanted them to do.
- Mozley: That sounds right. She was very positive.
- Selix: Oh, she certainly was, she was very dynamic. Some of the women whom we've interviewed have told us that they would go to the opera house with her to an affair, and pretty soon they'd look around and Eva would be missing. They would find her back stage signing up the artist to come out to the club and give a lecture.
- Mozley: I can believe that.

- Selix: Or to give a program.
- Mozley: Yes. And she had a way of explaining it to people that would just make them so glad to do this. I can remember—I guess when you told me the date of her death, that during college, I must have been—I went to Berkeley and away from San Francisco in the sense of being at school and being active, because I didn't see her too much then. But I do remember when I was in high school I used to go out occasionally, because on my graduation, she just had a lovely party there for some of my friends and for me as a graduation present, so then we did definitely kept in touch. Of course, the funny things that you remember—nearly always at Christmas, she would give me a book for a Christmas present, and while they were—I guess at the proper ages, they were also very intellectual and very uplifting. I didn't enjoy them much until several years later when I would look back at them and think that they were just the greatest gift to have had really, but at the time, I would have much preferred something more casual than the books that I was getting. But I remember her and she had a dog; I think it was a French bulldog.
- Selix: Was it French or English?
- Mozley: One of the small bulldogs.
- Selix: That was Sonny.
- Mozley: Yes, that was Sonny, that's right, and he was a nasty little thing.
- Selix: That's what everybody says about Sonny [laughs].
- Mozley: Poor Sonny, isn't it awful to have a reputation like that? He wasn't that bad but he wasn't very pleasant. I remember he was old and sort of rough.
- Selix: He wasn't a dog that you could pick up and pet.
- Mozley: Oh, no.
- Selix: And then after Sonny came Topsy, which I think was a Belgian Griffon.
- Mozley: Oh, yes, the little one, I remember. Poor old Sonny, yes, he was always rustling around and growling all over the place [laughs].
- Selix: Did you ever go to Wonderhill?
- Mozley: Yes.
- Selix: Did you spend time there, did you stay there?
- Mozley: Not for any length of time. I'd forgotten Wonderhill.
- Thayer: [inaudible] made the curtains for us.
- Mozley: Yes.

- Selix: Well, that was the summer place.
- Mozley: The summer camp. I went down several times with my mother and we would stay maybe a couple of days and nights. That was the first place I ever ran into Apple Pie Bed [laughs].
- Selix: Oh yes, Apple Pie Bed.
- Mozley: I can't remember a thing about it except it was hot and an awful good time, but I don't remember much else about it.
- Selix: It was a beautiful place; it was donated by the Mortimer Fleishhackers.
- Mozley: Yes.
- Selix: And unfortunately it was not endowed, so it was always rather a difficult thing to keep it operating financially, because they didn't charge the girls very much to stay there. The dormitory was built to house about sixteen, and we can remember weekends when we would have sixty-three to sixty-five people there for a Sunday dinner, and all those dishes had to be washed by hand. The girls had to take turns serving, and doing dishes, and cleaning up the dining room. Some of the younger people remember that we always had fresh vegetables from our own gardens at Wonderhill. Many of the children didn't like vegetables, and they can remember passing them under the table to Sonny or Topsy during the meal.
- Mozley: Oh, dear, they helped clean it up.
- Selix: Do you remember any of the other of the Wolfsohn family?
- Mozley: Yes. I don't remember them well, but I know I met her brothers, Mark and Mast?
- Selix: Oh, Mark was at the club a great deal.
- Mozley: Yes. Then, again, memories go, one of them married someone whose name was Flora.
- Selix: Flora Marx.
- Mozley: Yes. I don't remember them well, but I met [inaudible], and then I remember some of the other women who worked in the club. I can't remember the names of many of the girls as we say, except when you use names I recognize them. I knew some of the family, but I haven't seen or had any contact with them for years and years. In fact, when I unfortunately read a death notice in the paper and that makes you remember.
- Selix: There is still one of the Wolfsohn family living and that's Mast Wolfson. He's eighty years old and he's still practicing medicine in Monterey. We interviewed him just about two weeks ago.
- Mozley: Oh, that would be very interesting.

Selix: Mrs. Thayer, you said that it was through Queen Stewart that you originally went to the Girls' Club.

Thayer: Oh, yes, definitely.

Selix: And that was because you were interested in volunteering your services over there and—

Thayer: Our interests were very much the same, you see.

Mozley: My mother was going already; she probably talked you into going.

Thayer: Why, sure. [inaudible] I remember, as you know, having the car right there to go in and I'd be going and maybe we'd go down there. We had always drove up McAllister Street.

Selix: Oh, yes, definitely.

Thayer: For instance. That wasn't the only thing that we did. You see, we'd be going [inaudible] to teach in the afternoon when the children would be coming. We'd go earlier if there was the mothers' meeting. We'd go down to help get the tea ready and do things of that sort. We were going down there, so, first thing in the morning, why, we'd start out and we'd go to McAllister Street to all of the second-hand stores because we used to love the antiques. I still have two pieces of furniture here in this building that I got there with Queen. And then when Barbara was able to walk when she was about three or four years old, then we'd take her down to the Girls' Club before she started school at synagogue. Queen would say, "We'll always take Barbara along because it looks so poor to have a kid trailing behind" [laughs].

Mozley: Oh, that's a fine thing to say.

Thayer: We'd always get up because we'd go Monday mornings because then the first—if you pay attention to your first steps of superstition of a second-hand store, the little second-hand store.

Mozley: Well, any second-hand store, you sell something quickly early in the morning.

Thayer: The first one; if you go out without buying anything then you'll have a bad week.

Selix: Oh, they had that superstition? I never knew that.

Thayer: They used to laugh about it. Then we took Barbara there to look like we were poor, having to take the kid and all; it was delightful. Then of course later on why [inaudible] Mrs. Fleishhacker. In Florida—I was down there for a year in 1920 and Mr. and Mrs. Fleishhacker—of course, my husband knew him in a business way—and she came and she gave—we had the Girls' Club to talk about and she was always interested, you know. Of course, I was terribly interested in it too, so. That was in 1920, so you see, that was about in the middle of the time [inaudible]. Other people had the—you know, I don't know where he went and he used to laugh about it and say that we had to go clear to Florida, to Palm Beach, Florida, to talk about the Girls' Club, and that was all our

conversation. Everybody else was talking about Florida, but we were more interested in the Girls' Club and what was going on out here.

Selix: Even though you were in Palm Beach.

Thayer: Yes.

Selix: Well, Wonderhill was built in 1919 and was dedicated in 1920, and that was the year that you met Mrs. Fleishhacker in Florida.

Mozley: No wonder she seemed so interested.

Thayer: Well, I never [inaudible] you see, of course. I went to the Girls' Club and the meetings and everything like that, but we never—there were all these other people around at the Girls' Club. But she was down there, a stranger in Florida, and I was too, you see, so we had very much in common right there from the Girls' Club [inaudible].

Selix: Do you remember any of the entertainment that the girls used to—

Thayer: Oh, yes.

Selix: The plays, the drama.

Thayer: I used to go to them with Queen to see Barbara when she was little out there. She used to go with her father and [inaudible], so I had lots of leisure to play around.

Selix: I don't ever remember your father being at the Club. Was he ever?

Thayer: No.

Mozley: I don't know, he could have been but offhand he didn't make a practice of going.

Thayer: No, I doubt it.

Selix: How did he feel about your mother's extracurricular activities?

Mozley: I think he liked it.

Thayer: He was very proud of her.

Selix: And he appreciated her singing and her playing?

Thayer: Of course.

Mozley: Oh, he loved that very much, yes, he enjoyed that thoroughly. When I was a little girl, I can remember—I don't know where he learned or anything. He had a violin and occasionally he would play the violin when she would play the piano, but this goes way back, and then he didn't; he stopped and I don't know why.

- Thayer: He was always interested in his family. I mean he didn't play golf or he didn't [inaudible] with his law practice, you know. Any man who has a law practice, they are pretty well tied up.
- Mozley: He was interested in the university; he was quite interested in it.
- Thayer: He graduated in the first class.
- Mozley: No, not the first class but one of the early classes.
- Thayer: Well, what was it that he did over there at the—
- Mozley: It was one of the commencements.
- Thayer: Not too long ago we went over with him.
- Mozley: Before he died. He went to almost every single commencement.
- Thayer: He was very much interested in it.
- Selix: Up to what age did he practice law?
- Mozley: Up until he was in his early eighties he had his practice. He didn't solicit business at that stage, but he had his active in—he was quite active until then and even then afterwards some of his older clients would come and talk to him about things. He kept his office downtown and would go down for a few hours a day, I guess until between seventy-five and eighty. They moved to Berkeley in about '47 or '48 or '49, I'm not sure now. There was some property over there that was in the family, some small apartments, and they moved over there. Even then—then he began letting his practice slow up but he would go to the city occasionally. Then he finally closed his office, although he kept active with the Bar Association and all that.
- Selix: Did you graduate from Berkeley?
- Mozley: Yes, I graduated from UC and then I went and finished a teacher's credential at San Francisco State.
- Selix: Old State Normal School.
- Mozley: Yes.
- Selix: I went to the Frederick Burke Training School when I was a grammar school student. Tell us something about your husband, Don Mozley.
- Mozley: Don is a newscaster for CBS in San Francisco and he's the automotive editor; that is his field and his interest [inaudible]. Don was born in southern California and his family came from Missouri, and he went to college there because it had a very fine journalistic school.
- Selix: He started basically as a journalist?

Mozley: No, he started in on radio from the very beginning. The university had both the school of journalism, but the students had to work actively to stay in this. So, as soon as he was finished he found a job, and he worked out doing some of the scientific reporting with the atomic bomb tests out in the Pacific. Then he was with CBS always, sometimes he was in Los Angeles and then back up to San Francisco, and so for awhile he traveled a great deal. For quite a few years he's done that.

Thayer: And still does.

Mozley: He doesn't travel as much as he did but does occasional short trips.

Selix: The two of you have traveled abroad quite a bit, haven't you?

Mozley: Don and I have only been married three years. I've known him for fifteen years or so. My first husband worked for Standard Oil.

Selix: What was his name.?

Mozley: His was George Britton; he died about four or five years ago. We loved to travel. We liked to travel, I liked to travel, and Don traveled. We didn't travel with him, although we met a couple times if we would be away on trips. It was very nice because Don and I enjoy traveling very much too, so anytime we get a chance, why, we will go. Our honeymoon was driving through Europe, and we've been back several times, and will probably keep traveling as long as we can.

Selix: You were saying, Mrs. Thayer, that whenever Queen came to see you or was waiting for you to get ready to go out that she would immediately go to the piano and start playing and singing for you.

Thayer: Yes. You remember that, Barbara?

Mozley: Oh, she loved to play.

Thayer: You would go over there and she'd say, "I've been to a show last night," and then go in there and she could play it.

Selix: Did she play by ear?

Mozley: Yes. She could read music but she had this wonderful gift of ear. You'd go "rah, rah" at her, why, she could play the whole thing, just remarkable.

Selix: She had great charisma and there was a fascination about her. She had a very impish look, and she was somewhat of a pixie.

Mozley: Oh, she was. She looked a great deal—now, I can't remember the woman that was so famous for her social parties that died a short time ago. I'm sorry it's gone, I thought of it a minute ago. They looked so much alike.

Selix: Elsa Maxwell.

- Mozley: Elsa Maxwell, yes, she looked a great deal like Elsa Maxwell.
- Selix: She had blue eyes and small features.
- Mozley: Very small features and brown, very curly, brown, fluffy—I mean it was a very thin, brown hair, and rosy, rosy cheeks, very rosy cheeks. Not too tall, I think she was about five-foot-two or something like that. I guess buxom is the best word, but just a very gay, happy personality.
- Selix: She never showed a down side; she was always up.
- Mozley: No, and over all the years, I can very, very seldom ever remember having her annoyed about anything. If I can recall, I can think of one or two times when she maybe sounded a little cross at her poor, little girl doing something wrong, but in general, she really—it's just amazing how she could keep this—
- Selix: Did you have a feeling that you were raised as a spoiled child?
- Mozley: No, I was just told that I was raised as a spoiled child.
- Selix: But you weren't really spoiled.
- Thayer: She wasn't a bit spoiled.
- Mozley: I suppose not because I had so many friends, and was always busy, and always very active, and was so well loved. And I think that it was the kind of love that didn't spoil the child to just let the child do what she or he wanted to, but you knew you had to behave and the different things that were expected of you, but you also just felt so secure. [inaudible] No complaints.
- Thayer: No, no complaints, I didn't have any.
- Selix: The following is narrated by Leah Selix:

Because of the broad scope of the activities of the Girls' Club, members may be found in every locale. We had put a notice on the bulletin board of the Tamalpais Retirement Residence, and it was through that that we met Mrs. Thayer. The fortunate circumstances were that she was such a good friend of Barbara Stewart Mozley and had been a close friend of Barbara's mother, who was Queen Stewart. We had been trying to get information about Queen Stewart from other narrators. Hazel Salmi, mentioned in the interview, had painted a portrait of Queen Stewart, which now hangs in Mrs. Thayer's apartment in the Tamalpais Retirement Residence. End of tape.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—GWENDOLYN POWERS APPLGARTH

INTERVIEW WITH GWENDOLYN POWERS APPLGARTH

Date of interview: April 3, 1973

[Tape 1, Side A] 83

Artists Gottardo Piazzoni, Joseph Rafael, and Ralph Stackpole and their connection with the Girls' Club—Jewish funders of the Girls' Club—Lack of religious overtones at the Girls' Club—Description of Rachel Wolfsohn—Teaching ukulele to the girls—Mother, Laura Pride Powers: writing on California history—Establishing Merienda in Monterey—Founding the California Historic Landmarks League—Custom House Museum in Monterey—Eva Wolfsohn, Rachel Wolfsohn's funeral—Impressions of Girls' Club—Impressions of other members of the Wolfsohn family—Childhood in San Francisco—Earthquake and fire of 1906—Attending high school and college, marriage to San Francisco architect, George Applegarth—George Applegarth's career—Views on women in architecture—Building for Heyneman on Bush Street.

[Tape 1, Side B] 95

More on Heyneman building—George Applegarth's active life until age ninety-six.

INTERVIEW WITH GWENDOLYN POWERS APPLGARTH

[Date of interview: April 3, 1973]

[Tape 1, Side A]

Selix: Mrs. Applegarth, when did you first become acquainted with the Girls' Club?

Applegarth: I think it was about 1912 and through my mother's association with artists in San Francisco.

Selix: What was your mother's full name?

Applegarth: My mother was a writer and wrote under the name of Laura Bride Powers. At that time she was doing art criticism for the old *San Francisco Call* and that's the connection, you see, between the art group and Ray [Rachel] Wolfsohn, who had friends among that group.

Selix: We recall the names of Gottardo Piazzoni and Joe Rafael. I believe you mentioned that it was through Joe Rafael that you met Rachel Wolfsohn.

Applegarth: Yes, and Gottardo Piazzoni was a very special friend of my mother's.

Selix: Oh really? And how about Ralph Stackpole?

Applegarth: Oh yes, I have a small painting by each one of them.

Selix: Each one of the three of them?

Applegarth: No, not Rafael, but one by Piazzoni and one by Stackpole. Stackpole's is a sketch in watercolor done from his window in Paris, and Piazzoni's is a little oil of Tiburon against those brown hills which he loved so much.

Selix: Have you any idea how Rachel Wolfsohn was so active in art circles?

Applegarth: No, I don't know how she really was woven into that group.

Selix: Because the names of these particular artists are familiar to us from our childhood, because we had lovely paintings of theirs in the building of the Girls' Club. And Ralph Stackpole designed and had a fountain built for the courtyard during the time that we were members of the club.

Applegarth: Well, it just must have been Ray's connection with Joe Rafael. They were very close friends, and these artists were all friends together, and so they were interested, I suppose, through Joe Rafael. That was really the story of the club that people were woven into the life of the club by their devotion to friends or the work that was going on, and after they met Ray they felt as though they could do anything for her.

Selix: Rachel Wolfsohn and Eva Wolfsohn had quite a talent for gathering together people of culture and ability to help them with their work in the club.

Applegarth: Yes they did, remarkably so, and particularly, I would say, among the cultured and well-to-do Jewish families they got such marvelous support. And many others, too, but there seemed to be a great deal of confidence there and a great desire to spread the cultured taste that they had, among the girls who had so little in their homes.

Selix: The board of directors who supported the club and its work from their own private funds were all Jewish people as far as I can recall, and as far as the records show. However, we were never permitted to discuss religion or politics in the club, and there were never any overtones of religion, because it was open to everyone of any race, color or creed.

Applegarth: Yes, I remember that distinctly. Many of the girls were Jewish girls, but this just happened by accident, where they lived or something of that kind.

Selix: It probably was because of the neighborhood at that time.

Applegarth: Yes, that's right. Some of them came from Daly City and would come a long distance to the meetings. I only went out there one night a week, but these girls would come a long ways, you know, they would have an early dinner and they would be riding an hour, it seemed to me, to arrive there. There was never any thought of discrimination or anything of that kind; it was completely open, and as a matter of fact I had a feeling that the Wolfsohns were not practicing Jews. I don't know, but I think that some of them went to the Unitarian Church.

Selix: That is correct. We understand that Rachel started at the Sweedenborgian Church and took Fred with her to go to Sunday school. She had been teaching in a Jewish synagogue that was quite Orthodox. She was teaching that Jesus Christ was a wonderful man, and the rabbi came to her and said, "Miss Wolfsohn, we cannot have that kind of teaching in an Orthodox synagogue." So Rachel said, "If I can't teach it the way I see it, I guess I'll have to leave."

Applegarth: That sounds exactly like her. And this was just an impression that I had, you see, but it was never discussed and made no difference to anybody who was associated with the club.

Selix: Can you describe Rachel Wolfsohn to us?

Applegarth: I remember her as a tall, slender, very striking looking woman with very good features and large dark eyes, and a kind of electric manner, very decisive and very animated.

Selix: With a personal magnetism.

Applegarth: A personal magnetism, yes, and a great sense of drive; you felt the vigor of her personality even on meeting her. She was not at all masculine, I don't mean anything like that, that was abrasive, but a very magnetic person and one who impressed you; you wouldn't forget her.

Selix: In what capacity were you connected with the Girls' Club and how did you happen to become--?

Applegarth: I can't exactly remember who made this connection. It must have been that my mother had talked to Ray and in some way Ray had indicated that they wished they had some kind of music going on in the group. And maybe my mother was the one who said, "Well, maybe my daughter could teach them how to play the ukulele," and this was the deal, so I was given a great opportunity. I was raised to think of all kinds of civic activities as being a great thing to enter upon and my mother was always in things of that kind from women's suffrage to pure milk and all the rest, you know. I was always sitting on an old trunk in the back of some hall listening to my mother talk when I was growing up, so of course this was right along my line to go out there and try this.

So I went out and I was all full of college songs and the melodies of the day and all of my college enjoyment of group singing, and so I went out there and sang and played for a group of girls who thought they would be interested. When this became a going thing, somehow or other, about ten of them got instruments. I suppose that the board of directors bought them for them wholesale, but anyway, there were about ten, I think, and so we began. I would sit in the middle, here, of this great group and then we would begin with up-down, up-down and three cords in the key of "C." In no time at all, even the first and last one, why of course they could sing and play something. They were just crazy about it because it was so easy in the first place, and they could all participate. I think that I went about a year, and the girls became the chief entertainers of the dinners and whatever was going on, this group. They developed their own songs, and the girls bought instruction books, later, and some of them got to play very well. It was great fun for me while it lasted, and I heard afterwards that it really was a source of great entertainment for them and a means by which they drew the girls together. So that it was, I would think, quite successful.

Selix: Did you put on any performances while you were there?

Applegarth: I think we did. I think that the girls played for different gatherings while I was there, but right now I can't think of any one in particular.

Selix: Do you remember attending any dinners or any lectures at the club?

Applegarth: In the most vague way, but I can't really tell you what they were about or anything. They always had something going on, but it was usually late and time for me to start home, because I had to go home by streetcar, so I didn't always stay for things that went on later.

Selix: We thought it was quite a commentary on your influence on the girls when we interviewed Celene Sheldon Olsen, who spoke very glowing of her experiences in your ukulele class. Celene went on to study with Mrs. Blanchard and became a very fine oratorio singer, and was active in the San Francisco churches, the synagogues, for many years. She just retired a few years ago.

Applegarth: This amazes me because I had no idea that this would be influential and inspiring, and one could go further, you know, but it was good while it lasted. Then I became involved in other things and after that year I didn't really have much contact with the club, so I didn't know how the girls carried on after that. But there's no doubt that it is a source of inspiration and confidence to people to feel that they can do something creative, and

that's what they felt. They were really performing something and contributing, so that in a way, I'm not surprised that at least one went on further.

Selix: Well, I'm sure some of the others may have, too, but we just haven't come in contact with them. We're going back quite a few years to assemble the material. Incidentally, we recently visited Celene Olsen and she very pridefully showed us the ukulele that she used in your group.

Applegarth: I can't get over this! I must get her name and address and call her up.

Selix: It was really Celene that suggested that you would be a good source of information.

Applegarth: This is like a voice from a million years past, you know!

Selix: It sounds like your mother was quite a crusader.

Applegarth: Oh she was, she was, so I grew up in that atmosphere. As a high school girl, I was forever going off to some dinner given by the [Syndicalists?] or somebody like that, whom my mother was interested in at least hearing, you know. My high school friends used to think I had a perfectly marvelous life, because this kind of thing never entered their lives at all. If I could take one of them off to one of these strange dinners with me, they were absolutely thrilled. My mother was really a great idea person and she had a longing to know what people were doing and why. She was a great crusader. She became particularly interested in California history and wrote a great deal about it.

Selix: Has she written books?

Applegarth: Yes, she has. I think she really wrote about the first book that was published on the California missions; this was in 1898 or something like that.

Selix: She wrote the book in 1898?

Applegarth: I think so, yes.

Selix: What was the name of the book?

Applegarth: *Missions of California*. It was a small volume and it was published by Doxey, here in San Francisco and all the plates were destroyed in the fire. I have just a couple of copies of that. Then she wrote a children's book on the missions, a revision of that first one, that was in all the public school libraries.

Selix: Under what name did she write?

Applegarth: Laura Bride Powers, always. And she wrote for many magazines. Then later on when she went to live in Monterey after building a home in Carmel—she lived in both places—why, she wrote a book called *Old Monterey: California's Adobe Capital*, and that was the latest book that she wrote. That's an excellent book on Monterey. She did a great deal. She organized the Monterey History and Art Association, which is the biggest thing they have down there now. They own adobes and have preserved adobes and set the tone for the development of Monterey.

Then my mother began the celebration of Monterey's birthday down there, which is called the Merienda and takes place on the third of June every year or close to that date, and it's a tremendous thing. They have it in the patio of the Jack's building. If you know Monterey you know where that is, the old Pacific building, and it's really a great event. Everybody in town who is anybody takes part in it, and the women are in costume and the men broil the steaks and serve the luncheon; it's really a big thing. My mother did things of that kind all through her life.

Selix: What year did she move to the Monterey Peninsula?

Applegarth: In the early '30s.

Selix: About 1930?

Applegarth: Around in there, yes.

Selix: She must have been a contemporary of Mrs. [Hofeld?]

Applegarth: Whom I know well.

Selix: Oh really?

Applegarth: Oh yes.

Selix: Well, we're hoping to interview her.

Applegarth: Of course, she was a Devendorf, and Devendorf was one of the founders of Carmel, and also Frank Powers, who was a very close friend of my mother's but not related. My mother organized, much earlier, a group here in San Francisco called the California Historic Landmarks League and this was in the late nineties. Frank Powers was one of the officers of that organization and the first thing they did was to purchase Sonoma Mission, Fort Ross and the Viscaino Serra Monument in Monterey with the money that they raised. My mother wrote all the publicity for the money-raising and Mr. Hearst contributed his [safe and his papers?] My mother did all of the writing for that and with that money, \$2000, they made all those purchases and those became the first monuments in the state park system. My mother really gave the rest of her life to this work in connection with the landmarks. With the San Francisco earthquake, the work of the California Historic Landmarks League was really finished, because people were scattered, records were destroyed, and so nothing more was heard of that organization; it just really fell apart after that.

Selix: Your association with the Wolfsohn family developed into personal friendships with other members besides Ray?

Applegarth: Oh yes, it certainly did. The one who we got to know the best turned out to be the youngest member of the family and this was Dr. Mast, because he was practicing in Monterey. My mother built a house down there in Carmel and later moved into the old custom house in Monterey, which she developed as a museum of history. It was there that she was quite ill; she had her first heart attack there and Max took care of her, so that I saw a great deal of him from time to time. He was always in despair over my

mother, because when she was supposed to be lying prone in bed she was prancing around in some adobe building, you know, making arrangements for it to be repaired or something of that kind. We had frequent conversations with him in trying to pull my mother through. Finally, at the age of seventy, she had to retire as the curator of the old Custom House Museum because of age, and she was flat on her back when they opened the first theater in Monterey. You know that Jack Swan place?

Selix: Yes.

Applegarth: Well, they've had a melodrama performed every weekend since that time, since it was opened; it has never stopped producing. That was one of the projects that my mother carried on, was the restoration of that building. And while she was flat on her back with another heart attack and due to leave the Custom House because another curator was coming in, this theater was opened for the first performance. My daughter played the lead in the play, and we had to bring my mother home, stretched out in the car resembling an ambulance as much as we could, because in those days they thought that quiet and rest was the only thing to do with a heart case. Today, you know, they have them up and exercising a little bit but that was not the method at that time. So we were warned of the care that we should take of her and how we should transport her and everything, and we brought her home after the opening of this theater.

She lived here with me for ten years and often from bed, working out all kinds of schemes for things that went on here in San Francisco. She established the celebration of San Francisco's birthday here and it has taken place ever since then, in June, every year, the twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth of June. My mother carried it on until her death with my help and then I have carried it on up until now and now my daughter-in-law is chairing it with Dr [Al Vachumick?]

Selix: Oh, that's great. It doesn't sound as though your mother ever did retire.

Applegarth: She really didn't.

Selix: What can you tell us about Eva Wolfsohn, who carried on the work of Rachel?

Applegarth: I don't know very much about Eva except that she was a very lovable and capable person, and one was conscious that she was such a different personality from Ray. But my association with the club, I think, came to an end about that time, so I--that was 1915, you say, when Rachel died, so I really wasn't associated with the club.

Selix: You mentioned that Eva's personality was different than Rachel's, I was wondering in just what way it was different? They were different in appearance, we know--

Applegarth: Yes, different in manner, different in appearance and different in the impression that they gave you of their--it would be very hard for me to point out the difference.

Selix: To draw comparisons.

Applegarth: Yes, it would be very hard.

- Selix: I never knew, Rachel but to me--well, Eva Wolfsohn was one of the greatest influences in my life and I always thought of her as being a very dynamic, magnetic personality, and she had great influence over people who she wanted to come and work in the club.
- Applegarth: You see, I can't really follow her along in her work, but I just know that everyone was very happy to think that she was able to do it, you know, and there was a thought that--when I heard any comments later--that she was doing extremely well.
- Selix: She did do a wonderful job and she died in 1934. You mentioned that you recall Rachel Wolfsohn's funeral at the Girls' Club.
- Applegarth: I think it was at the Girls' Club, I think it must have been. It was the first funeral I had ever seen of that type, you see. It was very simple. She was buried in this beautiful wooden casket; I had never seen anything like this before. I thought it was so beautiful and so fitting for her and artistically lovely, you know, and appropriate, and really, the rest of my impression is rather vague.
- Selix: You did have some contacts with Julian Wolfsohn?
- Applegarth: Yes, I did.
- Selix: And Dr. Fred Wolfsohn?
- Applegarth: Oh yes, I knew them quite well.
- Selix: Did you know them socially as well as professionally?
- Applegarth: Yes. Fred I saw a great deal of, because he took care of my children's teeth. I had four children and this covered a number of years of difference because they all had to have orthodontia, so I'd see Fred quite often. As we got older we just kind of drifted away, but I used to meet his wife at various meetings of all kinds.
- Selix: Did your experiences at the Girls' Club have any influence on your own life?
- Applegarth: Well, I think so because it was a decided chapter of experience wasn't it?
- Selix: I would say so.
- Applegarth: Yes, and a very warming thing. I have never had anything to do with a neighborhood settlement type of thing before. See my mother was interested in women's suffrage and as a growing girl I used to be there at meetings all the time. Then at the old California Club--my mother was a member there and worked very hard on the milk campaign for pasteurized milk and all that, and I used to be there with her a good deal. Then she got me doing all these historic things, things in the field of history, so that I was kind of trailing along with her in her endeavors, and so this was an entirely different contact.
- Selix: You had mentioned your impression of the way the dinners worked--no, you'd said something about having lunch at the club.
- Applegarth: Yes.

Selix: What was your impression of the way it was served and--

Applegarth: That they were so artistically and well handled, so that they would be an example to the girls or to anyone that was there at the luncheon; you couldn't but admire the artistry of it all. The serving plates were attractive and the place mats and everything was set up attractively and done correctly, and with a center piece of fresh flowers or fruit or something of that kind. It seemed to me of kind of an interesting kind of combination of beautiful domestic life and business life in some way, you know, there was business going on here too, of serving these girls, but here was this domestic side, in Rachel's own quarters.

Selix: Do you recall anything else about the beauty of the building?

Applegarth: No I can't, not in detail, but I know that it was an artistic building and just beautiful.

[brief pause in tape]

Applegarth: There were many members of the family around whenever I was there. I always felt as though they regarded it as a family project and were all keenly woven into what was going on there and gave Rachel great support.

Selix: We remember that Mary Wolfsohn, the mother of the Wolfsohn family, taught darning, taught the girls how to darn socks.

Applegarth: Did she?

Selix: Yes.

Applegarth: Now this I didn't know. That's interesting, isn't it?

Selix: And the brothers, Julian and Fred, after they became professional men, would go to the club and give lectures to the mothers' groups.

Applegarth: They were a very intellectual family. I think possibly right in there, there would be a little distinction between Rachel and Eva; Rachel was, I think, a more intellectual type. Would you say so or not?

Selix: Well, not having known Ray, I haven't a way of making a comparison.

Applegarth: Ray was like Julian and Max, more. You see, now, Julian and Max didn't look anything alike, but they had similar minds.

Selix: Gussie and Eva, I think, were the shorter ones in the family; they had the short stocky build. Ray was the only one of the girls who was tall.

Applegarth: Yes, I know that's so. I think we've covered everything that I have here. The Wolfsohns as a family were fascinating. Ray, I thought, was the dominant and inspiring one who seemed to be the center. She was a beautiful young woman with large brown eyes and a quick energetic manner. I recall that she was on a special diet and learned later that she was a diabetic. When I attended her funeral and was impressed by the simplicity and

beauty of her lovely wood casket in the service--Ray's death was shocking to everyone, but Eva took over the club leadership. She was an entirely different personality, but she had been so well schooled by Ray that she was able to carry on very competently almost immediately, and then developed her own style. There was another sister named Gussie who was a nurse and was more like Eva in personality. I didn't know Gussie very well and didn't follow her career at all. The boys in the family were fine young fellows. I thought Julian, the second oldest, was just finishing his training as a psychiatrist when I met him. He became a very successful analyst but died of some severe high blood pressure disease. The next son, Frederick, who became an orthodontist and took care of my own children's teeth later when he got into practice, he was a very handsome and charming young fellow. He is still practicing, I think, in San Francisco.

Selix: Dr. Fred?

Applegarth: No, he's dead, isn't he?

Selix: Yes, Dr. Fred died.

Applegarth: And after Fred came the youngest, Max, who was at the Harvard Medical School when I was going to the club, he became an internist and after a short practice in San Francisco went to live in Monterey. He developed a large practice on the Monterey Peninsula and fortunately took care of my own mother who had moved to Carmel. I think he's still practicing and greatly beloved by everybody who knows him. He is a very civic-minded man and practices in an older building, which is his residence. The oldest Wolfsohn son I only met once or twice and did not know well, but Mrs. Wolfsohn, their mother, was a very distinguished looking elderly woman whom I thought very beautiful and pleasant. The boys were interesting to me because at my age I was interested in meeting men, and I recall taking one of them to a college picnic to Paradise Cove, I think it was. I know we sat alongside of part of the bay and it was a foggy day. I had my ukulele and whether it was Fred or Max or Julian, I don't know, but one of the boys went with me and brought his instrument, which was either a guitar or a mandolin, and we provided the music of the afternoon. That was great fun for me because this was not a college boy but a real man, you see.

Selix: You had mentioned many occasions when Max would visit your mother in Monterey.

Applegarth: We loved Max; he was such a good doctor and became such a good personal friend to my mother. Of course, I didn't live down there so I wasn't always present when he was paying visits to my mother, but I was there often enough to see what good friends they were and what a rapport they had. I think that it was through my mother's influence that he became so interested in the history of that area. I know that my mother also used to look at him with a little bit of concern because she had aside her bed a small antique chair which she valued highly, in which Max used to sit. As he'd get talking about the history of Monterey he'd rock back and forth in this chair, putting the back legs in great danger, and my mother used to be so worried that the whole thing would collapse, but it didn't; he got through his visit without any catastrophe. I always remember that in connection with his care of my mother.

Selix: Mrs. Applegarth, let's talk about you for a while if you don't mind. First of all, we'd like to ask you the date of your birth.

Applegarth: November 21, 1899.

Selix: And you were born in San Francisco.

Applegarth: Yes.

Selix: What neighborhood did you grow up in?

Applegarth: I was born out on Hartford Street, I think, in the Mission, and my grandparents had a big old house on the corner of Twenty-first and Howard.

Selix: You were in the same neighborhood at the same time as Adrienne's grandparents.

Applegarth: Is that so? Well, after the fire and earthquake--we were burned out, first of all, because my grandmother and great aunt had inherited a family hotel down near the city hall. It was a place where all members of the family, having nervous breakdowns or being overworked or something or recuperating from something, would retreat, you see, and stay there for a while and get rested up. At that time my mother and father and I were living there and we were on the fourth floor of this kind of Victorian house, and the stories were very high so that would equal to about six stories; we thought this was quite high up, you know. We were burned out--this was Larkin and Turk--we were burned out and went across the bay for six months. And in the meantime we got the tenants out of this old family home on Twenty-first and Howard and then there were about eight or ten of us who went to live in this--because the house was in two parts. It was a double house, you see, and we cut a door in between and all of the members of the family lived there for about a year after the fire and earthquake.

Selix: Where was the home that was burned down?

Applegarth: This was this Victorian hotel on Turk and Larkin. See, the fire came up as far as Van Ness Avenue; we were completely burned out.

Selix: But the one at Twenty-first and Howard did not burn?

Applegarth: No, the fire went to about Eighteenth, I think. This was a marvelous refuge for us, and it was all repainted and refurbished and everything; we just loved it out there.

Selix: How long did you live there?

Applegarth: Oh, about two years and then we went back to the middle of town; we had to.

Selix: Did you go to school in the Mission district?

Applegarth: No, I went to Girls' High School.

Selix: Were you a contemporary of Helen Vonn by any chance?

Applegarth: I don't recall the name. I was in the club 1908--

Selix: Ruth Brandenstein?

Applegarth: I don't know.

Selix: I guess it was a different period. Was Edward Dupui--

Applegarth: Edward Dupui, yes, he was there at that time, and Dr. Scott was the principal. Have you heard anything about him? He came in as the principal of Girls' High School when I was a freshman and we became very, very close friends.

Selix: Edward Dupui was Adrienne's uncle.

Applegarth: Oh really? A most interesting man. Wasn't he a personality, though?

Bonn: Too much of one; he had a history.

Applegarth: "Gwendolyn," he would call me! [says in a singsong manner] [laughter]

Selix: What was your full maiden name?

Applegarth: Gwendolyn Powers.

Selix: And that was the name under which you had your class at the club, was it not?

Applegarth: Yes.

Selix: Where did you go to college?

Applegarth: UC.

Selix: Did you graduate from there?

Applegarth: No.

Selix: Did you ever have a career?

Applegarth: No, I didn't.

Selix: You married right after college?

Applegarth: I began just going out socially, you know, and all this time I was training with my mother on all these various projects. It just gave anybody a very busy life who was associated with my mother. So I had that and then I didn't marry until 1915.

Selix: You married George Adrian Applegarth, who was a very famous San Francisco architect.

Applegarth: He was a young practicing architect, and he had graduated from the Beaux-Arts in 1906. He was in New York at the time of the earthquake here and had been offered a connection with a very fine firm in New York, but when the earthquake came he decided he wanted to come back to California and build up with the city. He had been born in Oakland, and his uncle was an architect, too, in the city; he had practiced with

him somewhat before he went to the Beaux-Arts. So he decided to come back here and, of course, he did very well; it was a great opportunity here for building after the fire. He was an associate of Kenneth Macdonald for a few years and Kenneth Macdonald was very well acquainted with people who had the money to build. They leased the top floor of the [inaudible] building for ten years, right away, in the middle of all the ashes and everything. This was a very good opportunity for a young architect, and my husband made the most of it. I didn't meet him until several years later; that was 1906. He was a very popular bachelor around, and I met him in about 1914 and we were married in 1915.

Selix: How many children did you have?

Applegarth: I have four, two boys and two girls, alternating, boy, girl, boy, girl.

Selix: Well, isn't that a nice arrangement.

Applegarth: Isn't it though? This is what [inaudible] [Mark Smith?] used to say, "This is what comes from having an architect for a husband." [laughter]

Selix: It's rather an interesting sidelight that Adrienne Bonn studied architecture in high school and took all the necessary drawing [classes]. Eva Wolfsohn knew that she wanted to be an architect so she said, "Well, I have a friend who's an architect, and I will take you to see him." So she took Adrienne down--by this time Adrienne was a high school student--she took Adrienne down to Mr. Applegarth's office and said, "Now, Mr. Applegarth, tell Adrienne that she doesn't want to be an architect. That she'll have to study two years on plumbing alone."

Applegarth: My husband knew Julia Morgan very well, who had been at the Beaux-Arts when he was there, and she was practicing--she was ahead of him--and she was practicing here but finding it very hard. And, of course, he was not a feminist, I guess, and he didn't encourage women to go into the profession, because he thought it was awfully hard for them.

Bonn: Maybe that was the reason.

Applegarth: He thought it was hard for them to make a go of it.

Selix: What else can you tell us about your husband's career in San Francisco? I know he designed many famous buildings.

Applegarth: Yes, he did. He did extremely well and became associated with certain families and built for them constantly, until they built up all the property that they had and the fathers died off and everything. It was interesting that he stayed right with certain families.

Selix: Generation after generation.

Applegarth: Well, I suppose so. You see, they all lost so much property, buildings during the fire. He did all of Spreckels' building for many, many years, both commercial and residential and then he did the Palace of the Legion of Honor and the [Sebrian?] family and several other families that were well-to-do and did a great deal of building. He lived at the

Southern Club when I met him. He was not a Southerner and had no right to belong to that club, but he just knew a lot of the men who lived there and they induced him to move in, because he had been living in some bachelor club and wasn't very happy with it. The Southern Club used to be where the Metropolitan Life building is on California Street, and it was just a perfectly beautiful building and the club was so interesting. It had a big veranda out front overlooking the bay. They used to give the most wonderful parties there imaginable, and so I met him there, going on a date with another man.

Selix: Oh, at one of the parties?

Applegarth: Yes, at one of the parties. He had a very interesting career, and he loved his work. I often tell friends of mine to look at a very interesting little building on Bush Street, a very narrow building between two large buildings. It's on Bush near Sansome--I can't think of the address of it, but this is one of the first buildings that he put up and I think it was about a twenty-foot lot, a very, very small lot. He built it for a man named Heyneman, who was a necktie and shirt maker.

Selix: Is that the one who became Elouesser Heyneman?

Applegarth: I don't know. The later story of Heyneman's life, I don't know. But how Heyneman came to go to my husband, I don't know except that somebody rather close had a building done for him, you see, by my husband. My husband used to guarantee these clients not only the exact cost of the building but that he would get the tenant for it and everything, complete. He was a very methodical man and he was a very careful figurer, and he got a reputation for being very dependable.

[Tape 1, Side B]

Applegarth: I don't know how Mr. Heyneman came to drift into my husband's office, but it must have been through some client who had been very well satisfied because my husband was such a careful figurer. And as I said before, he not only guaranteed the exact price of the building and never failed to have the building completed under that figure but also guaranteed to get a tenant for the owner, so this was a good package deal, as you say. Well anyway, Mr. Heyneman came in with a whole bunch of pictures, the Taj Mahal and the Parthenon and great historic buildings of the past. He came in to my husband and said, "I want you to build a building for me, and I want some of these buildings all shown in it because these are the greatest buildings in the world. I want you to give me something that will look like some of them or all of them put together." Well, of course, my husband nearly collapsed at the very thought of anyone thinking like this, but he was very politic and he said, "All right, now you come back in a week and I'll show you what I've drawn up for that lot. I'll go over and look at it and send my engineer," and so on. So when Heyneman came back, my husband had something constructed there, a drawing of something that, of course, didn't look anything like what Heyneman was expecting, but he was entranced with the actual drawing and thought it was just great, so this is what they went ahead with.

It's really the most interesting little building; it's almost all glass and it has a little Gothic top to it. Now it's nestled in between these two skyscrapers down on Bush Street

and it's been sold several times. In the Junior League's *Here Today* book they have a picture of that building, but they couldn't find out who built it so my husband doesn't get the credit for it, because it's a very unusual little building. As my husband said, it was so silly of them not to go to the right places to find out because any of the older architects could have told them, or at the city hall or in one of the older real estate offices; they know those things, have a record of them, but anyway, there it is.

There were many, many funny incidences in my husband's early practice and this man was so anxious about this building of his, you would have thought that it was the only building in the world. He kept coming in almost every day when the building started, to inquire how it was getting along and so on. The only way my husband could get rid of him was to give him something to do. He said, "Now, Mr. Heyneman, look out here"--from the top floor of the Call building you could look right down onto the place where this building was, and he said, "They're driving piles down there now for the foundation of your building. You go down there and stay there and watch that pile driver and see that they really do a good job. Each pile has to boom at the top before it strikes solid ground, and you just sit there and you watch that booming come about on each pile." So this went on--this man used to go down there and watch every pile being driven, and then when the building was finished he was so proud of it that he sent out flyers to all his friends telling about the remarkable building that this was. It was so extraordinary, I'm sure, that there is nothing ever built in the world that could compare to it in his mind. He was quite a character, really.

Selix: Well, it was the most important building, anyway.

Applegarth: The most important building. It was just all blown up in this flyer telling about the heating and the elevators and the everything, you know, it was marvelous. But he was so concerned about the welfare of his workers, that was one thing that was interesting.

Selix: It was a factory building then?

Applegarth: Well, the lower part of it--yes, he must have had the work going on there because he was very particular about having the work rooms sanitary, because where they were working now used to get damp underfoot and this bothered him, and he was very particular to have the working conditions right now. It doesn't look like a factory building at all, but they certainly didn't manufacture things in the lower part of it there. It's now an office building and it has a slow old elevator in it, and it has changed hands a couple of times. Now sometime when you're down in the financial district you should go down and take a look at it.

Selix: We will. When did your husband retire from his practice?

Applegarth: Well, he didn't like to say he was ever retired. He always had something going on, on the drafting board, whether it concerned family or the alteration of some friend's house or something like that; he always had something doing. But he gave up his office downtown only about three or four years ago, really. He only died last year, just a year ago at the age of ninety-six.

Selix: Isn't that a remarkable life!

Applegarth: Remarkable, yes. He was perfectly clear and capable right up until the last.

Selix: Well, then he was actually working up until the age of ninety-six.

Applegarth: Yes, he was.

Selix: Oh, isn't that marvelous.

Applegarth: Driving his own car and everything.

Selix: Driving?

Applegarth: That's right; there's no age limit.

Selix: No, that's right, there isn't.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—LENORE PETERS JOB

INTERVIEW WITH LENORE PETERS JOB

SESSSION 1, February 15, 1973

[Tape 22, Side A] 101

Early impressions of Girls' Club—Sister, Anita Peters Wright, and the beginning of her career as a dance instructor—The Peters Wright Creative Dance Studio—Three generations of dance professionals—Remembering Edith Heinrich—More on Anita Peters Wright's career—Teaching dance at the Girls' Club—Anita Peters Wright's form of dance, influenced by Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis—Daughter's and granddaughter's role at The Peters Wright School Creative Dance Studio—Recitals, students, style/philosophy of dance instruction.

SESSION 2, March 2, 1973

[Tape 22, Side A] 108

Anita Peters Wright in New York—Family background and connection to the arts—Retiring from teaching dance and dance performance of "Mother and Child" on eighty-second birthday—More on daughter—Judy Job, and her dance instruction career, more on granddaughter.

[Tape 22, Side B] 116

Artist Geneve Rixford Sargent and sons—Sargent's one-woman show at the de Young Museum—Mother and her death, father, siblings—Earthquake and fire of 1906, reconstruction—Anita Peters Wright and husband Dexter Wright—Dancing with actress Maude Adams—Peters Wright's dance troupe on tour—Hazel Salmi, Peter Stackpole, "Dance of the Hours," at Ingleside Racetrack.

INTERVIEW WITH LENORE PETERS JOB

[Interview Session #1, February 15, 1973]

[Tape 22, Side A]

Selix: Today is February 15, 1973, and we are interviewing Mrs. Lenore Job. The interviewer is Leah Selix.

I remember when Mrs. Job was a dance instructor at the Girls' Club when Miss Eva Wolfsohn was the director of the Girls' Club, and we have in front of us a lovely bowl that Mrs. Job will tell us about. You mentioned that every Christmas Miss Eva had a gift for anyone who taught at the club. Tell us about this bowl.

Job: Well, every Christmas we had a gift; and at this late date, I still have one of the gifts, and I think it's Chinese maybe. It's a green bowl with a metal lacing around it which prevents it from getting broken, and it's very lovely. Anyway, whenever I look for something for flowers, I use Miss Eva's bowl, but I don't always think of her because it was so long ago. But today my memory is being stirred up by Mrs. Selix, and I'm remembering many, many interesting things about the Girls' Club. My sister, Anita Peters Wright, taught there, I think, from its inception. I'm pretty sure that when it was opened, she was the teacher, and when she left home and went on the road with a dance group to tour the country, I took over her work. This was one of the features of her work, teaching at the Girls' Club. It was always a pleasure just to go there because it was so beautifully done, I mean, architecturally from the outside was very nice, but on the inside, everything was of such excellent taste, so interesting, and educational, and artistic. It was always such a pleasure to go there and to think that this beautiful place was available to all the people of that neighborhood, who were on the lower echelons of society and to whom it was a great boost in their education. In fact, Frederica Rohrer, whom I happen to know, has often told me how the Girls' Club started her on her way to being a very fine singer, and such things of that happened a great deal.

Selix: Do you remember any other girls who were influenced by the Girls' Club?

Job: No, I'm afraid I can't. There must have been many of them, but I just happened to know about her much later in my life.

Selix: Tell us about Lenore Job. Do you mind if we ask you when you were born?

Job: No, I was born in 1890; I'm eighty-three years old.

Selix: Then you were here during the fire and earthquake.

Job: Oh, yes.

Selix: And where did you live at that time?

Job: I lived at 2514 Pine Street, just two blocks from the—

Selix: And was the dance studio there at the time?

- Job: Yes, my sister had a dance studio there. She started out her career as a kindergarten teacher. When she was younger—if you want to know about—
- Selix: Yes, I'd like to know.
- Job: When she was a young girl, there weren't many avenues open for women, but she would love to have gone on the stage because she was quite an actress, but she couldn't quite do that, so she took up kindergartening. Kate Douglas Wiggins founded the first kindergarten here in San Francisco, and she introduced the Montessori method of teaching. That was very new in those days.
- Selix: And very advanced.
- Job: Very advanced and now, it's interesting, it's being revived now.
- Selix: Yes, I've read about it.
- Job: Dropped all those years. Well, anyway, Mrs. Wright, my sister, Anita, opened the kindergarten, but in the kindergarten, every Friday, she had dancing; she'd never taken any dancing lessons but she had dancing. Every year she gave a beautiful entertainment of dancing and singing and—
- Selix: Was this at the Kate Wiggins kindergarten?
- Job: No, no, this was her own kindergarten.
- Selix: Oh, she opened a private kindergarten.
- Job: Yes, after studying and taking a course at the Kate Wiggins kindergarten, she decided her career was this. The kindergarten was successful and became a primary school and then it became a grammar school, all credited to the San Francisco School; it was just Mrs. Wright's genius at teaching. Then I think the turning point was when dancing gradually took over and the school faded away, and the dancing grew, and she became a dancer, and taught dancing, and produced dances.
- Selix: What year did she start the Anita Peters Wright School?
- Job: 1912 [inaudible-would mark?] because that's when she married Dexter M. Wright, who was the musician, and they founded the—we consider that the school was founded under that name at that time. So, that's 1912, how many years ago? That's sixty years ago.
- Selix: Yes, that's a long time ago.
- Job: It has never missed a day of operating.
- Selix: Even during the fire? Well, that was started after the fire. The Peters Wright School of Dancing [Peters Wright Creative Dance Studio] is still in existence and it is located on Sacramento Street.

- Job: Yes, has been in this house for over fifty years.
- Selix: And has been here for over fifty years?
- Job: Let's see, we came here in 1918, that's fifty-five years. We used to live on Pine Street, and then we moved here, and we've been here ever since. When my sister went away and took her dancers on the road, I took over her work and gradually became the head of the school. And now my granddaughter is taking over; as I recede, my granddaughter is taking over.
- Selix: Was your daughter involved in the school?
- Job: Oh, yes, very much, she was born and raised in the school.
- Selix: And that was Judy Job.
- Job: Yes, Judy Job is my daughter, and as soon as she could walk she was dancing and was always part of the school. She gradually became—she taught in the school for many years, and then now, she's the head of the music and dance department of the Oakland Recreation Department; everything in dance and music is supervised by her.
- Selix: That's wonderful. And it's her daughter who's carrying on—
- Job: And now her daughter is taking over the Peters Wright School; yes, so it's a dynasty.
- Selix: And you said that your sister Anita worked at the Girls' Club from its inception.
- Job: I think so, yes, I'm pretty sure.
- Selix: I know that your family were professional dance teachers, and I'm sure that they were paid by the Girls' Club to instruct the members, but I know from my own experience that anyone who worked there, if they were paid instructors, were underpaid because there were always budget problems.
- Job: Yes, well, of course, it was largely volunteer work but such a beautiful experience. It should have been well-financed but of course, those things never are.
- Selix: Even the cultural activities of today have a difficult time getting finances, but we feel that the board of directors of the Girls' Club were very generous. We've always been very grateful to them and felt that they did a tremendous amount for the Girls' Club, because if it hadn't been for them, there wouldn't have been a Girls' Club. We will eventually do interviews and tapes that will bring out the names of those people. Do you remember any of the people who were on the board at the time?
- Job: No, I don't. The only person in the authoritative part of it was Edith Heinrich that I remember.
- Selix: What do you remember about Edith Heinrich? Was she there from the inception of the club?

- Job: Probably, yes, I think she knew Rachel. Of course, I'm not sure, I just knew that she was there and was a part of the—I don't know what she did exactly.
- Selix: When we were children, she was second-in-command to Miss Eva.
- Job: Oh, she was? I knew she was an authority.
- Selix: I don't believe that she was a resident worker there, but she was very much a part of every activity, and she was lovingly known as "Heiny;" from the time that we were children, she was Heiny. We followed her career and her life until the time that she died; we were in touch with her.
- Job: We used to see her once in a while, and whenever my sister came to town from New York, we always saw Edith.
- Selix: Was your sister in New York a great part of the time?
- Job: That's where she lived. She left here in 1924, and toured the country, and she went to New York, and was there when the Crash came in 1929. She had had a very successful year, but the Crash came in New York. She decided to stay there. Her husband would have liked to come home, but she stayed there and started another school in New York.
- Selix: And how long was that—
- Job: Well, let's see, from '29 until—she died, I think, three years ago, at the age of ninety-three. She was still teaching. She never danced a great deal herself, she was mainly a teacher. She had this studio—they called it a studio there; it wasn't a school like ours, it was a studio. Toward the end, when she was not so able, she coached singers, and actors, and movement. In fact, before she fell and broke her hip, she was still teaching.
- Selix: At the age of ninety-three?
- Job: Yes.
- Selix: Well, that's a wonderful record. Now, she was at the Girls' Club, we'll say, from its inception to about 19—we know that you were there in 1926, and you think you started in 1924?
- Job: Well, apparently, because that's when she went away.
- Selix: And then you taught there for about four years.
- Job: I think so, yes.
- Selix: And you found it a very rewarding experience.
- Job: Yes, I did. I enjoyed the contact with the women that were running it, and I just enjoyed being there; it was a lovely experience.
- Selix: Did it influence your own life in any way?

- Job: Well, no. I'm just trying to think why it stopped, I don't know.
- Selix: The Club? Why you stopped?
- Job: Yes. I imagine it was because the club stopped. I don't think it was the first time—
- Selix: Oh, no, the club didn't stop; no, the club never stopped.
- Job: Oh, didn't it?
- Selix: No, it went on and on, and eventually it became a Community Chest agency, and then it became the [Mission Community Center?], and now it's known as Mission Neighborhood Center.
- Job: I see, well, that's the building.
- Selix: The building is used.
- Job: Well, I was just wondering why I left, whether they just decided they couldn't have the dancing class anymore, I don't really know. I don't think I taught there as many as four years, but my memory is so bad I can't be sure, but it was several years.
- Selix: I see. And do you remember any of the recitals that you put on?
- Job: No, but according to this I did put it on.
- Selix: Oh, I'm sure you had recitals every year.
- Job: We did, yes.
- Selix: That was Miss Eva's strong point, to have her girls perform.
- Job: Yes, of course, and our part was to make them perform and show them how.
- Selix: And we were always very proud when the board came to watch our performances.
- Job: Oh, yes.
- Selix: Did you know [Rose Walters?] or any of the people who taught ballet at the club?
- Job: No. Did someone teach ballet?
- Selix: Yes, they also had ballet classes.
- Job: That's what happened. My teaching was modern dance, you know, creative dance, evidently the ballet took over.
- Selix: Now the type of dancing that you taught was creative dancing. Was that your sister's own personal interpretations of dance?

- Job: Yes. It's quite a long story but she made her own career. She didn't study dancing at all; she read, and she observed, and she studied in that way and developed her own type of dancing, inspired, I believe, by Isadora Duncan.
- Selix: I thought that that was the background.
- Job: Yes, but she was also instructed by Ruth St. Denis, or anybody that was in town from whom she could learn.
- Selix: Your sister was?
- Job: Yes. I don't mean formally, but I mean she saw everything they did, and she immediately used it. She had a genius for taking what she saw and using it, and she was quite an interesting person, quite unusual in that way. She did dance a little herself, but primarily, she was a teacher. We used to say she could teach anything, even what she didn't know. Let's see, what else can we think of.
- Bonn: What is Judy's last name now?
- Job: Her name is Callahan. She married twice. She married a young man named [Kerner?] to whom she was married for ten years and he died. Then she married Callahan, a friend of theirs, who had also lost his wife. That's a different story. We must get a hold of Frederica.
- Selix: Yes. I would like you to spell out the name of your granddaughter who is now in charge of the Peters Wright School. Would you give us her name and spell it for us?
- Job: Yes, her name is Bronwen. Bronwen was taken from the book *How Green Was My Valley*, that lovely book, and the heroine was Bronwen. It is spelled several different ways. Some spell it with a W-I-N, some with W-Y-N, but hers is Wen, Bronwen.
- Selix: And the last name?
- Job: Revenaugh. That's her husband's name.
- Selix: When I talked to her on the phone, she told me that she was the fourth generation teaching in the Peters Wright School, and I said, "Is there going to be somebody to carry on the tradition when you can no longer teach?" She said, "I'm working on it, I'm trying" [laughs].
- Job: Well, I don't know what will happen if she has a baby.
- Selix: You don't know what will happen to the school?
- Job: Judy taught all the time while she was carrying her baby, and Bronwen's birth was announced on the day of our program. On the Thirteenth of June, it was announced that the baby was born.
- Selix: Did you have recitals frequently here in the school?

- Job: Every year, we never missed a year.
- Selix: Only once a year, though.
- Job: Once a year, but there were all kinds of other things, smaller things, going on around at clubs and so forth, but the big thing every year was the recital.
- Selix: Did you draw many of your students from Pacific Heights district?
- Job: Well, yes, we did, up to a certain point. We'd have all the elite from Pacific Heights, and then the San Francisco Ballet came in and cut that out, all those people: Mrs. Dean Witter, and she was one of our strong supporters, and Mrs.—I can't think of the other names, but anyway, that happened. Then we had to struggle along and make our own way much better.
- Selix: Now you draw from the neighborhood, or do people come from all over the city?
- Job: They come from all over the city, yes.
- Selix: I imagine that the type of dancing that you're teaching now is different than when Anita first started the school.
- Job: Well, in a way, and yet in a way, it wasn't. Hers was based more on the ballet, her technique. Her technique was based on the ballet because that was all we knew in those days but her spirit—everything was feeling.
- Selix: Emotion.
- Job: Emotional, yes, from Isadora Duncan, you know. It seems to me, myself, too, I feel like an artist that has an art, and he takes from all the great artists what he can use, and that was the same with she and with me, too. We never followed any particular set path; it was always creative.
- Selix: I noticed in the phone book now that it says "Flamenco and"—
- Job: Yes, now the school has—we have five different teachers. We have a Hindu teacher, a Flamenco teacher, and an Afro-jazz teacher, and a ballet teacher, as well as modern dance, creative dance, which is the mother—
- Selix: The umbrella of the school.
- Job: Yes, of the whole thing, yes. I feel, have always felt, that dance is such a human thing and it covered all kinds, and we've been able to do that. That captures our unique quality, because I don't know any other schools that have these different teachers. They are usually all ballet or all modern. We have always felt that you had to take in everybody. Let's see, what else we can think of the Girls' Club.

[Interview Session #2, March 2, 1973]

[Tape 22, Side A, continued]

Selix: Today is March 2, and we are resuming our interview with Mrs. Lenore Job. Since our first interview, I have talked to two Girls' Club members, both of whom told me that either they or their sisters had been asked to join Anita's dance group when it went on tour, but for family reasons they were unable to go. In the first part of the interview, you mentioned that Anita coached professional performers in her New York dance studio. Do you know the names of any famous people who may have been her students?

Job: No, I don't. That's difficult to say. They weren't famous because they were people who wanted to be famous.

Selix: Oh, they were people who were working towards fame.

Job: Yes. There may have been some famous people, but I just don't happen to know the names. When she left home, when she settled in New York, I didn't have much connection with her. I had a friendly connection but I mean, as far as knowing everything, all I knew was, "Hello, how are you," you know, personal things, so I can't answer those questions. There may have been lots—many, many interesting people that she knew, but I'm afraid I'm not the one to answer that.

Selix: What do you suppose aroused Anita's interest in dancing? Did you have any ancestors who were dancers?

Job: No, none of them. My grandfather was a sea captain and my mother's people were working people. They were artisans or upholsterers and yet—oh, yes, there were some actors among them.

Selix: There were actors among your mother's family?

Job: Yes, actors and musicians, too. Her mother had a lot of children, and I remember reading about the young men being [inaudible]—anyway, there was that trend in her family, not in the Peters family.

Selix: No, in your mother's family. What was your mother's maiden name?

Job: Alice Cain.

Selix: And where was she born?

Job: In London.

Selix: That's a very interesting coincidence because in the Girls' Club, we had a family by the name of Cain who came from London, who came from England.

Job: Really?

Selix: I'm wondering if there is any connection.

- Job: I don't know, there might well have been, because she had a lot of brothers and sisters.
- Selix: Well, it might well have been. When did your mother come to San Francisco?
- Job: I'm not sure of that either. I was told she was twenty-one when she married, and I don't know how old she was when she came here [inaudible].
- Selix: What year was she born, your mother?
- Job: I don't know.
- Bonn: 1848.
- Job: How did you get that?
- Bonn: Well, she died in 1893 and she was forty-five.
- Job: Well, I think that's near as we can get. There is one picture that has her date on the back of it, but I don't seem to be able to find it.
- Selix: Was your mother ever in professional life or—?
- Job: No, not at all.
- Selix: She never worked then.
- Job: Her profession was having children.
- Selix: And how many children did she have?
- Job: Oh, I beg your pardon, she sang; she had a beautiful voice.
- Selix: Did she sing professionally?
- Job: She sang in churches.
- Selix: Oh, she was an oratorio.
- Job: She used to sing in [inaudible] after you asked me. It's so long ago that I—she used to sing in—what's the name of that place up in the Mother Lode country? It's a place that's familiar in the Gold Rush days where she used to sing. Anyway, she sang in a church, and she used to sing around the house all the time, my sister told me. She was always singing and very gay.
- Selix: How many children did your mother have?
- Job: Eleven. Two died; two did not reach maturity.
- Selix: And where was your father born?

- Job: In Le Havre, France.
- Selix: What year was he born?
- Job: 1840.
- Selix: And at what age did he die?
- Job: Eighty-seven.
- Selix: What was his full name?
- Job: Joseph Chrysoston Peters. It's a saint's name; he was a Catholic, they were all Catholic. [inaudible] His mother was a Catholic, who was driven out among the Catholics that left England when the Catholics were persecuted and settled in France, and her people kept a hotel there. My grandfather was from Maine, Catholic Maine. He was a captain of a whaler, and he came to this place, and stayed at this hotel, and married the young hotel people's daughter.
- Bonn: That's a twist, isn't it?
- Job: Quite romantic, yes. I think all the children were born there. Let's see, I think there were six children of that marriage, two girls and four boys, yes, and my father—I don't know why they moved to America but they did.
- Selix: And where did they settle in America originally?
- Job: When they came from France, they settled in Georgetown, Maryland.
- Selix: Do you know what year your father came to San Francisco and how old he was?
- Job: No, but it was when he was a young man anyway. I don't know what brought—
- Selix: He was [inaudible].
- Job: Oh, yes, they went to Oregon for some reason or other.
- Selix: They went to Oregon first?
- Job: They didn't come to San Francisco, they went to Oregon first, and then I drifted down to San Francisco. I don't know. Now, we have a book called *The Peters of New England* in which there are all kinds of branches of the Peters' family discussed, but I don't know whether they would have that kind of information.
- Selix: Were some of the Peters in New England among the early settlers?
- Job: Probably. Oh, undoubtedly. Had you read that book [inaudible]—And there were some Peters in Utica. My brother, Paul, who just died recently, was the youngest son, youngest of the boys. He was very interested in the family history and used to keep a family tree and all that. He found some relatives who lived in Utica, New York, and he

communicated with them, but I don't know what he got from them. But there are some pictures that came of these people in Utica.

Selix: Your mother and father met and married in San Francisco. Do you know what year they were married?

Job: No, I don't know, I don't know that. I couldn't tell you that.

Selix: I think you said your mother died at the age of forty-five, when you were three years old.

Job: I have the impression that she was twenty-one when she married and my father was forty-one. I know it was a big jump.

Selix: What was your father's profession?

Job: He was a hay and grain commission merchant.

Selix: In those days that was a very important part of the commercial world.

Job: Yes. If it hadn't been for the automobile it would have kept going, but when the automobile came, that was the end of that profession.

Selix: And how did your mother manage with eleven children?

Job: That's what I often wonder. He was able to support them, I guess, up to the time—let's see, when Mother died, he was still earning some money on his work. He didn't give up until, oh, maybe 1900.

Selix: As early as 1900?

Job: We were born on Eleventh Street, south of the block, on 225 Eleventh Street, and all the sudden, my sister, Anita, decided we were going to move. We moved to Scott Street, 225 Scott Street.

Selix: Was Anita the oldest child?

Job: No, she was the next to the oldest, but she was the managing type. The oldest sister was not the managing type, she was the pleasure-loving—it all worked, of course, but Anita was the kind that took over and ran the house.

Selix: Were any of the other nine children who survived interested in any of the arts?

Job: No, not professionally.

Selix: Anita was the only one who pursued the art.

Job: She was the only one. My older sister played the piano by ear, no serious addiction to it. Although, it's funny, my brother, Albert, used to sing, sang songs and entertained us.

There was always a feeling of entertainment in our house, somebody joking, or singing, and laughing and that sort of thing.

Selix: They were sort of natural-born performers.

Job: Yes, I think that was it, not all of them but many of them: [Albert, Ralph, Leo and Paul], four brothers, and five sisters.

Selix: And what were the sisters' names?

Job: [Mabel?], Anita, Dora, Lily, and Lenore. And two died, one named Jessie and one named Violet.

Selix: Was it the two youngest ones who died?

Job: No, Violet was a twin of Lily; Lily was the next to youngest. I'm the youngest, Lily was the next to youngest and they were twins; the twin died very soon after birth. Then Jessie lived to be about seven, I think. I think she died of diphtheria. So, you ask the questions; that's the best way.

Selix: Do you remember what year or at what age you discontinued your teaching in the Peters Wright School?

Job: Oh, yes.

Selix: What year was that?

Job: Just this last year.

Selix: You were teaching up until last year?

Job: Yes.

Selix: You were eighty-two, and still teaching and still dancing.

Job: Yes. On my eighty-second birthday, I gave a performance of a dance that I had done for many years, "Mother and Child." I started it when my daughter was five years old; she's now verging onto fifty. This is kind of interesting, she was five years old, and I thought of this idea of a mother and child. It was a lovely dance with some group music, and I stood with the child in front of me, you know. We did this and I worked on it, and she used to cry and object and all, but when it was finished, she said, "I know what this is, it isn't just us, it's all mothers and children." Wasn't that an interesting thing?

Selix: Very.

Job: I think that was a very interesting thing.

Selix: For a five-year-old.

- Job: Yes, for a five-year-old. Anyway, she liked it then when we were finished. Then what I wanted to say is, by and by, she grew up too tall and I had to get another child, so through the years I did the dance for many years and always with a new child. Then for a long time I didn't do it; I thought I was too old to do it. Then all the sudden I did it again when a likely child came along. My eighty-second birthday I wanted to treat myself, so I did the dance. I trained a little girl in the neighborhood to do the dance with me, and I invited all the children that had been the child with me, as many as I could get.
- Selix: And how many were there?
- Job: There were nine altogether.
- Selix: That you were able to contact.
- Job: No, there were nine that had been, but I think only about seven came. I'm very inaccurate about the—but, anyway, it was very lovely. I had it in the studio, just a simple—then we showed some movies, too. I had a movie of myself with this dance when it was in the original. Yes, at a friend's house in Pasadena and it was a lovely picture. It was amazing to see this little girl and me, it was so lovely; all the people were in tears.
- Selix: It was an emotional—
- Job: Yes, very. Then I did it at Union Square when the peace—at the first peace demonstration, I did the "Mother and Child" in Union Square.
- Selix: For which war was that?
- Job: The one that just finished, supposedly just finished.
- Selix: The Vietnam War?
- Job: Yes, when they first began moving against it, Women for Peace, you know. I was there with a little Negro girl; I have a sculpture of me and the little Negro girl doing it. My son-in-law had it done and it was an impressionist thing. Being the Negro girl and the white, she wanted to get the two colors and she found a piece of manzanita that had both colors; that was lovely. That was my last dance. Before that, I think about a year before it, I danced at the [Fellowship of All People?]. Do you know that church over on—what street is it on—right near the Broadway Tunnel?
- Selix: The Church of the Fellowship for—
- Job: [The Church of the Fellowship of All People?]. Well, I danced there one Sunday morning, rather recently.
- Selix: That was when you were about eighty-one.
- Job: Yes, I was only eighty-one then. Well, I found I could do it, you know. The only thing that was hard was the knees, but I managed to do it.

Selix: I understand that you still do some dancing.

Job: Did my granddaughter tell you that?

Selix: Yes.

Job: Well, this is Friday, isn't it?

Selix: Yes.

Job: Oh, I was supposed to go to a class this morning. She didn't tell me; she was supposed to remind me. When you say dancing to most people, they think you are going to flitter around on your toes and that sort of thing. Well, it isn't that, it's movement of your whole body, and you can do that until you are 100, I guess.

Selix: Do you remember what year your daughter, Judy Job, started dancing? Did she start at a very early age?

Job: She started as soon as she could walk; as soon as she could walk she was in the studio. She used to spend many hours outside the studio in her carriage, and as soon as she could walk she was in—I'll never forget her first birthday party when she was four, maybe. When it came to the dance, she was furious because the other children were dancing, she wanted to be the whole thing. It was interesting.

Bonn: She wanted to solo.

Job: I think she started seriously dancing, that is coming into the classes, at three. She was a natural. You see it isn't like ballet dancing. That's what's so hard for people to—it's more of a human thing. She moved gracefully and she was very full of humor.

Selix: What year did your daughter, Judy Job, start teaching? Did she teach along with you?

Job: When she was a young girl, say about twelve, she would teach the children in the neighborhood on the steps, you know, that way. Then she was, of course, in all the classes and taught me, too, told me what to do in the classes; that's the way children are. When she began formally to teach, I guess, she was in high school.

Selix: And then she had formal classes of her own.

Job: Yes, I think it must have been when she was in high school because she was always teaching but mostly dancing.

Selix: When did she leave the teaching to take the position in Oakland?

Job: That's a good question. I'm not quite sure but I could find out.

Selix: I think Bronwen said 1968. That's four or five years ago.

Job: I guess that's about right if Bronwen says that.

- Selix: And Bronwen took it over at that time but you were still—
- Job: No, I took it over; I came back to it, you see. I was out and then I was in again. I got to be too old, and then when she left, I had to get in and be young again.
- Bonn: You weren't that old at that time.
- Job: Well, it was a case of necessity, you know; she had to go and I just took over. I'm not very clear on what happened when she—who took her classes. I'm not quite sure, I'd have to ask Bronwen.
- Selix: When did Bronwen start teaching?
- Job: Well, it was something like Judy, she kind of slipped in very early. I couldn't say exactly when.
- Selix: She probably was born dancing.
- Job: Yes, she was. She was always in the performances and in the classes, but when she began teaching—I don't think she began teaching until she was well out of high school.
- Bonn: There was someone in your group at Club who was rather large, beautiful black eyes, black hair, was that your niece?
- Job: Oh, Francesca?
- Bonn: Was that Francesca?
- Job: Yes, she was in the class, rather large. When did you see her?
- Bonn: I think at Club in a performance.
- Job: Oh, you mean at the Girls' Club? Well, she may have come there and danced, I couldn't say. But you knew she was a relative?
- Bonn: Yes.
- Job: Well, that's my niece, yes. It's very interesting, Francesca was also brought up more or less in the school although she and her mother didn't live here, but she came to the classes and she was in all the classes, and somehow I associated her with everything we did. Then when Bronwen began to grow up, she became just the same, she was tall and dark and pretty; I'm always calling her Francesca and getting them mixed up because of the position.
- Selix: In the family and in the school.
- Job: Yes, very funny.
- Selix: When you were teaching at the Girls' Club, was your daughter, Judy, active in the group there?

- Job: Oh, no, that was way before she was born, that was way before I was married. I was married in '23 and she was born in '24.
- Selix: What was Mr. Job's profession?
- Job: He was a marine engineer.
- [Tape 22, Side B]
- Selix: In your living room, we see a portrait of your daughter, Judy Job, that was painted by Geneve Rixford Sargent. She was a well-known San Francisco artist and exhibited in San Francisco museums, and she was a very well-known personality at the Girls' Club. We knew her from the Girls' Club. I understand that Geneve was a personal friend of yours. Will you tell us about your relationship with her through the years?
- Job: Well, I met her, I think, the first time at the Girls' Club. She was in a class there that I was in that my sister was teaching, and somehow or other, she gravitated to our school and she was in our classes. She was a family friend. I wouldn't say I had an intimate relationship but a very nice, friendly relationship. She painted my daughter's picture and I posed for her. There's a little painting in there of me that she did. One of our dancers worked for her, and took care of her children, and her kitchen and all. She was a very hard-working German girl who danced with us. Poor [Irma?]. Mrs. Sargent made a painting of her and called it "The Tired Dancer;" she was tired all the time. I'm not sure I could say much more.
- Selix: Geneve's brother, who was a doctor, Dr. Rixford—what was his first name?
- Job: He was a very well-known doctor. I don't know his first name.
- Selix: He was a San Francisco doctor, wasn't he?
- Job: Yes, a very well-known doctor. Then her sons—she had three sons. Did you want me to—three sons. One, Winthrop, is the music critic of *The New Yorker*; he still writes for *The New Yorker*. Then another one named Billy, who also is a very fine musician. I'm not sure what he does now, but I know he's a very fine musician. I think he's played with the symphony. I'm not sure of these details.
- Selix: I believe he did play with the San Francisco Symphony.
- Job: Yes. There's still another one, I can't think of his name now.
- Selix: Do you remember what he did?
- Job: No, they were all musical though.
- Selix: Geneve was a very remarkable person. We knew her through the Girls' Club, and in her later years, she insisted on living in the building that was known as the "Monkey Block;" that was the Montgomery [Block] building downtown. I think the Transamerica Building is on that site now.

- Job: Yes.
- Selix: And Geneve was still working as an artist, and she insisted on living in that old, old, ramshackle building which was—in fact, I think they had to evict her in order to tear it down.
- Job: Yes.
- Bonn: Of course, she died quite a few years ago now.
- Selix: Oh, yes, yes, but she lived to be quite—I think she was almost ninety or ninety when she died.
- Job: Because she gave a show at the de Young when she was eighty.
- Selix: She did? A one woman show.
- Job: Yes. I remember that very distinctly in the little note that she was eighty then, and she died probably at least five years later than that.
- Selix: I remember that one year she made a trip to Europe, and she was going to travel for quite a while, and all she took with her was a small carrying case about the size of a train case. She traveled very lightly because she was going to carry her own luggage; she was a very independent person.
- Job: Yes, and she always went on the day coach to New York and just took a pillow with her and some nuts. I remember that very well, that's all she wanted. She'd stand up the whole time.
- Selix: And in those days, how many days did it take to get to New York by train?
- Job: About five days. Nothing daunted—she was very dauntless.
- Selix: She visited Anita when she was in New York.
- Job: Yes, and in fact, she made that her headquarters, and in exchange for her board and lodging she—my sister had several paintings of hers.
- Selix: She was a great friend of Edith Heinrich's.
- Job: Yes. Now Edith is gone.
- Selix: Oh, yes. And Geneve had a daughter who died at the age of two of tetanus; it was a very tragic incident in her life.
- Job: Oh, dear.
- [short pause in tape]

- Job: I was told—she didn't tell me—I was told that my mother's wedding day was one of the most unhappy of her life. I suppose it meant that everything wasn't right, she didn't like it, but she and my father, as I knew of them later, were great lovers, very fond of each other and quite romantic. Another thing comes to my mind that my oldest sister told me, my mother used to sing and she was very gay; and if there was a party, she would be the center of attraction and my father used to just delight in that. He wasn't jealous, isn't that wonderful? I think that's the most wonderful thing because jealousy is such a horrible thing. She said he used to enjoy her so much. I thought that was a lovely thought. Then my one memory of my mother—I have two memories, one on Fourth of July, sitting upstairs and looking out the window on my mother's lap to watch the fireworks that my brother set off. Because he was the rich one of the family, he had a paper route, so he bought most of the firecrackers. Then I remember my mother lying in her coffin; I have a real memory of that.
- Selix: And you were only three.
- Job: I was only three, but I remember the people sitting around. I didn't go and see her, I didn't know what it meant, but going over and someone picking me up and putting me on—
- Bonn: Was the funeral at home at that time?
- Job: I suppose so, yes; yes, it must have been.
- Selix: And you mentioned that your father was quite a Victorian.
- Job: Yes, and then when she died, my poor father was as helpless as a newborn baby, he didn't know anything, you know [laughs]. And here he was with a house full of obstreperous children. The oldest at that time was twenty-one, I know that, and the youngest was three, so there were nine children in between and they all had friends. [pause in tape] When my mother died, my father was suddenly confronted with the fact that he had nine children to bring to maturity and take care of. It was a pretty bewildering experience for him because my mother used to keep all trouble from him. She never told him any of the trouble when the children were naughty; she kept everything beautiful and calm like a real Victorian wife. He came home at two o'clock—I know this from remembering hearing about it—he came home at two o'clock. When the children were at school, he was there and he always had a nice dinner and wine, he always had wine, and then he'd go back to his work. But when he came home again, the children were in bed. Here he was with this terrific house full of children. Well, the oldest sister was a very beautiful girl and she was very pleasure-loving, loved parties and people, and naturally, she was not the one to run a household. But the next one, Anita, who was a wonderful manager; she saw that everything went as well as it could. Then we had the oldest brother—like all old Victorian families, the oldest brother went to stay with his grandfather. He didn't live home, he went to Oakland where his grandfather, the captain of a whaler, lived, and he had his apprenticeship as a bookkeeper in some company over there, and we never saw him. In fact, he used to be very irritable when he came home and the children—oh dear, it was a funny thing [laughs].

Then another young man, my father was determined that he should go to sea because his father was a sea captain. In fact, he was a captain of a whaler and he was away for two years sometimes. Then back to the immediate family, then Albert, the oldest son, he's the one that lived in Oakland with his grandfather. Then the next one was Leo and he went to sea, and my father took him down to—I don't know how it was but the captain said, "If he was my son, I'd rather cut his throat than send him to sea." Isn't that funny? But he went to sea and he loved it. He sailed the seas for many years, I don't know how many, but it was a great event in our family when he came home. That was Leo.

Selix: That was Leo. And then who was the next child in the family?

Job: Well, Leo was the next son after Albert: Albert, Mabel, Anita, Leo, and then Dora, and Ralph, Paul, Louis, Lenore.

Selix: I think you mentioned that one of your brothers was a dentist?

Job: Yes, Ralph.

Selix: Ralph was a dentist and practiced in San Francisco.

Job: Yes.

Selix: What are your recollections of the fire of 1906?

Job: I've written a piece about that, would you want me to read it to you?

Selix: No, let's put it on tape as you can recall it.

Job: I wrote it out very carefully, it's not very long. [pause in tape] I was sixteen years old and I was sick in bed, and one morning I woke up—I had an anatomical figure that I used to draw and he was on my bureau; I called him Oswald. All the sudden I woke up and Oswald was moving, moving, and then finally fell to the floor and crashed into 100 pieces. I realized it was an earthquake because we were used to earthquakes, but usually we just felt a shake and that was all, but this went on shaking. I got up and ran down the hall to my father's room. He was sitting on the bed and I sat there with him, and it was still shaking. This was the great distinction between that and other earthquakes that it went on shaking. We all got up and my sister went down and began getting the breakfast, and all the sudden two young men stalked in and said, "Put that fire out. Don't you know that Los Angeles and Chicago are under water?" [laughs]

Selix: Were they soldiers?

Job: No, just young men in the neighborhood. Where he got that information I can't imagine but that was the truth. I thought it was worse than [inaudible], so we put the fire out, and we didn't light a fire again then for a long time.

Selix: Where were you living at the time?

Job: We were living on Pine Street, right around the corner down there, 2514 Pine Street.

Selix: What's the cross street?

Job: Pierce.

Selix: Pine and Pierce.

Job: Yes. That night we all went up to the [Alpha Plaza?] and slept there, tried to sleep. To see the city in flames, well, burning—

Bonn: It had started to burn at that time.

Job: Yes. Well, that was the first night. Then the next day a man came riding on horseback up Pine Street saying "The fire has crossed Van Ness and is coming this way." So of course, that meant we had to move because the fire—they hoped Van Ness would stop the fire, which it did but not in all places, but it did burn. So, anyway, my brother, Leo, the oldest one with us, as soon as it happened he got up and went down to my father's barn on Sixth and Brannan, 591 Sixth Street. Isn't it funny? I remember those numbers. He went down and got the horses out and brought them home. So, when this happened we were told to move; Leo got the hay wagon and we piled our things on it and went out to the park.

Bonn: Golden Gate Park.

Job: Golden Gate Park. We took our parlor rug and our dining room rug, and we found a place and fixed like a little tent with the dining room rug on one side and the other one on the other; the girls slept in one and the boys in the other. Leo, my brother, had a pistol under his pillow. In the park, we could hear the lions roaring. The Shoots—do you remember the Shoots?

Bonn: No.

Job: Well, anyway, the Shoots was an amusement park and it was on Fulton and Eighth Avenue. I can just see it right there. We could hear the lions roaring and the—all around us were phonographs playing and [inaudible] people had brought them out there to play.

Selix: They moved those?

Job: Yes, they moved them out and everybody was gay; it wasn't tragic at that time. We were there, I think, it was two days. Leo, my brother, went into town each day. He had a buggy and a horse, and he would go in to see what was happening. So, the third day, he came with a broad smile on his face and he had a paper saying, "The cold [inaudible], the fire is out." The fire, of course, was the big thing.

Bonn: Had your house burned?

Job: No.

Bonn: You just moved back there.

- Job: Oswald was the only casualty [laughs], not a dish in the china closet. Isn't that funny? So, that was it, but we couldn't use our stove, they condemned—but anyway, people always wonder why we say the fire, you know, because the fire was the thing we could do something about; you couldn't do anything about the earthquake. I'll never forget the lines of people going out Pine Street: baby carriages, and coasters, and old men and old women carrying their burdens. Nowadays, you know, in Europe you have all these tragic people running from Hitler and so forth. It's not so unusual but it was then, terrible.
- Bonn: What kind of a day was it that day? Was it a pleasant day after the earth stopped shaking?
- Job: Yes, it was warm, it was warm. Then we were right down by Stow Lake. I mean, Stow Lake was up, we were right near, and we went up to that every day. Each day we went up and got rations the army was distributing. We got acquainted with canned corned beef. It was fun. We were all up there, and people stood in line and joked.
- Bonn: Like a picnic.
- Job: Yes. And then the fire was out, so then came the period when I went away. My father and I went to visit a sister over in Corte Madera. I spent three months over there, so I didn't have that time when they cooked in the street. My other sister, Lily, did the cooking. They used to have an awfully good time; the stove was on the sidewalk and they'd sit on the steps at night. It was nice weather, you know, it went into summer. Those that weren't burned out, there was no tragedy about it; there were to some. But anyway, then came what we called "Burned District." They had clothes that were "Burned District Gray" and the stores began to have suits, you know, "Burned District Gray." I remember that. Moved out to Van Ness. The Van Ness Theater was—I remember seeing *Peter Pan* there.
- Bonn: Was that the Baldwin Theater?
- Job: No, not the Baldwin; that was before the fire, the Baldwin Theater. That was on Powell and Market, right where Woolworths is now, that was the Baldwin Theater.
- Bonn: What was the name of the theater that Flora Marx—
- Selix: The Columbia.
- Bonn: No. Her father owned a theater on Van Ness.
- Selix: It could have been the Baldwin, I don't remember.
- Job: No, it was the Van Ness Theater. The big theater that took the place of the Columbia, they called it the Van Ness Theater. That's where the big shows came: *Peter Pan*, and Ethel Barrymore, and all those fine performances. I don't know how long that lasted, I would imagine a couple of years.
- Bonn: Yes, well, that theater was burned.

- Job: Was that burned?
- Selix: Later you mean.
- Bonn: No, after the earthquake from what I can remember.
- Job: That's not the one I was thinking of.
- Bonn: Well, we have to listen to Flora's tape again.
- Selix: Do you remember the reconstruction period in San Francisco when they started rebuilding?
- Job: Yes. One thing that I remember in my old story I wrote about that struck me, just before the earthquake the Call building was the tallest building, which is on the corner of Kearny Street—it's still there—
- Selix: That's the Examiner building, isn't it?
- Job: No, that's on the other side. The Call building is on the other side. It had a dome but it was made of reinforced concrete. This was the beginning of reinforced concrete, and everybody wondered if it was going to be earthquake-proof and it was; the earthquake didn't ruin it. It withstood the earthquake.
- Bonn: I understood that they tried to knock it down, even, and it wouldn't fall.
- Job: I didn't know that, but I know that it stood and City Hall, which was a beautiful building, but it was all in ruins. You've probably seen pictures of it. It was a very lovely ruin; it was more artistic-looking in this one. And reinforced concrete was in the air; to me, that was the birth of that. We became conscious of that thing, and I suppose that's what they are counting on in these new skyscrapers that they have now.
- Selix: But the residential homes that were built were mostly framed—weren't they framed construction? I mean the ones that were rebuilt, weren't they mostly framed construction?
- Job: Oh, yes. Well, another feature that's interesting is in the rebuilding they used election booths. You don't remember the election booths.
- Bonn: Yes, I do.
- Job: Well, they used to have election booths for voting, so they brought all those out. I don't know where they were but people were living in those. In fact, there's one still existing; I went and looked at it the other day to see if it's still there.
- Bonn: Where?
- Job: It's on Broderick Street right near Geary. Of course, it was completely made over but I'm sure that—but I'm used to the friends of ours lived there, we used to go there and have fun. They lived in this place for a long time.

Bonn: That's interesting.

Job: It's very interesting that it's still there. Of course, it's completely changed. Let's see, what else there was interesting about that? I thought the Call building standing was quite a triumph.

Bonn: Indeed it was. When did you get approval to go into your house and start cooking again?

Job: I'm not sure just when but I think it was about maybe a half a year.

Bonn: Is that so?

Job: I think it was quite a long time.

Bonn: I imagine they sent inspectors around?

Job: I guess they did. As I said, I was three months away—I was in Corte Madera, and I think when I came home, I'm pretty sure that they were not cooking in the street. I'm not quite certain about that. It's funny how your memory—certain things stand out in my memory and others do not.

Selix: In as much as your home didn't burn, did any friends or relatives come to stay with you who had been burnt out?

Job: No, no. We had the most miraculous—I don't know, we'd been through the Depression and the wars and we were never touched by any of it. I often think that, I don't know why. In the earthquake, we lived through it, and we didn't have any invasion of refugees at all; I don't know why. I suppose maybe people came but I don't remember. Then of course, we had a fire on our own, we had our private fire. I think it was a year after. The attic burned over there and we had that all done over.

Selix: Did your father's business burn in the fire?

Job: Yes, indeed. My brother rescued the horses and the hay wagon, but all the barn went up in smoke.

Selix: Did he ever resume his business?

Job: No. Well, since he was a commission merchant that meant that he sold—

Selix: Bought and sold.

Job: Yes, he did continue that for quite a while. Then the family was growing up; Leo went to sea, and Anita, the managerial one, had to decide what she was going to do with her life. She would have like to have gone on the stage because when she was—she used to go to a convent. We were all brought up in the convent at first.

Selix: Which convent?

- Job: The Convent of the Holy Name on Tenth and Howard; it's connected with St. Joseph's Church. We were all brought up there first. She used to be in the entertainment there, and she had a taste of that kind of life and loved it. But she didn't think she could make a living at that, so she went and took up kindergartening. Kate W. Wiggins opened a kindergarten.
- Selix: Do you remember what year that was?
- Job: No, but we could find that in here. But anyway, she had a kindergarten way down on— [short pause in tape]—Anita would loved to have been an actress. She had quite a flare for the theater, just naturally, but she couldn't memorize lines somehow.
- Bonn: But she could memorize dance routines.
- Job: But dance routines was a different thing. So, she took up kindergartening.
- [short pause in tape]
- Selix: You mentioned earlier that Anita's husband was Dexter Wright.
- Job: Dexter M. Wright; he was a musician. He was a—what shall I say—he was an arranger, a conductor.
- Selix: A conductor and an arranger.
- Job: Yes, and he worked a great deal with Paul Steindorff, who was a director in Oakland, very well known.
- Selix: A symphonic director?
- Job: Yes, in Oakland. She met Dexter and married him and that started the school Dexter—Peters Wright. Dexter played in the Columbia Theater, in the orchestra there. That was his living at the time besides arranging music and all that. He played in the Columbia Theater. Do you remember Maude Adams?
- Bonn: We know of her.
- Job: Well, she was the idol of America, you know, comparable to Mary Pickford in those days; we all adored her. Well, she came to the Columbia Theater and she had a season: *What Every Woman Knows*, *Peter Pan*, and various things. But she was preparing a performance of *As You Like It* to be done at the Greek Theatre, and she needed someone to teach dance in the performance. Dexter was playing in the orchestra and he heard about this, so he told Anita. They had a woman on the staff, one of the [Wyatt?] sisters. You've never heard of her. They are a pair of—you know the old-fashioned kind of dance teachers, nothing to do with the theater. But anyway, she wouldn't do, and Anita went and tried out. She just put on some music and threw herself—danced all over the stage and Miss Adams said, "I'll take you."
- Selix: We were at Hazel Salmi's and she showed us—

- Job: Oh, do you know her?
- Selix: Yes, that's Hazel Gowan Salmi.
- Job: Salmi, yes.
- Selix: She was one of the women who said that she could have toured with Anita, and she had newspaper clippings showing pictures of Anita's group that she trained to dance in *Aida* at the Greek Theatre.
- Job: Oh yes, yes. Oh, we have loads of pictures of those days.
- Selix: You have pictures of all those days?
- Job: Yes, we have quite a number of them. But let me tell you about this because I just wanted to finish this.
- Selix: Yes, go on.
- Job: Well, so Anita got the job just by her own sheer nerve, you know. She didn't know much about dancing at that time. But anyway, Miss Adams hired her, and she was so pleased with her that when she finished, she paid her twice what she had agreed to. She also dropped her handkerchief, and Anita picked it up and brought it home, and I washed it and returned it with a little poem. I was so crazy about Maude Adams. This was quite something.
- Bonn: Well, she was the greatest person in the American theater at the time.
- Job: She was something different. That was quite an episode in her life.
- Selix: Did Anita go to New York because her husband wanted to go?
- Job: No.
- Selix: It was because she wanted to go.
- Job: They didn't go to New York, as you say. No, they were accepted at the Orpheum on a tour that was touring the country.
- Selix: Anita and her husband?
- Job: Yes, Anita, and her husband, and a troop of girls; I don't know how many, maybe twelve. They went all over the United States and for several years—now, let me see, I was married in '23 and that's the year she left here and she went—well, then she must have traveled for six years because she was in New York at the time of the Crash, 1929. That was a time when he would have liked to have come home but she didn't want to, she stayed there.
- Selix: Did he also stay in New York?

- Job: Yes, he also stayed in New York, and they opened another studio where they lived for the next [inaudible] years.
- Selix: Did he follow his own profession in New York?
- Job: Well, he worked with her, you know, he did a great deal of the music part of it, orchestrating. See, when they traveled around, he led the orchestra; he played the music, and led the orchestra, and took care of all the music part of it. They went through the Depression, of course. They were the kind that saved their money, and all their girls had no money. They had lots of people that they fed, and took care of, and stayed there, and lived in the studio and had quite a time with the Depression.
- Bonn: It's interesting to think that we had two girls from the Girls' Club who would have loved—would have given their eye teeth to have been with Anita, and they had this opportunity but they both had to turn it down. Isn't that interesting?
- Job: Their parents didn't want it.
- Bonn: Right.
- Job: Well, that's too bad.
- Selix: One of them was Catherine Sheldon [sister of Celene Sheldon Olsen]. I don't know—
- Job: That sounds familiar.
- Bonn: There were three of them.
- Selix: Catherine Sheldon and the other was Hazel Gowan, who is now Hazel Salmi.
- Bonn: And Helen Brune [sister of Marion Hayes Cain].
- Job: Oh, Hazel, I remember her very well. Is she still—
- Selix: Oh, that's right, Helen Brune was another, that's three.
- Job: I don't know her but Hazel Salmi, I remember her very well.
- Selix: We see her every week.
- Job: You do? Well, isn't that interesting.
- Selix: She's retired. She spearheaded that Richmond art center and retired some years ago, and she's still painting. She has a beautiful home in Point Richmond, which she and her husband built when they were first married.
- Job: Oh, isn't that lovely. She's a very fine person.
- Selix: Oh, wonderful person.

- Bonn: Do you remember when Peter Stackpole gave us the new stone in the fountain at the club?
- Selix: The new fountain.
- Job: Gave you a new stone on—
- Bonn: Yes, there was a little pond in the courtyard at club and we had little goldfish swimming around it, and Stackpole carved—and it was a new medium—he carved and colored the figures on this stone, which took the place of the fish pond. Hazel Gowan was a part of the group, I believe, that danced at the dedication. Do you remember that? We have a woodcut showing it.
- Job: No, I don't remember that, I may have been away. I was in the theater, too. There was a period when I was on the road in another capacity, not anything to do with Anita.
- Selix: As a dancer with another group?
- Job: Yes, as a dancer, a chorus girl, singing and dancing.
- Bonn: Well, the next time we come we'll bring this picture of the court.
- Job: I'd like to see it. Now, speaking of that, we danced at Ingleside, when Ingleside used to be a racetrack. When the real estate group took it over, there was a big sundial in the middle of it, or somewhere, and we danced around it; we danced the "Dance of the Hours" around it. And I think it seems to me Hazel Salmi was in that picture. I'll try to get the pictures out the next time you come. We have a lot of pictures. Isn't that interesting?

TABLE OF CONTENTS—MAST WOLFSON

INTERVIEW WITH MAST WOLFSON

Date of interview: May 16, 1973

[Tape 21, Side A]..... 131

Family background, sister Rachel's genius, sister Eva's death, childhood, father's death, brothers Mark and Julian, religion in the Wolfsohn family—The Girls' Club, the Barrett family—Cultural interests in Monterey area—Continuing career as physician—Son's education, career, and marriage—More on feelings about the Girls' Club.

[Tape 21, Side B] 142

Early days of the Girls' Club—Columbia Park Boys' Club—Disposition of Eva and Rachel Wolfsohn.

INTERVIEW WITH MAST WOLFSON

[Date of interview: May 16, 1973]

[Tape 21, Side A]

Selix: Dr. Wolfson, what was the full name of your father?

Wolfson: Henry Wolfsohn.

Selix: When and where was he born?

Wolfson: He was born in Hamburg, Germany, came to this country when he was sixteen years old. He was born about 1840.

Selix: What career did he pursue?

Wolfson: He was a businessman interested in mining, and that was in the mines in Virginia City and those adjoining regions in Nevada.

Selix: He was an entrepreneur in the mining business?

Wolfson: No, he was a man who had got some stocks and got a hold of some land, but that was about where it was [pause in tape]. He lived in San Francisco and did his work from there, and that was mainly having an office where stocks, and bonds, and other things on a very small way was done. None of the family had any wealth, none, but he, with the mind that he had, he was supposed to have things. I think the family still owns it, but nothing has ever been done with it, even though my brother was a mining engineer.

Selix: Wasn't there a period in the life of the family when there was a certain amount of affluence?

Wolfson: No, not that I ever knew of.

Selix: Oh, really?

Wolfson: No.

Selix: And what was your mother's full maiden name?

Wolfson: My mother's name was Mary Williams. She was born in 1850 in Hull, England.

Selix: When did she come to America?

Wolfson: She came to America when she was—in 1858, she was eight years old.

Selix: Do you know the date of your mother and father's marriage?

Wolfson: No, I don't.

- Selix: Did they meet and marry in San Francisco?
- Wolfson: Met and married in San Francisco. My mother was a schoolteacher and a principal of a school when she was young, in her twenties.
- Selix: Was that in San Francisco?
- Wolfson: San Francisco.
- Selix: Do you remember what school?
- Wolfson: I couldn't say.
- Selix: Do you remember any of the incidents in the family as you were growing up?
- Wolfson: Well, I was the youngest of nine children. One was born stillbirth, but I was one of nine children, and I was born in 1893. The other children all lived to maturity, with my sister, Ray, passing away when she was forty-three, my sister, Eva, in 1934, which would have made her somewhere in the sixties.
- Selix: And Ray died in 1915.
- Wolfson: Yes. Then Gussie, the other girl, passed away in 1969.
- Selix: Gussie was really the only girl who lived to real maturity.
- Wolfson: Gussie was eighty-nine. My brother, Fred, was at the University of California, and graduated in mining engineering, and then in orthodontia; he was eighty-three, I believe.
- Selix: When he passed away.
- Wolfson: Yes, five years ago.
- Selix: Mark Wolfsohn was the oldest brother.
- Wolfson: Mark was the oldest brother and he died when he was seventy, two days before my brother, Julian, who was a professor of medicine at Stanford, who was sixty years of age; and at that time, I was fifty.
- Selix: Mark died two days—
- Wolfson: Mark and Julian died two days within one another. Mark had an intestinal obstruction, and he died before the operation could be done, and Julian had a similar thing and died after the operation a couple of days, two days later.
- Selix: What do you remember about your mother and father? How old were you when your father died?

Wolfson: I was eleven years of age. My father would have been sixty-five if he had lived five more days.

Selix: And you were eleven. So, you do have some recollection of your father?

Wolfson: Oh, yes, very much.

Selix: What can you tell us about your father?

Wolfson: My father was a very gentle person. He was a heavyset man, and inveterate pipe smoker, and always kindly. I still remember him going to the markets, to bigger markets, like the California Market, which was one of the best in San Francisco. He'd come home all loaded up with things. He was very much interested in books. They had a library for he and my mother in our home on Pine Street, 2911 Pine and Bush Street in San Francisco. He had this collection of books, some of them on rice paper, which is supposed to be really something; and I believe that part of the library was given to the University of California. It wasn't a large library, but it was an interesting one. I remember around the house that we had bookshelves, we had bookcases; we had rooms that were made up of music because all of us studied some type of music. Mine happened to be learning the piano, but then I went into cello, and that carried me along through high school, and even helped to pay my way to the University of California. I had a couple of afternoons of the program with the Sunday concerts there, a half-hour of music.

But looking back into my early days with all of the family, it was a question of education, it was a question of music, it was a question of going to college, it was a question of having people, artists, and others of interest around, and that led up to all of the work, through my sister, Ray, who started the Girls' Club in San Francisco that first was down on Seventh and Folsom Street, before the fire; this was way back in the time, oh, somewhere around 1897. Those girls, all the unfortunate girls from the standpoint of privileges, or study, and going to school, and the like, were all helped out in these ways through the Girls' Club with very, very fine people who came to work there as part of their desire to help the unfortunate. It was a very fine atmosphere in that place, because they were all treated irrespective of race, color, or creed, all treated absolutely equally. And they just loved my sister, and then finally, my sister, Eva, who took it over when my sister, Ray, died in 1914 or 1915.

Selix: What are your recollections of your sister, Ray?

Wolfson: My sister, Ray, she was a very, very fine, dignified, but warm woman, who just had a great desire, almost a genius, in her line of working with people and having people find out that they would like to work with her. She had a very fine board of directors, including the Slosses, and the Lilienthals, and the Steinharts, and all the rest of them of any importance in San Francisco. And that would carry on up until the time of my sister, Eva's death, which was in 1934. Then the place where she was working at, I went up there to see her; it was on 362 Capp Street. I happened to go up there that day for no reason whatever, except she had been ill for some time, and she really suffered. But when I went into her place, about noontime it was, so, she wanted me to have luncheon, which I had out on the porch next to the room. I talked to her, because she couldn't smell the food or anything else, she was so nauseated. She had had a malignancy of the

pancreas and metastases to the liver. They asked me to step out of the room after I had finished my luncheon for just a moment while my sister was taken by a nurse to the bathroom. I got out of the door, and I hear a thump, and I went inside to see her, and she was passed away on the floor just getting out of bed. Why I went up there that day I did not know, but I went.

Selix: We were in the building that day working.

Wolfson: I was there, so I pronounced her dead, and I went and saw that there was the autopsy by one of the University of California men, and that was it. My brother, Julian, was a doctor then, but he was not around, and I couldn't find him until that night or the next day; he was out of town.

Selix: What other recollections do you have of your mother and father as a young child?

Wolfson: My father, I just remember about his coming in, going to the office, his pipe—even in those days they would have these—[inaudible] North Carolina was the pipe tobacco that he smoked; that's not even known today. I could see him taking it and putting it into one of these [inaudible], rolling it around in his hands. Also, that he was always kindly; and when he would come home sometimes, I would always see him, and try to put my hand in his overcoat pocket [inaudible] holding a sickle pear or something else; he'd have these little ones. But he was quite a gentleman. I never heard either my mother or my father ever cross words with one another. But I knew that my father suffered very much pain in the way his business had been going when he and my brother, Mark, would walk the floors of the house at nighttime trying to discuss ways and means of trying to salvage them. My father was very honest, and my mother exceptionally honest with a very, very good vocabulary, being a schoolteacher.

I always felt that this was a home where there was love and expression of oneness in the family; I always wanted to be home. I was very glad to go out and do any of the things that I treasured, whether it was bringing in wood from the different buildings that were going up with what all the rest of the kids were doing around there, and making our own little coasters; all the things that you don't do nowadays. You go to theaters, or to the White House, or some other place to do it, but those days everything had to be done [inaudible] or even with skates. Mother was a very beautiful woman. She was tall; she must have been about five-foot-eight. She had brown to black hair, fair skin, and blue eyes, and a straight posture, which was leaning a little bit as the years went on having had nine children.

Selix: Your mother lived to be quite—

Wolfson: My mother was seventy-eight, and I pronounced my mother dead, too; so, I pronounced three of my family. My father died of a coronary outside of San Francisco, when my brother happened to have been with my mother for a little vacation; he died suddenly at nighttime [pause in tape]. My father went to bed that night and said he had a little indigestion, which he had never had any known heart trouble, and he was dead in less than five minutes.

Selix: How old was he?

Wolfson: My father would have been—in four or five days, he would have been sixty-five. So, that was quite a time watching my mother coming home, seeing her come off the California Street cable car at Baker Street, and then coming up the street, and I knew something had happened, because I was just eleven then. She told me; and the funeral, I think, was during that week. I remember seeing my father there with his casket and all; but it was just one of those things. So, it took quite a little while for Mother to get over that, because it was a very wonderful life with a man she loved and a man who loved her. Then with a very ingrown family that we all worked and loved one another and our home—[inaudible] as I said before with both music, and with literature, and with fine people in the intellectual world. I remember that my father had a long, long game of cribbage with the superintendent of schools in San Francisco; I think they played a thousand-game match. So, that was one of the little things, then, I remember about him. We always sat down to a table where there was at least six and sometimes mostly ten at the table. Everything was done by us until then, but we had some years that began along in there where we had some Oriental help that came in.

Selix: After the death of your father, did Mark become the head of the family?

Wolfson: More or less, yes. Mark was very, very good to all of us; he helped all of us through school. Mark didn't have any college education, but he was a businessman, a bookkeeper, and he was one that helped all of us. An exemplary brother, who never wanted anything for himself but always wanted to see that we could have the wherewithal to get our education.

Selix: Did he have his own business, or did he work—

Wolfson: No, he worked for others.

Selix: As a bookkeeper.

Wolfson: Yes.

Selix: We remember Mark very well because he was at the club so often.

Wolfson: He was a bookkeeper, and then he got interested in other things, but he still got interested in some, I think, bad shots of going into gunpowder, and another one going into some Japanese importing company, or the like. But I don't think any of those really made anything for him, except maybe a little at the time.

Selix: Do you remember any other particular incidents about your brothers?

Wolfson: Well, I remember Julian, professor of medicine. In the early days, he came down to Pacific Grove and did a year with [Jacque Lurbe?] at the [Herstein?] Laboratory in Pacific Grove. He worked on the artificial maturation of the sea urchin egg for a year there, and he got his master's degree from it. Then he went on to Johns Hopkins, and graduated from there in 1911 at the same class as Dr. Bloomfield, professor of medicine at Stanford; they were classmates. Then he went into the field of neuropsychiatry and was a clinical professor of neuropsychiatry at Stanford. In his medical field, he was an excellent teacher; he was an excellent diagnostician; he was a very fine doctor with patients. He helped a great deal in diagnosis and in treatment; and along with that, he

was a great hypnotist, after his training in the First World War in London. That was for the field of medicine and not any chicanery.

Selix: Was he ahead of his time?

Wolfson: No, he was not ahead of his time, but he did these things from the standpoint of being a professor. And most of his students at Stanford would realize exactly how he could do things and his ability to teach, as well as diagnose, as well as hypnotize.

Selix: What was the maiden name of Julian's wife?

Wolfson: Julian's wife was the name of Lebus. It was a cousin of Leon Liebes in San Francisco; the fur people that owned the store.

Selix: And she was from England?

Wolfson: She was from England. They met during the war and were married, and then went over to England and lived over there.

Selix: Did Dr. Julian practice in England?

Wolfson: Only as far as the army was concerned; he was a major in the army.

Selix: Then, among the brothers, there were three who went into medicine: Dr. Fred, Dr. Julian and Dr. Mast.

Wolfson: Dr. Fred was not in medicine but was in dentistry, and he finally—after he graduated from the University of California, he started a dental unit at Stanford, the outpatient one. Then he went on to war in the navy; he was a commander in the navy in dentistry. Then he came back and went to the [Harvard Forsyth School of Orthodontia?] and spent a year there, and then, was a year also as the assistant to the professor of orthodontia at Harvard.

Selix: He had a very fine reputation.

Wolfson: He was a very, very fine man. He had through his work and his family—I know of no chicanery with any of my family, no brothers, or anything. We all have been particularly honest and upright, and we try to be and meet people as we find them; we ask nothing from any of them.

Selix: We were very close to Eva Wolfsohn, and she was a great influence on our lives. Of course, we heard about the Wolfsohn family all during the period that we were associated with Eva, and knew what a great family they were.

Wolfson: Eva was an exceptional girl because she did not have the training and all that my sister, Ray, had because Ray, I believe, had been at the University of California majoring in mathematics. Then she got into her field of sociology and the Girls' Club, in which she made a huge success; it was one of the outstanding ones in the country. She had gone all over and met Jane Adams in Chicago. My sister, Eva, took on when my sister, Ray, died and carried it on; and they just loved Eva and the way she was. And the things that the

girls had learned, whether it happened to be sewing, or art, or the stage, everything was done with the best, with the finest she could get of the teachers that would come in there; and all this, was on their part gratis.

Selix: Voluntary workers.

Wolfson: I remember their Christmases. I don't believe any persons of any field that would have the comfort in their various religious ways on the Christmas time, with seeing the Christmas trees all bedecked in their lovely red candles and red ribbons, and everything done in a very, very fine way. Done by artists, who would help to take and make these trees this way, so that the girls, no matter what they saw, they always saw what was an example for them to help in their little homes. I think the most important thing is the kindness, and the accepting others, and to not expect anybody to be what they weren't, but to improve themselves from the standpoint of the arts. Their religions they were expected to carry on with and to work at them, and not just the question of being there one Sunday, or a Saturday, or whatever day they went to church. They were supposed to go along, and have their religion as something that would make their character, not just the question of saying that I am this or I am that.

Selix: Did the family follow any particular religion?

Wolfson: I don't believe any of us did, no. I know my sister, Ray, was very much interested in Swedenborgianism, which I became and I was christened, baptized into Swedenborgianism; that was before I went back East. I had been going to the little Swedenborgian Church on Lyon and Washington Street; that was the church of [Mr. Alfred Wooster?], I believe that was his name. He used to live up on Telegraph, out in the Russian Hill, in San Francisco close by a very fine person, Mrs. Richardson. That was all—then Sam Seward, professor of English at Stanford, was a teacher of mine at the Swedenborgian Church on Sunday schools. Really, looking back, I feel how fortunate I was to have men of those calibers who would be helping to influence my life.

Selix: Well, the Wolfsohn family seemed to have a talent for having very talented people around them, as well as their own talent that the family displayed.

Wolfson: Well, like usually, causes like to come to them, you know; you sort of seek your level.

Selix: That's right.

Wolfson: We never submitted ourselves to anything lower than what we felt was the best.

Selix: Do you have any recollections of the Girls' Club? Did you ever participate?

Wolfson: Oh, yes.

Selix: In what way?

Wolfson: I remember them very well, and I remember especially their country clubs where I used to go along. I was supposed to be helping with the cleaning around the place, as well as

trying to see that the iceboxes and other things were kept up, that they were properly cleansed, and a sort of a little handy boy around the place.

Selix: Was this at Wonderhill?

Wolfson: This was one over at Mill Valley, I remember very well. I even remember still the smell of the asphalt that was put on the streets in the summer time, and the oils—I can still smell that—and the wonderful natural smell of the woods all over at Mill Valley.

Selix: Was that at Willow Camp?

Wolfson: I couldn't say what the name of that place was, I don't remember. I remember it was Mill Valley. And also down around the club, I used to sort of be a little handy boy around there whenever I went down there.

Selix: When the club first started in the early days, in the lower Mission District, were you not also participating somewhat?

Wolfson: I mean it was still always as a little boy that could do something here and there. One of the families that I remember very well, an exemplary family, were the Barretts. They came to this country, and they really had nothing, and to make a living for his family he became a bartender; he was not a drinker. I remember that was down around Seventh and Folsom Street. He had a very lovely wife and he had several children, one of them I remember whose name was Nell. From the age of fourteen years of age, she was stricken with an arthritis, which probably was rheumatoid, and her arms and legs, the arms especially, were just like hooks; she could hardly move the joints. But she still did the most beautiful needlework with those hands. She had to be lifted from her bed to her chair, or onto her horse and buggy, if they were going to take her anyplace. She had the most angelic smile, never complained that she was in pain, but always angelic smile. And I believe that her feeling of the Christ in Catholicism was one of the big stays in that girl's life. She did not live very long, because I knew her in her early days, and she had two very lovely sisters, and a brother, and the mother. That was a very, very closely knit family; and even though they lived in an apartment, as it were, in back of the bar where they were, it still was one of the very, very fine, devout upright families that I knew of in the early days, barring none.

Selix: They were still active in the club when we were; we remember the family.

Wolfson: They were an exemplary family; I remember them above most of them. Maybe it was the beginning of my interest in medicine.

Selix: It could have been.

Wolfson: But that was—I was too young for anything like that, but it was interesting how I was attracted to that type of individual.

Selix: When did you—did you start your practice in San Francisco or in Monterey?

Wolfson: It started in San Francisco. I was with my brother, Julian, up until 1929 and '30, and I came down here on August 1, 1930.

- Selix: Then you've had a long career in this area.
- Wolfson: Yes.
- Selix: What have been some of your interests in the Monterey area, some of your cultural interests?
- Wolfson: Well, for many years, since almost I came here, I was interested in the Monterey area of music. This was in the Carmel Music Society; I was on the board of directors up until a few years ago when I retired. I was also a member from the early beginnings of the Carmel Bach Festival to about the same time when I retired. And I formed the Monterey Heart Association, and then formed on top of that, the [Central Mission [inaudible] Heart Association] and named them, and had them going; and it's a very, very successful affair all the way through. I also formed the Monterey Academy of Medicine with several other doctors here, which is a very successful organization for doctors in the field of general medical people belonging to a single unit for the betterment of medicine and instruction. Through a patient of mine, Sam Morse, I was very happy to see that he thought along with the sorts of myself and Dr. John Garfield, whom I've taken over with me to see Mr. Morse at his office, to see whether we couldn't get a community hospital down here, which was to be a very fine character. And with a little speaking, a little understanding, he agreed to be our chairman of the building committee, and we got the community hospital; one of the fine, small hospitals in the United States has been built.
- Selix: That's the Monterey community hospital?
- Wolfson: The Peninsula Community Hospital. It's really called the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula.
- Selix: Is it in Monterey?
- Wolfson: It's in Carmel, between Monterey and Carmel. But it is one of the fine ones in the United States.
- Selix: And you spearheaded it.
- Wolfson: I spearheaded this particular drive with Sam Morse, and then everybody else got behind it, and—you can't do anything yourself, you can only give ideas or help people to get things started, and everybody has to get into the picture. But it's the ones who start the things are the ones who really have something different than the other ones who belong.
- Selix: The one who starts that has the drive.
- Wolfson: Well, they have something more than that, they have some kind of an inspiration, an ESP. There's something that goes on which I can't say, except I know that I have had several occasions down here to see that that thing was done and it was done right.
- Selix: I understand that you're still practicing.

- Wolfson: I'm practicing full-time. I had my eightieth birthday on March 2, '73, and I ran the meetings for the American College [of] Physicians Regional Meeting here; and I feel like forty-five. I still have my drive and everything else, and I carry on this way, because I'm single now at this work. I formerly had a partner that had to leave in '69 and is away, not near here.
- Selix: You don't have an associate.
- Wolfson: I don't have an associate, no. I have a very fine—well, she's more than a secretary. She runs my whole office and also runs my own finances, because Mrs. Wolfson is unable to do any of those things for the last four years. But Miss Evelyn [Wright] has been the one who's been behind it, been with me since 1949, been with the other two doctors, who were in here with me before; Dr. Layton and Dr. Garland.
- Selix: What was the maiden name of your wife?
- Wolfson: Germaine Levy. She was at Stanford.
- Selix: Did you meet her at—
- Wolfson: I met her in San Francisco, after I came back from Europe one year.
- Selix: What year were you married?
- Wolfson: We were married in 1925 and had my child Mast, who is a psychiatrist now in Berkeley. He was born in 1927, the day that Lindbergh came back to America.
- Selix: And what has your son's background been in education?
- Wolfson: Mast graduated from Stanford [Academic School?], then he was a graduate of Stanford Medical School. He had one year at the Stanford Medical School hospital in San Francisco, and Dr. Bloomfield was the head of that training at that time. Then he went into the navy for two years; when he came out of the navy, he started a practice in Palo Alto, then Redwood City. Then he went into a training for three years in psychiatry in Berkeley; he now has become a full-blown psychiatrist with all of his national boards taken both in Chicago and Atlanta, Georgia, and is practicing in Berkeley now in psychiatry.
- Selix: And is he married?
- Wolfson: He is married to a girl by the name of [Elizabeth Bonnie Fish?], and they have three children, one boy and two girls. They are a very musical setup; they are a very, very close-knit family that are interested, again, in music and education. Miss Fish, at the time before marriage while she waiting for Mast to get out of the navy, was a schoolteacher, having graduated from Mills [College] in education.
- Selix: How did it feel during your lifetime growing up in connection with the Girls' Club? Did you have a great empathy for the work that your sisters did?

Wolfson: Yes, I did. I thought it was a very great privilege to see work like that being done, and to try understand that even though people did not have money, they still could become educated and be used to the better things in life. That just shows that if you put something before people and give them an example under the right light, under the right understanding and love, that great things can be accomplished. And this was one of the big things that happened in San Francisco in that sort of a field.

Selix: The Girls' Club had a great influence on the lives of many people.

Wolfson: On the lives of men, too; the sweethearts of the girls that were there, as well as they still carried on when they became married.

Selix: Sometimes there were three generations coming to the club.

Wolfson: I was very sorry to see that the place has closed down; first having been taken over by the city as it were, but so many things are turned down after a while. Time brings many changes, and those are some of them. However, all one has to do is look at the government and look at business and see what's going on now. Look at the businesses in San Francisco, the White House, the City of Paris, any of these—[inaudible], any of these places, they all have had great changes or have been stopped in their performances, their stores.

Selix: The club, although it no longer exists as the Girls' Club, the seeds that were planted by your family are today doing a great job.

Wolfson: Oh, yes. That I feel very strongly, that when you implant something into people, and they see what can be gotten out of it, they see the real meaning of life, of happiness, of love; I believe that it will stay with them. I believe the Catholic Church says, "Give us a child until he's seven years of age, and you can have him the rest of your life."

Selix: That's correct, that's what they do say. Mark Wolfsohn was very instrumental in prolonging the life of the Girls' Club after they had that fire in 1948.

Wolfson: That's right.

Selix: He and Margaret Hall did a great deal to keep it going.

Wolfson: That's right, yes. One of the girls that I have here, that I'm taking care of as a patient now for the last four years, has been a girl who was very much involved in the Girls' Club, she and her sister. She was called Ella Simons in those days; she's now Mrs. Ellen Kern.

Selix: We went to see her.

Wolfson: She has been one of them. And Sylvia Simons, who was her sister, who was quite instrumental in some of the good shows and plays that they had in there, and they were some of the early ones that were in the club after the fire in San Francisco, when the club was already started. That was in 1897.

Selix: Do you have any recollection that your sister, Ray, had any connection with—

[Tape 21, Side B]

- Wolfson: The only thing I know, remember, I remember the name Sidney Peixotto, who was the head of the Boys' Club [Columbia Park Boys' Club] in San Francisco, and my sister started the Girls' Club, I believe, shortly after the Boys' Club had been formed.
- Selix: The Boys' Club was formed in 1894, and the Girls' Club in 1900.
- Wolfson: I remember some of the Girls' Club's goings on when I was still—around 1897.
- Selix: Oh, that early?
- Wolfson: Yes. The only thing that I know is that my sister, Ray, had worked along with the Club. Exactly what she was doing, I do not know, but I knew that she knew Sidney Peixotto, and I knew that she knew of the work of the Boys' Club. It may have been some of that that started my sister, with her knowledge of things going on through the universities, of starting a Girls' Club in San Francisco.
- Selix: We understand that Rachel Wolfsohn financed the early beginnings of the Girls' Club.
- Wolfson: Well, I think that was mainly on account of the fact that she would be working, my sister, Eva, would be working; they usually taught. They were people who taught those who were a little bit backwards in school.
- Selix: They were tutors, weren't they?
- Wolfson: Tutors. I think that's the only way that she could go along and finance things. It's like I financed the first five years of the American Heart Association in Monterey. It was not a Heart Association, it was a [Heart Committee?] of the TB Association, which I pulled out of and then formed this other one. I also helped to form the [California Heart Association- AHA's CA branch?]; we pulled out of the TB Association. So, those things, they all seem to be following one another. There is a seed that's sown, and you have to follow along in those lines, especially what your leanings will be.
- I do not know anything more about the Boys' Club, except it was very successful, and they've had some very fine men that were connected with it, that became a really great help to the organization later on. One of those I know, and he became a patient of mine, was Albert Bender.
- Selix: Oh, yes, we remember him.
- Wolfson: He was very influential in getting some of those of the Boys' Club to work with him, and I think to finally—his institution, when he passed away, was on account of the fact that he had left the insurance company to them.
- Selix: To the Columbia Park Boys' Club?
- Wolfson: No, to the Columbia Park boys that were working with him as partners. These organizations are all very, very important. They are not for the people that have, it's for the people that haven't. I believe very, very strongly, it's what I believed in the Heart

Association, that we must get in and try to do things for those that haven't and show them the way, and see whether we can help, and not die so frequently from coronary and other heart deaths. So, I believe that what I've tried to do with the Heart Association here is to see that although we do not supply money for the treatment of any one of the cases, we do supply information and will help those to get into the proper hands. And with the clinics, and with the obesities, and all these other things, we have these particular meetings from time to time in an office, where they can find out any of the things that they so choose to do. It's one thing to be able to go to a fine university, but it's another thing to go along and realize that you've only learned from that that you are not the ones who started that, and you must go along and try to do what your calling is to help others.

Selix: Do you remember anything about Eva's disposition as a child or as an adolescent?

Wolfson: All I can say is that when I was a child, a baby, I remember that Eva used to help to take care of me. And I can still remember when I went around—in those days, you went around in little dresses, little skirts, and other things. I had long hair until they told me one day, they wanted me to go down and get some chocolates. They took me down and my brother put me onto a chair, and I came home with my locks all cut off at the great astonishment of my mother.

Selix: What age were you then?

Wolfson: Oh, it must have been somewhere around, I would say, somewhere around six or seven; I'm not quite certain.

Selix: Oh, you had long hair until you were six or seven?

Wolfson: Oh, yes. I believe that was somewhere in there. I'm not certain of that point. I can still see myself in the barber's chair though.

Selix: Was it a shock to you?

Wolfson: No [laughs].

Selix: Maybe by that time you were glad of it. What else do you remember about Eva?

Wolfson: Eva was always very, very [inaudible], and the one big thing, outside of her being excellent in the field that she followed in my sister's footsteps of the Girls' Club, was the fact that she was an excellent cook. The iceboxes were always filled to overflowing, but she knew how to cook and she knew how to cook well. And everybody that she knew that happened to be around could partake in anything that she had; she was generous to a fault. My sister, Ray, was exactly the same way; they were just generous to a fault. My sister, Gussie, went along and she went in—after getting some university work—went into nursing, and she was at the German Hospital in San Francisco at the time of the fire; she worked very, very hard during that fire in 1906. I remember that my sister, Ray, also was in charge of one of the little hills nearby, where they had all the army blankets and the bread that would come in and all, running this camp right by the Lick Wilmerding High Schools. My sister, Eva, was in on that also. They were always

trying to do something for somebody else, but they always had a great vision and always had perfection as their standard.

Selix: And I think the greatest thing that they gave was love.

Wolfson: Always; that was the thing that drew everybody to them. But it was a love—it was a great spiritual love. There was a physical warmth, but a great spiritual love, and they sometimes could not put over to some of those that was in the club what was going on, but unfortunately, there are certain people like that that they cannot see the forest on account of the trees. It really doesn't make very much difference, because those were only few and far between, but you find that in everything. We even find dentists that go to schools, and they come out, and they are really charlatans afterwards, and advertising ones and all. Well, you can't blame the school on account of that, it's the person; some people can receive and some can't. Some are blinded no matter how many glasses you put on them. And you see, I never wear glasses at my age.

Selix: You never have to?

Wolfson: I don't wear anything. I can pick up the smallest kind of print; it makes no difference how small it is, and it's just as clear as a bell to me.

Selix: That's remarkable.

Wolfson: And my hearing is perfect. I'm eighty and I feel like forty-five.

Selix: Well, that's wonderful. You probably will have had the most productive and longest productive life of anyone in the family.

Wolfson: Well, my brother, Fred, practiced up to almost the time he was going, and that was about eighty-two.

Selix: Was it eighty-two? Because Eva and Ray died at such early ages.

Wolfson: Yes, my sister, Ray, died when she was forty-three.

Selix: Both died untimely.

Wolfson: But they accomplished in a time what others would take two or three lifetimes to do, they did in one lifetime. They were very, very grateful that they could do something for somebody, and it was never a question of any remuneration, never.

Selix: No. I figured that between the two of them, they had about thirty years in the club, and I often think and wonder what it would have been like had they lived a longer life, each one of them.

Wolfson: Of course, as you know, when you have somebody who has a stroke in them to do things, not that I'm comparing them to the musicians, but take some of the great musicians, the great composers, and some of them never even saw the middle of their thirties.

Selix: That's true.

Wolfson: I just saw a little girl the other day and heard her, who's a genius on the violin, [Lillette Campbell?], and she's just thirteen years of age, and she's one of the fine players of the orchestral stages now.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—HERBERT SCHIRMER

INTERVIEW WITH HERBERT SCHIRMER

Date of interview: May 22, 1973

[Tape 15, Side A]..... 149

Joining the Columbia Park Boys' Club at age thirteen—Boys' Club director, Sidney Peixotto—Boys' Club activist, teachers, outings, baseball—Jobs as a boy, family members—Earthquake and fire of 1906—Marriage, family background, career—Life in Shafter, California, in the late 1930s and early 1940s—Influence of Columbia Park Boys' Club on life activities, religious affiliations—More on family—Interviewer narration.

INTERVIEW WITH HERBERT SCHIRMER

[Date of interview: May 22, 1973]

[Tape 15, Side A]

Selix: We are meeting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Schirmer in Beverly Hills. Mr. Schirmer was a member of the Columbia Park Boys' Club. Mr. Schirmer was born August 21, 1893. At what age did you join the Columbia Park Boys' Club?

Schirmer: At thirteen.

Selix: And how did you happen to join?

Schirmer: Well, it seems like all the boys in our neighborhood were interested, and these boys had made such a great showing in the community that everybody was anxious to get into the Columbia Park Boys' Club.

Selix: And who was in charge of the Boys' Club?

Schirmer: Mr. Peixotto.

Selix: That was Sidney Peixotto?

Schirmer: Sidney Peixotto.

Selix: What can you tell us about Mr. Peixotto as an individual and as a human being?

Schirmer: He was a very dedicated man to the younger people, especially boys. He was always interested in furthering the good of the young man. He had a very fine reputation in the city as to his leanings, and his thoughts, and the things that he did.

Selix: Did you know other members of his family?

Schirmer: Not very well. I knew his brother.

Selix: What was his brother's name?

Schirmer: I can't recall it right now. And his sister was a professor over at the university.

Selix: Was her name Peixotto, or had she married?

Schirmer: No, her name was Peixotto.

Selix: What was her first name?

Schirmer: That's too long for me to remember.

Selix: You don't remember that. What did she teach at the university? Was it social service?

Schirmer: I think it was mostly social service, yes. She had a very fine reputation as a tutor; she was a good teacher. And she likewise was interested in the boys. She was over there quite often when we had our meetings, and she was quite an inspiration to us.

Selix: What did you do at these meetings?

Schirmer: Oh, we had band practices, and there were any number of arts that the boys were all interested in it. And the baseball teams would hold their meetings, and the basketball teams; and of course, the bands were holding their meetings quite frequently. They performed at most all civic occasions that were held in the city of San Francisco.

Selix: The boys' band, you mean?

Schirmer: Yes, the boys' band did.

Selix: Do you remember the names of some of the volunteer teachers, who worked at the Columbia Park Boys' Club?

Schirmer: No. We had one man in particular that had been there a long time. I can't remember his name anymore, it's been so long, but he had been there a long time, and he was a very fine tutor.

Selix: What did he teach?

Schirmer: He taught band.

Selix: Oh, he taught band. And Garnet Holmes was the drama teacher?

Schirmer: Yes, in those days.

Selix: Did you participate in drama?

Schirmer: No, no, I participated in band, in baseball, and basketball.

Selix: In the sports.

Schirmer: Yes, mostly in the sports.

Selix: What kind of outings did you have?

Schirmer: Well, every year during the summer school vacation, we used to go away for seven weeks. We used to take the trip from Sausalito, and go up the Redwood Highway, and give shows in all the towns there, and that was how we made our way through. The tickets that we sold for the performances that we gave and the baseball games that we played in took care of the cost of the trip. It was all free; there was no other expenses that the boys had to pay.

Selix: You didn't have to pay any dues at the club?

Schirmer: No, no.

Selix: How did you travel on these trips, did you use the train?

Schirmer: We walked.

Selix: You walked? You didn't have any conveyances?

Schirmer: They had conveyances, but they were used for the cooking, and the band instruments, and the equipment that was needed for the shows. But we walked that seven weeks, and went up as far as Eureka, and we played all along there. We went to the state hospital at Napa, and we played there, and we entertained there, and we danced with the inmates there, and that's how we got by.

Selix: Was your father in business in that neighborhood? That Columbia Park Boys' Club was about around Seventh and Folsom, wasn't it? Or Seventh and Howard?

Schirmer: We were on, most of the time, Seventh and Howard.

Selix: It was called Columbia Square.

Schirmer: That's right, that was where they first started, and then they moved from there, I think, they moved up to Potrero, and I think we had the club there for a while. It was downtown that we spent most of our time.

Selix: Your father was in some kind of a business—

Schirmer: No, my father passed away at that particular time; my father passed away when I was three years old.

Selix: But where did you live before you lived in San Francisco?

Schirmer: I always lived in San Francisco all my life. I was born in San Francisco over at the old Palace Baths.

Selix: Where were they located?

Schirmer: On Filbert Street.

Selix: You mean out in the Marina?

Schirmer: Yes.

Selix: Oh, the Crystal Palace—

Schirmer: No, not the Crystal Palace; these were the Palace Baths downtown, in the Italian quarters down there on Filbert Street. We went out onto the Fisherman's Wharf.

- Selix: Off of Columbus Avenue?
- Schirmer: Yes, in there.
- Selix: I thought that was called Crystal Palace Baths.
- Schirmer: Perhaps it was. I was born there, and that's a long time ago.
- Selix: Well, they were still there in my time.
- Schirmer: Were they?
- Selix: Yes. What other things do you remember about your activities? Did you enjoy these outings that you had during the summer?
- Schirmer: We looked forward to them every year.
- Selix: I think you mentioned that you went to the state hospital at Napa and put on a performance.
- Schirmer: That's right.
- Selix: And then the boys slept outdoors?
- Schirmer: That's right, we slept outdoors, we entertained there, we played baseball there. And a good many of the boys that I played baseball with up there went into the Pacific Coast League, and from the Pacific Coast League into the National and the American Leagues, and became quite a bunch of stars.
- Selix: What were the names of some of them?
- Schirmer: Sandy Bowen was one of them. He wound up in the big leagues. [Jimmy Cagney?] played with San Francisco. [Jimmy Bone?] started out with San Francisco. Turkey Burke played up there, and there were any number of the fellows, and same way with basketball. Some of those boys that played for the Columbia Park Boys'—we played in the Examiner League up there, and we were always quite a contender for national honors; so, the boys always made reputations that were worthwhile.
- Selix: What did you do as a young boy to earn money?
- Schirmer: Well, I went to school, and during the holidays, I would work delivering packages for H. Liebes and Company, or I worked down in the wholesale houses, anything which I could make enough to get by.
- Selix: What about the newspapers that you sold?
- Schirmer: The newspapers that I sold started with the Spanish-American War when Teddy Roosevelt left with his Rough Riders, and everybody was standing out on the curbs

waving goodbye. So, I thought I'd sell a lot of newspapers, and I sold some I found later that were three or four days old [laughs].

Selix: But you still found a market for them.

Schirmer: Yes. These boys, they thought they were buying papers that were—

Selix: Now, you said that your mother was widowed when you were three years old.

Schirmer: That's right.

Selix: How many children were there in your family?

Schirmer: Two, my sister and myself.

Selix: What was your sister's name?

Schirmer: Dorothy.

Selix: Dorothy Schirmer. Did she ever marry?

Schirmer: No.

Selix: How did your mother raise two children?

Schirmer: Well, she did sewing and took in roomers and boarders, and that's how we got by.

Selix: Later, did she remarry?

Schirmer: She married, yes, when I was around fourteen, somewhere in there, thirteen.

Selix: What was the name of her second husband?

Schirmer: Benjamin Barnett.

Selix: What kind of business was he in?

Schirmer: He used to do the trucking business for the wholesale houses in San Francisco, and we had a large fleet of trucks that did all the delivery work for the wholesale houses there.

Selix: Were they trucks or wagons?

Schirmer: They were wagons and trucks.

Selix: Oh, you also had trucks?

Schirmer: Yes.

Selix: But you also had horse-drawn—

Schirmer: They were all horse-drawn—

Selix: Oh, even the trucks were horse drawn.

Schirmer: Yes, all drawn.

Selix: And what can you tell us about the Columbia Park Boys'? Do you remember any other members who went on to become quite famous people?

Schirmer: I understand, but of course, I haven't seen any of them for a long time, I understand there was [Massy?]
—I forget what his first name was—he went on and made quite a reputation for himself. There was a fellow by the name of [Jaime Raphael?] that played basketball there that went over to the Hawaiian Islands and played over there. And there were a lot of them that went into different endeavors that after I got away from there I—see, I left San Francisco when I was twenty-one years old. Well, I was a little bit older, I was about twenty-three. I came down here to Los Angeles, and I've been down here ever since; so, naturally, I lost all track of all those people.

Selix: What were your experiences during the 1906 fire?

Schirmer: Well, during the 1906 fires, the earthquake came on in the morning, and I was awakened by my mother, because I slept under a chandelier, and she was afraid it would fall on me. So, she woke me up and got me up, and I went to the window, and as I got to the window, the shake was still on. I noticed that the curbs had gone into a pyramid, and the rats were coming out of them and were going down the street. I looked across the street and our neighbor across the street, a [Mrs. Howland?], had a home there that had a big iron fence in front of her place. She tried to get over this fence and got stuck on it and couldn't get out; we finally had to get her off there. Then as the fire got closer to us, some of the streets had big cracks in them, and we thought we better move. In the back of my home, we stabled a lot of the horses that we used in the business of my stepfather, and on the top of that in the barn where the horses were kept, I used to have about six, seven hundred pigeons. When they got close to us, why, they told us that we better get out. I likewise had a Great Dane dog, who had four pups, and when the quake came, she got scared and took the pups and got under the house; so we had a problem getting her out, but we finally got her out. Then we tried to look and see if we could get some space on some of our wagons to move some of our belongings, and they were all gone; all the drivers had taken them, so we had no way of making any movings.

We moved out to Twin Peaks, and we camped out there. We saw the fire coming closer to us from downtown. I saw when the different sparks really burned the old brewery on Howard Street, when it burned, and when all the different public buildings started going up. Then my stepfather, he went into town, thought he could get some food, had to get something for the dogs to eat. And the town being under guard, why, they come in here and took him into a bakery—he never knew anything about baking—and had to make up the—he baked. At the end of the third day, he finally came home—we were scared; we didn't know what happened to him—with a sack of loaves of bread. So, we were able to have some bread out there, and he was able to feed the dogs a little bit; and then

later, we were able to get food; they rationed it off, and we were able to get food. They start telling us what had happened, and we weren't able to get back to see whether our house was gone or not. But we had heard that the old Valencia Hotel had burnt down, and the shake— it just sank into the ground, and we never knew just how many people were lost in that hotel. The top of the hotel was about even with the sidewalk; three stories had sunk into the ground. So, then a short time later, the government put a lot of tents out in Golden Gate Park, and we went out there, and I stayed with some folks out there that were related to my stepfather. Then we finally, after the fire had subsided and we were able to get back, we got back into town and were able to get into a little shack that they had on Capp Street there, and we stayed there for some time.

Selix: You had lived on Capp Street.

Schirmer: I had lived on Eighteenth and Capp Street.

Selix: When the fire came.

Schirmer: That's right.

Selix: That's where you had to move from.

Schirmer: That's right, that's where our buildings where these horses were stabled; we had a home in the front and in the back were the stables.

Selix: What age were you married?

Schirmer: Twenty-one.

Selix: And what was your wife's maiden name?

Schirmer: Sara Elaine Kessler.

Selix: What occupation was her father in, in San Francisco?

Schirmer: They had come from Portland. Their home had been in Portland, and they moved to San Francisco; and he went into the restaurant business, and he had a restaurant in San Francisco.

Selix: I understand that both your family and her family originally came from Germany.

Schirmer: My family came from Germany; her family came from Russia originally. My family came from Germany. Then we were there for a few years after I got married; I worked in San Francisco. I got a job as a salesman, and I traveled for different firms for some years. I traveled for a firm called Western Fancy Goods, and I traveled for several other firms. Then finally, I was selling [inaudible] foods for a firm in San Francisco called the Clayburgh Brothers. For them, I came down here; we had an office we opened down here. I traveled through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, all through that country; that was during the Second World War. I was with them down here until I decided to go into business for myself, and I went into the retail business. I was in the retail business in

Los Angeles here until 1925; and in 1925, I had a breakdown, and I decided—I was in business in Los Angeles here until 1925, when I had a nervous breakdown, and the doctors told me to get away for a year. I went away for a year, and I decided to go into Amarillo, Texas. They were having an oil boom over there, and I went over there. I didn't do anything over there very much, just laid around. Then at the end of the year, I was feeling pretty good and came back here to California. When I came back to California, I went back into the [inaudible] food business. I represented different New York mills; and I did that until 1938. In 1938, I decided to go into business in Shafter, California, where I opened a retail store, a department store. I likewise opened one in Wasco, California; I had two of them up there. I was there until 1942 [phone rings and pause in tape]. In 1942, I became very—no, I went up there in 1939. In 1942 is when I opened my second store in Wasco. In '40, I opened a store in Shafter.

Selix: Did you have a family by this time?

Schirmer: Oh, yes, I had a family—my daughter was born in San Francisco when I was up there, and my son was born five years later down here, so, my family—I only had the boy and the girl.

Selix: What age were they when you were in business in Shafter, about, would you say?

Schirmer: My daughter and my son both were going to school. My daughter, when I first went up there, she must have been somewhere around twenty-two, and my son, he was five years younger. He went to school and he graduated, he had gone to school down here, and then went up to the University of California; he graduated from the University of California. Then when we were in Shafter, both my children came up to Shafter.

Selix: Did your daughter go to college?

Schirmer: Yes, in Bakersfield. My son went to Bakersfield, and then from Bakersfield, went up to the University of California, where he graduated.

Selix: Did your son and daughter help you in the business?

Schirmer: Yes, yes, both of them.

Selix: And your wife also worked very hard.

Schirmer: Yes, that's right.

Selix: I understand that during that period you both worked very hard.

Schirmer: That's correct. And then I got very active in civic things. I became president of the Kiwanis Club during the war, I was made president of the Businessman's Association, I represented the Salvation Army in Shafter District, and I helped put on the first Shafter Potato Festival; so, I was very active in civic work while I was there.

Selix: At what time did you finally give up the store? Did you finally sell the store?

- Schirmer: I sold my first store, which was in Shafter—[pause in tape]
- Selix: What kind of merchandise did you handle in your Shafter and Wasco stores?
- Schirmer: We were a general department stores carrying all soft goods; we didn't carry any hard goods of any description. Ours was mostly women's, men's, children's, shoes, domestics, all soft goods; we carried no hard goods of any description.
- Selix: You carried yardage and ready-to-wear.
- Schirmer: Yardage and ready-to-wear.
- Selix: And what kind of communities were Shafter and Wasco in those years?
- Schirmer: Well, Shafter was the town where the *Grapes of Wrath* was written. We had all those people from Oklahoma, Texas that used to come out here to pick cotton and pick potatoes; it was strictly a farming community. The population itself—we had a lot of Seventh Day Adventists, we had a lot of—I forget what they call them now, Russian people—I can't think of it. I'll think of it in the next few minutes.
- Selix: Were there Ammonites?
- Schirmer: No, they were not Ammonites; they were all in that Ammonite family, but they were the Russian—they were mostly up there; the town was pretty full of them.
- Selix: Did you have a Mexican group there?
- Schirmer: Yes, we had a Mexican community there, too.
- Selix: A large Mexican community?
- Schirmer: A large Mexican community.
- Selix: And then when the people came in from Oklahoma, what was your experience with those people? Did you find that they were poverty stricken and—
- Schirmer: Well, I happened to be appointed by the federal administration. They built what they called a camp up there, a migrant camp, and that camp was run for the benefit of these migrant laborers. We wanted to get them off the riverbanks, where they were living in the outdoors under very squalid conditions. They finally put tents up there, and then they finally put buildings; and when the buildings were put up, the government appointed five of us people up there to go over the requests for accommodations in these houses. We were told that the people that were to go in there were allowed to have a refrigerator, and they were allowed to have an automobile, so the head of the household could go to his laborers. And we selected the people that we thought were best fitted to accommodate these houses. That was during the time of—when the—what was his name—the actor—his wife was so—he wrote the—

- Selix: You mean the one who wrote *The Grapes of Wrath*?
- Schirmer: *The Grapes of Wrath* was written after that, during the period that they lived in these houses up there, *The Grapes of Wrath*. Now, the other was Helen Gahagan.
- Selix: Oh, Helen Douglas Gahagan [Helen Gahagan Douglas].
- Schirmer: Helen Douglas Gahagan and her husband. They were very much interested in these people that lived in these houses; and we put on a Christmas party for them, the community up there did, in these houses, and she came up there with dolls and gifts for the children. Then it got where they were; it seemed like connected some way with the population that wasn't thought of too well up there.
- Selix: Well, that was the reputation, but no one ever knew whether it was that, a witch hunt or—
- Schirmer: They never could prove anything.
- Selix: No. That was the [House of] Un-American Activities Committee.
- Schirmer: That's right. They tried to put it on them, except that we knew one thing that we found later, that the Santa Claus that we had up there for the children was wearing one of these badges that connected him with the [inaudible].
- Selix: With the communist party?
- Schirmer: Well, they were supposed to be with the Communist Party, whether that was just—whether he had a badge, or it meant anything, or didn't mean anything [inaudible].
- Selix: No one knew.
- Schirmer: No, no one ever knew.
- Selix: Well, these families that came from Oklahoma, were they able to improve their conditions?
- Schirmer: Yes, living conditions were improved by the camps.
- Selix: Apparently a great many of them were able to improve their economic conditions and—
- Schirmer: Yes, they worked up there, and the children were allowed to go to school up there. Naturally that all helped to improve their conditions. The Mennonites were the people up there. They were predominant up there.
- Selix: They were a very austere religious group.
- Schirmer: They were an offspring of the Russian Germans, and they were predominant up there.

- Selix: Well, they were very dependable people, weren't they? Honest people?
- Schirmer: Oh yes, yes, they were.
- Selix: Did you give credit in your store?
- Schirmer: Yes, yes.
- Selix: And how did that work out?
- Schirmer: We were very careful with our credits, and our losses were very small; they were not large. Of course, not many of them were the migrant workers, because there was nothing to substantiate reason for giving them credit. But with the Mennonites, even the Mexicans, we were able to give credit to, we were able to get a history on. Our losses were not big.
- Selix: And when did you sell the store at Shafter?
- Schirmer: The Shafter store I sold about in '52, I think it was. And the Wasco store I sold about five years later.
- Selix: And then you retired to Los Angeles?
- Schirmer: I retired to Los Angeles, and I've been living here ever since.
- Selix: And you've enjoyed your retirement?
- Schirmer: Very much so.
- Selix: Looking back on your life, on a life of activity, how would you say that the activities at the Columbia Park Boys' Club had influenced you?
- Schirmer: I think they had a great bearings on my life.
- Selix: In what way?
- Schirmer: I think it taught me how to live with people. I think it taught me honesty in the games that we played. I think it taught me how to live righteously. I think it had a big bearing. I always felt it had a lot to do with my bringing up.
- Selix: Did you feel that it gave you influences that you may not have had at home?
- Schirmer: Yes, yes, I think it did. I think it taught me to respect everyone else and to carry on in my home life what I was taught in the outside world. After I got to working for other people, it taught me how to live with them and treat the people with whom I was doing business. My home life was well [inaudible]. I had a mother who was a very big influence on my life.

- Selix: Tell me about your mother. Where did your mother come from?
- Schirmer: My mother came from a town on the border of Germany and Poland; it was called [Gauschstein?]. My mother's life was very hard after my father died, when I was two and a half, three years old, and it was very difficult for her. She made a little by sewing and taking in boarders. My mother had a great bearing on my life. Everything she did was done with thought. My mother was never a person that had to go to a temple to learn the right way to learn. She always used to say that her temple was within her four walls, and if she lived within those four walls, she could learn what she would be taught other places; she lived that life. My sister lived with her for many years. In fact, she lived with her until she passed away.
- Selix: Did your mother raise her children in the Jewish faith?
- Schirmer: Only in a very small way.
- Selix: You didn't go to temple?
- Schirmer: My mother very seldom went to temple; and I did, as a small child, I went to temple and then as I grew a little older I had to go to work, and then I didn't pay as much attention to it. In later life, when I was up in Shafter, we belonged to the temple in Bakersfield, and then when we came down here, we joined the temple down here, and we've been members ever since. And I've been a great worker for the City of Hope.
- Selix: What have your activities been with the City of Hope?
- Schirmer: I do a lot of work for them, a lot of collections, I solicit a lot for them, I give a lot to them.
- Selix: Have you been an officer at any time?
- Schirmer: No, I've never been an officer. It's my favorite charity and I do a lot for them.
- Selix: What are some of the other Jewish organizations that you are involved in? Are there any others?
- Schirmer: No. Well, in my temple—I'm not active anymore, but I'm a great donor to the boys' and girls' camps up there, and that's my life.
- Selix: Do you happen to be a Zionist?
- Schirmer: No.
- Selix: What career did your son pursue?
- Schirmer: My son, when he went to the university, was supposed to take up medicine; and after going to the University of California, he had an injured spine, and we had him in bed for one year. So, when he was able to get back onto his feet again, after a year, he had to go

back to finish. I said, "Are you going to continue with medicine?" He said, "No, I don't want to continue with medicine." I said, "Why?" He said, "Well, after I went through this ordeal that I had, I don't think I could do it." So, he went back and he finished, he graduated with honors at California; and then before the war broke out, I wanted him to go to law school. I think I had him sold on that, but then the war broke out. And then when the war broke out, he said to me one day, he said, "Dad, I think I want to go back into Shafter." I said, "Why?" He said, "Well, everybody knows in Shafter why I'm not in the army, but if I'm up there, I have no excuses. Everybody that sees me wants to know why I'm not in the war, and their youngsters are in the war." I said, "If you want to come into the store, why you come into the store." So, he came into the store, and he was with me until he decided he was going to come down here. He came down here, and he got married down here, and he's been here ever since. He's in the sportswear business.

Selix: In a retail store?

Schirmer: Yes, two ladies retail sportswear stores.

Selix: Where are they located?

Schirmer: One is at Lakewood and one is in the Orange Mall.

Selix: Where is that?

Schirmer: In Orange County. It's called the Orange Mall in the city of Orange.

Selix: Where does he live?

Schirmer: He lives in Newport Beach—[pause in tape]—in the town of Orange, but he lives at Newport.

Selix: Is that close to Orange?

Schirmer: Yes, very close.

Selix: Did your daughter pursue a career?

Schirmer: Yes, my daughter came down to Shafter, she was there a while, and she was married.

Selix: Where was she married?

Schirmer: She was married in Las Vegas. Then they were with us in the store, and that's where she learned the business, and then she came down here, she opened a store out in Pasadena; she had a ladies store in Pasadena. Then she sold that, and she opened a store in the mall at Whittier called the Whittier [inaudible]. She was in that for three or four years, and then they—

Selix: What is your daughter's full married name?

Schirmer: Her full married name is Blumkin, B-L-U-M-K-I-N, June Blumkin.

Selix: Was her husband active in the stores?

Schirmer: Her husband, after the war—he was in the navy during the war, and the kids were little, so they had to go back to Washington; he was in the navy back in Washington. Then after the war was over, they came back to Shafter, and they stayed with us in Shafter. But prior to being in the navy, he was in the movie business here. He was in the cutting department of these films, and that's what he was.

Selix: How many children does June have?

Schirmer: June has four children.

Selix: And how many grandchildren?

Schirmer: She has four grandchildren.

Selix: And they all live in the southern California area.

Schirmer: Yes [pause in tape].

Selix: The interviewer on this occasion was Leah Selix. I will add the following information to the interview:

The name of the brother of Sidney Peixotto was Eustace. The circumstances of this interview were rather unusual. Adrienne Bonn was with me, and in fact, Herbert Schirmer is the first cousin of Adrienne's mother, Stella, who died several years ago. Adrienne has always felt very close to Herbert and to his wife, Sarah, and has recollections of many happy times spent with him as a young person. Sarah always enjoys our visits and has a great many things to tell us. But we had told her that during the interview, she would not be able to talk because the tape would pick up the sounds in the background, so Sarah left the room and went into the kitchen. Pretty soon, a wonderful aroma was filling the house, and as I was interviewing Herbert, I couldn't figure out exactly what was going on. But at the end of the interview, I went into the kitchen and found that Sarah had been busy baking a generous batch of cookies for us of which we are very fond. And of course, these were wonderfully homemade cookies, and she also was packing up some fruitcake for us. Her idea was that we would enjoy these things on our way back to San Francisco where we make our home. Sarah told us that when we got back to San Francisco to just put the cookies in the oven, and that they would heat up very nicely. We got back to our Arcadia, where we were staying while in southern California, and couldn't wait to open the cookies to share them with our hostess and her family. And needless to say, there were no cookies left to heat up when we got back to San Francisco, but we thought it was wonderful.

In the beginning of my narration, I had intended saying that our call on Herbert and Sarah Schirmer was purely a personal visit while we were in the Los Angeles area. However, during the course of the conversation, we were telling them about our experiences with interviewing different people that had been connected with the Girls'

Club and with the Wolfsohn family in San Francisco. We also told them that Bancroft Library was interested in the early cultural activities of San Francisco, and Herbert said, "Are they interested in the Columbia Park Boys' Club?" And our question was, "Well, did you go to the Columbia Park Boys' Club?" Herbert said, "Yes, I did." We said, "How about an interview," and he was willing, so there we were.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—HAZEL GOWAN SALMI

INTERVIEW WITH HAZEL GOWAN SALMI

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	165
SESSION 1, March 11, 1972	
[Tape 13-1, Side A].....	167
Reading a written account of the early history of the Girls' Club—Ralph Stackpole's sculpture at the Girls' Club—The importance of having been exposed to art at the Girls' Club—Attending the San Francisco Institute of Art at current site of Mark Hopkins Hotel.	
SESSION 2, August 12, 1973	
[Tape 13-1, Side B].....	174
Personalities of Rachel and Eva Wolfsohn—The Richmond Art Center.	
[Tape 13-2, Side A].....	174
More on the Richmond Art Center—Teaching dance classes as outgrowth of Girls' Club experience—Influence of Girls' Club on development of the Richmond Arts Center—Working for photographer W.E. Dassonville.	
[Tape 13-2, Side B].....	179
More on W.E. Dassonville—Family background—Arriving in San Francisco on a lumber schooner—Living on San Bruno Avenue—The earthquake and fire of 1906—Mother and her book, <i>Wildwood</i> —Brother, husband.	
[Tape 14, Side A].....	186
More on husband—Moving to Richmond, CA—Designing and building home—More on family background in Mendocino County—Family archives in the Bancroft Library.	
[Tape 14, Side B].....	201
More on family in Mendocino County—Husband's collections—Interviewers' comments on Hazel Salmi.	

INTERVIEW WITH HAZEL GOWAN SALMI

[Interview Session #1, March 11, 1972]

[Tape 13-1, Side A]

Selix: These three women [Hazel, Leah and Adrienne] have a friendship of long standing, which started at the Girls' Club.

Hazel, how did you first become acquainted with the Girls' Club?

Salmi: Well, Leah, it was after I had graduated from the San Francisco Institute of Art, and my mother made the first contact. We did not live in the neighborhood of the Girls' Club. But after she made the contact, I went there then to some of the classes, and from that time on continued to go. That must have been about 1914; I must have been about nineteen years old.

Selix: When you went to the classes at that time, were you a member of the club or a teacher?

Salmi: Both. I have here some things that I had written down. The reason that I have them written down is that about two years ago, Leticia Meyer, the daughter of Frederick Meyer, who was the founder of the College of Arts and Crafts and who was involved in the development of the Girls' Club as far as its physical development was concerned, furniture plans and that sort of thing, had asked me what I knew about the beginning. She felt that it should be recorded someplace. She particularly wanted it recorded in relation to what her father had done, and she thought that perhaps it could be placed in the California Historical Society archives. While I felt that I did not know it historically, I did write for her what my recollections were, and what I had heard about its beginning. So, if you like, I could read you this. Do you think that would be—

Bonn: That would be fine. Pardon me, the school you went to and the school that Meyer was affiliated with, is that the one in Oakland?

Salmi: Yes, that's the one in Oakland, but the one from which I had graduated was the San Francisco Institute of Art in San Francisco. I later went to California College of Arts and Crafts, however, just for a summer session and for some special work, and knew him there, Mr. Meyer. This is what I wrote, and perhaps it makes it a little more concise:

“My first knowledge of the Girls' Club at 362 Capp Street in San Francisco was in the year 1914. The club was under the direction of the two women who were the founders: Rachel and Eva Wolfsohn, who made their home on the second floor of the main building. These two women were so integral a part of the whole operation that the persons, program, building could hardly have been thought of separately. Together, they constituted a meaningful demonstration in living, and this is what made it so significant. This vital quality influenced those who participated in the various activities in a subtle way that became a part of the growth of each individual. This must have been so from its beginning, for when I first knew it, the children of some of the first members were coming to the club, as well as their mothers and grandmothers.”

I believe, you girls, there may need to be a correction there, that there were not grandmothers at that point.

Bonn: Oh, yes, that's right, I think the grandmother group came into being later, because of the age difference.

Salmi: That could very well have been. But I know there was a Mothers' Club, and then later, I remember that there was a Grandmothers' Club. Indeed, there was a Mothers' Club and a Grandmothers' Club within the framework of the Girls' Club as it went on.

“The beginning, to those who came later like myself, was learned about in fragments as one learns of family beginnings through the stories that family members tell. Rachel was the elder of the two sisters, and while the idea may have originated with her, it seems that with the close rapport between Rachel and Eva, it could have generated as a joint expression.

At any rate, they rented a store in the South of Market district in San Francisco. The furnishings that they assembled were probably quite meager, but it was scrubbed and painted and made attractive to the girls of the neighborhood, if I may judge from how the place always looked later on. The activities they offered were probably determined by the skills of the friends, who they interested to come and share these skills with the girls in the classes that they conducted. There were artists and musicians and people who could sew and cook. There seems always to have been tutoring for those who could go farther with this aid. It must have filled a need in the lives of the people who lived in the area, people of a variety of national backgrounds, for the club grew and put down firm roots.

“How long this first location was occupied I do not know, but apparently larger quarters were needed. For some time before the earthquake of 1906, the Girls' Club was moved to one of the old houses on [Renkin Hill?]. This place was burned with all the surrounding area in the fire, which followed the earthquake. As the families who had lived in the South of Market area moved, the roots that lead out of the burned area into the Mission district, San Bruno Road, and Visitation Valley, it was a natural decision to re-establish the Girls' Club where these families settled. Surely this decision to carry on would be an interesting story, if one could know who was involved in the effort to bring it to reality. There must have been many, for I recall Eva telling of an evening, during the period after the fire, when a group of friends gathered around a dinner table, pledged \$40,000 as a beginning toward rebuilding.

“Again, I do not have the date when the site on Capp Street was purchased, when the actual planning was begun. The architect was Bruce Porter, and the few beautifully designed pieces of furniture in the two main rooms on the first floor were by Frederick Meyer, founder of the California College of Arts and Crafts. The building must have been finished about 1910. In the large assembly room with a stage, there was a mural by Gottardo Piazzoni, and about the same time or later, there was added in the courtyard the fountain by Ralph Stackpole. There was another mural in the hall by Grace Storey, sister of Arthur Putnam [Grace Storey was actually the wife of Arthur Putnam]. Good taste and simply expressed beauty were evident throughout the building. It was the type of beauty and quality that would inspire people, young and old, to unconsciously incorporate this quality in their own lives and surroundings”

“At the time I became associated with the Girls’ Club, there was a governing board, and I believe these people were largely responsible for the financial support of the club. This was before the formation of the Community Chest. While I do not know all who were involved in this way, those I do recall as being active were Mrs. Jesse Lilienthal, Mrs. Leon Sloss, Mrs. Lewis Green, Mrs. Moses Gunst, Mrs. I.W. Hellman, Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker, Mrs. Charles Stewart, Mrs. Charles Durbrow, Miss Aimee Steinhart, Mrs. M.J. Brandenstein.

“Rachel Wolfsohn died about 1915, and after her death, Eva carried on the work with the aid of an assistant, who also lived at the club. Edith Heinrich was the resident assistant for many years. Margaret Hall, whose father William Hammond Hall was responsible for establishing Golden Gate Park, contributed to her skills in many ways, and eventually was a regular staff member, but did not live at the club. After Eva’s death in 1935, Margaret Hall and Edith Heinrich carried on a program until about 1938, when the buildings were used as a community center supported by the Community Chest. It is still in use for this type of program.

“The building was laid out in a U-shape, one leg of the “U” paralleling the street. In this part was the entrance hall with the living room on one side and a dining room on the other, and a small sitting room.”

And Adrienne, I believe, you said that there were two other rooms that I have not recorded.

Bonn: Yes, as you immediately enter to the left was a library, was a small room. I would venture to say it was maybe fifteen by ten, and the room was lined with shelves and books, of course. Then across from that, on the right hand side, or the Capp Street side, was a music room. Now, there was a piano in there and there was a head of Mozart [laughs].

Salmi: Yes, I can recall these now, but when I wrote this I didn’t recall.

“These rooms were used for small, social events and meetings. The second floor was the apartment occupied with the Wolfsohns and the resident assistant. On the third floor were rooms for household help, which consisted of a man and his wife and a maid. The base of the “U” housed the large cooking room on the first floor, where classes were held, and above this, on the second floor, the sewing room, where sewing classes met, and where costumes were made for plays and dance recitals. There was no third floor in this section. The other leg of the “U”, which was across the rear of the property, was a beautiful, large room, which was simply called “The Big Room.” It was two floors in height with a balcony across the back and along one side. There was a well-designed and equipped stage at the end of this room with green rooms on two levels. Off the balcony opened a series of small rooms with large windows looking out onto the court, which occupied the inner part of the “U”. These rooms were used for small classes or groups as scheduled.

“One of these rooms was allocated to my use, as Rachel Wolfsohn invited me to establish a studio there, as I had recently graduated from the California School of Fine Arts of San Francisco Institute of Art. I was to teach several classes, design costumes and stage settings, which I did on a part time basis for many years. There were drama

classes for children and for young adults. Gerda Wismer Hoffman was one of the directors. Dance classes were taught by Anita Peters Wright in the big room. Music lessons were available, and the small rooms off the balcony were eventually in regular use for lessons in violin and other stringed instruments. This phase of the program outgrew the facility, and was moved to a cottage a couple blocks up Capp Street. With this move, the music program was operated under another board of directors, and eventually, completely separated. It then became the Community Music School [San Francisco Community Music Center], and I believe, is still active in the same location with the same name. About 1935, or earlier, the property adjoining the club was purchased, and the gymnasium built, so that activities needing this type of facility could be added to the program.

“In the total concern that the Wolfsohns had for the cultural development of the girls who came to the club, they managed through their contacts to have tickets to concerts, opera, and other events of this nature. These they made available on a rotating basis to those who they felt were ready for this experience. Also, there were happy days in the county not to be forgotten. This led to the eventual establishment of a summer home down the peninsula near Woodside. This place was made possible through the generosity of some of the friends of the Girls’ Club. It was named Wonderhill, and well named because of what it meant to the many girls who spent weekends and summer vacations there.

“All told, this was indeed a demonstration living, well lived. The cycle was rounded out, but certainly not ended with the three, or so, generations who knew it. The influence generated then must still be moving unending. These are some of the things I remember about the Girls’ Club, and I am glad that I was one of the ones who knew it, for I do feel that that influence that touched everybody who went there can never end. It goes on and manifests itself in ways that probably we will never know completely, and also, may not be able to trace back to its origin.”

I have the feeling that in many ways that may be one of the reasons I went on and did something about establishing the art center in Richmond.

Bonn: I’m sure.

Salmi: I’m sure that it must have been, because that demonstration on living that seemed to involve creating a beautiful environment, which I’m sure it influenced all of us, must also have gone on into that influence.

Bonn: There’s no question everybody was touched by this way of life.

Salmi: That is my impression, and while any part of it could be expanded, certainly, and recorded much more fully than this, these were just some of the impressions that I have in thinking back.

Bonn: You mentioned one thing about the sculpture in the court by Stackpole. There used to be a very simple bird bath there originally, and then it was later that Stackpole did the—

Salmi: Yes, it may have been later than I said.

- Bonn: Yes, because so many people were so unhappy with it, do you remember that?
- Salmi: Yes, that's true, because his style had changed.
- Bonn: It was a new style for him, and he was experimenting. It was the figures were colored; he had painted color onto the stone.
- Salmi: He had burned in wax.
- Bonn: Was that it?
- Salmi: Yes.
- Bonn: And each side was different, one from the other.
- Salmi: And it was very stylized, and not in the more naturalistic style, which he had used while doing the World's Fair sculptures that he did.
- Bonn: Didn't you do a wood block with the—
- Salmi: Yes, I did and—
- Bonn: Do you still have that?
- Salmi: I do.
- Bonn: That would be good to put with this.
- Salmi: Okay, yes, I could. I think that probably another phase of influence made, while I was doing some—well, I was working and learning as one always did there, and so, I was involved in going to classes, as well as maybe teaching a few. So, I attended Anita Peters Wright's ballet classes, and then became involved in the stage settings and that sort of thing, and I think it was one of the things that made me realize how closely all phases of art are integrated, or should be integrated. And that comes out most completely in presentations of the dance, or of course, most completely, I suppose, in the presentation of opera, which we didn't do, but we did in the dance and in the level of dramas that were put on there by the various ages. Then later, in the art center, I felt that there had to be as completely rounded a presentation of the arts as possible, both in the way of the quiet art, and the fine arts, and the music, which did involve a symphony orchestra there and the ballet, all which is now going on.
- Bonn: I think you would be interested to know that not too long ago, [Helen Hinchcliff?] came to the house and she was in the office here. She asked about the paintings I had on my fireplace, and two of them are yours, these small paintings, and you know, her only comment was, "Oh, Hazel, she was such a beautiful dancer." She didn't say a thing about the paintings, but she did remember how beautifully you danced.
- Salmi: That was kind of her, I'm sure. I certainly enjoyed it, and it opened up a whole new field for me, because I had never been involved in anything of that kind before, nor had the opportunity to participate.

- Selix: That is the way we felt about the club was that it gave us a way of life that we would not otherwise have experienced in our own backgrounds.
- Salmi: Yes, well, I'm sure that it was so with me, too; and I was always so grateful to Eva, because I, of course, knew her longer—Rachel died so soon after I started going there—but when she was always able to obtain tickets for important musical events in town, and she did make them available to different girls, or young people, who were involved there. And I'm sure many of us would never have had the opportunity to see or hear some of the things that we did see.
- Bonn: Then there was this wonderful theatrical group, was a little theater group with Mabel Gump and Templeton Crocker. Do you remember the name of that group? The Players' Guild?
- Salmi: Oh, yes, yes.
- Bonn: And Eva always had tickets for that, and they were wonderful plays.
- Salmi: They were, indeed. Well, it was rather a total experience, in cultural experiences, in the right kind of way. They were geared to our ability to assimilate them and to use them.
- Selix: Hazel, you haven't told us anything about your experiences at the art school.
- Salmi: Oh, Leah, when I went there, it was on the same site as the Mark Hopkins Hotel, where the Mark Hopkins Hotel now stands.
- Bonn: Was that the Hopkins home?
- Salmi: The Hopkins home. It had originally been there and just destroyed by fire. Well, when I went there, it was a temporary wooden type of building built on the foundations of the old Hopkins home. All down the garden part at the back where the stone stairways, and the fountains, and the walls, all dry, and weeds, and where had been gardens, but that's where we sat and ate our lunch, down there on that south-facing hillside below, and which now is within the walls of the hotel. The dark stone wall encircling the whole place is the same now today as it was then. I understand that that masonry was done by Italian masons that were brought here to work on the railroad in the Feather River Canyon—that's what the Western—?
- Selix: Western Pacific.
- Salmi: I think so. But up the stonework that's—whether it's—the retaining walls, I suppose, or the tunnels, or whatever, is exactly the same as this around the old Mark Hopkins home, and is still around that same block that encompasses the Mark Hopkins Hotel, and without a crack in it after the earthquake, and so on. But anyway, at that time Captain Robert Fletcher was the director of the school, and Earl Cummings was the teacher in sculpture, Theodore Wores was in life class, Ingersoll—can't remember his first name—was the design teacher, and a [Dr. Allen?]
—can't remember his first name either—was lecturer in anatomy, because then we really went into anatomy and had to be able to draw bones and muscles; that was part of the training for the life class. During the time I was there, Pedro [de] Lemos, who later had something to do with the

establishment of the Allied Arts, down the peninsula, came from the East. He came first as a student for a semester, and then was an instructor there; and if I'm not mistaken, he was the one who introduced applied arts in that school; before that, it was just fine arts. He introduced the jewelry and all design in various applied arts like block printing, etc. So, then I was the youngest student there at that time, because I had gone almost directly when I should have been going to high school. Maurice Logan was one of the outstanding students, and [Judson Star?] was another. Let me see—I can't think of the name—

Bonn: Let me ask you this, the school—the Hopkins home had been burnt down, but there was a building there. Was the building built as a school, or was it then, again, as a home for the Hopkins family?

Salmi: The Hopkins home was completely destroyed.

Bonn: But you went to school on that property, and it was built as a school?

Salmi: Oh, yes, as a school. No, it was not the home, except that they utilized the existing foundations.

Bonn: When did the Stanford Court come into being?

Salmi: While I was going there, and that was built in the last year that I was attending school, there.

Bonn: Because that encompassed in this—

Salmi: In that block, right.

Bonn: Yes. And it has the same stonework around it.

Salmi: Yes, that's right. Apparently, it went around—well, weren't they both part of the big four that were connected with the railroads?

Bonn: Oh, I guess so.

Selix: Yes, Stanford and Hopkins, yes.

Salmi: Yes, and that ties into the railroad story of the masons, I guess.

Selix: Do you remember anything about any of these instructors at the art school? Did any of them go on to become famous artists?

Salmi: Well, it's how one interprets famous. They were well known in their time; Theodore Wores was, Earl Cummings. That group that's out in front of the de Young, the Indian boy playing the flute with the mountain lion sitting over on the other rocks, is Earl Cummings. So they were people of their time. Mr. Piazzoni, also, was on the faculty at that time, and while [inaudible] is well known now, he was very well known then; and [Frank van Slone?] was also a lecturer there. There's other people—

- Selix: That was before the time of Otis Oldfield and—
- Salmi: Yes, it was.
- Bonn: Lee Randolph.
- Salmi: Lee Randolph was much later.
- Bonn: And then the school just moved to a new location on Chestnut. That building was built for the school.
- Salmi: That's right. It had an interim, though, when they were in office buildings downtown, while that was being built.
- Bonn: What happened to the Hopkins' property?
- Salmi: I'm not entirely sure, that was after we went across the bay. I did attend some of the classes. I was taking design under a man named [Fords?] during that time, and we met in one of the office buildings downtown. So I think that was while the school was being built, and I believe that the hotel people had already acquired the other property, and were probably going on with their plans.
- Bonn: Oh, I guess maybe, yes.
- Salmi: And that was while I was up there, that the Pacific Union Club was established across in the old Flood home, and when I first started going to school, it was still completely gutted. It stood there, just the walls, and it was at that time that the Pacific Union Club took it over, and they are still there, of course.
- Bonn: All during that period? Six years it was gutted, then?
- Salmi: Yes. Well, it was, what, about 19—I started there, what, in 1909 or 1910.
- Bonn: I was thinking 1912.
- Salmi: So, it had only been about three years, four years.

[Interview Session #2, August 12, 1973]

[Tape 13-1, Side A, continued]

- Selix: Adrienne Bonn, Leah Selix and Hazel Salmi are meeting in the home of Hazel Salmi at Point Richmond, in the city of Richmond, California. We will reminisce further about the Girls' Club, and Hazel's career there, and at the Richmond Art Center, of which she was the founder, and will then tell of Hazel's early life.

[Tape 13-1, Side B]

- Selix: Hazel, do you have any recollections about the personality of Rachel Wolfsohn? Do you remember her as a person, what kind of a person she was?

- Salmi: I didn't know her closely, but, of course, I admired her as I think everyone did. She was a very gracious kind of person, quiet as compared with Eva's vivacity, I would say.
- Selix: She was more quiet than Eva was?
- Salmi: Well, she seemed so to me. Now, it may have been, because, of course, she wasn't in very good health from the time I first knew her. She had several illnesses, and whether that—but I don't think that was it, I think she was really a different—had different characteristics in that regard.
- Selix: What would you say that Eva's characteristics were?
- Salmi: Enthusiasm and vivacious. She had the quality of being excited about things and transmitting that to other people, I think.
- Selix: We always had the feeling that the most insignificant occasion was so embellished by Eva that it became a great occasion, even though it might be a very simple thing that was going on.
- Salmi: I think that well could be said. Yes, she did have the quality of enjoying everything and making, as you say, things seem important; they were important to her.
- Selix: Everything was.
- Bonn: Did she have a joy in—?
- Salmi: Oh, yes, definitely, and a very keen interest in everyone.
- Selix: She had a great capacity for enjoying life.
- Salmi: Yes, she did, and she wanted other people to do that too, I'm sure.
- Selix: In this interviewing, we have several times mentioned the art center. I think we should identify the art center. What is the correct title of it?
- Salmi: Richmond Art Center.
- Selix: And it functions as an art center, a museum?
- Salmi: No, it's not a museum. It is a center for active participation, and of course, which also includes passive participation in the way of exhibitions. But a museum, I think of as an institution that builds up collections in whatever field they are specializing in, but that has never been the function of the art center.
- Selix: But they have an art gallery.
- Salmi: Oh, yes, definitely. There is a very active program of changing exhibitions, particularly as related to living artists, and mostly young artists.

- Selix: And in the school, or the tutorial section of it, would you say that every craft was taught, jewelry, and weaving, and ceramics, and—?
- Salmi: Well, basically to set up on the use of basic materials, and the techniques involved in the use of those materials, which would, of course, include the tools and equipment that would be necessary, and the basic design that would provide the functional use of the materials of that kind, and the artistic development of it. So being set up that way, it was not divided as we usually think of in the way of hobby uses of material. It was basic uses of materials and the best techniques in their handling. That would include clay, which of course then would be ceramics; and metal, which might include jewelry and the fashioning of larger articles in metal; wood, which could be used mostly either in sculpture or carving as it was used in the art center; paint, color, and print, fiber, which would be in the weaving. But by dividing it in that fashion, it was never dated in the way of its use. It was rather the best handling of the material itself, so that it could be used by the person creatively and freely without being restricted within a fad or a hobby, which would date it, I would say.
- Selix: Was this your own conception of how it should be set up?
- Salmi: Yes, that's right, so that's why the studios were set up on that basis. Going down the hall, our first studio was the painting studio, the next was weaving, the next was ceramics, and then the print studio, which included other things like the use of leather and that sort of thing, because the equipment, the furniture of the studio could lend itself to that. Then there was the metal studio, which also included, eventually, equipment for lapidary work, because of it being related in a sense of jewelry. Then we had, what we called, the wood room, which was used also as utility in relation to the setting up of exhibitions, and that sort of thing. But that then later became the ballet room, that is we had a good portion of that, because as we branched out into the performing arts, orchestra—we had at first a symphonette, which was only the strings, then later it became a symphony orchestra, and then ballet, and the correlation of the two in performances, which then, of course, brought in the necessity for stage settings and costume design.
- Selix: And did you also have dramatic productions?
- Salmi: No, we did not. We felt that it definitely belonged because of being a performing art. But there was a group that functioned separately in Richmond, and doing a very good job. We had hoped eventually as we might be able to promote the building of a little theater that we might incorporate them, but that never had arrived at that point by the time I left.
- Selix: What year did you found that center?
- Salmi: In '36, it formally started in '36.
- Bonn: That was the original, before the building, that was the very—
- Selix: No, that was the new building, wasn't it?

Salmi: Oh, no, that was '51.

Selix: Oh, the new building was built in 1951, and you originally started working in '36.

Salmi: Yes, definitely.

Selix: And then when did you retire from the—?

Salmi: In 1960. It was a well-formed activity long before the building was built for that purpose. As a matter of fact, there would have been no building had there not been the activity.

Selix: Yes, had you not developed it in previous years in other locations.

Salmi: That's right.

Bonn: What was the original address?

Salmi: Oh, the original address was a suitcase.

Bonn: [laughs] Tell us.

Salmi: Well, I had started working with people, different groups, as for instance, the leaders and campfire girls, and that sort of thing, helping them with their crafts, and then helping other groups, the Women's Club and etc. It became rather obvious that people were interested in this sort of thing, but there hadn't been anything available in Richmond at that time. Then about '35, '36, along in there, someone suggested that under the WPA, that there might be the opportunity to get some aid. I looked into it and found that under the educational program of the WPA that classes could be started, and so, that was done. We still did not have a place to meet, but the school department here was cooperative. So I was allowed places in several school buildings, which meant that I traveled from one to the other, and carried with me all equipment that we used, because I was just using my own equipment, and so everything that would go into a suitcase. That's why the things we started like cutting linoleum blocks for Christmas cards, because starting at that time of the year, along in the fall, seemed like a practical project, and so, it definitely was in the suitcase. And then when it came to the point of printing our Christmas cards, the hand press that I had was too heavy to carry around, and the principal of one of the junior highs had told me that we could meet in the cafeteria in the morning. We had to be out of there before they started lunches, which was about eleven-thirty, something like that, and so then that meant carrying this press up and down stairs and getting it out of the way. So, finally, he told me that I could have a room—well, at the time, it was just a storage room. When they cleared that out, I found that it had been a science room and had running water and gas.

Bonn: What a find.

Salmi: Well, yes, and all these benches, you see. Of course, they were buried under piles and piles of books, and you didn't even know it was there. That was really the first

permanent home of the art center, and that was in Roosevelt Junior High on Ninth Street in Richmond.

Selix: About what year would that have been?

Salmi: That was 1936 when we got that.

Selix: And then did you stay there?

Salmi: We stayed there until '42, when at that time, the shipyards had been developed in Richmond, and from a 23,000 population it zoomed up to over 100,000, you know, in a very short time.

Bonn: Yes, I remember that.

Salmi: The schools were needing every space they had, and so we had to move out of there. We moved into a building that had been the old health center. It was originally a store downstairs and two apartments upstairs; and the health center had occupied these apartments and the Red Cross had the downstairs. So we took the upstairs, the two apartments, and used the different rooms and made about six small rooms all told.

Bonn: I remember that building.

Salmi: Do you?

Bonn: Yes.

Salmi: That was on Ninth Street.

Bonn: That was the first one I do remember. I don't remember the school.

Salmi: I didn't recall that you had been there. So, eventually we had also the downstairs in that building, and it was during that time that we became more and more crowded. And also, during that time, we set up the large program for servicing the recreation centers and the housing centers that the government had built, several of them, about nine different centers in Richmond. It was probably the largest program of that kind. Well, it has never been as large since as it was at that time. That was under the Lanham funds that had become available to the recreation department in Richmond, and so we were given the responsibility; that was in '42, I guess. It was after we had moved into the health center building. So, I simply pressed into service the people that had been coming to the classes, who had been coming since the 1936 time, and some of them with art school background that had been trained. Those who were able to—and everybody seemed to be able to step into this emergency that was going on at that time.

Selix: And teach; many of them were teachers.

Salmi: Yes, they did, they went out into the different—and then they again had suitcases. We equipped them like [inaudible], you know, and so, they went out. There would be a suitcase all equipped for work with clay, there would be another one for painting, or for

whatever we were doing; and they'd just simply pick up the case and go, because you couldn't leave anything in these buildings; we had to take everything with us.

Selix: And they went right to the housing projects where the people lived.

Salmi: That's right.

Bonn: Wasn't that a tremendous way to do it though, Hazel?

Salmi: Oh, yes, it was marvelous. We also had a very, very active program in dramatics. We had dramatics, and dancing, we had choral, we had instrumental music, we had all the arts, the visual arts, and then correlated all of those things. It was really a very active and useful program.

Bonn: In looking back, do you feel that was one of the most productive periods?

Salmi: I do, I really do. We met people who had never come in contact with this sort of thing before, because they came from practically every state of the union, and many of them from some of the Southern states. People would stay in the shipyards for a while, and then find that they didn't wish to stay any longer, and they'd go back to their former home. And somebody might have a piece of pottery that was in the kiln at the time they left; I think we sent pottery back to people in nine different states during that time.

Selix: Did you have a large attendance of the black group?

Salmi: No.

Selix: They didn't take to it or—?

Salmi: Well, there weren't so many here then, you see. Not too many blacks came in the early days of the shipyards because, well, not all people were skilled it's true, but still there were a good many skilled workers, and so, most of the—

[Tape 13-2, Side A]

Selix: You were saying it was mostly the Caucasians, who were the skilled workers originally in the shipyards, and that the blacks came later.

Salmi: Yes, although there were some, it's true, but we did not come into contact with them at that time; and really, they filtered in to this kind of thing rather slowly. I think our first contact with blacks was in offering to help train—for them to use that training in relation to their own groups of children, at least we tried to encourage that. So we did get some adults in that way, but we didn't get many children to begin with.

Selix: But did you later on?

Salmi: Oh, yes, later on, quite a bit later on.

Selix: Would you say that, as of now, that there are very many blacks enrolled in the classes at the art center?

Salmi: I think the percentage would be about the same as it would be in a school situation.

Selix: Then after you were in that health building, did you have another location before the art center was—?

Salmi: No, we moved from there to the Civic Center building. At the time, we had been in the process of trying to get another more adequate building, so whenever anything seemed possible, we always contacted the city council or someone interested. As a matter of fact, we had been working on it for quite some time involving people in the community, particularly civic leaders. We really had a good deal of interest among those people because so many of the wives who came, women who came and whose husbands had some responsible place in the community; there was definitely a feeling of interest and the will to do something about it.

So, we had, I recall, called together a group of that type of men to lunch one day in our art center building on Ninth Street, the old health center building, with the idea of putting to them this problem and asking for their help in solving it. So, I—there was an expression among—particularly I remember Mr. Helms, who was the superintendent of the schools here, making the comment to someone else that this worked right in to what they had been thinking of in the way of developing a civic center. Mr. Helms had been trying to develop a civic center for quite some time before that; and as a matter of fact, it had come to a vote at once before that, which involved land. As I recall, it was where the Nichol Park is now, or part of that land. But anyway, the shipyards were going on then too, and there were people who would come into town who could see the value of something of that kind.

So, on our tenth annual exhibition, which was the exhibition of people who were involved in the classes—and we always had to rent space for our exhibitions because we had no space for that in the Ninth Street place, and we rented the Women's City Club on Nevin Avenue in Richmond. The decision was made to form an art association for the purpose of developing plans for an art center, and to form this during that tenth annual exhibition. So, it was an evening meeting—was called, and we had a temporary chairman, but knew pretty well who was to be put in as officers at that time. The meeting was held then on the basis of the whole civic center, because there were other people interested in other phases of the civic center, and it was all presented at this public meeting that evening. That really was the first meeting held on the promotion of the civic center here in Richmond, and was held at our exhibition.

Bonn: What position did Mr. Helms hold?

Salmi: He did not hold an office in the art center, but he was always sympathetic and helpful in many ways.

Bonn: Was he a city official?

Salmi: He was a superintendent of schools and had been very active in the development of Richmond because he came as a principal—let's see, I guess he came as superintendent, that's right, but it was when there was only one elementary school, and I believe, probably—I don't think any secondary school at the time he came. He came really to develop a school system in Richmond, which he did; he saw the school program through from about three schools to one of the very large, widespread department that it was when he—I don't know how many years he was superintendent, but I think longer than anyone else had been superintendent in the state.

Bonn: He wasn't a Richmond native.

Salmi: No, he had been brought up in San Leandro, I think; his family had orchard lands down there in that area.

Selix: Then the idea of encompassing the art center in the civic center was brought up at this meeting?

Salmi: Well, yes, it was presented as one of the things that would belong in a civic center. Wayne Thompson was the city manager at that time, and he was very far sighted in relation to anything of this kind of civic development. He himself told me once—I don't know if this bears repeating or not—that he didn't know—they wanted to have a preliminary plan made when it was finally decided that they would bring this to a vote of the people; you see, some kind of plan had to be presented before it could be voted on. So, he had been reading—now, I don't know what magazine or publication, I imagine a civic publication of some kind that had to do with other cities, but he was reading that at breakfast time, and he saw the name of Miller and Pflueger and what the Pfluegers had done in San Francisco, you know. So, it was his—I believe then he had them contacted, and that was how they came to be the architects for the civic center here. And of course, Timothy Pflueger, who was very sympathetic to artists and was on the board of the San Francisco Museum of Art at that time, and his brother, Milton, and [Leffler?] Miller were all in this firm. Well, then they did the preliminary work on it, and I think that Timothy Pflueger was not aware of the fact that we were not part of the city at that time, and just supposed that we were, and that we were to be included. So, in the plans then we had made, or I had made, a preliminary layout of what we needed, which it's very much on the same plan that's out there now, and so he incorporated it. Well, he incorporated it into the building as a wing of the auditorium building; and I believe it was a very wise thing that he did because it looked small in comparison to the great space of the auditorium building, and looked rather insignificant, although it actually was not. People looking at the plans, city officials, councilman and so on, didn't pay much attention to this little wing; so it just sort of slipped in.

Bonn: But by having it in the civic center and the city hall, it gave it more status, don't you think?

Salmi: Well, yes, I do, and I think that it's amazing because it recognized art as part of a city responsibility, which actually it is, but at that time, was not generally so. So anyway, our building was the last of the buildings to be built, because the old city hall was in the corner occupied what is now the auditorium, and it was one corner of the auditorium. The new city hall had to be built and occupied before they could tear down the old one,

so it put our building—the Hall of Justice was first, the library and the city hall were next, and then the auditorium was last. Well, by that time, prices were commencing to rise so, because the original bond issue was only for \$4,500,000, and when it seems incredible that so much could be built for that amount—

Bonn: It certainly does today.

Salmi: But already prices were rising by the time they got to the fourth building, and it looked like we were not going to be able to have it done. So, it was an important evening when that came up, when the bids were opened to find out whether or not—and I think some \$150,000 had been transferred from general funds into this; and anyway, it was made possible. But a number of things had to be deleted before it was brought down to the place where it could be within the amount of money that was still left to be used; so we did not get the things that we had planned. The little theater was left out for rehearsals. All of these things were needed from the very moment that we started, and they are needed even more today, but they were left out. The photography department, and all that sort of thing, we did not get, but we did get a place.

Bonn: Well, certainly you speak of Richmond Art Center to anyone that's interested in crafts, they know about it, and they have nothing but enthusiasm for the project and how wonderful it is.

Salmi: Yes, I have letters from cities all over the United States that wrote asking about how we did it and how—because it was not usually done then. Now we think it as a very common type of thing, and one expects something to be done for the arts, but that was not so at that time; it was a new thing.

Selix: You were also consulted, weren't you, when they were planning those buildings and some of the—?

Salmi: Oh, yes, our plan was taken by the architects, and so I had the opportunity to work with them during the development of the plan. Of course, they carried it on, and refined it, and brought it into harmony with the rest of their buildings; and they were wonderful people to work with. Timothy Pflueger died during the time before this was completed, but I worked with [Leffler?] Miller; when it got down to the point of color, and things to be chosen, and so on, even for the library, I worked with him on that.

Selix: And you also worked on some of the other artistic details of some of the other buildings, didn't you?

Salmi: No, not in the other buildings; it was only as it related to this one and to the stage of the auditorium.

Selix: Was it through your work with the art center that you were named Woman of the Year by the Soroptimist Club?

Salmi: That was the Business and Professional Women's Club that carried on that. I belonged to the Soroptimist Club. I never belonged to the Business and Professional Women's

Club, but they were the ones in Richmond who headed the project of naming a Woman of the Year each year. Yes, it was because of my work with the art center.

Selix: What year was that?

Salmi: '55, I think.

Selix: And what year was it that you were listed in *Who's Who*?

Salmi: It was long—about that time, too, there were several years, but now, I'm not sure without going up and looking at the date on the book, which I guess was '54 or '55, somewhere along in there.

Selix: And when you were in charge of the art center, what was your title?

Salmi: Director.

Selix: And did you have someone else who acted as curator of the art center?

Salmi: No, at that time, we did not have that position filled. As a matter of fact, many positions that now existed were not filled. But, no, I was director, and then our instructors made up the staff of the art center, and we had one secretary. At first, we did not even have a man who was assigned to installations, so any heavy work of that kind we all did it, and it was carried on by the staff working together as a unit. Of course, we had marvelous cooperation, and I think that—we felt ourselves to be a unit; it was very close working together. So as far as needing a curator is concerned, we didn't really because we conferred with each other, and where artists—it seemed to be advisable to contact an artist because it would bring the kind of work in for exhibition that we felt was needed at that time. And then there were suggestions from the different instructors and through our conferences, so we worked it out that way. Then we had our annual open exhibitions, which brought in many young artists. They were always juried exhibitions, and we had an annual painting exhibition, one in sculpture, and one in what's called our designer craftsman exhibition, which brought in the jewelers, and weavers, and ceramics, and all the crafts of that kind. We had marvelous response and cooperation from the art department of the university; they always responded.

Selix: The University of California?

Salmi: Yes, they and the people who were on the faculty, and were always represented in our annuals. And of course, we called on some of them at times, too, for jurors, and then many young artists who were coming up. Some of them had some—I should really think back to see if I could say with certainty who may have had first showings at our place, but I don't want to hazard that without checking it. I do recall that during the World's Fair in Brussels, when at the time that Grace McCann Morley was in charge of the selection of the materials to be sent there for the particular year that she—the art that was represented for that year or part of the year, and of the seventeen painters, who were represented in this particular period of time, eleven of them had been shown first at the Richmond Art Center, I mean of the paintings.

- Bonn: That's a tremendous percentage.
- Salmi: Yes, the paintings.
- Bonn: In other words, she selected of all the United States.
- Salmi: Yes, I guess she did.
- Bonn: It was a national exhibit at the World's Fair. Of course, she had the—
- Salmi: However, the fact that she selected for a certain period of time of the fair may have been that it was more representative of the Western part of the United States. Now, I wouldn't say for sure, but I know that of the seventeen that went, there were eleven of these paintings had been shown at the Art Center.
- Bonn: And she was the curator or the director of the San Francisco Museum?
- Salmi: She was the director. I referred time after time to her for guidance, and she was a tremendous help when I would wonder if we were on the right track, if we were doing the right kind of thing; after all, there was nothing to guide us otherwise. I asked her help any number of times, and she was always very generous; I feel that she really was a very strong factor in helping us.
- Selix: Did you ever have any feeling that the influence of the Girls' Club and the Wolfsohn women had any influence on anything that you did when you developed the art center?
- Salmi: Well, I don't suppose that anything anyone does is isolated from other things that they've done, that's a sequence, and I think in the sequence, there undoubtedly would have been influence, because the Girls' Club was an experience for any young person at that time. It represented quality, and high standards, and whatever was being done or presented, and I think that couldn't help but be an influence, anyone who came in contact with it. And it was natural to feel in as much as those things were appreciated, and the opportunity to be active in things there, it was natural to feel that, yes, that one wanted to share that with someone else. I think that right from the start, I always had the feeling of wanting to do that, because the group that I had in San Bruno before I—
- Selix: Yes, tell us about that group. That was after you started—
- Salmi: That was when I was still going to the Girls' Club, so it was after I had been involved in dancing there, which I became involved in because I was there at the Girls' Club and doing my work with Anita Peters Wright classes that were available. I had always loved dancing, so I entered her class at the Girls' Club and had my first instruction in dancing there, any formal instruction that I had ever had. So then I started some dancing classes with children out in the San Bruno area, San Bruno Avenue area, not the town of San Bruno. And also presented a little—we finally worked on the presentation of a play that was mostly made up of dancing, I suppose would be a dance drama, perhaps. We raised some money there and bought a piano, which was installed in the room that I had made downstairs in my parents' house, in the basement part; so then made available the piano to children, who did not have a piano and wanted to take lessons, and to have a place to

practice. In a sense, that operation was very definitely an outgrowth of the Girls' Club. So, you see, anything that one does—and then when I came to Richmond, while I was still active in the Girls' Club, I didn't do anything in Richmond as long as I was active in the Girls' Club. It was as I became inactive in the Girls' Club that I became active in Richmond. It was probably more of a personal need maybe than anything else, because I still needed to be associated with something of this kind; so it was necessary to create it in order to have it.

Bonn: That was doing it the hard way [laughs].

Selix: Can you tell us about the period when you worked for W.E. Dassonville? We have a booklet that has been given to us about the music school of the Girls' Club, which must have been published before 1913, and the very lovely photography work in it was done by Mr. Dassonville, who was at 140 Geary Street in San Francisco at that time. We understand that you were employed by him. What can you tell us about this?

Salmi: Yes, I was. After I graduated from the California School of Fine Arts, I really didn't know what to do with myself. I didn't know how to get a job, or what I could do, and I felt very insecure, so I had had a couple of jobs. I worked with a place that made stained glass windows for churches shortly after I graduated; and then when I left there, this job came through the art school, also, was to work—this photographer, Mr. Dassonville, wanted someone to do his retouching and that sort of thing. He did not like retouchers who were trained in the usual way of taking all the lines out of faces, and so he contacted the art school, so he could get someone who had been working in portraiture, or life drawing, and that sort of thing. Anyway, this job came up there, so I went to Mr. Dassonville and went to work for him. It must have been in 1914, I guess. He was then, at the time I worked for him, in the Mercedes building on Post Street, which is about opposite where Gumps is. So, I did his retouching and some of his printing. I think printing was often done by normal daylight. I really knew nothing about photography, so I did what he told me to do. He printed with the Cooper Hewitt lamp, which of course was a constant source of light, and I guess did a more dependable kind of printing. I remember I had the job of printing up the pictures that he had taken of William Keith's paintings. Now, he had taken these before I came to work for him, but all his printing was done afterwards, so all of William Keith's paintings that I guess had been—because these were all copyrighted. Now, it must have been that he was doing it for the heir; I think it was a niece, who inherited most of the work of William Keith. I really don't know who he was doing it for, but these were all copyrighted I know. I did the printing on a lot of those. Now, he may have been doing—they may have been sold, I really don't know.

Bonn: Keith's paintings are very dark in character, aren't they?

Salmi: Yes.

Bonn: Did he do them in black and white, or did he—?

Salmi: No, he used platinum paper that came out with a beautiful, brownish tone, not sepia, but it was a very rich tone. As a matter of fact, Keith's paintings were very brownish as

well. I remember that project. He did beautiful portraits. I remember while I was there that he had the job of doing the portraits of Phoebe Hearst's grandsons.

Selix: Do you remember any other work that he had while you were there?

Salmi: I don't remember any persons particularly, or any projects, like the Keith paintings.

Selix: What kind of a man was he to work for?

Salmi: Oh, he was a very pleasant man, I guess.

Bonn: Very patient, we assume [laughs].

Salmi: He was tolerant I'm sure, because I didn't have any experience, so he must have been.

[Tape 13-2, Side B]

Selix: Why did you leave there?

Salmi: He was getting a new studio on—let's see, it was up above the jewelers that are on the corner of Grant Avenue and Geary. He was getting new studios up there, and I think he was going to revamp the whole situation, so—

Selix: Do you remember what he looked like?

Salmi: He was of a slight build. Yes, I remember, sandy-haired, slender type of man.

Selix: We understand that he was a very early influence on the work of Ansel Adams.

Salmi: Well, I wouldn't know that. Now, it could very well be, because I think he was highly thought of as a photographer.

Selix: We've more or less gone into your career, and now I think we should find out something about your life. When were you born?

Salmi: November 30, 1893, so Thanksgiving Day.

Selix: Thanksgiving Day? And where were you born?

Salmi: In Rockport, Mendocino County, California.

Selix: How many generations of your family had lived there by the time you were born? Were you the second generation or—?

Salmi: Well, this was lumbering—the Cottoneva Lumber Company. My grandfather was the principal owner, and my father superintended some of the mechanical part of the mills for him, and also, the loading of the lumber schooners that came in. It was one of the little ports on the north coast where the lumber was loaded on. My mother had gone

there to teach school, and she, I guess, was eighteen. That's how when she first went there from Philo, where she had been born and raised, was also in Mendocino County, but it took her two days by stage to get up to Rockport on the coast. And my grandfather had decided that there should be a school—that was my paternal grandfather—and he had made arrangements to have a school there, and so, it was established, and she got this job. She taught there for a year, and then she taught further out in the mountains the next year, and then I guess the next year after that was when she and my father were married.

Selix: What was your mother's maiden name?

Salmi: Stella Brown.

Selix: And she married your father—

Salmi: Ernest Gowan.

Selix: How old were you before you left Rockport?

Salmi: I think I must have been three or four, I don't know now exactly. My brother was born at Rockport also, and you see, the year 1893 was one of the big depressions like our 1929 with the stock market failure, and that sort of thing. In 1893 was a very big collapse, a financial collapse in this country, at that time. So, I have an idea that that had something to do with my grandfather's fortunes, too, and anyway, whether he sold the mill, how it went out of his hands, I don't know. He took after that the Shelter Cove place up on the coast, and it was a big ranch. So, we moved also, Mother and Father, myself, and my little brother, who must have been just a baby then, probably about a year or eighteen months old, something of that kind. Anyway, we all went to Shelter Cove, and it was there that my brother died, when he was two and I was four, so I know that I was five when we left Shelter Cove. For awhile, my father was with the Union Lumber Company at Fort Bragg. We were there for about a year, and then we left there on a little lumber schooner, came into San Francisco.

Selix: Did the lumber mill at Cottoneva, did that fail, or just go out of business?

Salmi: Went out of business.

Selix: Because of the depression.

Salmi: Yes, and you see, it was out of business a long time. I think that—or whether they had come to the end of their cutting, I'm not altogether clear on that. But anyway, they went out of business, and then there was no—probably because of the times also, it wasn't sold as a business, and it wasn't for years later that—now there is a Rockport Lumber Company, it's operated again, but I guess all on second growth timber. So anyway, that's when I first came into this area.

Selix: You remember coming to San Francisco on a lumber—

Salmi: Yes, coming in through the Golden Gate on a little lumber schooner, that was the first time I came to San Francisco.

Selix: And where did your family first settle in San Francisco?

Salmi: Well, my mother and father went to San Jose for awhile, and then came into San Francisco, and from then on. I must have been about seven when we came to San Francisco, I think.

Selix: And where did you live in San Francisco?

Salmi: On Erie Street, right off Howard; it's a big old house. And some other branch of the family was already living there when my mother came there.

Selix: Where was that, Howard and what?

Salmi: Erie.

Selix: Erie was the cross street?

Bonn: Where's Erie?

Salmi: Erie is near Thirteenth. You see, it's a small street that comes through just from Howard, I guess, to Mission, I think.

Selix: Near Thirteenth.

Salmi: Yes, there were still some big old houses there, you know.

Selix: How long did you live there?

Salmi: I don't know exactly.

Selix: Where did you live at the time of the fire?

Salmi: Oh, out on San Bruno Avenue, they had built a house out there. It was a new area that had been old nurseries, flower growing, particularly. It had been broken up into lots, and there were only two or three other houses in this whole block at the time we built there. So, we were there at the time the earthquake came.

Selix: Do you have any recollections of it?

Salmi: Oh, yes, very vivid, I remember the earthquake very well. I was, what, eleven, I guess, then. I remember the earthquake very well, and then I remember the after part, too. There were friends of ours, a man who was a contractor, and who used horses, and drays, and that sort of thing, and he lived in that same area near Howard and Thirteenth, in a large house. Well, he saw that he was going to be burned out, and so he loaded everything of his that he could on the wagons that he had, and came out to our place.

And we—as everyone had to in every part of the city—had to move their cook stoves outside, because they were not allowed to use chimneys or any fire inside after some of the spot fires that started after, you know, the earthquake from people building fires in their stoves when the chimneys were damaged. We used our whole house for bedrooms, so these people and other people who were burned out, came there.

Selix: What are your own recollections about the earthquake?

Salmi: I remember my sister, who was seven years younger than I, and I had to help her get dressed in the morning; well, when it started to shake, I jumped out of bed, and got her out of bed, and started to get her dressed. As I recall, I had her mostly dressed by the time it stopped shaking [laughter].

Selix: Did you realize it was an earthquake?

Salmi: Oh, yes, we'd been having a lot of earthquakes before that, so we were used to earthquakes; I knew very well it was an earthquake.

Selix: That San Bruno house was the family home from then on, wasn't it? Your mother lived there until—

Salmi: That's right, she lived there up until the time she went into the convalescent home, or rest home.

Selix: That would be a long period, wouldn't it?

Salmi: Yes, it would.

Bonn: San Bruno at that time was divided into streets, it wasn't farmland.

Salmi: No, it was divided into streets, yes, it had been.

Selix: What was the cross street?

Salmi: We lived on Garrard, near [Silliman?]

Selix: Your mother wrote a book, didn't she?

Salmi: Yes, she wrote a book after she was seventy-five years old. Of course, she had arthritis very badly, and couldn't get around easily, and she used to tell stories about her early days. So, one time I suggested to her that she write them down, not necessarily to try to create a novel with a structure, but simply isolated stories, which she did. Then after it was—well, she typed them all herself—I tried a number of times to send it to a number of publishers without any success; some nice letters back, but that was all. Finally, she discovered Vantage Press, and we contacted that; and I guess that almost anyone can get a book published through Vantage Press, if you pay for it, so my brother and I paid for it, and it was published.

Selix: What was the name of the book?

- Salmi: *Wildwood*, which was the name of her home.
- Selix: The name of her home in Philo?
- Salmi: That's right, her father had named their place Wildwood, so she named the book *Wildwood*.
- Selix: What was her father's occupation?
- Salmi: He was a doctor. They came across the plains in '53; they left Iowa in the early part of '53. He then had a young wife and three small children, and they came across the plains. They first settled in Napa, and he had a drugstore and a practice there. Then some more of the family were born there, and then he decided that he was going to go someplace else, and he went off up into Mendocino country.
- Bonn: The trains were running, the over land trains?
- Salmi: No, no, they came with an oxen team.
- Bonn: And a covered wagon?
- Salmi: And a covered wagon, yes.
- Bonn: Is that so? We read your mother's book, and it was delightful.
- Salmi: It does have a charm, there's no doubt about that, and it's all her early recollections, because of course, she left home when she was about eighteen and started to teach school. Well, this system resisted for some time, where after graduation she went on to—they didn't have a regular high school, but there was a school established, well, a boarding school. She went to that and finished, which I suppose would have been about high school level, and then took the county examination; and that was done for a long time after that. After high school, a student was permitted to take the county examination for their teaching certificate, and that's how she—many of them started at age eighteen.
- Selix: She was a very strong personality, wasn't she?
- Salmi: Yes, I think so.
- Selix: And a very strong character.
- Salmi: I think so.
- Selix: We had never met her, but from things that you had recounted to us—how old was she before she left her home to go to the nursing home?
- Salmi: She was eighty-four.

- Selix: And she had been living alone for quite a few years?
- Salmi: That's right.
- Selix: You also had another brother, who survived, didn't you?
- Salmi: Well, I have a half brother, Roger; he's sixteen years younger than I am.
- Selix: And what is his occupation?
- Salmi: He's a building contractor in San Francisco.
- Selix: Tell us about your marriage. What year did you get married?
- Salmi: In 1916.
- Selix: And who did you marry?
- Salmi: Martin Salmi.
- Selix: And what was his occupation?
- Salmi: He was a machinist at that time, working for the White Automobile Company.
- Selix: And how long did he work for them?
- Salmi: Not too long after that, he took the city examination for that type of thing, and then he was with the fire department in San Francisco as a service engineer.
- [Tape 14, Side A]
- Selix: Was that the San Francisco Fire Department?
- Salmi: Yes, it was. It was while he was there that, under the Smith Hughes Act, people in the crafts were able to go to university and take work for teaching—the idea was that they were setting up vocational training in the schools. They were drawing from master craftsman and giving them training in teaching; and they became teachers in the schools under this act. So, Martin went into that training, and the first school he got was the Richmond—
- Selix: Where did he train?
- Salmi: University of California.
- Selix: And how long did it take, the training period?
- Salmi: I don't remember exactly, because he went at night; it was all night, you see, because he was working in the daytime.

- Bonn: Was it all crafts, or were there other courses too, he had to take?
- Salmi: Oh, no, crafts; the men were supposed to know their craft. It was the techniques of teaching.
- Bonn: Oh, I see.
- Selix: At what stage was he when you married him? Where was he working?
- Salmi: At the White Automobile Company. We came to Richmond in 1921. They had had woodwork at the high school at Richmond, but that was all; so he had the responsibility of setting up the metal crafts. He set it up on the basis of machine shop training and foundry work; they set up a whole foundry, where they cast in aluminum, particularly, and bronze. He had that department until—well, he stayed at Richmond High School, and they went from that high school, and they built the new one out on Twenty-third Street, and he designed a shop there and taught there until he retired.
- Selix: How long was he in the school system?
- Salmi: From '21 to—he retired in '56.
- Selix: Well, he had a long career teaching.
- Salmi: Yes, he did.
- Selix: And he was very civic-minded also, wasn't he, in the city of Richmond?
- Salmi: Oh, yes.
- Selix: What were some of his—
- Salmi: Well, he was, from the standpoint of interest, he did not involve himself in organizations and that sort of thing, but his work at school was important to him, and he put in a lot of effort and thought on that, and also in developing his system of teaching.
- Selix: And developing his students, too.
- Salmi: Yes, indeed yes, because the boys who went out from his class went into industry, and many of them went ahead and had very fine jobs. There were a couple of industries that allowed time off their apprenticeship to boys who came out of his class.
- Selix: Oh, really? He really was a great influence, a moral influence, as well as an educational, on his students.
- Salmi: Yes, I'm sure he was.
- Bonn: You were both interested in the same things, really, crafts and design. Did you know this before you met him, or did this develop after you knew him?

- Salmi: Well, I suppose we didn't analyze it, you know, sometimes people are interested in the same things without—
- Selix: How did you meet?
- Bonn: In a craft class [laughs].
- Salmi: [laughs] No, it was in church. There was a little Presbyterian church out there in San Bruno that we were active in, that is active—it was like, I suppose, a social center in a sense. There was a debating group there, and of course, Martin loved to—debating, and a mutual friend had brought him there and gave him the opportunity to talk, and that's where we met.
- Selix: Did you have a long engagement?
- Salmi: Quite long, yes.
- Bonn: Somehow or other, I never thought of Martin as going to church.
- Salmi: No, he didn't go to church, he went to debate [laughter]. No, he had a very strict religious upbringing, against which he rebelled, so therefore he never went to church.
- Selix: He was Finnish.
- Salmi: That's right.
- Selix: Was he second generation in this country?
- Salmi: His mother and father were both born in Finland; he was first generation born here.
- Selix: Oh, first generation born here. Where was he born?
- Salmi: San Francisco.
- Bonn: In the Mission district?
- Salmi: No, south of Market.
- Bonn: That's my idea of Mission. We all knew each other most likely at one time.
- Salmi: Probably. That's where his family lived until—they were burned out at the time of the earthquake, and then they went out to Visitation Valley, which is over the hill from the San Bruno area. So that's how he happened to be out in that area where he happened to come to that church.
- Selix: When was your son born?
- Salmi: In June 1917.

- Selix: What is the full name of your son?
- Salmi: Douglas Stewart Salmi.
- Selix: Did you live in San Francisco when you were first married?
- Salmi: Oh, yes.
- Selix: Until what year?
- Salmi: Until '21, when we came to Richmond.
- Selix: Did you come to Richmond because Martin was going to teach in Richmond?
- Salmi: That's right.
- Selix: That's what brought you here.
- Salmi: Yes, that's it, I never had been in Richmond until I came to look for a house to live in.
- Selix: And what did you do, rent a house?
- Salmi: Yes, we rented, and as a matter of fact, we moved once a year for the first five years we were here. Just like a circus, we could move overnight.
- Selix: And when did you decide to build?
- Salmi: Well, the last place we lived in rented. We lived there for nine years; it was a lower flat. Every weekend, we went to various parts of this area to see where it would be good to live, and finally decided that the point was the place we wanted to live. So I had haunted the city hall, and the, I suppose—whether that's the engineering department, or the assessment department, or what, but wherever they have the maps. And I looked up the ownership of pieces of property over here, and finally found these lots that belong to someone who lived in Los Angeles. It turned out to be a woman whose husband had been a doctor, and he had taken these five lots on bad debt, and she didn't want them, so we bought them from her.
- Selix: You bought five lots?
- Salmi: No, one of them had been completely cut out by the overflow from the reservoir up above, so that was no lot, except on the map, and then the [Hills?] bought two, and we bought the other two of the remaining four.
- Selix: Oh, I see. Who designed the home?
- Salmi: I did.
- Selix: You did your own designing?

- Salmi: Yes, I designed both houses, the Hills' house and this house, and coordinated them because of being adjacent and each having only two lots. Then my stepfather, who was a contractor also, and this was during the Depression in 1933—we started building in 1934, but we bought the lots in 1933, and I did the planning in that time, that is all the layout and house design. They did the engineering part of it as it were, the construction design. Then they took the contract for the carpenter work. We subletted it, so they guided us, and we did our own contracting, you see. So, they guided us through, the subcontractors, and Martin did the electrical work, took that himself. The brickwork, I did a lot of that myself. We did a lot of the actual labor ourselves.
- Selix: And it was your stepbrother acted as the carpenter?
- Salmi: No, it was my stepfather. Although my stepbrother was working for him at that time—my half brother rather, he's not a stepbrother—so, they both worked on this house.
- Bonn: Well, this is such a beautiful home. I think you should send in photographs with your history.
- Salmi: It's been a very satisfying home, it's true.
- Selix: It has so many handcrafted things in it, things that Martin has made.
- Salmi: That's right, Martin did—
- Selix: All the iron work and—
- Salmi: And all the hardware.
- Selix: And there's hand carved woodwork that you have done and some of your furniture. Did Martin do the fireplace?
- Salmi: No, I did.
- Selix: You found the piece of wood that—
- Salmi: No, I built it.
- Selix: You built the fireplace?
- Bonn: Don't be fooled because Hazel is of small stature [laughter].
- Salmi: Martin always did the mixing of the mortar and the carrying of the bricks; I did the brick laying. All the patios I did, too.
- Selix: And you have so much brickwork.
- Salmi: Yes, tons of bricks.

- Selix: How many years did it take to build the house?
- Salmi: We started it in March and moved in in September.
- Selix: And was everything finished?
- Salmi: Yes, except the outside things, like the brickwork, and the patios, and that sort of thing, but the house itself, yes, was completed.
- Selix: And what about the retaining walls?
- Salmi: No, the retaining walls came later, and also some of the flat areas, because this was a lot that sloped from the street right down to the bay, you know. So, all flat areas had to be built, and there's lots of labor represented here.
- Selix: Oh, it's very evident too, in all the brickwork, and the cement work, and the beam ceilings. But it has been a wonderfully, functioning home, hasn't it?
- Salmi: Yes, it's possible that the fact that we did not have much to spend, of course, and what we did have, we put into structure, and so, I suppose that perhaps contributed to some of the simplicity of it, and that has remained satisfying. I think maybe simple things are not as dated as—
- Bonn: Well, certainly this house is not dated.
- Salmi: When you just design from basic structure, well, you're not going to get something that is ornamented, and usually the dating is in the ornamentation.
- Bonn: This is actually a split-level house.
- Salmi: Yes, because it was fitted to the hillside; I took all the levels with the transit myself and laid out the levels.
- Bonn: Split-levels became more or less common, but was this maybe the first split-level?
- Salmi: Oh, I don't think so.
- Bonn: How did you get your idea for it?
- Salmi: Well, going back and forth across the bay on the ferry boat, when I was working at the Girls' Club, I amused myself doing plans. I can think of many ways it could be improved, but there was not much to go on then. Houses were more formal and traditional in design, and so, it was a matter of trying to fit it to the land.
- Bonn: You certainly did a beautiful job.
- Selix: It's still so contemporary.

- Salmi: Well, thanks. I think probably it's just because of making it functional and fitting it to the land that makes it—because that probably is the essence of the contemporary houses, as we think of contemporary houses, it's that they do—
- Selix: Yes. When you first started to build in this area, were there any other houses here?
- Salmi: A few, yes.
- Selix: Were they nice homes?
- Salmi: The one across the street was here, and then there was one other down the shore. No, they were small homes.
- Selix: Very modest homes.
- Salmi: Yes, just a little ways, well, over there, a few couple of hundred feet or more, there was [Bertha Damon's?] house and that was an inspiration in lots of ways; she's a whole story in herself. She had remodeled a little cottage that was there, and it had a great deal of charm. It has been torn down because it was not very structurally sound, but it had a lot of charm. That was the only house out here of that character.
- Selix: What year was it that Martin died?
- Salmi: In '64. March of 1964.
- Selix: It's really remarkable that you've been able to take care of this big place by yourself, and keep it up as well as you have.
- Salmi: I suppose I've always been used to doing things, the things that were necessary to do.
- Selix: How did you manage to work at the Girls' Club after Douglas was born?
- Salmi: Of course, it was never a steady job, you know; it wasn't day after day at any time.
- Selix: Oh, it was at your convenience?
- Salmi: Well, and according to necessity. For instance, particularly when I was doing the stage work; and sometimes before he went to school, I took him with me. Then after he went to school, he went up to the high school, after he got out of school, and stayed with Martin.
- Selix: Oh, then things worked out very nicely. And what was Douglas' education?
- Salmi: He went through the Richmond schools and then to the University of California. He majored in aeronautical engineering and with a secondary of mechanical engineering. He first went to work for Lockheed; he worked there for seven years.
- Selix: In southern California?

Salmi: Yes.

Selix: And then he moved to Richmond?

Salmi: Then he came back to Richmond, yes. He really wanted to get back to the Bay Area, and so, I had heard of the fact that American Standard was looking for a young plant engineer. Anyway, I contacted him just to let him know about it. He came up and was interviewed, and was not all together sure he wanted to take it at first, but then decided to take it. So, then he moved his family here to Richmond and worked for American Standard, until they closed their Richmond plant.

Selix: That was quite a few years, wasn't it?

Salmi: Yes, he was there twenty-five years, I guess.

Selix: And where does he work now?

Salmi: He's now working for the school department.

Selix: Oh, is he?

Salmi: Yes, didn't you know that?

Selix: No, I thought he was with—was it Phoenix?

Salmi: Yes, he went to Phoenix. They wanted him when American Standard was closing, and so, he went directly to them and worked there for about three years, I guess. He was not too happy for several reasons there at Phoenix, and he heard about this job that was coming in the school department and who was retiring. He was hired on the basis of an engineer in relation to their structures, the school structures. He's actually working in designing certain things that have to do with buildings, or the instillation of mechanical equipment like—well, just recently they had a helicopter landing a—they had to replace the air conditioning on one of the high schools, and they couldn't get it in any other way. They landed it on the roof with a helicopter. So, it has to do with working with the contractors, but from the engineering standpoint.

Selix: Is he enjoying it?

Salmi: Yes, he's liking it very much.

Selix: That's good. What is your ethnic background?

Salmi: The Gowans were Irish, and Scotch, and English. The Browns were Scotch Irish, but—that is my mother's father, the Brown side—but her mother's side was Pennsylvania Dutch, which I believe is German rather than Dutch, but they always say Pennsylvania Dutch; her people were born in Pennsylvania. That goes back to before the Revolutionary War.

- Selix: Oh, her family was here before the Revolutionary War?
- Salmi: Right.
- Bonn: Your mother's family.
- Salmi: Her mother's, that's on her mother's side, well, also on her father's side. Both families were here from that time, because apparently the [Macdonalds?]
—we're not too sure, we don't go back on the Browns, but the Browns were Macdonalds on the female side of the Browns. They came from Scotland, and that whole group of Macdonalds that came in, which came about the time the Revolutionary War was going on, and they came into North Carolina, that group. It was a Macdonald who married a Brown in [Boonsburg?], Kentucky, but that Brown, we can't get beyond that but he was in the Revolutionary War.
- Bonn: What about Boonville?
- Salmi: I don't know how it got its name. You mean Boonville in Mendocino County?
- Bonn: Yes. How did you get to go to Boonville, your family, how did they land there? That wasn't mentioned before was it?
- Salmi: Yes, my mother's father and mother went up into that Anderson Valley country. There was not necessarily any Boonville then, I guess.
- Selix: When they came over the plains.
- Salmi: Well, they were seven years in Napa before they went up there.
- Selix: I seem to recall a story about an encounter that you had with a railroad train. Was it at Rockport?
- Salmi: Yes, at Rockport. Of course, Rockport, you know, is just situated in a little canyon that opens down to the ocean, and then the redwood forests in all that area came right down to the ocean. So the only place that houses could be built was right along the stream that came through there, and our house was no exception. And the logging railroad ran up along this stream, too. They were in the habit of coming down loaded with logs, and when they got to a certain place, the engine switched off in order to take on water and the logs came down by gravity, with the brakeman on, too. And as it came down to a more level area, they apparently were able to stop the cars. My mother was always fearful that I would get out onto these tracks because we lived right close to this, where the railroad came through. And my brother was an infant at the time. The man who did the milking for us came through to—went out to wherever he did the milking, and he left the gate open, and of course, that was the first place I went and was out. So, my mother said—this is all the stories that she recounted—that as soon as she would hear the cars coming down, she always looked to see where I was. She looked out and saw the gate was open, she couldn't see me, and so she assumed that I must be outside. The brakeman saw me and applied the brakes as best he could, but where this was situated apparently was steeper, and he could not stop the cars. So he jumped off—I was

between the rails standing right in the track. He had slowed the cars a lot, but they knocked me down, and he jumped off right there, and laid down beside the track, and talked to me. I got up on my hands and knees, and he was afraid I was going to try to crawl out. So, it hit me again, and I went down, and I just stayed there until all four cars went over. So, I was between the rails.

Bonn: No wonder your mother worried about you. I bet you enjoyed it. What was your reaction?

Salmi: They asked me why didn't I see the cars coming. I said, "Yes, but I thought they should stop."

Selix: You just wanted to see them stop [laughter]. How old were you then?

Salmi: I was two.

Bonn: Two! Is that so?

Selix: Tell us about the gentleman who some fifteen years ago traveled up through that country and interviewed members of your family. What was his name?

Salmi: Mr. Compton. I think it was Eugene Compton, but I'm not sure of his first name. He did this as an avocation. He worked for the University of California, in the capacity of instruments, and clocks, and that sort of thing, I think, in the whole plant. He collected things for the Bancroft Library as an avocation and interest of his own. So, he made a habit of, whenever he had time or vacations, going up through country like the Anderson Valley area in Mendocino County, and interviewing families who lived there and had been there for a long time. He got material from an uncle of mine, [Byran Gowan?], relating to the logging industry and the Cottoneva Lumber Company particularly, and also from a cousin of mine, [Arnold Brown?], relating to the Brown side of my family. This material, photographs, etc., are in the Bancroft Library, and I think that some of the surgical instruments that belonged to my grandfather, I believe, are in the museum that they have at the medical center, UC medical center.

Selix: In San Francisco?

Salmi: That's what I understand. Now, I'm not sure.

Selix: Were there ever any other books written about the family, about any of the families or any of that area?

Salmi: No, except my cousin [Blanche Brown?] has done a lot on the genealogy of the whole valley as a matter of fact. She's done more on the other families than she has on our own, because she taught there for so many years, and was a person who young people kept coming back to after they went on into higher education or into later life. As the years went on, and these families were intermarrying, some of them were not even sure what their own backgrounds were. So they would keep referring to her in relation to their families, and so, she got started on doing the genealogy of the valley. She has worked on most of the old families up there.

Selix: Have some of the subsequent generations of those old families remained in the valley?

Salmi: Oh, yes, yes.

Selix: The young people have stayed there.

Salmi: Oh, yes, indeed.

Selix: Well, how do they make a living?

Salmi: Well, they make some very good livings with their apples and sheep, etc. See, as time went on, and they sent their—

[Tape 14, Side B]

Salmi: You see, as time went on, and they sent their young people to Davis; and they're ranching and farming in a much more up to date efficient way than their parents did.

Selix: What year did you build your cabin at Philo?

Salmi: In 1929.

Selix: Did you build that yourselves?

Salmi: Well, again, it was a family type of thing. My stepfather and Roger worked on that too, and Martin and I. Douglas was about twelve years old then. They did the original first part, so we had a foothold, and then we did all the building after that ourselves, and the rockwork and the fireplace, etc.

Selix: Did you and Martin over the years feel that you had a very satisfying life having settled in Richmond? Did it turn out to have been a good choice for a place to settle?

Salmi: I think so. I don't know that we questioned that because that would assume that you were making a choice. I don't know if we made a choice, it was circumstances and this opportunity opened, and you do what you have to do, or what you can do, in whatever the situation happens to be. And I'm sure Martin did all that anyone could have done with what he had to do.

Selix: Martin was a great collector, too, wasn't he?

Salmi: Yes, he was.

Selix: He collected lamps and—

Salmi: Yes, he was the collector, and everything that—he wasted nothing, and I suppose that had its basis in his background of frugal parents. Tools that he had from his apprenticeship days were still well cared for. He believed in caring for tools and equipment, and so, he kept many things. And he collected lamps and clocks; he loved

clocks and liked to work on them. Then it wasn't until we got to collecting the netsuke and into that we both were interested in the same thing in that, and I being the small collection that you could put out of sight, why, I liked that.

Selix: Well, he also collected stamps.

Salmi: Yes, he collected stamps, too.

Selix: And those—

Salmi: Commemorative medals. Yes, everything that he had an interest in. And books relating to his profession. He was a member of the Society of Automotive Engineers for forty years, or more; and so, he had all the journals, and the yearbooks, and the transactions of that organization. These things accumulate. He gave all the journals to the San Jose State College. They were just establishing their engineering department at that time, I believe. Anyway, they came up here with a pickup truck, and picked them, and they were glad to accept them. After he passed away, I gave some more of the transactions to Contra Costa College. But it was just an accumulation of too many things, and maps, and everything. Yes, he was a collector, you can say that.

Selix: And you have three grandchildren, and how many great grandchildren?

Salmi: I have three great grandchildren.

Bonn: At this point in time?

Salmi: At this point in time.

Selix: [The following is narrated by Selix] Hazel Salmi is a true artist, which is reflected in everything she does. She will be eighty years old in November, is active in civic affairs, does a great deal of gardening, enjoys making jewelry, paints in oils and acrylics, does stitchery, knitting, and craft work of all kinds, maintains her home and gardens. Her garden areas are extensive and are terraced down to the waters of San Francisco Bay. The Salmi home is one at which we have been frequent visitors through the years. We have enjoyed a long friendship with them. Hazel's home is beautiful and is an excellent example of her great talent as an artist and designer. Every delectable meal is balanced as to texture, color and taste, and artistically served using beautiful table appointments, including pewter bread and butter plates made by Hazel. She has had an earnest career and given much of herself to everyone with whom she has come in contact.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—FREDERICA ARMSTRONG ROHRER

INTERVIEW WITH FREDERICA ARMSTRONG ROHRER

Date of interview: March 6, 1973

[Tape 12, Side A]	205
Family background, father's work as artist—Joining Girls' Club in 1912 and singing with Henrietta Blanchard—Wolfsohn family members—Girls' Club board members and entertaining girls at country estates—Drama teacher Gerda Hoffman—Geneve Sargent and sons—Hother Wismer—More on Henrietta Blanchard—Eva Wolfsohn's funeral—Religion at the Girls' Club—Swedenborgian Church—Burke family and elementary school—The Mission District—Performance by opera diva Luisa Tetrazzini—Influence of Girls' Club on musical career, musicians who visited Girls' Club, Edith Heinrich—Anita Peters Wright, Lenore Job—More on singing career and family.	
[Tape 12, Side B]	223
Narration by interviewer based on further conversation with Frederica Rohrer.	

INTERVIEW WITH FEDERICA ARMSTRONG ROHRER

[Date of interview: March 6, 1973]

[Tape 12, Side A]

Selix: Three members of the Girls' Club of 362 Capp Street in San Francisco are meeting at the home of Mrs. Carl Rohrer to reminisce about their early experiences. Adrienne Bonn and Leah Selix are the other members of the group. Leah Selix will act as moderator.

Frederica, when did you join the Girls' Club?

Rohrer: About 1912.

Selix: Were you living in the Mission district at that time?

Rohrer: Yes, I was born there.

Selix: What is the date of your birth?

Rohrer: July 19, 1894.

Selix: What was the full name of your father?

Rohrer: George Frederick Armstrong.

Selix: And what was the year of his birth?

Rohrer: Well, frankly, I'd have to look up the records; I have them.

Selix: Well, where was he born?

Rohrer: He was born in New York State. He came to California about 1869.

Selix: What was his occupation?

Rohrer: He was an artist.

Bonn: A painter?

Rohrer: Yes, he painted pictures.

Selix: Did he exhibit at the museums?

Rohrer: He exhibited in the early days [inaudible] his father was an artist and an auctioneer in Oakland. He had six prints and four were offered. My father did a great deal of painting in Lake County. He was sponsored by [Foster?] that had the Northwest Pacific Railroad [Pacific Northwest Railroad] [inaudible] railroad, and my father was sent to sketch in

Lake County and painted many, many pictures, which hung in the Ferry building and were exhibited on those old ferry boats. Now we don't know where the paintings are.

Bonn: You've lost them!

Rohrer: As a family, we've lost them.

Bonn: What a shame.

Selix: Did he do landscapes?

Rohrer: Yes, landscapes mostly, yes.

Selix: And what about the brothers, the other brothers who were artists, what type of—

Rohrer: They were all in landscapes. After we're finished, I'll show you something that my grandfather made me. He was a frame maker.

Selix: Your grandfather. Were there any girls in that family?

Rohrer: Yes, my sister, who is ninety years old, is still living; she lives in Lake County.

Selix: And what is her name?

Rohrer: Her name is Miller, and she has an artist daughter that lives in Piedmont.

Selix: What is your sister's first name?

Rohrer: Emily.

Selix: Emily Miller. And her daughter's name?

Rohrer: The artist?

Selix: Yes.

Rohrer: Mrs. Gardner Johnson. He is in politics.

Bonn: The name sounds familiar.

Selix: In what capacity is he in politics?

Rohrer: Well, at one time, he was in the assembly in Sacramento, and he's a great parliamentarian and very high in the Republican party, does a great deal of work with them; and he's a lawyer in San Francisco.

Selix: This is your niece's husband?

Rohrer: Yes.

- Selix: Did you ever have any children?
- Rohrer: Yes, I have four sons.
- Selix: Oh, have you? Well, we'll have to get to them later. Your father was able to support a family in his work as an artist?
- Rohrer: Yes, and when he couldn't sell pictures, he turned to painting automobiles. In the early days, you see, he had all the work of such people as Crocker. In those days, there were very few big automobiles in San Francisco. They had those—and I remember, as a little girl, the big shiny automobiles that would come periodically in my father's shop. Everything had to be watered down, and everything had to be dustless, so he could work on these automobiles. That's the way we lived.
- Selix: Those were the days before spray painting, when they had—
- Rohrer: Oh, yes, each wheel was striped; he would stripe each wheel individually. It was a creative period when people did things by hand, which we loved.
- Selix: What was your mother's maiden name?
- Rohrer: Bellisle.
- Selix: And her first name?
- Rohrer: Amelia.
- Selix: Is she a member of a San Francisco family?
- Rohrer: My grandfather came over the Panama Isthmus . In the days when they got to the isthmus [inaudible]. When I was a little girl, I was told they came on donkeys through Panama, and then took the boat to San Francisco. He was sent by the Pullman Company to build Pullman cars. He was in the French colony here; all their friends were French. And the [Le Marage?] and all the [inaudible] families had the big yards over in Pleasanton. But the two families were very different. My grandfather's family, the Armstrongs, were all Yankees, all New Englanders, and this French family, they were French that came from Canada originally.
- Selix: The Pullman shops were always located in Richmond, weren't they?
- Rohrer: As far as I know. But he had his office here in San Francisco with the Southern Pacific.
- Selix: When you started at the Girls' Club in 1912, where were you living at the time?
- Rohrer: Living out in Mission, on Folsom Street and Twenty-fourth.
- Selix: What attracted you to the Girls' Club?
- Rohrer: Singing.

- Selix: Who was teaching singing?
- Rohrer: The teacher that I had there was Mrs. Milton Blanchard.
- Selix: What can you tell us about the background of Mrs. Blanchard?
- Rohrer: Mrs. Blanchard's background—frankly, I think she was—she lived in California, her people had for a long time. I know her husband came from a New England state, I think Maine or Vermont, I'm not sure. He was a teacher professor at Mission High School. Dr. Blanchard.
- Selix: Do you remember him, Add?
- Bonn: I'm thinking [laughs].
- Rohrer: Yes, well, you [inaudible]. Now, Henrietta Blanchard, where she was born—she was a Bailey, her name was Bailey; and as far as I can remember, she was born here, but I can't say that definitely. It was an old family, and she taught Mills [College] for years; she had a very big class in San Francisco and did a great of singing. In those days, she was teaching—she was the teacher that I came in contact with at the Girls' Club and many of us were [inaudible-the temps?] girls. Bobby was one of the girls.
- Selix: Bobby Sheldon.
- Rohrer: Oh, yes, Bobby Sheldon. It was quite a group of us up there [inaudible].
- Selix: Do you remember some of the other names?
- Rohrer: Yeah, [inaudible] [Emma?] and Bobby and [Frances Mercier?], that's her married name. No, I can't remember now, but she did have a choral—
- Selix: About how many girls were in her group?
- Rohrer: In her group? There? Oh, see, what we did, we actually had—we were with her in the Girls' Club, then we moved to her larger class, and we then took lessons at Kohler and Chase building. Because then by that time, I was working and I began taking private lessons, because I had my beginnings at the Girls' Club and then followed her into her private teaching.
- Selix: How much did it cost you to take the lessons at the Girls' Club, do you remember? Was Mrs. Blanchard a paid teacher at the Girls' Club or a volunteer?
- Rohrer: I really don't know. I'd say volunteer.
- Bonn: Can you describe Mrs. Blanchard physically?
- Rohrer: Oh, beautiful, a tall, beautiful woman and beautiful eyes, very blue eyes, very stately; she had more of the English bearing.
- Bonn: I can only remember the back of her because she was always leading the group.

Rohrer: I would say a beautiful woman.

Bonn: Light hair.

Rohrer: In grace and she gave us a great deal. Those are the formative years; and I feel now and in all tribute to the Girls' Club, I found more in those two years to grow on that made a pattern for me as it did probably for you two.

Bonn: Oh, absolutely.

Rohrer: You probably didn't go on in music but you went on in your own fields. I got really in touch with all the background I had in music, because if you remember, there was hardly a time that Eva didn't call and say, "Now, I have tickets for the Player's Club, I have tickets for the symphony, I have tickets for this concert or that musical," and if you loved that, why you went right there.

Selix: Eva was always able to get lots of tickets.

Rohrer: I hope they give her all the tribute that she deserves because she took that club after her sister, who was probably the star, after all, she formed the club. And Eva came at a time when either she took it or gave up the idea, and she did carry on; it must have been very difficult to begin with.

Selix: To follow in Ray's footsteps. Do you remember anything about Ray at all?

Rohrer: No. I remember seeing her a few times, but always in my mind as an invalid and removed from us. Do you remember?

Selix: No, we don't. Did Ray visit the club in the—

Rohrer: I have a feeling she did; now, I'm not sure.

Selix: During the last years of her life.

Rohrer: I have a feeling, but by that time, didn't they have a home, too?

Selix: Yes, the Wolfsohn family had a home.

Rohrer: Because I remember the mother.

Selix: What do you remember about Mary Wolfsohn, the mother?

Rohrer: When you ask me what I remember, it's very minimal; I can't tell you because I can't remember. I just remember the mother as seems to me just as—no, I don't think of her as an old person, I just think of her as you do when you are young; you just have certain images. I remember the elder brother and what was his name?

Selix: Mark, he was the one who was active at club.

Rohrer: He was very active. And our husbands, as we took our husbands back into the club to the different affairs, would always come in contact with Mark because he was there helping Eva; he was always there.

Selix: Yes.

Rohrer: We didn't see much of [inaudible]. Fred would be there, he'd come and speak, and of course, Dr. Julian, we heard him lecture and his wife would entertain us and lecture. And then, talking about entertaining, do you remember those beautiful affairs we had down country in the summer?

Bonn: Wonderhill?

Rohrer: Oh, I stayed there, stayed there with the Iversens—but no, I'm speaking of the Gunst estate and one other one; there was another one, too. But Morgan Gunst—Fleishhacker, maybe?

Selix: Yes, they were members of the board, and Mrs. Lilienthal. Many of them entertained the girls at their country estates down the peninsula.

Rohrer: Oh, they did it beautifully. There was never the feeling—and I say this now, years afterwards, as an older woman—never the feeling that we were being just taken for the day and just something to be gotten over, you know, what I mean?

Selix: We were never patronized.

Rohrer: No, never felt that, never did.

Bonn: Mrs. Gunst was the only one that I can recall that had a country home in Burlingame.

Rohrer: Then that was the one.

Bonn: There could have been others, but I just don't remember.

Rohrer: Was that the one along the tracks?

Bonn: All I remember is brown wood, hanging flowers, and beautiful colors.

Rohrer: A beautiful, old home.

Bonn: Yes, beautiful.

Rohrer: [inaudible], which we did, or we wouldn't have done that [inaudible]. It was beautiful.

Selix: Did you study anything else at the club besides music?

Rohrer: Drama [laughs].

Selix: Who was your teacher?

Rohrer: It was Mrs.—we were speaking about it before—Gerda Hoffman. And frankly, my last child was a boy—I had all boys—but if it had been a girl, it was going to be Gerda. And then you remember she became very ill.

Selix: Yes. Her brother was Hother. Was it Hother or—

Rohrer: Well, I don't really know how you pronounce it in the Scandinavian, but Hother we called him. Was it Hother [spells name]?

Selix: I believe so.

Rohrer: Then he married late in life, and they were very friendly with the doctor's family, the Rixfords, and I used to meet them there. You know in all this, these beginning grew out into many channels, and I found myself in all branches of music. I found myself in the Rixford home in a group of singers there.

Selix: Dr. Rixford's home.

Rohrer: Dr. Rixford's home. He liked to sing, and he was a dear friend of Mrs. Blanchard's. So, we would gather there—that was our first marriage, and we would gather there about every two weeks and sing with him.

Selix: Did Geneve Sargent come to the club through Dr. Rixford?

Rohrer: I never met her. I knew that she was a sister of his, and I knew of her work, and her son is a critic in New York.

Selix: He writes for the *New Yorker* magazine. The other son, [William?], was a musician, but I believe he was with the [inaudible].

Rohrer: Well, they couldn't—because once a year, the Rixords have this open house on New Year's Eve, and we would be invited. All the family would be there, all their relatives, and all the people that we had met through music, and of course, that was beautiful, too.

Selix: Hother Wismer was he not in the San Francisco Symphony?

Rohrer: Yes.

Selix: What did he play?

Rohrer: Violin.

Selix: He and his sister were both real personalities.

Rohrer: Oh, I remember so well, because on New Year's, you know, after they had a few drinks, people were apt to talk, but when it was time for him to play, he didn't want any talking and he'd shush them all up [laughter]. Oh dear. He was a great [inaudible] and she was; I enjoyed her very much. She had a sad life, didn't she?

Selix: Very sad, yes, very sad.

- Bonn: I think of Gerda being later in the club's history. About what years was she there?
- Rohrer: [inaudible] because she was there after I was married. I remember when my last child was born, she came and had dinner with us, and all she said was, "Frederica, don't you eat any pot roast because pot roast dries up the milk" [laughter]. These are little things that stand out in your mind after many years.
- Selix: Well, that's what we're doing, we're reminiscing about all the little things.
- Rohrer: Yes, we're reminiscing, and whatever has to be cut out will be cut out, but—
- Selix: No, we don't have to cut anything out. Mrs. Blanchard had a studio in the Kohler and Chase building, which I believe was at #11 O'Farrell Street, wasn't it?
- Rohrer: Yes.
- Selix: So, in addition to the work that she did at the club, she had her own private pupils.
- Rohrer: Oh, definitely. You see, then we—in those years, I wasn't as close in the Girls' Club because I was married and had my own home as you girls did too. We'd go back periodically, but the years with real growth there were over, and so, I worked for Mrs. Blanchard's studio.
- Selix: Well, you were in the Girls' Club from 1912 until you married in 1917.
- Rohrer: Oh, no, I continued on. I was in [inaudible-Cloverdale?] for two years, and then when I came back—no, I wasn't active after that. I was seeing Miss Eva, and when the children were born, she'd come out to the hospital and see me then. We kept our friendship going on.
- Selix: But you always came back at Christmas time.
- Rohrer: Oh, yes, yes, we did. And her funeral, I will never forget that, it was so beautiful. You remember it.
- Bonn: Yes, I do, yes.
- Rohrer: [inaudible] and Bobby sang. Bobby sang at my husband's funeral, too, but it was that one song she did sing, I never heard it sung so beautiful, never will, "But the Lord is Mindful of His own," from Elijah, and she sang that for Mrs. Blanchard. We sang as a group, three or four of us, we sang [inaudible] from Elijah as a women's trio. So, Eva had a beautiful funeral and I think there was a rabbi.
- Bonn: It was a memorial service rather than a funeral, and it was Mortimer Fleishhacker, Sr.
- Rohrer: [inaudible] Most beautiful memorial I've been to.
- Selix: Will you tell us what your impressions were of the Christmas occasions at the Girls' Club?

- Rohrer: Well, I think just pure joy, I mean there was never the feeling of too much. The old tradition was there in a sense but it was a blending of traditions. I don't think we—I don't know, are you girls Orthodox Jewish?
- Bonn: No.
- Selix: Oh, no. Nobody ever had the feeling at the club that there were any overtones of race or religion.
- Bonn: Any religion.
- Selix: I remember that it was one of Miss Eva's taboos that you could not discuss politics or religion.
- Rohrer: Wasn't she a Swedenborgian?
- Selix: Ray Wolfsohn went to the Swedenborgian Church.
- Bonn: Tell her how.
- Selix: We understand that Ray was teaching Sunday school in a Jewish synagogue in the Mission district in the early days, and she was teaching that Jesus Christ was a wonderful man. The rabbi came to her and said, "Miss Wolfsohn, we can't have that kind of teaching in an Orthodox synagogue," and she said, "Well, if I can't teach it the way I see it, I won't be able to teach here anymore." So she left, and she went to the Swedenborgian Church and she took—I believe it was Fred—Fred Wolfsohn with her to attend services there.
- Rohrer: I used to go there periodically. I became Unitarian, and at that time, I was very active in music through Estelle Carpenter.
- Selix: Oh, Estelle Carpenter, she was in charge of—
- Rohrer: I was one of her girls, because in all her teaching in the grammar school, she collected a group of us and at the end of the year, before she died, we would gather and she would have us for lunch. There was [Mrs. Waldruff?], you remember the musician [inaudible—Eva?] Waldruff?
- Bonn: Yes.
- Rohrer: And there was a group of us, who had been singers, and she called us her "girls." Now, she was very active in the Swedenborgian.
- Selix: She was in charge of the music department of the San Francisco public grammar schools when I was in school.
- Bonn: For many years after that, too. She went on forever, didn't she?

Rohrer: She went on for many years after, because when I was at Columbia, out in the Mission, graduated from Columbia, and she was there as a younger girl. She had the prettiest brown hair, all curls, and those big, brown eyes, and she went on for years and years.

Selix: You mentioned the Columbia, was that a school in the Mission?

Rohrer: Yes.

Selix: Where was it located?

Rohrer: Florida Street.

Selix: That was a grammar school.

Rohrer: Yes. [Mammy Burke?—[laughs]—this is interesting, was a relative of Frederick Burke, and they had this Frederick Burke [Elementary] School across the street here, and that Burke family was very prominent in San Francisco education.

Selix: The school across the street was the old State Normal School.

Rohrer: That's where all my boys went.

Selix: And that's where I went to grammar school.

Rohrer: You went to grammar school there? Dr. Burke was alive then.

Selix: I don't remember Dr. Burke.

Rohrer: Well, he was there.

Selix: What do you remember about the Mission district? Did your family do their shopping on Mission Street?

Rohrer: Oh, yes. And on Saturday night, my father—I can see him still—he'd get all dressed up, and we'd go up Mission Street. We'd walk up and down, and sometimes we'd go in for one of these shows, you know, and then we'd go into one of the ice cream parlors and we'd have ice cream.

Bonn: Was it [Lithenbury's?] at Twenty-first?

Rohrer: I don't remember that. [inaudible] came later on [inaudible]. Though, it probably was.

Selix: You mentioned the shows that you went to, that was live entertainment, wasn't it, at the Wigwam Theater?

Rohrer: Yes. He also had a great love of music, he sang well, and he always took me to the operas; and in those days, in the very early days, the opera house was still down on Third Street. Then the Tivoli, you know, was built over off of Powell Street; so I had a good [inaudible-grab?] as far as Mission was concerned. The Mission was delightful.

The people that were there, mostly in my area, they were Catholic Irish. We were the only Protestants on my block, and I, as a little girl, would go to St. Peter's.

Selix: At the Catholic Church?

Rohrer: I'd go with my friends. Go in, always awed, and especially at Christmas [inaudible]. That was the population then, Catholic Irish.

Selix: The businesses on Mission Street, didn't you find that there was a business that represented every aspect of life, so that you wouldn't have to go downtown to do your shopping, you could do all your shopping?

Rohrer: We didn't go downtown much until I was older and started working. I started working very early, and I remember the Christmas Eve when Tetrzzini sang in the square there; my mother and I were there.

Selix: What year was that?

Rohrer: I was only sixteen or seventeen. The regulars would show and she sang there.

Selix: It must have been very exciting.

Rohrer: Very exciting. And the singing, she sang—she was such a short, puffy, little lady, you know, but that voice, in that night air, that voice was something.

Bonn: Was Tetrzzini a San Franciscan?

Rohrer: She was Italian.

Selix: She was on tour here, wasn't she?

Rohrer: She was on tour. She came back here several times, I heard her in concert, but that was the night she sang in the open at Lotta's Fountain.

Selix: Well, then, you considered the period that you spent at the Girls' Club probably the most formative period of your life.

Rohrer: I would say so, without any questions. Then I went on, of course, and began singing in churches.

Selix: You were about eighteen years old when you went to the Girls' Club though.

Rohrer: Well, I was married when I was twenty-three. I was there longer than—I told you about 1912, didn't I? [inaudible] I was there quite a few years before marriage. I was out of the city for two years, and when I came back, I resumed certain relationships, let's say, [inaudible] from families, Eva and Gussie; I saw her quite a bit. And had friendships with the three sisters that I tell you about, and Bobby was always in the background, but Bobby had—she had married and her life was—I came in contact with her a great deal. But the Temps girls were—Emma was singing quite a bit. Emma and what was her sister's name?

- Selix: How could you spell the Temps' name?
- Rohrer: I think it was T-E-M-P-S. She was Emma Renner.
- Selix: And she married Temps?
- Rohrer: No, she married a Renner, her last name was Renner. And her sister's name—isn't that dreadful? They were both big women. Do you remember them?
- Bonn: They lived across the street from us.
- Rohrer: [inaudible] What was her sister's name?
- Bonn: I don't remember. Oh, I think Bobby mentioned her.
- Selix: Was the Temps family the family that had the delicatessen store on Mission Street?
- Rohrer: Yes.
- Selix: I remember that.
- Bonn: Did they? I don't remember that.
- Rohrer: I remember the delicatessen on Mission. She had a beautiful contralto voice, but she was sort of lackadaisical, you know, she didn't care whether—but she really did have a gorgeous voice.
- Selix: Was Eva Wolfsohn an inspiration for you to expand your career as a singer?
- Rohrer: Yes, although it was more important for me that I wanted to get married. My husband was born in the Mission, too, and we both went to Cogswell. Then I went there and went to work at Southern Pacific, and he graduated there and went to Cal. Then the family bought this big cattle ranch, and then we were married. Eva saw to it that I worked on my voice, I mean, I felt that she definitely knew—because that family had a cultural background that we all absorbed. It's frankly that; we absorbed that.
- Selix: That's true.
- Rohrer: And you know that too in your own relationships there. So, she saw to it, in bringing those fine people there, that we had the best.
- Selix: Do you remember some of the people whom she brought to club?
- Rohrer: Well, I speak of her, and I speak of Wismer, I speak of Wallace Sabin, because afterwards, I sang—
- Selix: How do you spell that name?
- Rohrer: S-A-B-I-N, Wallace.

- Selix: What did he do at the club?
- Rohrer: Oh, He came out there, and gave us a call, and we had a choral with him. Now, Wallace Sabin was one of the great organists. He had the organ here at—was it St. Luke's or [inaudible] [He played at St. Luke's]? He was an organist here for years and years. He was probably one of the finest musicians that San Francisco ever had. He was an Englishman and he lived here, and I joined a choral under him with twelve women, when I became active in the San Francisco Musical Club. I became very active there, and became president there, and went on to other things. He was then our choral director there, and there was twelve of us that he had as a choral; of course, then we'd reminisce about my girlhood there at the Girls' Club and we'd remember. He stuttered and he couldn't speak clearly, and if he'd get excited, [laughs] we just couldn't understand him at all, but he was a great musician.
- Selix: And what other musicians do you remember Miss Eva bringing to the club?
- Rohrer: Well, let's see, [Samson?], Sabin, Wismer. Many of them came to perform for us.
- Selix: Many of them from the symphony.
- Rohrer: Oh, yes. As you speak now, I can't give you any pertinent names that came to teach us, I'm speaking now of the people that I came in contact with in teaching—
- Selix: Do you remember [Alfred Hearst?] that was at the club?
- Rohrer: No, I don't. I remember him as a great leader here, but I don't remember him being there at any particular time, no. How about Edith Heinrich, did she teach there?
- Selix: Edith Heinrich was on the staff.
- Rohrer: Her grandfather was the great singer.
- Selix: And her sister was an opera singer at Metropolitan in New York.
- Rohrer: She passed away?
- Selix: Well, she was killed in a very tragic accident.
- Bonn: Well, that's not Edith, that's her sister.
- Selix: Edith Heinrich's sister, Julia.
- Rohrer: Julia, the singer. What about Edith?
- Selix: Oh, Edith died quite some years ago, but we followed her activities until the time of her death.
- Rohrer: And how about Margaret Hall?
- Selix: Margaret Hall has passed away.

Rohrer: She was a dear.

Selix: Yes. What can you tell us that you remember about Edith Heinrich?

Rohrer: An extremely, dynamic person. She to me was a direct opposite of Eva.

Selix: In what way?

Rohrer: In leadership, in public relations. She was an extremely interesting woman and a fine worker for the [inaudible] the Girls' Club. Beyond that, I don't [inaudible].

Selix: We remember her as a very effervescent personality.

Rohrer: That's a good word.

Bonn: Because physically, they were a complete opposites; Eva was short and plump, and Heinrich was tall and slight.

Rohrer: Yes.

Selix: Edith Heinrich, I never remember her walking into a room, she always danced into a room [laughter].

Rohrer: Now, in the dancing, in those early days—I remember I didn't take dancing—but I remember in those early days, that Anita Peters Wright—because her sister is one of my best friends.

Selix: Lenore Job?

Rohrer: Yes.

Selix: Oh, that's right. You know when we interviewed Lenore Job, she kept saying, "We should have Frederica here; we should have Frederica here."

Rohrer: But I didn't know Lenore then because Lenore came into my life through this Frederick Burke School.

Selix: What was Lenore's connection with Frederick Burke School?

Rohrer: She came there when we had our children there. You see, all the children in that training school over here, the Frederick Burke Elementary School, came from different parts of the city. I then lived in Forest Hill, we had a home there, and my husband would bring those boys down here every day, and Lenore had a daughter there.

Selix: Oh, that was Judy, Judy Job.

Rohrer: Yes. And some of the friendships still go on that we contacted and contacted over here. But Lenore did not come at that time as I remember her because she took up her sister's work after Anita Peters Wright went to New York, and then for years, we young mothers were in the class with Lenore. Every Monday morning, we did all our

exercises, went through her beautiful gestures. In fact, she's having a memorial now this weekend for one of our dear friends, [Molly Parker?], the travel agent. Did you know her?

Selix: No, we didn't know her, but she mentioned the service. After you were married, what professional singing did you do?

Rohrer: I did some singing at Unitarian church, I did a great deal of club work, funeral work at Gray's [Nathaniel Gray & Company]. Oh, and then singing—I was singing all the time, but beyond that I didn't go.

Selix: Did you sing at weddings?

Rohrer: Well, when I was asked, I got paid for a job, yes. [inaudible]

Selix: What range is your voice?

Rohrer: Mezzo.

Selix: Same as Bobby Sheldon's, isn't it?

Rohrer: A little higher. She's more of a contralto.

Selix: Oh, I see. You always sang the oratorio—

Rohrer: Yes, I did, but I think particularly it wasn't my forte.

Selix: What was your forte?

Rohrer: I would say when I was singing something like "I Love Life," or singing for a group that I could communicate. I did a great deal of church work, but it was not my particular forte.

Selix: You weren't drawn to it the way Bobby was.

Rohrer: No, no, Bobby was a marvelous church singer; I think that's her forte.

Selix: Yes, it is.

Bonn: Well, certainly nothing was more thrilling than Christmas time when you all sang together. It gave me the shivers; it was just so beautiful.

Rohrer: Oh, yeah. It was, and as you say, the Christmas there was a beautiful affair. I can't remember what else we did. Did we have speeches or—

Selix: We had a big tree.

Rohrer: Oh, we had a beautiful tree.

Selix: To the ceiling.

Rohrer: Yes.

Bonn: And the Iversens came in the Sunday before and hung the garlands; the room smelled so beautiful.

Rohrer: Well, that would be. You're going to get a great deal of information from [Edna Iversen?].

Bonn: We must reach her.

Rohrer: And let's try to make the context before you leave. I'll make you a drink, girls.

Selix: All right. You started to raise a family shortly after you were married?

Rohrer: Yes.

Selix: When was your first child born?

Rohrer: My first child was born three years after, and he was born—we came back to the city then.

Selix: From Cloverdale.

Rohrer: Yes, we sold the place up there and we came back here. My husband came into the mechanical—he had a dental laboratory here. We were here during the Depression, which you remember.

Selix: What did he call his laboratory?

Rohrer: Just Rohrer Dental Laboratory, yes. We went through that Depression with four sons: David, Robert, Peter and Paul.

Selix: Oh, what lovely names.

Rohrer: And the last one, Dr. Paul, he's a plastic surgeon in southern California. He did his study in Germany after the war and graduated from Switzerland. And the other boys are all in business, all fine men. I have twelve grandchildren and five daughter-in-laws.

Selix: Twelve grandchildren and five daughter-in-laws?

Rohrer: No, five daughter-in-laws [laughter].

Selix: Oh, I was wondering why you had five daughter-in-laws out of four sons [laughs].

Rohrer: Well, I have had five daughter-in-laws because of a couple of divorces, but I've been very fortunate in daughter-in-laws.

Selix: Great, that's wonderful. What businesses are your other sons in?

Rohrer: David is a manager of a nut company, a co-op, in Chico, California, takes him to the whole part of northern California, Duchè Nut Company [inaudible]. He lives in Chico. My second son, Robert, he was a Stanford boy; he played for the Indians down there on the Stanford team.

Bonn: Football?

Rohrer: Yes, many years in athletics. He graduated from Stanford and went to coach football in southern California, and then left that, went into insurance; he's a broker. He's connected with that Saddleback Inn in Santa Ana. The third son, Peter, is an insurance broker and he's in Novato, and Paul is a plastic surgeon in Newport Beach, California. And they all were trained across the street here.

Selix: At the Frederick Burke School.

Rohrer: Yes.

Selix: Frederica lives at 78 Buchanan Street, which is directly across the street from the Frederick Burke—well, it's now the University of California Extension, isn't it?

Rohrer: Yes.

Selix: But I remember the school well. I remember that my mother wanted us to have a good background, and we were on the waiting list of the Frederick Burke Elementary School for a year before we could get into it. There were three of us, three girls.

Rohrer: On the waiting list?

Selix: Yes.

Rohrer: You don't say.

Selix: Yes, and we enjoyed it very much.

Rohrer: Did you know Dorothy [inaudible]? Dorothy Ash?

Selix: I don't think that I would remember any names from that period.

Bonn: There's a Robert Ash in one of—

Rohrer: He was her brother.

Bonn: [laughs] He was in my class in grammar school.

Selix: Robert Ash?

Bonn: Yes.

Rohrer: Dorothy was his sister.

- Selix: And she went to Frederick Burke?
- Rohrer: Went there, and then took up teaching there, and taught in the school.
- Selix: Is there anything else you can tell us about your career?
- Rohrer: In music, I went on into federated music. I was on the National Federation of Music Club for four years, and traveled over the country to the National board meetings.
- Selix: Was this before your marriage?
- Rohrer: No, this was in my later life. I've been president of many clubs: San Francisco Musical Club, Saint Francis Musical Club, the Los Altos Morning Forum, and the community concerts of Palo Alto and Los Altos. I've had a very busy and active life.
- Selix: What was the happiest part of your life?
- Rohrer: The hardest question I have to answer. [inaudible] My life after marriage.
- Selix: As a wife and mother.
- Rohrer: Yes. [inaudible] and my girlhood was happy as—but youth is never the happiest period, I don't think, of anyone's life. I mean, speaking for myself.
- Selix: But you felt completely fulfilled as a wife and mother.
- Rohrer: I did.
- Selix: And you feel that your music contributed to that.
- Rohrer: Oh, greatly. Without it I know that I wouldn't have had the happiness of that, and I had it in the direction that I wanted it to go, because my talent was not talent that took me straight to the top; it was a good talent.
- Selix: But it brought a great deal of enjoyment to other people.
- Rohrer: Well, I can't tell you how much. Well, to other people I don't know, but I've had many years in music.
- Selix: Do any of your sons sing?
- Rohrer: No, but they're all musical. My son, Peter, sings, my son, Bob, played cello and piano; they all had music, they all have music.
- Selix: It was a part of your family life.
- Rohrer: Oh, yes.
- Selix: What year did Mr. Rohrer die?

Rohrer: Mr. Rohrer died in 1959. He was an artificial eye maker, a profession that you don't find many men doing. He left the dental laboratory and went into the plastic making of eyes. For instance, if you would lose an eye, the ophthalmologist would call my husband in, and he would make a copy of the [inaudible] eye, and then make the other eye; it was a very delicate and beautiful profession.

Selix: How did he learn that?

Rohrer: He learned that through being with an eye maker.

Selix: As an assistant originally?

Rohrer: Yes, because my husband was proficient in the early days in the study and the use of plastics. If you remember in our lifetime plastics have become very important. In the early days, all the artificial eyes were made of glass, and my husband was one of the first to use the plastics; he was very active.

[Tape 12, Side B]

Selix: Today is Sunday, March 11, 1973, and Leah Selix is narrating excerpts from the conversations that followed the interview with Frederica Rohrer. Frederica's paternal ancestors were Yankees; their name was Louis. They were Welsh and English and had sailed from England to arrive in America before 1776. Many fought in the American Revolution, and Frederica is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution known as the DAR. Frederica's maternal grandfather was French Canadian. His family lived in Eastern Canada, and during the period that the Catholic Church was acquiring the lands of the French settlers around Montreal and Quebec, he left Canada. While the French government was building the Panama Canal, he worked there but the French were soon forced out of the area by the mosquitoes. Coincidentally, several days before interviewing Frederica, we had interviewed another member of the Girls' Club, Sylvia Simon Marcus. Her father had charge of the commissary when the Americans were building the Panama Canal. Frederica spoke of her sister, Mrs. Emily Miller, who lives in Lake County, and who at the age of ninety is alert and still doing her own gardening. Emily had never attended the Girls' Club. Frederica's brother, Francis Armstrong, is employed at the Southern Pacific Railroad, where the maternal grandfather had been located so many years ago.

Frederica was greatly stirred by this experience of recalling former periods of her life and especially of the Girls' Club. I can personally recall the great emotions that I had felt each Christmas when I heard the singing of the carols. The voices were so beautiful and so professional. This was the tradition of at least fifteen years that we know of. Eva Smith Hackett had been a drama coach at the Girls' Club, but Frederica did not know her there. She met her years later in another activity and did some drama work with her, and the strange coincidence is that the brother of Eva Smith Hackett had previously occupied the apartment where Frederica now lives. Dr. Mast Wolfson had been a student of the cello and when Frederica's son was ready to start cello lessons, Eva Wolfsohn gave Mast's student cello to Frederica. Dr. Mast lives on the Monterey Peninsula with his wife, Germaine, and when Frederica goes to the Bach Festival in Carmel, she sees them. Dr. Mast was a member of the board of directors of the festival

at one time and has always been active in it. He is still practicing medicine at the age of about seventy-nine.

We had not seen Frederica for many years and it was a pleasure to meet again. She is a handsome, statuesque, charming woman of great dignity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—CRYSTAL LAKE BERMEL

INTERVIEW WITH CRYSTAL LAKE BERMEL

Date of interview: March 27, 1973

[Tape 3, Side A].....227

Introduction to the Girls' Club in 1915 —Description of Eva Wolfsohn—Anita Peters Wright's ballet class and performance—Incident between Girls' Club member and a soldier—Attending the World's Fair of 1915, with artists Piazzoni and Stackpole—The senior girls' activities, members Rose Goldblatt Stiller, Queen Montgomery Stewart and others, lectures/dinners for the senior girls—More on Anita Peters Wright's dance class, Isadora Duncan—Joining the Rachel Wolfsohn Mothers' Club—The doctors lecture series and Dr. Emge—Studying dance with Isadora Duncan's student, Maria Von Sabern—Family background—The Mission District, the earthquake and fire of 1906.

[Tape 3, Side B]248

Aftermath of fire, more on Mission District: Wigwam Theater, Mission Dolores Park—Career—Meeting husband—Volunteering in the Coast Guard during World War II in Portland, Oregon—VJ Day—Remembering Stella Bonn—Children and grandchildren—Reading poem "Cupid and the Girls' Club."

INTERVIEW WITH CRYSTAL LAKE BERMEL

[Date of interview: March 27, 1973]

[Tape 3, Side A]

Selix: The three of us meeting today were all members of the Girls' Club. We have never forgotten the name of Crystal Lake because it was and is such a beautiful name. The other members of the group are Adrienne Bonn and Leah Selix. The three of us will reminisce about our experiences at the Girls' Club many years ago. Crystal, you started at the Girls' Club in about 1915?

Bermel: That's correct.

Selix: And where were you living at the time?

Bermel: I was living on Mission Street and Nineteenth.

Selix: How did you happen to hear about the Girls' Club?

Bermel: I heard about it from a friend of mine. Her name was Patty Bauml. She used to go to school with me.

Selix: And did she go to the club?

Bermel: Yes.

Selix: I don't remember that name. I think you said that you lived in a flat that was owned by Fred Gerdes and at one time he was a state senator?

Bermel: Correct.

Selix: And he was in San Francisco and in business in the Mission district as a piano mover.

Bermel: Yes.

Selix: I remember that name because when we lived in the Mission district my father was in the music business, and Fred Gerdes hauled all the pianos and record players that my father sold. We knew him for many, many years because we were in the music business for a great many years, although not at all times in the Mission district. What are your recollections of Eva Wolfsohn?

Bermel: I remember her as a very lovely person, very anxious to help people in every way, very inspiring, very unselfish, a good person.

Selix: In what way did she influence your life? Did you feel that you had many cultural advantages through your activities at the club?

- Bermel: Yes, many cultural activities. We went to plays, and she used to get us all tickets for various things: concerts, plays and musicals, and she had various people come to the club and sometimes play and sometimes give lectures on different things.
- Selix: I remember so many of the people who came, and they were always prominent people.
- Bermel: Yes, the very best. She was a person that if she wanted to get somebody she would get them and that was it; she went after them and that was it.
- Bonn: We always wondered how she accomplished this.
- Bermel: Well, I guess it was charisma.
- Selix: That's a good word for it. I think that we all fell under her spell; the people who came to the club, the members of the club, and all the wonderful cultural activities that some of us would not have enjoyed had it not been for the Girls' Club. What were your main activities as a member of the club?
- Bermel: Well, I enjoyed the dancing with Anita Peters Wright's Group. She used to come and she taught, and we had all the Russian ballet technique. One time there was a play over at Berkeley—it wasn't a play; it was the opera. Madame Gadski was the singer and Arasoni was the tenor; they put on *Aida*.
- Selix: Were they Easterners or Westerners?
- Bermel: I think they were probably Easterners. I don't know that we had so many things like that, but anyhow we used to talk to Arasoni, and he told us how a tenor had to know all the operas, you know, how very difficult it was. And Madame [Christoffi?] was very wonderful. But anyhow, Anita Peters Wright had the ballet, and there were eight of us who were in it.
- Selix: Were they all Girls' Club members?
- Bermel: The eight.
- Selix: The eight were?
- Bermel: We were in the front row in the ballet and they put it on three different times, at the Hearst Greek Theatre and the Civic Auditorium.
- Selix: In two places?
- Bermel: Oh yes, they had a night performance over in Berkeley.
- Selix: In the Greek Theatre?
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: Do you remember the names of some of the other Girls' Club members? We know that Hazel Salmi was one of that group.

Bermel: Well, there was Olga Boning; she passed away now but she was in it. I can't think of the others.

Bonn: Was [Pete Sheldon?] in that group?

Bermel: I don't remember the name, no.

Selix: Marion Brune? Helen Brune?

Bermel: I don't think so.

Selix: You don't remember her.

Bermel: Oh, but we used to have to go night after night. Most of us worked during the day, and we'd have to go out to Anita Peters Wright's home, and we had to practice until two and three o'clock in the morning.

Bonn: How did you get home?

Bermel: Streetcar—I was going to say bus, but they didn't have buses then. We had to take the Fillmore home. But that was a wonderful experience.

Selix: It must have been exciting.

Bermel: It was. We had to have a special makeup man because it was put on—it was a real first class thing.

Selix: Very professional.

Bermel: Yes.

Selix: How old were you when you first started at the club?

Bermel: I was a teenager.

Selix: And you had just graduated?

Bermel: I had graduated from Humboldt Evening High School.

Selix: Was that where you met the girl who took you to the Girls' Club?

Bermel: No, no, I knew her in grammar school.

Selix: Oh, well did you go to the club when you were in grammar school?

Bermel: No.

Bonn: Did you move next door to the club after you became a member?

Bermel: No, no, we lived there all the time.

- Bonn: Did you realize there was a club there?
- Bermel: Well, I was busy, you see, I worked during the daytime, and I never even knew anything about it.
- Bonn: Maybe you went in from the Mission Street side, did you?
- Bermel: Yes, I went in from the Mission Street side.
- Bonn: Oh well, that's why then.
- Bermel: That's why. First we lived in the big flat in front and then later when Mrs. Gerdes's brother moved out, we moved into the smaller place. They were on the same level but there was like a—I think a long time ago that was a place where they used to keep the cars underneath.
- Bonn: They used to drive in with the horses.
- Bermel: Maybe it was a barn.
- Bonn: They had two tremendous doors on Capp Street—
- Bermel: Yes that's it, and this house was built on top.
- Selix: It was originally a barn?
- Bonn: It wasn't a barn; it was where they drove the horses in. Whether the horses slept there or not I don't know but that's what—
- Selix: The horse and wagon.
- Bonn: Yes, the whole thing.
- Selix: You were very close to Eva Wolfsohn and I know that she was very fond of you. Can you remember any particular incidents with her, personal incidents, or any part of your friendship with her? I know she took a great interest in you. And tell us about how you met your husband.
- Bermel: I worked in the army headquarters and—
- Selix: At the Presidio?
- Bermel: No, no, it was first downtown; it was on Second and Market. Later on it was moved up to the Presidio when they abandoned the downtown place. The soldiers were supposed to wear their uniform; they were never supposed to be out of uniform but a lot of them were. But I thought—when I was going out with him—that he should wear his uniform, because I did work for it and I didn't want to be caught in a jam; I don't know that I would have been, but he wore his uniform. One of our Girls' Club members, Dorothy Schnitman, saw the Girls' Club girl walking with a soldier and she was shocked, and she followed us for blocks but that was due to the high standards, you know.

- Selix: That shows how well the Girls' Club members took care of one another.
- Bermel: Yes, they certainly took beautiful care.
- Bonn: Had he been an officer, would that have been all right?
- Bermel: I don't know if it would have been, but anyhow he had the uniform on. He had fought for his country and everything, but still he was an object of suspicion.
- Selix: Did Dorothy catch up with you?
- Bermel: Oh no, she didn't speak to us but I think it was reported.
- Selix: It was reported to club?
- Bermel: I'm sure.
- Selix: Do you think it was brought before the board of directors? [laughter]
- Bermel: I don't know if it went that far or not. But anyhow Eva became very fond of my husband, Eva Wolfsohn did. During the Depression he could work only three days a week, and he used to give her one day in the week and he'd take her different places.
- Selix: In his car?
- Bermel: Yes. One time we went down to see her brother Mast, you know, he lived down in Carmel.
- Selix: He was a doctor by then, Dr. Mast Wolfson.
- Bermel: Yes, and his wife, and they had a little child.
- Selix: Germaine and Max, Jr.
- Bermel: I guess it was just one at the time.
- Bonn: He's still practicing.
- Bermel: Oh, is he?
- Selix: Yes. He's partially retired but—
- Bermel: And then through Eva I got acquainted with Dr. Emge.
- Selix: Oh yes. Well, before we get on to Dr. Emge I want to ask you, you mentioned that you went to the World's Fair with a group of girls from the Girls' Club.
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: And what did some of those girls do?

- Bermel: Some of these girls wandered off and they went into a big dance hall and a couple of them were seen dancing with soldiers.
- Selix: And what happened then?
- Bermel: They were brought up before the board, I guess, and I know a couple of them never went back to the club, because she didn't think she did anything wrong. She had three brothers herself. While they were in there and these soldiers were there they danced a couple of dances with them, that was just it. She thought it was just like dancing with her brother, you know.
- Selix: You had gone to the fair in a group and—
- Bermel: We went to the fair and we were taken around by Piazzoni and some other big artist.
- Selix: Gottardo Piazzoni, the famous San Francisco artist.
- Bermel: Yes and he took us around and we saw different paintings, and then I think there was a sculptor; I don't remember his name.
- Bonn: Stackpole?
- Bermel: Yes, Stackpole.
- Selix: Ralph Stackpole. Do you recall what their connection was with the Girls' Club?
- Bermel: I think Eva just got them in on her personality, you know, to help the girls.
- Selix: What did they do with the girls? Did they teach them art?
- Bermel: No, I don't think so.
- Selix: But they made art affairs available to them, perhaps.
- Bermel: Maybe so, but I remember that one thing, that we went out there, and it was very lovely to have them show us around.
- Selix: I know that we had several very beautiful paintings in the club building that were by Piazzoni. I think that we will remember those paintings as long as we live.
- Bonn: Do you remember the one in the big room, sheep and shepherds and it was pastoral?
- Selix: Meadows, quiet, the most beautiful painting. All tans and sand colors and browns.
- Bermel: I don't remember.
- Selix: When you first started the club, because of your age and the fact that you had graduated from high school, you were probably a member of the Senior Girls' Club which met in the evening.

Bermel: That's right.

Selix: And what were the activities?

Bermel: Well, I took up the dancing.

Selix: And then do you have any recollections of the senior dinners?

Bermel: Yes, they were wonderful.

Selix: We had beautifully set tables and beautiful flower arrangements, and we always had someone prominent from the Bay Area as the main guest speaker. And then didn't the girls offer to speak at those dinners also?

Bermel: Oh yes.

Selix: And some of the girls were quite good speakers.

Bermel: Excellent.

Selix: Because they had been trained in drama at the club.

Bermel: Remember Rose Stiller?

Selix: Oh yes.

Bermel: And she was really a very good one, you know, she always had her little jokes.

Selix: She had a marvelous sense of humor. I think that Rose Goldblatt Stiller probably had the longest period of life in the club because she started in the club when Rachel Wolfsohn first started the club down in the lower Mission District before the fire. Rose was active in the club through every stage of its development and she was on the board of directors until she became too old to attend any longer. So that was a whole lifetime of activity in the club, and I can't think of anybody else who gave that much time to it. Most of the girls who grew up in the club, most of them married and raised families and eventually moved out of the area, even out of San Francisco, but Rose was employed by H. Liebes Company on Grant Avenue, Grant and Geary, as a saleslady in the fur department. She had a reputation for being a wonderful salesperson, and she had that in her personality. She was very outgoing—

Bermel: And outspoken.

Selix: She was a very honest person.

Bermel: Yes, she really was.

Selix: And I can't remember what year she took over the role of Santa Claus because at that time—I don't know whether we didn't have any men in the club or maybe Eva Wolfsohn felt that because it was a Girls' Club, Santa Claus should be played by a girl; women's lib, although we had never heard of it in those days.

- Bonn: She took it on after Queen Stewart left.
- Selix: Do you remember Queen Stewart?
- Bermel: Yes, I do.
- Selix: Do you know anything about Queen Stewart's background?
- Bermel: I remember she used to sing that little lullaby, "By low, so high, sleep little Ikey sleep."
- Selix: Do you remember all the words?
- Bermel: It was "By low, so high, sleep little Ikey, dream of security, dream while you can, sleep little Ikey, you'll soon be a man." [laughter] And then she had another song that she sang about the cute little Dutch girl, "Cute little petty from Peter..." She would sing about all our petticoats. "Nice little petty from John, one blue and yellow from some other fellow and one that I haven't got on."
- Selix: You have a marvelous memory!
- Bermel: That was really terrific. Then "The point that I'm at is that underneath that, I haven't got on anymore." [laughter] She was terrific.
- Selix: Queen Stewart—and Queen was her real name.
- Bermel: Yes, what an awful name.
- Selix: Oh, I think it was a beautiful name because she played the part of a queen all her life and she always dressed in royal purple.
- Bermel: Oh, she did? I don't remember that.
- Selix: Yes, she did. And she had a round face and very merry blue eyes.
- Bermel: Yes I know; I remember that.
- Selix: She had a marvelous personality, and she was the Santa Claus when I was a child; I remember her very vividly. She played a great part in the Christmas festivities. Do you remember anything about the Christmas festivities? They were great days.
- Bermel: They were beautiful.
- Selix: Do you remember the women who sang in the—well, they were girls then—who sang the Christmas—
- Bermel: Yes, [Bobby Sheldon?], I remember her especially because—
- Selix: Frederica Rohrer?
- Bermel: I don't remember her.

Selix: Armstrong was her maiden name.

Bermel: They were very good.

Selix: They were under Mrs. Blanchard's direction.

Bermel: Yes, they were very good.

Selix: Christmas was a time when all the board came, and I think the children put on some kind of a performance. We had this huge tree, and there was always something for each child at the end of the evening. And at that time every worker in the club, volunteer or paid worker, and staff member, would each get a present from Santa Claus; Santa Claus would come and distribute the gifts.

Bermel: And you know sometimes there were boxes that didn't have anything in them?

Selix: Oh really? Now, why was that?

Bermel: There was one woman and she used to come there with her husband—I can't think of his name, but anyhow she had this beautiful box and she told us one time they didn't have enough to go around. Well, that's all right, it looked just as good.

Selix: They got their recognition anyway and they understood.

Bermel: Sure. Well she thought it was really a kick, you know; she knew that she wasn't going to get anything.

Bonn: I never knew that.

Selix: No, that's the first time I've heard that.

Bermel: It's not bad, though.

Selix: I started to talk about Rose Stiller who had been Rose Goldblatt. Rose, after Queen Stewart became too ill to continue at the club, Rose Stiller became the Santa Claus. Were you there when she was the Santa Claus?

Bermel: I think I was.

Selix: She had a very long career at the club and was extremely active and was very close to Eva Wolfsohn and to Ray prior to that. Rose had married and raised three children. Rose has since passed away and two of her children have passed away. The only remaining child is Norman Stiller who is an immigration attorney in San Francisco. He is married, and I believe he has children.

Bonn: And he's a member of the—

Selix: Oh that's right, Norman Stiller went on the board, oh I don't know how many years ago, but it's been a long, long time. In fact, I think he started on the board while his mother was still alive, and he's still on the board. It's Mission Neighborhood Center now and

it's still functioning as a center for the Latin groups in the Mission district. It's one of several buildings that they've taken over through the years. Do you remember the names of any of the prominent men who lectured at the club?

Bermel: Yes, I remember Dr. Grant, for one. I don't know how many people would remember him but he came from the university, and he talked a lot—

Selix: University of California?

Bermel: Yes, he talked a lot on the subject of sex.

Selix: Wasn't that later after you became a—

Bermel: No, this was in the evening, a long talk.

Selix: For the senior girls?

Bermel: Yes, for the senior girls; it was very interesting and it sounds more like today.

Selix: Yes, they must have been very progressive. I don't remember that.

Bermel: Yes. It was a very good course, I think about fifteen lessons—they weren't lessons, they were lectures. He told about a lot of things that we had never heard about, homosexual things and a lot of stuff like that, and that was a long time ago.

Selix: Well, how progressive for that period.

Bermel: Yes, yes. And then I also remember Leon Liebes. We had a little meeting in the library. There couldn't have been more than a dozen people there.

Selix: And what were you discussing?

Bermel: Talking about, "Now, if you had a lot of money what would you do with it?" I remember I said I would have big gymnasiums everywhere and make the people very healthy; different people came up with things like that. It was kind of a personal thing.

Bonn: Was he a nice person?

Bermel: He seemed to be very intelligent.

Selix: Another member of the Girls' Club had worked at Liebes and that was Louise [Bruck?], who was a very close friend of Eva Wolfsohn's. I don't know whether she was at the club. Do you know when she started at the club?

Bermel: She must have started it a long, long time ago because I remember her telling me one time—she was very prominent at the senior dinners.

Selix: She spoke a great deal.

Bermel: And Ellen Simonson, they were very good friends. I remember one time she was telling us how they were trained, you know, if anything happened they weren't supposed to show any excitement or anything. Somebody spilled a glass of ice water down her back.

Selix: Down Louise's back?

Bermel: And she never budged. [laughter]

Selix: Was she speaking at the time?

Bermel: No, no, she was sitting there and she was being served, and she said we were so well trained—

Selix: She didn't move?

Bermel: But Louise was the perfect secretary, used to be a long time ago, and one time she was secretary to the president of the First National Bank, I think, but she was the perfect secretary at the time. She wore long sleeves with cuffs and she had kind of a high collar with these—a starched collar and very proper.

Bonn: She had a lot of style to her.

Bermel: Yes, but she was very perfect.

Selix: Oh yes, she was very proper.

Bermel: She was a very ideal secretary.

Selix: Was she a contemporary of yours or was she older than you?

Bermel: No, she was much older.

Bonn: What happened at Liebes, if she was trained and—

Bermel: Well, later on she went to work for Liebes, but I don't know when this was. She learned how to do every department.

Selix: I wonder why she didn't stay on there, because I know later on she was in other fields.

Bermel: Yes, she went into insurance.

Selix: I wonder if it was because of the Depression that she was no longer at Liebes. I think it was the Depression years that she went into insurance, if I remember correctly.

Bermel: I don't remember that.

Selix: Do you remember anyone else who worked at Liebes?

Bermel: No, just those two.

- Selix: There's another connection between the Liebes's family and—Dorothy Wright Liebes, who was married to a member of that family came to the Club and gave a lecture.
- Bermel: Was it on knitting?
- Selix: She was a weaver.
- Bermel: A weaver. I think she was quite inspired that way.
- Selix: She probably talked at the club more than once, because I remember that she spoke at a senior dinner and the subject was hobbies.
- Bermel: Yes, it could have been.
- Selix: And then there was a further connection with the Liebes family; the two Liebes sons married the daughters of the Brown family who had the hardware store on Market Street, and Mrs. Brown eventually became a member of the board of directors; she was quite active as a director.
- Bonn: What was her first name?
- Selix: I can't remember. I can't remember whether it was Mrs. Charles Brown—yes, that's right. Then after her husband died she donated to the club complete shopsmith equipment for doing woodwork, and they had that downstairs in the locker rooms. It was quite an addition to the activities of the club because by that time we had men's groups and boys' groups. That's the other connection I remember with the Liebes family.
- You mentioned that when you did your exercises in Anita Peters Wright dance group that it was based on the Russian ballet technique.
- Bermel: Yes, the five different foot positions and the arabesques and everything.
- Selix: But the type of dancing that Anita taught was interpretive dancing, was it not?
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: Do you remember some of the recitals that you were in at the Girls' Club?
- Bermel: Just little things like that, like the waltz of the flowers, you know.
- Selix: And you danced in your bare feet?
- Bermel: Yes, we danced in our bare feet.
- Selix: That was quite an innovation.
- Bermel: It certainly was because I had a cousin that was going through college in St. Joe and she got these pictures of me with my bare feet and she sent pictures of her, what they had done over there, and she was all done up in tights and slippers.

- Selix: Well that was ballet, toe dancing probably.
- Bermel: No, it wasn't toe dancing. But she was kind of shocked.
- Bonn: Have you ever felt akin to Isadora Duncan because of that class?
- Bermel: Especially through [Gwen Sabin?]. She had been a student of hers.
- Selix: That was when you came back to club, wasn't it?
- Bermel: That was later on, after the children were born.
- Selix: What year did you get engaged?
- Bermel: That was 1924.
- Selix: And you were still going to the Girls' Club when you became engaged? After you got married—how long were you engaged before you got married?
- Bermel: Oh, maybe a couple of months.
- Selix: You had a long engagement.
- Bermel: No, I don't think so. [laughter]
- Selix: Then you got married and after you married did you immediately join the Mother's Club or did you wait until your children were born?
- Bermel: Oh no, I came into the Rachel Wolfsohn's club.
- Selix: After you got married?
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: In that period, did they have a men's club?
- Bermel: Not that I know of.
- Bonn: No, I don't think so in that early period.
- Selix: Then you joined the young—I believe the Rachel Wolfsohn Mothers' Club was the junior mothers, those who were just recently married or who had—they called them the young mothers.
- Bermel: Yes, they called them the young mothers.
- Selix: What kind of activities did you have in that group?
- Bermel: The one thing that was so good, every month they had a doctor's lecture.

- Selix: And do you remember some of the doctors who came?
- Bermel: I remember Dr. Emge.
- Selix: That's Ludwig Emge.
- Bonn: Do you remember his wife? Was her name Elsa?
- Bermel: Yes, Elsa.
- Selix: And did she also come and entertain the mothers?
- Bermel: No, no, she was very retiring; she never shoved herself forward in any way. But Dr. Emge, he wasn't a citizen, I believe, at the time so he—
- Selix: Where was he from, what country?
- Bermel: He was from Germany. He had a Red Cross class that he taught us, but he couldn't be officially a Red Cross member at the time so it was sort of unofficial. I remember going out to Emge's house one time, the people who were in this little group—they were learning the first aid and stuff from him, and Mrs. Emge entertained the group.
- Selix: Oh, wasn't that lovely. He probably was not yet practicing medicine, was he?
- Bermel: Yes, he was practicing medicine.
- Selix: How could he if he wasn't a citizen?
- Bermel: I don't know. He wasn't accepted in the Red Cross at the time but maybe he—
- Bonn: No, you can practice.
- Bermel: Sure, I think you could; I don't think you have to be a citizen.
- Selix: But you have to pass the California state exams.
- Bermel: He graduated from Chicago, you know.
- Selix: Oh, he graduated from a university in this country.
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: What was his specialty in medicine?
- Bermel: Obstetrics.
- Selix: He was an obstetrician. I wasn't sure of that. He became a very prominent physician in San Francisco.
- Bermel: Very prominent.

- Selix: And then didn't he go—
- Bermel: Gynecology.
- Selix: Didn't he go to Europe, to Spain, during the Spanish War, you know, before the World War?
- Bermel: I didn't hear about that.
- Selix: It seems to me that he was one of the doctors who went over to help in that war.
- Bermel: He went over there to help, yes; he had a uniform and everything.
- Selix: Yes, I remember that.
- Bermel: But I didn't know especially to Spain.
- Selix: I believe it was the Spanish War before the Second World War. [Editor's note: Dr. Emge did not serve in the Spanish War. It was Dr. Eloesser who was also a friend of the Girls' Club.]
- Who were some of the other doctors who spoke to the mothers? Do you remember some of the others?
- Bermel: No, I'm afraid not, I can't think of them now.
- Selix: What other activities did you have in that group?
- Bermel: Oh, I'll tell you, the two Barkans.
- Selix: Oh, Dr. Barkans, the eye specialist—
- Bermel: There were two, Otto and Hans.
- Selix: Yes, I remember. Eva Wolfsohn knew all of the prominent medical people in San Francisco.
- Bermel: Yes, she knew them from her brother. And he came and talked.
- Selix: Dr. Julian?
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: Did Doctor Fred Wolfsohn ever come and talk? He was the orthodontist.
- Bermel: No.
- Selix: What other activities did the Rachel Wolfsohn Mother's Club have?
- Bermel: That was the main thing. The lecture was the—

Selix: That was every week, a lecture every week.

Bermel: No, every month.

Selix: Didn't you meet every week?

Bermel: They had various things going on, different little deals, but I don't remember anything.

Bonn: Always with the coffee pot?

Bermel: Yes, they always had their little coffee.

Selix: Didn't you meet every week, once a week?

Bermel: Yes, I think so.

Selix: I imagine that they had a business meeting every week.

Bermel: There was always something going on, but the outstanding thing to me was the doctors' lectures; I liked to hear these people talk. That's how I got to know Doctor Emge, you know, acquainted with him.

Selix: How long were you married before your first child was born?

Bermel: Five years.

Selix: And you went to Dr. Emge as your obstetrician?

Bermel: That's right.

Selix: And he delivered your two children?

Bermel: He did.

Selix: And how long did you stay with him as a patient?

Bermel: I stayed with him as long as was necessary, you know, after the children were born. There was no reason to go otherwise. But after we moved up to Portland, at the time I was coming into the menopause stage and I got a couple of extra periods so I went to see this doctor up there, a woman doctor. We met her through the schools up there. She had me come in, and her husband was a surgeon, so they both examined me and they said I should have a hysterectomy. I came home and told my husband and he said, "Well if anyone's going to operate on you, it will be Dr. Emge." So I wrote to Dr. Emge and I explained everything and he wrote back and told me when I should come down, and he would have everything ready for me. So I went into his office—there was a flood going on at the time—

Selix: A flood? Where was the flood?

Bermel: A terrific flood all down the coast from Portland, and the train was waylaid and was suppose to come in real early, and got in early in the morning. My whole family was there and they thought I was going to die, or something.. But just before we got off four of the ladies sitting with me—and they each were telling why they were coming down. They said, “Why are you coming down?” I said, “I’m coming down to have an operation.” They said, “Oh I don’t believe it.” They didn’t believe it. “I don’t see how you could feel so secure,” and I said, “If this doctor said to cut off my head, okay, it would be all right. I would believe it was necessary.” But anyhow I went into his office and the nurse said, “He would like to see you in his little room first,” and I went in there and he examined me. He was so furious, and he said he was going to write to these doctors to tell them off because there was no need for any operation. He said there were little nodes in there but they will disappear with the menopause, so I never had a —. “You’re here, you might as well visit all of your friends.”

Selix: How long did you stay on that visit?

Bermel: A couple of weeks.

Selix: You had your mother and father—

Bermel: No, just my mother.

Selix: Your mother was living.

Bermel: Yes. He was a good friend and he wrote and told them off, I guess.

Selix: Isn’t that fortunate.

Bermel: You don’t very often find doctors like that, because they’ll generally stand by everything the other one says. But he was absolutely fearless; he was little but [alive?]. He wore the smallest rubber gloves that they had in that department.

Selix: I know that he had a marvelous reputation in San Francisco. In fact, I remember in 1947—I had never gone to him as a patient but in 1947 I was having a lot of sinus trouble and allergies and I thought, “How can I find out who is the best allergist in San Francisco?” I thought and thought, because I didn’t have a general practitioner or an internist at the time. I finally decided that the best way to find out was to phone Dr. Emge’s office and ask them who they referred their patients to for ear, nose and throat trouble. They gave me the name of Dr. Ashley and I still go; I’ve been going there since 1947 for allergy problems, and this is 1973.

Bermel: That’s wonderful. [tape interruption]

Selix: This friend of yours, Gussie—what was her name?

Bermel: Gussie Allston.

Selix: Yes, Gussie Allston was a nurse at Stanford Hospital.

Bermel: She had graduated from San Francisco Hospital years ago and then she was working at Stanford Hospital. She was in charge of the operating room. The first day that she was supposed to—she had to schedule about eight dozen operations, you know, things were going on, and anyhow Dr. Emge was bringing in a patient into the operating room and there was a patient leaving the operating room in a dying condition, which was not good for the other patient to see. Well, Dr. Emge called this nurse in and he bawled her out within an inch of her life. He's a little tiny fellow, and she's a great big tall girl but he broke her down and she was crying and he just kept right on after. So finally she looked up at him and she said, "Do you know Mr. [inaudible] from the Girls' Club," and he said, "Yes," and after that why they became great friends.

Selix: That settled it.

Bermel: That settled it.

Selix: After you were married you continued to attend the Girls' Club and you were in the dance group of Maria Von Sabern. Do you know anything about her background? Where was she from? What was her country of origin?

Bermel: I think she was from America, but she was one of the original pupils of Isadora Duncan, and she used to tell about that.

Selix: She told of her experience with Isadora Duncan.

Bermel: Yes.

Selix: What type of dancing did she teach?

Bermel: She did what they call "Bodily Sculpture;" she liked people to interpret the music as they felt it. She had some simple exercises that went with it. It wasn't like a ballet.

Selix: It was a form of interpretive dancing, but it went a little bit farther than Anita Peters' dancing.

Bermel: Well, it was altogether different; they were two different things. I don't think you would even consider them together.

Selix: Oh, you wouldn't. How long did you attend those Thursday evening dance classes with Maria Von Sabern?

Bermel: Oh, I went there a couple of years, I guess.

Selix: And then after your two girls were born you took them to the Saturday morning classes?

Bermel: Yes.

Selix: How many years did that cover?

Bermel: Just a couple of years for the children because we moved after that.

- Selix: Then you moved to Portland.
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: And I think you said that when you moved to Portland, Maria Von Sabern wanted you to leave one of your girls.
- Bermel: She was very fond of the little one, Muriel, who had a lot of inborn rhythm. Before she was even in the class and I would take her down, she'd wander out on the floor by herself and do her own thing. Mrs. Von Sabern seemed to think that she had a great deal of inborn rhythm, which was unusual.
- Selix: And she wanted to make a professional dancer out of her, didn't she?
- Bermel: I don't know. You see, Mrs. Von Sabern was not so much for pushing people into anything, you know, just for their own satisfaction, and if it was good, fine.
- Selix: But she had suggested that you leave—
- Bermel: She said it would nice if she could keep her and of course, we wouldn't let her do that.
- Selix: You moved to Portland and you were there several years, and then when you came back to San Francisco you took up your activities at the club again.
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: And what did you do in that period?
- Bermel: I went to the dancing.
- Selix: Back to the dancing.
- Bermel: Yes. But that wasn't a kind of the dance that the club—they didn't put on any shows or anything, it was more for your own good.
- Selix: Oh, I see. Did you go back to the Rachel Wolfsohn group?
- Bermel: Yes, I'd go in there occasionally.
- Selix: To the Mother's Club. Your girls, did they also go back after you were back in San Francisco?
- Bermel: They might have done a couple of things, but they were never in anything because we weren't there very long.
- Selix: Oh I see, then you moved again. What brought you to the Mission district?
- Bermel: My ma and pa.
- Selix: Was your father in business in the Mission district?

Bermel: No, he wasn't in business.

Selix: What was his occupation?

Bermel: He was working for the glass company.

Selix: Owens Illinois?

Bermel: I guess it was; the glass company down there on Fifteenth and Folsom, I think.

Selix: I think that was Owens Illinois.

Bermel: I didn't think that was the name of it but it doesn't matter; it was the glass company.

Selix: What was your father's full name?

Bermel: Fred Alfred Lake.

Selix: And what was your mother's maiden name?

Bermel: Leama Sophia Weis.

Selix: Did your mother ever belong to any of the mothers' clubs?

Bermel: No.

Selix: Were they born San Franciscans?

Bermel: No.

Selix: Where did they come from?

Bermel: My father was born in New York, upper state New York. My mother was born in St. Joe, Missouri.

Selix: And they met in San Francisco.

Bermel: No, they met in Montana.

Selix: Oh that's right, you were born in Great Falls.

Bonn: How did that happen?

Bermel: My grandfather moved to Montana, and I guess my father came through there and met them, I don't know.

Selix: How long did you live in Montana?

Bermel: I wasn't quite four when we left.

- Selix: To come to San Francisco.
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: And was it the particular job that brought your father to San Francisco, do you think?
- Bermel: I don't know about that.
- Selix: What do you remember about the Mission district? What kind of a district was it?
- Bermel: It was a nice warm place; it was a good place. It had the best weather in the city, you know that.
- Selix: Do you remember anything about the kinds of businesses that were in the neighborhood?
- Bermel: I don't remember too much. I went to the Mission Grammar School, after the fire.
- Selix: Of course, the fire was before your time.
- Bermel: No, it wasn't.
- Selix: Oh, were you in San Francisco at that time?
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: And do you have any recollections of the fire?
- Bermel: Yes, I do.
- Selix: What do you remember about it?
- Bermel: I remember the house was shaking so my mother got my brother and I and my father and she said, "If we are going to die, we're all going to die together," and she got us all in a little cluster. And just then a great big chiffonier fell over on my father's bed and it would have broken his legs. I remember my mother and all the people in the neighborhood we lived in, Seventeenth and Capp, the men were going down—there was a water main broken on the corner of Howard and Seventeenth and the men were all going down with buckets and getting water, and all the women were scrubbing the houses, getting things cleaned up again, you know.
- Selix: Oh, after the earthquake.
- Bermel: Yes. Then I had two aunts—they had come over in the morning on one of the first ferries and they walked all the way out to our place. That was the first we knew there was a fire; they told us about it. We had to move because the fire kept getting closer and closer. My brother had a coaster and my mother and father put things on the coaster. One of the things they put on was the sewing machine; she loved her sewing machine so they put that on. My brother and I stayed up at the end of Folsom Street at night and my father and mother kept going back. They brought such things as the family pictures, you

know, and all those things—no furniture, of course. When we woke up in the morning, we were all covered with ashes.

[Tape 3, Side B]

Bermel: We had to go in bread lines to get any bread, to get any food.

Selix: Was that at the Homestead Bakery on Nineteenth and Folsom?

Bermel: No, they had lines forming at different places where they brought in food, no special bakery; I don't think a bakery had anything to do with it. Then after that we moved into the back of a store on Mission Street and the wind would be blowing and the stoves were all on the curb, because they couldn't have them on the inside on the account of the chimneys; they had to be inspected all the time or the places would burn. So different people would—we had a little group of people—would bring different things, like my mother made a New England stew which has the meat and the vegetables and everything. So she was cooking in this pot out on the stove there and she had a big cover over it, and she had a cobblestone on top of that to keep it down because the wind was blowing, and this one man was a very persnickety Englishman. But anyhow, the wind blew so hard the cobblestone fell in the stew. [laughter] When we had the stew that evening he said that was the best stew he ever tasted; my mother never told him what flavored it. [laughter]

Selix: What else do you remember about that period?

Bermel: That's about all. Don't you think that's enough? [laughter] But that was interesting. And then of course we had to go to school afterwards, and we all thought we'd have to write a composition about our experiences, but we never did.

Selix: You were about eleven years old then, weren't you? It's hard to believe.

Bermel: Yes, I was ten years old; it was on the eighteenth, and I would have been eleven on the twenty-sixth.

Selix: Did you just have one brother?

Bermel: Yes.

Selix: What was his full name?

Bermel: Morrel, a terrible name.

Selix: Morrel Lake.

Bermel: Yes.

Selix: What was his occupation?

Bermel: He did different things, you know. When the war came along he was just a young kid, and he was never in the World War.

Selix: Was he younger than you?

Bermel: Yes, four years younger. He went out to work at the union iron works and he was making money hand over fist, pulling wires in the submarines and everything. He was all built up with all this extra money and everything. So then when the war was over there were no jobs like that anymore so what does he do, he goes and works at stevedore, which was very good too.

Bonn: You did all right financially.

Bermel: We did all right financially. He was a personality, boy; the ladies always loved him.

Selix: Did he work long at the stevedore.

Bermel: Yes, quite a while.

Selix: That became his occupation then.

Bermel: Yes, he did that for a long time.

Selix: He eventually married and had a family.

Bermel: Yes, he was married twice and he had no children.

Selix: He never had children.

Bermel: No. His second wife was an Irish nurse.

Selix: Is he still living?

Bermel: No, he died a couple of years ago.

Selix: What else can you tell us about the Mission district? Where did you settle when they started rebuilding after the fire.

Bermel: We lived on—you see our house was burnt down.

Selix: That was the Gerdes building.

Bermel: This was the one on Seventeenth Street. We could have moved if we had known, just almost across the street.

Selix: Oh really, Seventeenth and Capp, because that side of the street didn't burn, is that correct?

Bermel: No, across Howard Street it didn't burn but across Seventeenth it burned.

Selix: You mean the Howard Street side of Capp didn't burn.

Bermel: Howard and Capp are parallel. We lived on Seventeenth and Capp and here was Howard Street down here, and then this side of Howard burned but across the street it didn't burn.

Selix: Oh, because the Sheldon house was across the street on Capp, and it didn't burn.

Bermel: Well, anyhow ours was burnt; there was nothing left.

Selix: Your house was on the Howard Street side of Capp, not on the Mission Street side of Capp.

Bermel: It was between Mission and Howard.

Selix: Oh I see, on Seventeenth. So where did you go to live then?

Bermel: The first house we moved in was on Eighteenth and Howard.

Selix: You stayed in the Mission.

Bermel: Yes.

Selix: What else can you tell us about the Mission district?

Bermel: Well, I went to school there and—

Bonn: How about the type of people that were your neighbors?

Bermel: They seemed to be okay.

Selix: What were their ethnic backgrounds? What countries did they come from?

Bermel: I don't remember any odd countries.

Selix: What was your mother's ethnic background?

Bermel: Her mother and father were born in Germany.

Selix: And how about your father?

Bermel: They were Yankees from way back.

Selix: Oh, Yankees from upper state New York. Did they go back as far as the Revolutionary War?

Bermel: They could have. We don't know, but my father was never too interested in that. He didn't have much admiration for the DAR [Daughters of the American Revolution] and stuff like that, you know, so he thought people were people. But he did mention about somebody who had been in the war of 1812; that's as far as we knew. But he said, "What the heck?"

- Selix: Do you remember what form of entertainment there was in the Mission district?
- Bermel: There were nickelodeons and the Wigwam Theater.
- Selix: You remember the Wigwam? I remember seeing *Peck's Bad Boy* at the Wigwam. I think that was one of the first—that's the earliest recollection I have of ever seeing something on the stage, something professional, other than the things we did at the Girls' Club. Do you remember *Peck's Bad Boy* at the Wigwam?
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: The nickelodeons, they showed motion pictures, didn't they?
- Bermel: Yes, and they had a narrator always.
- Selix: Oh, they were the silent films and—
- Bermel: They were silent films and then this one man at the theater used to call Mary Pickford "Winnie." Nobody knew the names, you know. "Winnie" was doing this and that and the other thing.
- Bonn: Did they have subtitles?
- Bermel: I don't think they did. And then they had a piano playing and everything.
- Selix: You mean they didn't know the real names of the stars; they just knew them by the name that they were in the picture.
- Bermel: He called her Winnie no matter what he saw. That was a good name for her because she was very winsome.
- Selix: Oh I see, that was why. Those were the days of the Pearl White serial.
- Bermel: I suppose; I don't remember too much about that.
- Selix: Oh, I remember those.
- Bonn: You remember that curtain they had at the Wigwam with all these ads on it?
- Bermel: Oh yes. Oh yes.
- Bonn: There was a game we used to play with it, but I don't know what it was.
- Bermel: I remember that, yes. People seemed to have a good time. And then there's that little park—the Mission Dolores Park was always nice.
- Selix: That was one of the earliest parks in San Francisco, I guess.
- Bermel: It had been a graveyard once.

- Selix: Oh was it? Was it attached to the original Mission Dolores?
- Bermel: I don't think so.
- Bonn: No, it was two blocks away. The Mission Delores Park was at Eighteenth and Twentieth and the church is down at Sixteenth.
- Selix: Yes, but that was probably a part of that group—that center of activity in early San Francisco.
- Bermel: Oh no, because I think that was a Jewish cemetery.
- Selix: Oh, was it?
- Bermel: That's what I think.
- Selix: Because if it was already a park then that cemetery must have gone back many years, if it was already a park in your time.
- Bermel: I used to walk through there when I went to night school. And there was a Father Flannigan or somebody up there on the top. You know, he had a school for boys and there was a park up there?
- Selix: At Mission Dolores Park?
- Bermel: Right up on top. It wasn't Flannigan; it was some priest.
- Selix: What were your mother's activities? She was a—
- Bermel: A very good housewife.
- Selix: A very good housewife; I bet she was. [tape interruption]
- Not alone have you been a married woman and a housewife and raised two daughters, but you've also followed somewhat of a working career during your lifetime, and I'd like to go back to the period, say 1912, when you first finished school. Would that be when you graduated from grammar school?
- Bermel: I guess so, yes.
- Selix: You went to work right after you finished grammar school and then took the high school—
- Bermel: Well not immediately. First of all, I took a course in commercial school.
- Selix: What school was that?
- Bermel: That was the [High School of Commerce?]. Because I have a very short little finger and we had this terrible typewriting teacher, and she wouldn't pass me because my typing didn't look even, you see, it's kind of short. So I quit and then I went to [Gallagher

Marsh?], and then after that I got a job in Home Industry League and I was there five years.

Selix: Now Home Industry League was sort of an association of—

Bermel: Of all different merchants and people with businesses trying to promote California products if the—trying to get the people who were building to specify those articles in their specifications rather than have them come from the East.

Selix: The battle is still going on.

Bermel: Yes, I suppose. Those people are all out here now so I don't think it makes that much difference, but at the time it was a real going concern.

Selix: How long did the Home Industry League operate, do you know?

Bermel: Oh I guess about ten years, I don't know.

Selix: And you were there from 1912 to 1917.

Bermel: I think that was the time.

Selix: And then from there where did you go to work?

Bermel: I worked for Alfred Henry Jacobs, architect of the California Theater.

Selix: Was he a San Francisco architect or was he here just for the purpose of—

Bermel: Yes, he lived in San Francisco.

Selix: And he practiced in San Francisco.

Bermel: Yes, but he was educated in MIT and he studied in France.

Selix: He had a good background.

Bermel: Oh yes.

Selix: Tell us about the California Theater.

Bermel: It was a very beautiful theater on Fourth and Market. They had another architect before him and he had to use the materials that this man had, and he had to build it according to the material that was there ecause you couldn't get things, you know. So one thing they had—they had a twelve-foot girder that went across the center of the theater that supported the loges, and that was a very wonderful thing.

The theater was Gothic and it was the first time—it was written up in the *Architect and the Engineer*—the first time they had electrically controlled curtains and the first time they ever had an organ rise up out of the pit from the theater—you've seen that—and various things. The brass rails were all covered with velvet, and they had a big review

room. At that time they could select anything that they wanted to show and the people who owned the theater, the Rothchilds were amongst them, and one of them used to come up there and go over things. They had a review room and the organ was in seven different parts of the theater; everything was very topnotch. And every year or so often they would have a big concert. Do you remember those concerts? On Sunday morning you could go in there about ten o'clock and they'd have a symphony orchestra there, and then you could stay after that for the regular show.

Selix: That was probably one of the most modern theaters in San Francisco, wasn't it?

Bermel: It was at the time; it was very modern, in the whole country.

Selix: That was the first modern—

Bermel: Well it was very, very modern. They had everything that they could possibly wish for; there was plenty of money behind it.

Bonn: What was there at that site before the theater?

Bermel: I don't know.

Selix: And after that year that you worked for Alfred Henry Jacobs, where did you go to work?

Bermel: Then I took the federal civil service.

Selix: And where did you work?

Bermel: I worked in the army headquarters.

Selix: Where was that located?

Bermel: Second and Market. We were there a little while and then they moved us out to the Presidio.

Selix: And that's where you met your husband, wasn't it?

Bermel: That's where I met my husband. That was a big old barn of a place. It had been the cooks and bakers school and when it was built—the army built it—they used their regular [street?] sand when they made the cement and everything. It wasn't Portland cement, in other words, and every time it got damp the whole place got very damp and it was cold. They had little tiny radiators around, which they turned on at nine o'clock and they turned off at one; it was very, very cold in there. We were in this great big room with no partitions except the colonel and his lieutenant had a little glass case where they worked. We wanted to impress upon the officers how cold it was and we used to type with gloves on so that they could see it, and things like that. We didn't get anywhere, so finally I put in my resignation. I said I had to leave on account of my health; it went all the way up to the commanding general. Then, of course, he referred it to the colonel and the colonel referred it to the captain, and then finally the lieutenant. So the captain figured out a way that he could keep me. From his own quarters he brought an electric

stove which he put under my double desk and everybody used to stand around with their feet under there, but they didn't do anything for the other people.

Selix: Well then, you were getting special attention.

Bermel: I was going to leave, I really was. And it would have been a sad thing if I had to leave because my father was in the hospital, but I was really desperate.

Selix: How old was your father when he died?

Bermel: He was about sixty-three.

Selix: Was your mother still living?

Bermel: Yes.

Selix: What age did she die?

Bermel: Seventy-nine.

Selix: Did she live alone after your father died?

Bermel: She married again later on.

Selix: Oh did she? And what was her second—

Bermel: [Rochelle?]

Selix: [inaudible]

Bermel: I guess so.

Selix: You left the civil service to get married in 1924?

Bermel: That's right.

Selix: And then you didn't work for twenty-seven years during which time you raised two daughters. In 1945 you—no, let's see, it was before that that you went into the Coast Guard.

Bermel: Yes, it was about a year before.

Selix: About 1944?

Bermel: Yes, it was '44.

Selix: Tell us about your experience in the Coast Guard.

Bermel: They had temporary reserve—I belonged to the temporary reserve and they had about—

- Selix: What prompted you to go into the Coast Guard?
- Bermel: I heard it over the radio that they wanted people to work in the office of the Coast Guard.
- Selix: As volunteers?
- Bermel: As volunteers. So I went in and talked to them and then—we had about 5,000 men who worked on the waterfront; they patrolled the waterfront at night. These were men who worked during the day; these were volunteers.
- Bonn: Yes, I remember.
- Bermel: And then they had women, like us, who were working in the office, so I went to work in the office. We were keeping records of the women; we had to have their records, you know. Then we were issued our uniforms. We had tropical [waistshirts?] and then a regular serge and beautiful satin-lined topcoats and a beautiful raincoat, and we had these little overseas hats, you know, that kind of fold up. You weren't allowed to carry an umbrella or wear rubbers under any circumstances. It was always raining up in Portland and you can imagine how that was. So I have a [inaudible] that goes over the head and has like a little cape, and then we had Stetson shoes and all that. While we were on duty we had to eat with the spars who despised us.
- Selix: Was this experience in Portland?
- Bermel: This was in Portland and we worked for the captain of the port. So anyhow I worked in the office for a while and then they decided to put me out with the regulars, with the regular spars, and there we had to—when people came in we had to interview them and many of them couldn't write and they couldn't sign their name.
- Selix: Where did they come from?
- Bermel: They came from all over the country. They were going to work for Kaiser.
- Selix: In the shipyards?
- Bermel: In the shipyard. And anybody who went on the river, who had any connection with the river, had to come through the Coast Guard. If they were handling dynamite they got a red card. If they were going up the river to fish, why, they had another kind of a card, and so on. We had to get all the history, find out if they had any criminal experiences and like that. So anyhow I sat there and I interviewed, and if a man came in and he couldn't sign a thing we had to get an officer and the two of us would witness his ex; you wouldn't believe that, would you?
- Selix: Oh I can believe it, coming from all over the country.
- Bermel: Yes, and they were so glad to come, you know, and get a job and everything. So anyhow, one of these spars, she had to handle—there was a machine that had about, oh maybe a dozen numbers on it. It went on all these different papers, you know, as we checked out the people and that was supposed to be the job. Anybody who could do that

was wonderful. Anyhow the spars did not like the [TRs?], they hated it, every one of us, so what happened—I took little notes. So one day they all got around me and they said, “Well, you’re going to do that job,” and I said, “What?” So I sat down, and I did it perfectly, and they couldn’t understand it.

Selix: How you knew it, huh?

Bermel: No, they didn’t understand how I could do it. And then we had to fingerprint all these people when they came in.

Selix: It must have been interesting work.

Bermel: It was, yes. It was very interesting. We were behind the big rail and then across the way there was like a reception hall and different people would come in, you know, and they’d play the piano and they’d be singing [inaudible]; it was very interesting. Of course, some of these kids went overseas and they never came back. The Coast Guard was called the Hooligan Navy and that was very disgusting because they did an awful lot of good work; the navy had no use for them. But the spars disliked us thoroughly, so one time we had a meeting and the FBI was there and they called us all in and they said, “You will never know what people you have helped us apprehend.” That was interesting. Then the regulars were called in, and they were told they had to treat us with courtesy no matter what.

Selix: This was the spars.

Bermel: Yes, the spars. They had to treat us with courtesy no matter what happened and when we were at the table they were supposed to pass things; they wouldn’t pass us anything before. They were just as mean as they could be. They were mostly young people or kind of frustrated schoolteachers. Everything went along very good and then one day the head spar came in and she told me, “You were elected to clean out the latrines,” and I said, “That I will not do.” I said, “I will quit. I will not clean up after these people. They don’t even know how to sit on a toilet.” So she said, “Is that your final word?” I said, “It’s my final word.” I said, “I will not clean up the latrines.” So she went out and they had a conference and then she sent a spar in and the two of us did it together. They were going to have me do it by myself, and they were going to have us do all that. And the men on duty were so mean to these fellows that worked on the waterfront. They tried to get them to wash dishes and they tried to give them the most menial jobs and here these people—

Selix: They were all volunteers.

Bermel: They were volunteers and some of them had sons in the service. And another thing—you know, we had to take a picture of the poor guys when they came in. These old fellows that came in. They had had been in the World War; they were so proud and everything, you know. One fellow came in, and I was suppose to take his picture and he said, “You know lady, I’m just getting my teeth, and I won’t get them until Monday. Do I have to—” and I said, “No, you come in on Tuesday and I’ll be here and I’ll take your picture.” But they didn’t care, they would take it; it was really demeaning. Don’t you think that’s terrible?

Bonn: Yes, very.

Selix: Yes, that wasn't very nice.

Bonn: What right did that spar have to ask you to clean the latrine? You weren't under her jurisdiction were you?

Bermel: Well, she came around and then she said—they can try as much as they can do, but I didn't mind helping so that we had to clean it; we cleaned the thing. I think I only did it about twice. We had to clean the ceiling and everything, but really those girls, when they went in and they didn't know how to sit on the toilet. Really, that was the most amazing thing. One time we were going—the campfire girls—I had a campfire group and we were going out to the campsite where they had a wonderful place and—So I invited one of the spars to come and so she came, and that was really something. They were all housed in an apartment house, and everybody was living there. My husband was down there and he saw this girl come out and she was [up in the car?] and everything, and it kind of changed things. So after the war he hired a couple of these girls; they worked for him.

Selix: Your husband was area foreman for Western Electric.

Bermel: He was, yes.

Selix: Did he have the same job up there, in Portland?

Bermel: Yes.

Selix: In other words, you moved about five times because of your husband's career.

Bermel: Yes, well that's why we went there.

Selix: To Portland and then to Seattle and back and forth to San Francisco. What do you remember about VJ Day in 1945?

Bermel: We knew that there was going to be something coming over the loud speaker at eleven o'clock. I happened to be on duty so I stayed with my ears all perked up, and that's what it was. They announced VJ Day, so then I started to go home and as I walked around along the street, a young sailor tried to pick me up. I was old enough to be his mother. [laughter] It was real funny. They tried to be real peppy up there, but it's kind of a dead town. I think they threw some bags of water out windows and stuff like that; it wasn't very exciting.

Bonn: Oh, it was very exciting here.

Selix: Here they turned over cable cars and—

Bermel: Things didn't happen there.

Selix: Oh, it was awful.

Bermel: That was terrible.

Selix: Then you didn't work; that was the end of your Coast Guard career was VJ Day?

Bermel: That was the end of it and then a long time after that—oh, not too long after that—we had to parade because we had to learn how to march and how to carry a gun and all that stuff. If the war had kept on, people like us would have been in it.

Selix: I believe it.

Bermel: So it was in the armory and all of the Coast Guard had to be there, and when we marched down below, they wouldn't even look at us.

Selix: They wouldn't look at you?

Bermel: They wouldn't look at us. These were all kids, you know. They didn't know what they were doing. Maybe these two girls might have, that went with us. But most of them, if you looked up they weren't looking your way at all.

Selix: What prompted you to go to work in 1952?

Bermel: Well, my husband died.

Selix: In '52?

Bermel: He died in '52.

Selix: How old was he when he died?

Bermel: Fifty-four.

Selix: Oh he died young, didn't he.

Bermel: Yes he did, a heart attack, two weeks in the hospital. So then my friend said, "Well, why don't you go back to work again?" So then I did. I thought I was—I had a reinstatement thing that I thought that I had better go and take the test over again and I did, so then I went to work for the VA.

Selix: Veterans Administration. You worked for thirteen years and were you always a secretary?

Bermel: Yes.

Selix: That was an interesting experience that you had working in the psychology department.

Bermel: Yes, clinical psychology, and I had to write all the stuff up.

Selix: And you worked for a psychiatrist.

Bermel: I worked for a psychiatrist, yes.

- Selix: And this was in Palo Alto at the Veteran's—
- Bermel: Menlo Park.
- Selix: Oh, Menlo Park. And you retired at the age of sixty-five.
- Bermel: No, no, at seventy. I worked until I was seventy. That's as long as you can work. You can work a little bit longer if you want, but if you make anything they'll take it out of your annuity.
- Selix: And now you're retired and enjoying your grandchildren?
- Bermel: Yes, when I see them. [tape interruption]
- Selix: You mentioned earlier that you remembered Adrienne's mother, Stella Bonn, very well.
- Bermel: Yes, that's true.
- Selix: When she worked at Schwartz's in the Mission district.
- Bermel: I don't remember the name of the store, but I remember it was a dry goods place. One time I was in there with a couple of friends and one of them had brought her baby in. So she looked up and she says, "One day, Crystal will be bringing her baby in and somebody else will and we will see all the new babies," and it seemed a long way for us to go.
- Selix: You were what, maybe eighteen or nineteen then?
- Bermel: Something like that.
- Selix: You had no idea that you'd be married so soon I guess.
- Bermel: Well, it was quite awhile after that I did get married.
- Selix: Do you remember anything else about Stella Bonn?
- Bermel: Except she was a very charming woman, a very nice looking woman and very friendly, motherly type.
- Selix: Yes, and a very beautiful woman with great stature.
- Bermel: I think so.
- Bonn: But short.
- Selix: She was short, but she had great dignity and she was very aristocratic looking.
- Bermel: A very lovely woman. My husband used to go to your father—didn't he work in Roos Brothers?

Bonn: Yes.

Bermel: And he always went to him for his clothes and he always had them—

Bonn: Is that so?

Bermel: Yes, because he used to have them altered, you know, because my husband wasn't too tall and he had very broad shoulders, and then he generally had to have the sleeves shortened a little or something. Mr. Bonn always looked out after him; he always remembered that.

Bonn: That's interesting. You're the first one that has mentioned my father.

Bermel: Well, we kind of thought you had one.

Selix: You remember him then?

Bermel: I didn't remember him; I never went to Roos Brothers men's department.

Selix: What year was your first daughter born?

Bermel: 1930.

Selix: And what was her name?

Bermel: Paula Mae.

Selix: And when was your second daughter born?

Bermel: 1932.

Selix: And what was her full name?

Bermel: Muriel Jean.

Selix: And at this time, where is Paula Mae?

Bermel: Paula Mae is living in Menlo Park on McKendry Drive.

Selix: What is her married name?

Bermel: Nisley.

Selix: And she has a son?

Bermel: Yes, a son, Michael Paul.

Selix: And what is he doing?

Bermel: He's going to UC; he's nineteen years old.

- Selix: What is he studying?
- Bermel: He hasn't had to make up his chief thing that he has to do, but he's enjoying anthropology and mathematics, and he also does a little teaching to children. They get credit for that, I don't know if you know about that.
- Selix: Yes, I do.
- Bermel: He's a tall boy and he's not very noisy but people take to him. You have to get acquainted with him; he doesn't run after you to get acquainted with you.
- Selix: He's sort of reticent.
- Bermel: Yes, he is.
- Selix: Does your daughter work?
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: Where does she work?
- Bermel: She's in the business office of the telephone company, a supervisor job.
- Selix: In San Francisco?
- Bermel: Palo Alto.
- Selix: Has she been with them for quite a few years?
- Bermel: Oh yes. She started in at Stanford and then she got sick; she had thyroid trouble. She went back to Portland, and she wasn't able to finish that term out but while she was up there she got a little job in the telephone company, and she loved it. She was just a young girl; she was an errand girl who went around. And all the engineers liked her real well and when she went away they gave her such a party that she's never seen for a young girl, traveling clock and all like that. She's always had a great love for the telephone company, and she's enjoyed it very much; she has a real good job.
- Selix: Oh, that's good. And she lives near which makes it nice for you.
- Bermel: She and my grandson come every week.
- Selix: And your other daughter, your younger daughter?
- Bermel: She lives in Baltimore, Maryland. She has three kids.
- Selix: And what does her husband do? What is her married name?
- Bermel: Bledsoe.
- Selix: And her husband's first name?

- Bonn: That's a terrible name for a doctor.
- Bermel: Well, it's a very common name.
- Selix: What's her husband's first name?
- Bermel: Turner.
- Selix: At the present time, where is he practicing?
- Bermel: He's at Johns Hopkins.
- Selix: He graduated from Johns Hopkins?
- Bermel: He graduated from there. He's in an administrative position and he is an endocrinologist; that's his chief thing.
- Selix: How many children did they have?
- Bermel: Three.
- Selix: And what are their ages?
- Bermel: The little one is five, the youngest one, the next one is eleven and the oldest one is thirteen. Do you want their names?
- Selix: Are they all girls?
- Bermel: Yes.
- Selix: How often do you see them?
- Bermel: Well, we saw them at Christmas. We see them probably once a year.
- Selix: Well, that makes it nice that they can be with you once a year. Thank you very much for the interview, Crystal. It was just great meeting with you again.
- Bermel: Thank you, I've enjoyed it very much. You didn't want me to say my poem?
- Bonn: Oh yes, please.
- Selix: Be sure that you enunciate.
- Bermel: This is from the Girls' Club Bulletin of April 7, 1924. I was the editor, and here's a little poem that I wrote. Several girls were engaged at the time, so I wrote this little poem.
- “Cupid and the Girls' Club”
- There's a fat little fellow by name Stan Cupid,

He's a sprightly little fellow and far from stupid,
He goes all around with mischief in his eyes and hunts all the time for exercise.
He's armed with a quiver and a good-sized bow,
Who he's going to hit you never know.
Two hearts are his target; it's lots of fun,
He gets them both with an arrow and his work is done.
When he hits the bull's eye 'tis a joyful thing,
Before he gets his sweetheart and she a ring.
The Club's minus a member for Thursday night,
But plus one in the afternoon and all is right.
He aims to the left and he aims to the right,
He's shooting all the seniors that come to his sight.
Girlies who are left, be of good cheer,
Help the little fellow out, this is leap year.

Bonn: Very good, very good.

Selix: Very good.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—SYLVIA SIMONS MARCUS

INTERVIEW WITH SYLVIA SIMONS MARCUS

SESSION 1, March 4, 1973

[Tape 8, Side A] 267

Family background—The beginning of the Girls’ Club—Rachel Wolfsohn, mother and her role at the Girls’ Club—Siblings, family home in San Francisco—Father’s death—More on Rachel Wolfsohn’s personality—Financing of Girls’ Club—Eva Wolfsohn’s personality and role at Girls’ Club—Class issues, culture, and “taste” at the Girls’ Club—Activities at the Girls’ Club—Board members financial support of Girls’ Club—The earthquake and fire of 1906 and the destruction of the Girls’ Club building—Temporary site at home on Howard Street and building on 20th Street—Funding for the new building on Capp Street—Design of building—Girls’ Club dues—Goal of serving people of lower income levels—“Society girls” and community service—Rachel Wolfsohn’s death and Eva Wolfsohn’s move into leadership position at Girls’ Club—More on demographics of Girls’ Club members.

[Tape 8, Side B] 283

Special interests at the Girls’ Club—Teachers remembered—“Simple elegance” and the influence of Rachel and Eva Wolfsohn—Senior Hi Jinks—Common bond between Girls’ Club members—Sister Ellen’s activities at the Girls’ Club—Issues of morality—Poker games and horseraces—Edith Heinrich—Margaret Hall—The Community Chest—Sister Ellen’s marriage—Mother’s religious affiliations—Jewish members on board of Girls’ Club—Views on religious identity in the Girls’ Club—Visiting Gussie Wolfsohn in a convalescent home and reconnecting with Dr. Mast Wolfson,—Remembering other Girls’ Club members.

[SESSION #2, April 8, 1973]

[Tape 9, Side A] 298

Senior dinners—Welcoming tone of the Girls’ Club—Simons family’s years of membership—Men’s Club—More on members of the Wolfsohn family—Dr. Ludwig Emge—Size of Girls’ Club membership—Rose Stiller—Meeting husband, Luis—Loyalty at the Girls’ Club—Current styles of dress/informality in San Francisco—Husband Luis’ career in beauty supply—Naming the bobby pin.

[Tape 9, Side B] 315

More on husband Luis’ disposition; daughter, Ellen, and her career/family, daughter, Elaine, and her artistic nature; grandsons.

INTERVIEW WITH SYLVIA SIMONS MARCUS

[SESSION #1, March 4, 1973]

[Tape 8, Side A]

Selix: Sylvia, what is your birth date?

Marcus: December 8, 1895.

Selix: Were you born in San Francisco?

Marcus: I was born in Port Antonio in the British West Indies.

Selix: Did your mother and father live there?

Marcus: Yes, they lived there. My father brought my mother on their honeymoon from New Orleans to Jamaica to introduce my mother to his people. They stayed there for the next ten years of their married life and had four children, and then came back when I was about two years of age.

Selix: What did your father do in the British West Indies?

Marcus: He was an importer and exporter, and also dealt in horses and horse racing.

Selix: Did he own a racetrack?

Marcus: No, he just owned horses. This was a sport, I guess, more or less with him.

Selix: He raced horses then.

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: Did he breed horses?

Marcus: That I don't know, I don't know the details.

Selix: What was your father's full name?

Marcus: David Cecil Simons.

Selix: What was the year of his birth?

Marcus: He was born in 1859.

Selix: And he was a British subject.

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: Your mother was born in New Orleans, in what year?

Marcus: Eleven years after.

Selix: That would be 1870. What was your mother's country of origin or background?

Marcus: Well, my grandfather, my mother's father, was Scotch, and my grandmother was born in Ireland. Her name was Foley.

Selix: Were you raised as a Catholic?

Marcus: We weren't raised as any particular religion. We had a friend who was going to another Sunday school and we seemed to tag along; so, we had a sort of liberal education. And as a matter of fact, my sister, Ellen, went to the Jewish temple on [Wester?] Street in California at which Ray Wolfsohn was teaching, and that is how she met. She became interested in Ellen because she was always very bright, you know, and ahead of herself. She became interested in her intellect; and she got her interested in coming over to the club.

Selix: The Girls' Club is already established when Ellen started.

Marcus: That's right, it was south of Market.

Selix: Do you know what street it was on?

Marcus: Seventh Street and Howard.

Bonn: That was the very beginning of the Girls' Club.

Marcus: Yes, that was the beginning of the Girls' Club. If you want to go back in retrospect—I don't know whether you know this or not, but the founder of the Boys' Club, the Columbia Park Boys' Club, was Sidney Peixotto. He was a friend of Rachel's, and she became interested—he had her visit the Boys' Club. She became so interested in it that she thought a girls' club should be established, so that is how the Girls' Club became—

Selix: Was she ever employed at the Boys' Club?

Marcus: There was no employment, you know, they just gave their services. It was volunteer because they came from, at that particular time, a [bugsy?], average income people.

Selix: The Wolfsohn family.

Marcus: The Wolfsohn family. They lived on Pine and Baker, and at that particular time, when they lived and while I went very often, was a very highbrow part of town, contrary to what it is now, because anything that was Van Ness and above, you know, was considered very ultra, and Pine and Baker was extremely so, where they lived. They lived in a four-story house. It was a tremendous house, I remember very well, on Pine and Baker.

Selix: Can you tell us what Rachel Wolfsohn looked like?

Marcus: She was beautiful. Her height was about five-feet-six, and she had naturally beautiful features, an excellent nose, just the straightest nose and brilliant brown eyes, huge brown eyes. And a mouth, bereft of any makeup of any kind, you know, but was so beautiful and made such an extreme impression upon you because she used her mouth so much, and it just used to wave around so much. As a child, I was always attracted to her mouth.

Selix: She was very articulate.

Marcus: Very articulate because she was extremely intelligent and, of course, very interested in mankind to have done what she did, because she came from this very comfortable home. At that time, I know they had a Chinese cook. She left this very comfortable home to go down to south of Market and live in the Columbia Park Place at one time, and then started up the Girls' Club. She was just that much interested in people to give up all her luxury.

Selix: Do you mean that she lived in the building that the Girls' Club occupied? She made that her residence?

Marcus: Yes. And in fact, Ellen, my sister, was with her—she was very fond of her; they were buddies, even though she was quite a bit younger. She had a great interest in her because, as I said, she wanted to see her get real educated, you know, because contrary to most people at that time, women didn't go to college, go to the university, and Ray was a graduate of Cal.

Selix: Was she a graduate of the University of California?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: Did she study social service work?

Marcus: I don't know what her studies were, but I would imagine they would be in line with it, but I really don't know what she majored in. Ellen went to college, went to the University of California.

Selix: Did she graduate?

Marcus: No, she went to her third year and she was ill, and so she took time out and didn't go back.

Selix: And that was through the influence of Rachel Wolfsohn that Ellen went to college?

Marcus: Oh yes, inspiration, of course. My mother was very well educated. My mother, going back to that time, she went to college, which was almost—that was unheard of. She was a teacher for one year before she married, and she graduated from what they call the Normal School for Teachers, which was a two-year course, and then she went to the Tulane University, in New Orleans. So, it goes back pretty far.

Bonn: That was unusual.

Marcus: That was very, very unusual.

Bonn: Your mother had a great elegance about her, and she was just beautiful.

Marcus: Yes, she was an extemporaneous speaker; she could talk on any subject, without any preparation at all.

Selix: She was a beautiful-looking person and a beautiful person inside.

Bonn: She herself was an inspiration to all the women that belonged to the club at that time.

Marcus: Yes, they loved her, and she loved all of them. In fact, when we first [inaudible], just had a grand time together. They put her in as secretary, you know, because she was articulate and she could write very well, and they kept her there nearly twenty years. She was their first representative to the California Federation of Women's Clubs. She did all of the records for the Dolores Mothers' Club. She would just make [a notice though?], but that was sufficient for her.

Bonn: I thought your mother was president of the Dolores—

Marcus: Yes, then she became president for the next twenty. She just fluctuated with both; she was either one or the other for the complete time she was there, about forty years.

Selix: In those days, in order to be a member of the Mothers' Club, didn't you have to have daughters in the Girls' Club?

Marcus: I think that was necessary, yes, I would think it would be. And there were two Mothers' Clubs, you know, the younger Mothers' Club called the Rachel Wolfsohn Mothers' Club—

Selix: Did they have a mothers' club at the inception, or didn't the Girls' Club originally start just for girls?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: And what age group, would you say, was Rachel's prime interest, when she first started the club?

Marcus: I think all ages. When I came there, I was seven years old.

Selix: How old was Ellen by then?

Marcus: She was eleven. But the older ones, like the Buck girls and—oh, there were several other girls, but I can't quite get their names—they seemed very old to me; they were probably sixteen or seventeen or eighteen. But they met in the night because they worked in the day. They reached out in a neighborhood where the girls had to go to work at a very early age, to help support the family.

Bonn: This is still on Seventh Street?

- Selix: Seventh and Howard. What year did Ray start that Club?
- Marcus: I imagine, it would be around 1903 or 1904, because the earthquake was 1906.
- Selix: I have an earlier date of 1900.
- Marcus: Well, it may have been that.
- Selix: You had brothers, as well as your sister Ellen, and what were your brothers' names?
- Marcus: Ronald and Aubrey.
- Selix: And what were their occupations? Did they work in San Francisco?
- Marcus: Yes, in a bank. My brother was the youngest manager of the foreign exchange of the American Trust Company at twenty-two, I think.
- Selix: Which brother was that?
- Marcus: Aubrey.
- Selix: And what did your other brother do?
- Marcus: He did the same, but he wasn't an officer.
- Selix: In the same bank?
- Marcus: Yes.
- Selix: And Ellen went on and graduated from the University of California?
- Marcus: No, she did not graduate because she left when she became ill; but she had the equivalent of graduating, because both she and I took UC Extension courses in the night. We also took private secretary court recording to become a court reporter; that prepared us to take depositions, which both of us earned, you know, much more than our salary.
- Selix: You were both legal secretaries, were you not?
- Marcus: Yes.
- Selix: I recall. In what neighborhood did you live, when you first came to San Francisco?
- Marcus: My father had some cousins, who lived in San Francisco, and they located us at Seventh and Minna, I think the street was. My mother didn't think that that was a good district to raise her children, when she came out and saw it, because she had been accustomed to living in a little better type of neighborhood. But not knowing what it was, we stayed there for just about four or five months, and we moved to Golden Gate Avenue between High and [Leavenworth?] That's where we were.

Selix: And at that time, your father had his own importing business in San Francisco?

Marcus: No, he didn't have it in San Francisco. He was endeavoring to get placed and get a holding on things, but he found it very difficult to become subservient to anyone, so he went back to the Isthmus of Panama, and then at the commissary. It was on Christmas day, at a horse race—they were racing horses, of which he had an interest, you know, when he had a heart attack.

Selix: And did that cause his death?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: At what age did he die?

Marcus: I think it was fifty-five.

Selix: He was employed at the Panama—

Marcus: He was a manager of the commissary.

Selix: Of the Panama Canal?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: But the family stayed in San Francisco.

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: How many years was he there?

Marcus: Three years.

Selix: Oh, only three years.

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: What are your own recollections of the founding of the Girls' Club, and do you know who financed it? Did Ray Wolfsohn finance it herself?

Marcus: No. I shouldn't say no, because she may have done it at its very inception, until she got other people interested. But she had a most charming way about her, and she was just a genius in every respect. She was unlike her other sisters, who were sweet and charming, but they didn't have the intellect and genius that Ray had, and the charm, terrific charm.

Bonn: Do you have a picture of Ray?

Marcus: No, I haven't.

Selix: Do you remember, did she have a board of directors?

Marcus: That's what I wanted to tell you, she could meet anyone and anybody. And even at that time, I remember her telling me, when I was a child—she was going to Europe, she went to Europe, which was unheard of, too, at that time for a woman—

Selix: This was after she started the club?

Marcus: Yes. She was a great inspiration to anyone who she talked to, any child, you know, she inspired the child so. I remember her telling me, now, "You want to go to Europe—" [laughs]

Selix: When you were seven years old?

Marcus: Yes, and, "You know what you must do. Don't go unless you're prepared. Learn your history, read this book, read that book." She had me—I was flying almost to Europe. [laughs] She had me so interested. She was always so annoyed by migraine headaches, you know, that so often she would prepare these trips for a group of girls to go, and she would make it sound like such a lark, "We'll go to the beach, we'll toast marshmallow." She would make such a picture, you were just flying like Peter Pan. Then all the sudden, she'd get this awful headache, and she'd have to go into her room. We'd sit outside of her door, and we'd wish that she would get over that headache so that she could take us, and invariably she did. We'd wait there patiently, thirty, forty minutes, and out she'd come. She was a remarkable character. She was not only so beautiful to look at, but she had this great, great charm; I've never met a woman since that I could say had the same charm as hers.

Selix: Was Mast active in the—

Marcus: No, he wasn't active in the club. Eva was, at the time, and Eva was always held back. I guess she couldn't quite feel herself equal to her sister at that time, but it was so remarkable, everybody thought so, how she rose to the occasion and she came up, you know. She was so beloved by everybody. She had a different type of disposition and different abilities, but she had also abilities that—you remember, I'm sure—that inspired people.

Bonn: She brought the best in everyone.

Marcus: She really brought out the best. She not only inspired you to higher education, but she inspired you as to how to dress. I remember once I came with buckles on my shoes, "Oh—" she said, "What terrible taste, so flagrant and without taste." Oh, I felt so awful; I couldn't wear those shoes again.

Selix: She told you, huh?

Marcus: She told me, yes, that's right. She was really a remarkable person, too.

Selix: Then Eva was active in the club from its inception?

Marcus: Yes, she helped us; but, as I say, she was very subservient to her, because Ray was so outstandingly brilliant that, I think, it would be hard for any sister to follow her.

- Bonn: Did not Miss Eva—wasn't she a private tutor?
- Marcus: I think at one time. Eva and Gussie, together, sisters, both went to college, but I think for just a year or so.
- Selix: And then, I guess, it was about that time that the family lost their money.
- Marcus: I don't know much about that, because it's strange, so often you hear people being interviewed on television and saying we were poor, but we didn't know it if we were poor. I never knew whether a person was poor, or rich, or what, when we were in the club like that. We were at the club so much; and it never occurred to me, you know, to feel does the person live in this kind of house, or that kind of house, or whether the income was greater than the other. I think they were instrumental in just spreading their feeling around, and you'd go to each other's house, whether you had one room, or two rooms, or four rooms, it made no difference.
- Selix: It didn't matter how you lived.
- Marcus: It didn't; and as Adrienne was saying, this house has the look of the club, and I think that you're right; the influence of being around them and in their furnishings, because their furnishings were never flagrant, you know, but still were artistic. For instance, in this place on Capp Street, I remember when they set it out, the Blue Room—they used to call it the Blue Room, upstairs, the bedroom.
- Bonn: In Eva's bedroom?
- Marcus: Next to Eva's, that smaller one. And they called it the Blue Room, and it was made out of—the covering on the bed was unbleached muslin, with banners like that of a striking blue, a sort of delph blue. It just gave the most artistic effect at the most inexpensive way.
- Selix: They could do a great deal with very little.
- Marcus: Absolutely. Well, they had the taste, and they had the taste for simplicity plus attractiveness.
- Selix: The thing that always impressed me—I never knew Rachel Wolfsohn—but the thing that impressed me about Eva Wolfsohn was that the most simple event was so elaborated and so expounded upon that it became one of the great adventures of your life, and one of the great experiences that you had.
- Marcus: That's true. Well, that was more so even with Ray, if you can multiply that, you know. In addition to her abilities, she had—well, she was nothing short of a genius. Anybody who knew her always referred to her as that, in any thing, in any way.
- Selix: Do you remember what the activities were in the early beginnings of the Girls' Club?
- Marcus: Yes, there was the cooking class.
- Selix: Do you remember who taught it?

Bonn: Now, was this on Seventh Street?

Marcus: Yes. I can barely remember that, but I know that they had a sewing class and, what they called, cardboard sloyd. I don't suppose you ever heard of that. I had never heard of it before or since; but they made things out of cardboard, artistic, little boxes and things.

Bonn: I was in the class that Eva Neubauer had.

Marcus: Yes, that was it.

Selix: That was at Capp Street, later on. Was Eva Neubauer on the original board?

Marcus: I don't think she was ever on the board, I think she was just—

Bonn: No, she was on the board.

Marcus: Was she on the board?

Bonn: Yes.

Marcus: Well, then it must have been later.

Bonn: It was later, on Capp Street.

Marcus: The one, who you are asking about back—

Selix: The original.

Marcus: Was the Lilienthals.

Selix: That was Jesse W. Lilienthal, Sr.

Marcus: And Leon Sloss, Sr.

Selix: Fleishhacker, were they—?

Marcus: Fleishhacker, Mortimer Fleishhacker, yes. Mrs. Sloss's sister was named Green. Greenebaum was her first name; during the war they changed it to Green, Lilly Greenebaum, and Mrs. Gunst.

Selix: Mrs. Gunst, she was related to Rose Cohen.

Marcus: That was—

Selix: Mrs. Gunst's sister.

Marcus: She had nothing to do with the club.

Selix: She was not on the board, then.

Marcus: No, I think you just met her, when she entertained and played cards. I was married then, and I didn't go, but I remember my sister going to her house.

Selix: Do you remember how many members there were on that original board?

Marcus: No, but not too many. I think just that handful of the Lilienthals, and the Gunsts, and the Slosses, and the Fleishhackers.

Bonn: No, the original board was on Seventh Street; they started way back then.

Selix: Those people gave financial support to the club, and in those days, you didn't have the high income taxes that they had at a later period. After the club—do you remember any other activities at Seventh and Howard? Did they have drama?

Marcus: Oh yes.

Selix: That was a big part of it, wasn't it?

Marcus: Yes. And also, Ray would inspire anybody, who had a little squeak of a voice, you know, to sing. Well, you'd think you really had a voice. She could play the piano, and she would sit down, and she would get a group around; and then if she'd spot a voice that sounded a little better than the others, you know, that person would be so encouraged to sing.

Selix: Did Ray teach the singing herself, or was there a Mrs. Simons?

Marcus: There was no other singing teacher.

Selix: And do you remember who the drama teacher was?

Marcus: Not at that time. As I say, that was kind of far for me, you know.

Bonn: How big was the building, or wherever they were meeting; how big of a clubhouse was it?

Marcus: It was an old—as I remember it, you know, it seems kind of not too clear, but it was a house; it was an upstairs and downstairs house. Did I say that the night of the earthquake, 1906, my sister spent the night with Ray; she was sort of a protégé of Ray's, you know. She had a terrible time getting back to our side, where we lived. At the time of the earthquake, we had moved to a house, an upstairs, downstairs house on Grove Street. They called it the Ham and Eggs Fire—I don't know if you remember, but we were in that. This woman tried to cook some ham and eggs for her husband for breakfast, and the chimney—

Selix: That's what started the fire.

Marcus: That's what started that fire, on that side of Van Ness, because it never crossed Van Ness.

Selix: What was that, Grove and what?

- Marcus: We lived on Grove and Gough, near Gough, between Franklin and Gough.
- Selix: And Ellen had been staying with Ray that night, the night of—well, then they were in the Seventh and Howard building until the fire?
- Marcus: Yes, that's right.
- Selix: Oh, I thought there was another move.
- Marcus: No.
- Selix: They were burnt out there, weren't they?
- Marcus: Yes.
- Bonn: Oh, I guess that's it, they were burnt out from the fire and earthquake, and then, where did they move to from there?
- Marcus: On Twentieth Street.
- Bonn: The American Hall.
- Marcus: I don't know if it was in a hall, but for a time there, while they were trying to get back to the place on Twentieth, they met in our house. I went to Lick Wilmerding for high school; and we moved because my father had passed away then, and the club was such a part of our lives, you know. That club was so a part of our lives that we moved in order to accommodate the club; we moved to a flat on Howard and Twentieth, and the club met at our house.
- Selix: At the Howard and Twentieth address.
- Marcus: Yes, while the building was getting ready on Twentieth Street for the Club.
- Bonn: Well, then the club moved to Twentieth Street after your house, and then eventually to the building.
- Marcus: That's right.
- Selix: Well, what was the building on Twentieth Street, was that a home or—
- Marcus: It must have been a home.
- Bonn: Something about a hall, in my memory.
- Selix: The old American Hall was there at Twentieth and Capp; that didn't burn because they had ad-libbed between Nineteenth and Twentieth, and her house was the last one to burn.
- Bonn: In the Mission district.

- Marcus: Oh, is that so? Those cute little—three little houses, weren't they?
- Bonn: No, before the fire and earthquake, we had a two-story house with a balcony around the second story, and that burned.
- Marcus: Oh, I didn't know the fire—that you had the fire out there.
- Bonn: Yes, and then they rebuilt after the fire.
- Selix: Then they started plans to build the building at 362 Capp Street. Do you remember how that was financed? Did somebody donate the building or did they raise the money?
- Marcus: I really haven't any idea about that.
- Bonn: Tell Sylvia about the dinner then.
- Selix: Someone, who has been a member of the club, told us there was a meeting—we believe it was a meeting of the board. They had a dinner meeting, and that they pledged \$40,000.
- Bonn: At one dinner. That would have been Rachel.
- Selix: Yes, because Rachel was still living then. That was the money that started the 362 building, which was the beautiful building. Then after you moved to Howard, then you continued being active in the club. Did the Mothers' Club start when the club was at Seventh and Howard? Was there a Mothers' Club then or was it just the Girls' Club?
- Marcus: No. I really can't answer that; I don't remember.
- Selix: I have the idea that the Mothers' Club started later.
- Marcus: I think you're right, because I have no remembrance of it. I know that [Mrs. Greenberg] was our neighbor for awhile, for one stage of our life, when I was around seven or eight. As I said, we were from New Orleans, you know, and she took my mother to the Emmanuel Sisterhood. That's a Jewish organization.
- Selix: And your mother was an Irish Catholic.
- Marcus: Yes [laughter]. But she got along with anybody. So, she took us to the Emmanuel Sisterhood, and the second time that she went there, they elected her secretary [laughter]. She was charming and also had that ability, too.
- Selix: Yes. And of course, we remember the beauty of the building at 362 Capp Street, and the beautiful fireplaces, with the Della Robbia friezes above them. There was always a wood fire burning, and there was always fresh flowers; Miss Eva used to go to the flower market.
- Marcus: Oh, at four o'clock in the morning, in order to save those seventy-five cents! I'd stay there so often when she would be leaving at four o'clock in the morning. And the man there, the janitor, I guess—

Selix: John, the custodian, John Matson.

Marcus: Yes, they were so cute. I'll tell you an episode of that. We would go to the Easter services very often [inaudible]—

Selix: To Mount Davidson?

Marcus: To Mount Davidson, yes. Eva told John to awaken us, early enough to go, and he knocked at the door. I was in the Blue Room and we were [inaudible] but he knocked at the door, and he used to tell her what kind of weather it was. Eva would say, "What kind of weather is it, John?" He says, "Rotten" [laughter]. But he said it with no more emphasis on the rotten part, and with such respect, you know—rotten; it always struck me.

Bonn: Who in the cat days before John and Hannah? There was somebody else. He had a little gray moustache.

Marcus: Luis. He was a Scandinavian, the pretty black? Luis was his name.

Selix: After the building was built at 362 Capp Street—that was about 1907. That was after the fire and earthquake.

Marcus: Oh, it was a little later than that. You mean the Capp Street—?

Selix: The Capp Street—

Marcus: I think it was a little later.

Selix: About what year would you think?

Marcus: Oh, I would think about '10.

Selix: About 1910?

Marcus: I would think so. I think they stayed at that Twentieth place for quite a little while.

Bonn: It would seem more logical because the fire wasn't over until 1906. By the time the land cooled down, they had to have plans. They just couldn't build a beautiful place like that without plans.

Selix: Bruce Porter designed the building.

Marcus: And it was outstanding at that time. Anything that had a court, built around a court like that, wasn't heard of, you know.

Bonn: He was not an architect but a designer, is that right?

Marcus: Willis Polk?

Bonn: No.

Marcus: Is it Willis Polk?

Selix: No, Bruce Porter.

Marcus: Oh yes, you're right. I don't know.

Selix: From its very inception, the Girls' Club was nonsectarian and nondenominational, and it was open to everyone, whether or not they could afford to pay the dues, which, in our day, were twenty-five cents a month; I don't know what they were when you started. When we were in grade school, they started at ten cents a month; and then when you got into high school, they were twenty five cents a month; and fifty cents a month, when you were a senior girl, after you had started working. I don't think that there were very many attending members who had great means, I think that they were all working class people.

Marcus: Yes, yes, it aimed to reach the people who were of low income.

Selix: That was the purpose for which it was founded, was to bring culture into the life of the people of lower income levels.

Marcus: That's right, and that's what they did. Do you remember Betty [Banman?]?

Bonn: Yes.

Marcus: Well, at Betty Banman's house—we met once up there, and I was just astounded, up on top of this little—way up high, she lived—

Bonn: In the attic.

Marcus: Oh, it was sparkingly kept, and it was so beautifully arranged, you know; it was just an echo of the club, you know. I'm sure that they probably were on welfare, or some help of some kind.

Selix: It was Betty and her mother, wasn't it?

Marcus: Yes, and her mother was an ill person.

Bonn: They didn't have welfare in those days, did they?

Selix: Well, they had some form—

Marcus: Not welfare, but some form of help, I'm sure.

Bonn: Eva helped them, maybe; I bet there were a lot of people Eva helped.

Marcus: It may not have been called welfare, but it was similar to it.

Selix: Charity, I think they used to call it in those days.

Marcus: Most likely, yes, associated charities.

- Selix: Associated charities is probably what it was. Rachel's years at Capp Street were— followed about the same pattern as they did when the club was at Seventh and Howard, with the cooking and the sewing and—
- Marcus: But more elaborated.
- Selix: On a grander scale.
- Marcus: On a grander scale, and a larger scale, and there were more evening classes, you know, very much more. They had political science and good books, as well as dressmaking with Miss Eagans. Do you remember Miss Eagans?
- Bonn: Yes.
- Selix: Was she there in the early days at the—
- Marcus: No, not Capp Street, the Capp Street days.
- Selix: Yes, the early Capp Street days, she started, [Harriet Eagans?].
- Marcus: She was just devoted to the club, and everybody loved her, and she certainly was a marvelous teacher.
- Selix: Was she a volunteer worker or a paid worker?
- Marcus: If she got any pay, it was very little.
- Selix: Many of them were volunteer workers; and those who did get paid didn't get paid very much.
- Marcus: Oh no, they got paid very little. Those who volunteered were—at that particular time, the society girls never worked; now they work, thank God.
- Selix: You mean the society girls didn't do community service work?
- Marcus: In the early days, the society girls never worked for pay, they didn't go out into the commercial world. So, they took up some charity, as they say, I suppose to satisfy their conscience in some way; and they would come down and teach the classes on Tuesday; I remember I went on Tuesday afternoon.
- Selix: And did some of the members of the board, did they give their time to classes?
- Marcus: Well, Mrs. Neubauer is the only one that did, but the others ones didn't.
- Selix: Do you have recollections of the days that the board met at club, and what an excitement there always was in the air on the days of those board meetings, when the limousines would line up on Capp Street with the chauffeurs?
- Marcus: I don't remember too much of that because, you know, the marriage after, you know—I married in '24 and I lived down here.

- Selix: What year did Rachel die?
- Marcus: I think that she must have died around 1915 or 1916.
- Selix: 1915 is the date that—it always seems to me that Miss Eva would say it was the year of the Panama Pacific Exposition. Did Eva just automatically step into Ray's position, or did she have second thoughts about it? Was it a decision that she had to make, or did she just accept it as her place?
- Marcus: Yes, I think that she followed into that position as Mr. Truman [Harry S. Truman] followed Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt], you know. She was bewildered at the start just as he was and asked for God's help, and I think it was so with Eva. She just did a miraculous job; she never thought that she could carry it on as she did. She really brought in a dimension, some dimensions that Ray didn't, you know, the simpler. She really met the people who had the most subtle mentality and brought them up. I think Ray, with all her gifts, and she had so many, I think she had much more tolerance for a person of a little higher intelligence.
- Selix: She gravitated toward intelligence.
- Marcus: Yes, yes. Eva had such tolerance with people with limited intelligence, below normal, that it was remarkable to me sometimes to see how patient she was.
- Bonn: And she brought them up, too.
- Marcus: Yes. With Betty Banman there, she made her really feel responsible, having her phone to all the people—do you remember that, so that they would come to occasions?
- Bonn: No, I don't remember that.
- Marcus: If they were going to have a concert, or if they were going to have a play, she wanted to be assured of a good audience, so she would [inaudible] Betty, but she was so good at it, would phone all around and ask how many people they were going to bring, and how many tickets they wanted. It was a little position for her in the club and I think they gave her a small salary.
- Bonn: I'm sure, yes.
- Selix: Have you any idea about how many members there were when the club first started at Seventh and Howard?
- Marcus: No, but it was comprised of very little.
- Selix: Less than 100.
- Marcus: Oh, I would think so; I wouldn't think there were fifty.
- Selix: And it drew from the immediate neighborhood.
- Marcus: Yes.

Selix: After the Capp Street building was built, that in the beginning drew from the immediate neighborhood, but as the people advanced economically and as the girls married, they moved out of the neighborhood, but then they would still continue to attend club.

Marcus: Just like when we lived and I entered high school, we bought a home—when my father died, we took the insurance money and bought a home on Cole Street, and that, too, was a nice neighborhood, which has deteriorated. It was in the Ashbury Heights district, right near Cole and Carl. That took us almost a half hour to go over to club, and sometimes we would be there two or three nights a week, and going in the night, which you wouldn't do now. We were just one of many who did that, as you say, who either married or just went up a step or two in the better neighborhoods. So, many of them moved out to Richmond district, and they came to the club from Richmond; that even took longer than us.

Bonn: The mothers, particularly, would come back for the meetings.

Selix: Oh yes, they came from all over.

Marcus: Yes. Even my sister-in-law came from Alameda, Ray [Cones?]. Do you remember Ray [Cones?]

Bonn: No.

Selix: Oh yes, I remember Ray [Cones?]

Marcus: Lou's sister, a very bright woman; she just passed on a couple of years ago.

[Tape 8, Side B]

Marcus: Mrs. Brandenstein, who was very up-and-coming and also a charming person, she had a class for which Ray, Lou's sister, used to come from Alameda just to be in it. And I came a great distance, too, for the first couple years before we moved down here, just to be in her class; she was so illuminating. She would have the class for a dinner every, oh, month or two at her beautiful home on Broadway.

Selix: Well, wasn't that H.U. Brandenstein? That was H.U. Brandenstein.

Marcus: He was the attorney.

Selix: Yes, it was their home that we visited.

Marcus: Yes. Did you go too?

Selix: Yes.

Bonn: I went to a children's party once, there.

Selix: And at the time that your father died, were all of you grown by then?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: You were all grown and working.

Marcus: No, I was in high school, and Ellen was in the University of California.

Selix: But you were all able to finish your education then?

Marcus: I finished high school; and I didn't go to college, but I took UC courses in the night, you know, extension courses.

Selix: I know that both you and Ellen showed great leadership at the Girls' Club. What were your special interests? What classes were you—

Marcus: Well me, I was always interested in the drama, still am. I was a regular ham, that's never been satisfied. I was always in the dramatic arts and in the plays up until I married.

Selix: Do you remember the names of any of the teachers?

Marcus: Gwendolyn Powers, who married the architect [George Adrian] Applegarth; I thought that was the person you were talking about but you said Applegate.

Selix: Appleton.

Marcus: Appleton. No, that was another one. I remember the girl's name was [Marian Appleton?].

Selix: She was a member in the early days, and her brother went to the Columbia Park Boys' [Club].

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: Well, drama was your particular interest—

Marcus: Drama was mine, and I would go into the class—they had a class in Shakespeare at the time; that was when I was an adult.

Selix: Who was the coach then, was it still—?

Marcus: Oh, there were several of them; there were the coaches that we had. We had a [Mrs. Gould?] once. I would take the men's part, very often, in the Dickens' *Christmas Carol*; I was Scrooge, and Mrs. Gould coached it. And there were men who would come from the drama courses from the University of California. That's another thing that Eva was so clever at, she never stooped for less than the top quality of anything. I'd go to a concert with her, you know, of a very famous artist, and she would say, "Excuse me for a minute," and would look around. She would be in the back of the stage to meet that artist as he came out, so that she could cinch him to come to the club to give a concert; she knew no barriers at all, she was quite direct.

Selix: Do I remember correctly that she had Pauline Fredericks, the actress, come to club and give us a performance?

- Marcus: I don't remember that, and I think that I would.
- Selix: There was some famous actress, who was on tour and playing in San Francisco, who Eva inveigled into coming to the club.
- Marcus: Oh, she would, and all the [?] would never stand in her way. [laughs] She had all the top concert—and no barriers at all; she would never get anybody but the top.
- Bonn: Madame Aldridge came, and she was in the cast of *The Miracle*. Do you remember *The Miracle* at the—
- Selix: The Max Reinharts performance.
- Bonn: Yes. She's the only one I can remember, had a great big Southern accent.
- Selix: Wasn't there a story that Eva got the mayor of Rome to come or was that—
- Marcus: Ray was a friend with—when she went on that European trip, I think the mayor of Rome—
- Selix: Oh, she made friends with the mayor of Rome?
- Marcus: Yes [laughter].
- Selix: And then did he come to San Francisco subsequently?
- Marcus: I don't remember that in detail, but we just re-opened that corner by Blaine; I wouldn't have remembered that. But I remember her, now, showing these pictures to us, and telling me I must go to Ninth Street. "Don't go to Europe unless you're qualified." When I made my first trip to Europe, I really remembered what she said.
- Selix: How do you feel that Ray and Eva influenced your life, in what ways?
- Marcus: Well, I think that whoever they met, one couldn't be helped to be inspired to do the best within themselves; and I think that my morals, absolutely, I think that everybody's morals were felt. Don't you think so? I think the moral end of it—[laughs] I think they lived such clean, good lives that you couldn't be around them and do anything that was questionable. And I know—I wouldn't mention her name—one of the girls at the club, who I thought was marvelous; she was three years older than I, and I was in high school. She didn't go to high school, she went right from grammar school to working. She had a lot of what they call now "sex appeal," and I just adored her. She was a real blond. She lived out in, way out, South San Francisco, and she'd have to stay over night someplace, she'd stay at our house. All the clothes and everything I had, she always looked so much better than I did, and I just loved her. She went to commercial school at that particular time, and she had written all over her [inaudible] Commercial High School; and Eva thought that was just awful, that anyone could be that cheap. I thought she had such gumption to be doing that, and I was admiring her for doing all these things. But Eva got her out of it; and then she thought she could get her straight, she straightened her out.

Selix: Everything at club was in such elegant taste; and it became a part of your life.

Marcus: It was simplicity. It was elegance.

Selix: Simple elegance.

Marcus: Simple elegance is the expression, yes, you're right. It certainly did influence both my desires and the boys that I would dare to bring to meet them, you know. It greatly influenced me in all which ways, both in the building of the character, I think, and also in my taste. I think they were cultivated by them, and they had the most influence on me and, I think, on most people, especially those who were very little. I remember Adrienne, she was about this size, she was the cutest thing you would ever want to see and these black curls—do you have any pictures of yourself?

Bonn: Yes.

Marcus: These black curls down to here, I just remember; it was so cute.

Selix: We have a portrait at home that was done of Add when she was about five or six years old with these black curls.

Marcus: Oh, they were beautiful. And Helen just loved you so. Wasn't Helen clever though?

Bonn: Do you remember the Hi Jinks?

Selix: What do you remember about the Senior Hi Jinks? That was one of the climaxes of the year was the performance that the senior girls put on.

Marcus: Well, I was in a great many of them that—I had come down the runway and all that.

Bonn: Helen loved those!

Marcus: Oh, I know, she was marvelous, she was marvelous.

Selix: Helen Bonn Pitman, who was the oldest sister of Adrienne Bonn, and who was very active in the Girls' Club, she wrote many of the Hi Jinks. What was always the focal point of the Hi Jinks?

Marcus: Well, it depended upon just what was current at the time. I remember one of them was in 1915, when the fair was on. I was in plays, too, with Helen, now that I think of it, I think in *Neighbors*. I had the lead in it and Helen—oh, she was marvelous—she had such a sense of humor and inspired things so clever with writing. I just have such fond memories of her, just adored her.

Bonn: This is the way it is with club and club members.

Marcus: You never forget.

Bonn: No, you don't.

- Marcus: And no matter who you meet in the Girls' Club, who ever had a touch of it, it is an indelible impression that is never erased.
- Selix: Well, we all had this common bond, and we can meet, and maybe we haven't seen one another for forty years, but we can still go back and—
- Marcus: Yes, you're absolutely right. As I said to Clara [Ballon?], I said, "You know Clara, though we don't see one another—" except when she is walking the dog or—because her husband had diabetes for many, many years, and they live a very secluded life, and we're always on the go. But I said to Clara, you know, I think if I really was in distress, of all of the people around here, [inaudible] I would call on her. You know, I feel that close with her; and it's simply because we knew each other from childhood.
- Selix: I think at this point that we should explain that Sylvia lives in Hillsborough, and across the street from her lives, just by coincidence, Clara Ballon, who was also a Girls' Club member. And who was the other one in the neighborhood?
- Marcus: [Becky Orowitz's?] daughter, Becky Orowitz, whose name is [Weigel?] now.
- Selix: So, here are three Girls' Club members—
- Marcus: That's her daughter.
- Selix: It's still in the family.
- Marcus: And the strangest thing is that her daughter and my daughter are just like that. We moved from San Francisco to North Burlingame; and the first day we were there, Ellen, which is my daughter's name, brought home two little girls, who lived on the block. I asked them their names, and one of them was Eleanor Orowitz and the other one was Marjorie Weigel. So, I said, "Orowitz, do you have an aunt or a mother named Becky," and Marjorie said, "That's my mother's name," five years old she was. So, we got acquainted; and they went to primary school together, and grammar school, and to Stanford. She lives up there; and every time my daughter comes out here, they get together.
- Bonn: Tell us about your daughters.
- Selix: I'd like to go on a little bit more about the Girls' Club, and then go on to the family. I'd like to hear about Ellen's activities at the club, your sister Ellen. What were her main interests?
- Marcus: She was always in the political science or government classes as I remember. She was in this 1950 Jinks—
- Selix: Called the Hi Jinks, wasn't it?
- Bonn: Yes.
- Marcus: I don't suppose you remember the 1915 fair?

Bonn: I was only four then.

Marcus: At the fair, they had a big painting there of a supposed to be nude woman and it said, "Have you seen Stella?" So, my sister wrote "Stella" on this big slab and she had a pink union suit on and she was like this, you know, so she was "Have you seen Stella?" And I was "How are you going to keep them down on the farm once you've seen Paris;" and I came out on the ramp and sang and danced, you know. I had long lashes then; nobody had these false eyelashes at that time. Lou was in that business and every once—I didn't marry until twenty-four, but he kept asking me for so many years. He was in the wholesale business, so he gave me these false eyelashes. So, I came out with these lashes way out to about here, you know, and a short, short skirt, and singing, "How are you going to keep me down on the farm after I've seen Paris." Helen was really marvelous in what she did; such a talented girl.

Selix: I recall that you weren't allowed to attend the Hi Jinks until after you had graduated from high school, because that was probably the most sophisticated thing that was ever done at club. It was sophisticated that—

Marcus: Well, so sophisticated that Mrs. Lilienthal objected to the fact that I didn't have on stockings [laughter].

Bonn: But did the board members come to the Hi Jinks?

Marcus: Oh, did they. Why, they were the chief—went to all of the plays, oh yes. But there was some objection, because I was writing the character and I didn't put on stockings; and that was quite shocking to them. I wonder what she'd think of today?

Selix: Do you remember any other incidences like that? Any other things that were done that shocked the board, perhaps?

Marcus: Well, of course, very often they'd see one of the girls walking off, and they'd come back to Eva or to Ray, that they had lipstick on, which was just emerging at that time, and report things like that. Other than that, I can't—I know that they were quite careful about the girls. They wanted them to be quite prim and proper, and we were just emerging from that generation, you know, to a little more prudence.

Selix: I remember that when we were in high school, and we had dances at the club, that we were not allowed to wear silk dresses. We had to wear cotton dresses, because the theory was that there were many girls who attended club who could not afford a silk dress. And I think that you had to be working before you could wear a silk dress. We have a recollection of a performance where Add [Adrienne Bonn] danced a Russian dance, and she had on long black boots, and one of the boots flew off her foot onto the lap of Mrs. Lilienthal [laughter].

Bonn: In the audience! Was she surprised!

Selix: Well, Ellen was active also in drama and—

Marcus: No, she wasn't—she had no ability in that direction at all, only I don't know why. I think it was Helen who suggested that she do that. She has a slight sense of humor, to

this day she has; she always had a very good sense of humor. She would do anything that would create a laugh; but as far as Ellen's ability for the stage, she had none.

Selix: You and Ellen were both very close, personal friends to Rachel and Eva, both.

Marcus: Well, I wasn't with Rachel so much because I was that much younger, that it made a difference at that particular time of life; but our families were personal friends.

Selix: And I think that you and Lou used to play poker with them, didn't you?

Marcus: Yes [laughs].

Selix: Tell us about the poker games.

Marcus: Oh, Eva just loved to win, you know; and sometimes we'd make it so that she could win. She was sort of childish in that way. But we did, we played [pedianti?]. But Eva could—she would play [pedianti?] with anybody who walked past the door, you know.

Bonn: How about Eva and the horses?

Marcus: Oh, yes. After I married and lived down here, I got a phone if I'd meet her at Tampa; and I'd never been to a horse race, never been in my life. We met at different places, different gates, and had such a hard time meeting, but we finally met. She said, "Now, you stand in this line," and I was just bewildered, her telling me what to do. She was so interested in those horses. If she could do that on the side, she just loved it. Then she said, "Put two dollars here," and I didn't know what I was doing. Two dollars seemed like a fortune. I'm not a gambler at all anyway.

Selix: And I think that was something that the board didn't know anything about.

Marcus: Oh goodness, no. That was [inaudible].

Bonn: I didn't know anything about it, except after Eva died, I inherited the chest that was next to her bed, the hand carved chest, and I pulled out the top drawer and underneath the top drawer was this racing form.

Marcus: Oh yes, she just adored going out there. She was so glad that I married, she thought she'd have somebody to go with again, you know; and I wasn't a bit interested. And having that inheritance, too, from my father, you'd think that I would. But my sister is a gambler; she would be if she had the funds.

Selix: Then Ellen went to the lectures, and I think both of you held offices in the club in the different groups. You were presidents and secretaries, etc., just like your mother; you followed in your mother's footsteps.

Marcus: We weren't as clever as my mother.

Selix: Oh, I don't know about that.

Marcus: Ellen acquired above the average intelligence, always throughout her life, that she could see through problems—

Selix: Well, you know, I knew you and Ellen as I was growing up but because I was younger, I was always a little bit in awe of the two of you. I never really became acquainted with Ellen until I was on the board with her, in later years.

Marcus: I know, she used to speak so highly of you at those meetings. Once I moved down here, I didn't go; I had children right away, and I didn't go to the club.

Selix: Up until what age was Ellen active in the club, on the board, do you remember?

Marcus: I guess until she began having this Parkinson's in the middle '60s.

Selix: When Ray was in charge of the Club and Eva assisted her, were there any other assistants? Was Edith Heinrich in the picture at that time?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: She was there when Ray was there?

Marcus: No, Edith came around 1915, around the fair; I connect her with the fair.

Selix: Do you know anything about Edith Heinrich's background?

Marcus: Yes. Edith came from an extremely musical family. Her father was a great musician in Germany and had written many compositions. Her sister was in the Metropolitan.

Selix: In New York?

Marcus: Yes.

Marcus: Julia Heinrich?

Marcus: Julia Heinrich, yes. She was killed traveling by train at that time; in going from one city to the other to perform, she was killed.

Selix: At an early age.

Marcus: Well, she was probably around thirty.

Bonn: It was a freak accident, she was on the platform. Wasn't that right?

Marcus: Yes.

Bonn: Tell me, how did Heiny [Edith Heinrich] get involved with club?

Marcus: She sent in her application. Eva [inaudible] various cities in the social service work, and I think she just applied. I remember the first day that she came. I was up at Eva's for dinner when she came in that first day. She was another charming person, wasn't she?

Selix: Can you describe her for us?

Marcus: Do you remember her?

Selix: Yes.

Marcus: Well, in height, she was about five-feet-six or seven and blond and very Germanic looking, Germanic features, I think. Her ability was marvelous. Her personality was so outstanding and she, too, had such a sense of humor.

Selix: She was very effervescent.

Marcus: And extremely personable, and in speaking, she had a way all her own. She had expressions that I still use, you know, that nobody else I've ever heard use. I know she'd say, "Well, you come one in a box," and I use that all the time, and similar things [laughter]. She was real charming. She also had great appreciation of culture, of course, coming from the type of family that she did. She was in a play with me, too, and I was Nokomis and she was Hiawatha, at the club.

Selix: She was born in Germany or did the family migrate to America?

Marcus: No, yes.

Selix: Her mother and father and the children migrated to America.

Marcus: Yes, yes.

Bonn: How come she left the club?

Marcus: I don't know the reason for it, but you see, she felt that she was an Easterner. She had lived in the East so long that she wanted to get back there. Then, I think she went in about 1923 to New York. I connect that with my marriage in '24. It was the first time I went to New York, and I looked her up, and looked up Anita Peters Wright. She was living with Anita Peters Wright, in a studio in New York.

Selix: Edith was.

Marcus: Edith was living with Anita Peters Wright. She brought me up to her apartment, a later apartment that she had. It was so unlike the club that I just couldn't see how she could possibly live in that quarters; but she would make fun out of anything that she was doing; it was just her personality. Anita Peters Wright had a nice studio there and had quite a number of students.

Selix: We had done a tape on the Anita Peters Wright School and interviewed Lenore Job, who was Anita's sister. We kept in touch with Edith Heinrich and followed her career up until the time that she passed away.

Marcus: I visited her where she passed away at the Heritage; she had a lovely room.

- Selix: I used to go there to see her, and do shopping for her, and kept in touch. In fact, I remember at the memorial service that they had for [inaudible], I don't remember you being there.
- Marcus: No, I wasn't.
- Selix: When did Margaret Hall come into the picture at club?
- Marcus: I don't remember Margaret until Capp Street.
- Selix: Did she start work at the club in the new building?
- Marcus: Yes.
- Bonn: As a volunteer.
- Marcus: Oh, as a volunteer, yes. Margaret came from a very aristocratic, old California family. It was her father who laid out the Golden Gate Park with [John] McLaren. Her father was Hammond Hall, I think.
- Selix: They were the Hammond Halls of Virginia.
- Marcus: Yes, they were that very old aristocracy, and they held those girls—she had two sisters—they held those girls down, so that they never went out with boys.
- Selix: None of them ever married, did they?
- Marcus: No. It was quite something for Margaret to make that step to come to the club, and be sort of independent of her family, which was a big step to make.
- Selix: Her father also had something to do with Hetch Hetchy, I think. Wasn't he in the city engineering department? I believe he was.
- Marcus: I imagine so, I don't know.
- Bonn: Well, they had that building, too, at Post and Powell. Isn't that the Hall building?
- Marcus: Yes.
- Selix: Margaret was at the club—well, she was the last of the group to be at the club after the fire, you know; the fire that they had in 1948, I think it was.
- Marcus: I wasn't around.
- Selix: No, you weren't around then. Mark Wolfsohn sort of reorganized a new board, and Margaret was acting head of the club at that time, and for years that went on. Do you remember if during Miss Eva's lifetime, if the Community Chest had started to come into the picture?
- Marcus: Yes.

- Selix: Do you remember what year that was?
- Marcus: Well, it would be before I left.
- Selix: Before 1923.
- Marcus: Yes.
- Selix: I remember that was very difficult for Eva to work—
- Marcus: Yes, it was because she hadn't any sense of commercialism about her, nor did she want it to be associated in any way with the club. Although, I think she rather liked the fact that she had a little assistance from them, but she didn't like anything connected with the club that would in any way embarrass any of the members, you know. I think she rather felt that she wanted them to think that they were just independent of any handouts of any kind.
- Selix: That's right, that's right.
- Bonn: It became a different situation. She could talk to her board, but it was as a Community Chest procedure; she had to fill out the forms, go to the meetings.
- Selix: All the budget problems.
- Marcus: That's right and that was not one of her strong points, you know, I mean of that being organized. She was so cute in her ways. She loved to buy me clothes; she knew that it was much more expensive than I could afford, and so, she used to say, "It costs \$100," she told me very quietly, "but divided by three," and then she'd keep it three years, but she'd say, "Divided by three." We've kept that expression [inaudible] when we spend a little more than we should, but "divided by three" [laughter]. And Edith's expression, you know, she used to go around and give a dance—she was very graceful—she'd give a dance—
- Selix: She danced all over the building.
- Marcus: She'd dance like this, and she'd say, "Now, how I came to get this hat is very strange and funny," and she would go off and sing little poems like that; I think she was a great girl.
- Bonn: She had a marvelous story about her father, and it was a dream, but the way she told it you just sat there on the edge of your seat for maybe a half hour until finally the climax came; it was wonderful.
- Selix: She was very dramatic.
- Marcus: Very, yes, very dramatic and very graceful.
- Selix: Did she create plays?
- Marcus: No.

- Selix: She made costumes. Marion Brune was telling us about how Edith Heinrich made her costumes.
- Marcus: Edith was artistic and she had very good taste in clothing; she could assemble things easily.
- Bonn: She was like the Pied Piper.
- Marcus: Yes, she was.
- Selix: You were married in 1924, and what year did Ellen marry?
- Marcus: In '29, I think.
- Selix: In 1929, and she married—her name was Kern; Jack Kern, and he was a widower.
- Marcus: Yes.
- Selix: Who had three children who were almost grown.
- Marcus: No, I wouldn't call that almost grown; they were seven, nine and twelve.
- Selix: Oh, seven, nine and twelve. So, after Ellen married, did she sort of drop out of the activities at club while she raised these children?
- Marcus: No, no.
- Selix: The children came to club if I remember.
- Bonn: And so did Mr. Kern.
- Marcus: Yes, he came in the evening, yes.
- Selix: By then they had a group for men.
- Marcus: Yes, and for the first year after we were married, Lou went to the Men's Club. Then we moved down here.
- Selix: I was reading over some of the old bulletins, and I came across tonight—and it said—it was in November of 1933 that Mr. and Mrs. Luis Marcus donated playground equipment for use at Wonderhill.
- Marcus: Oh yes, I remember that.
- Selix: And also, in November of 1933, Sarah Simons was in New York.
- Marcus: We brought her there first, and that was her first trip. We drove to New York; we took her with us, and that was her first trip since her wedding trip. My mother was married—they were married in New Orleans; and she came from a very religious family. In fact, they had the house across the street from the church so that they could go and ring the

bell; they were that religious. So, they were very angry at her for getting married by a judge, because she chose a judge. Then when she went to New York as part of her honeymoon, my father was in very good circumstances at the time, and he said he was going to have a three month wedding tour. But when we were in New York, after the first month, his business called him back to Jamaica. When he met my grandmother on my father's side, she wanted him to get married by rabbi, and she said no, she didn't want to get married again, but that she would learn the religion if she'd like that, if she wanted to tutor her.

Selix: She would learn the Jewish religion?

Marcus: Yes, which she did. She knew much more than my father ever did, because she was a student and a teacher, and she had that qualification of remembering things, so she got to know pretty well all about it. Then when she came back with the children to New Orleans, they wanted to get married by a priest and it was really Abie's Irish Rose [laughter].

Selix: Your mother adapted the Jewish faith and the Jewish ways very readily, didn't she?

Marcus: My mother could get along with anybody; and she admired the Jewish people very much, she admired the warmth and the love, you know. And then when she got into the club, there happened to be a preponderance of Jewish women in the group.

Bonn: In the board.

Selix: The board was all Jewish. Do you think the neighborhood was predominantly Jewish at the time?

Marcus: On Seventh Street? No, the girls down there, that I remember from there, were not Jewish, the ones that I went with.

Selix: On Seventh and Howard, were not.

Marcus: Or after. I went with Anita Gottung and Hazel Stoutenberg, who was Hazel Randall, you remember?

Selix: Hazel Randall, I remember her.

Marcus: So, those were my two chums, you know, and they were both gentiles. As I say, it never occurred to me whether a person, at that time, what you were. Not since Hitler came along, and you actually began to think of it, but I don't think anyone ever thought what religion you were.

Bonn: In those days you were, perhaps, German or Irish or Swedish, but you weren't Catholic or Jewish or Protestant.

Marcus: Well that's a nationality, the Irish and German and all that, it's not a religion.

Selix: Everyone was always interested in the other person's national origin, but not so much in their religion.

Marcus: That's what I was saying, we never thought of it. It never occurred to me to say "What is she?" [Inaudible] they just all belonged to the club, and they were all gentiles.

Selix: I think you mentioned that when you go down to Monterey to see your sister, Ellen, who is in a rest home—

Marcus: She's in a Catholic home. She's in Ave Maria Convalescent Hospital, that's what they call it.

Selix: Oh, is she? And that you do see Mast Wolfson, and he's her doctor?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: That's a very interesting situation.

Marcus: It's like a book.

Selix: It's just like a book.

Marcus: Isn't it? I said the same thing to him. I hadn't seen him for twenty years, you know, and I met him when I went out to see Gussie, you know, Gussie was in there.

Selix: Oh, at Monterey, before she died?

Marcus: Yes, she was there. I used to go down to see her every couple of weeks; I would drive down. They said we were the only ones that came down regularly to see her. There was an add-on and an addition to that when my sister began to get this Parkinson's so badly, and it looked as if she needed care [inaudible]. I went around looking at the convalescent hospitals around here, and it was disheartening, it was horrible. When they told me they were going to add on a new addition down there, I thought, "Well, I'll run back." We went back to see Gussie, and I said to Ellen, "You stay in the car and I'm just going to run back and question something about this," and I went back, and they were very interested. Then the building was completed, and they were very interested in her coming down. The only drawback was the fact of her family being there and not being able to see her as much. However, as it turned out, we see her more often, because I go down and Lou goes down every Saturday; we never miss a Saturday. And her daughter goes down every Wednesday, and the boys go intermediate, you know, so she's really seeing more than she would otherwise. But talking about religion and Ellen's sense of humor, one of the head sisters there said to her, "Tell me Mrs. Kern, how do you worship?" She said, "You'd be surprised" [laughter]. To this day, they don't know how she worships. They never bothered her. They have little signs up that creed or color makes no difference.

Selix: They do in all of the denominational institutions now. That's the only way they get government funds.

Marcus: Yes, that's true.

Bonn: How did you meet Mast, then?

Marcus: Well, Mast I've known my whole life, but while I was growing—I knew that it was he that got Gussie to come down there. Then I hadn't seen him, but when I left her in the car and said, "I want to go check in and see about something," "I didn't tell her what I was doing. It was so very much more better and nicer and smaller, only twenty-six people as against sometimes 200 people, and the view. So, the next whole week I began to try and soften her up about the move, trying to do it easily. Then we went down the following Saturday for her to speak to the mother superior. As I had her in the wheelchair, wheeling her, I saw this apparition come up the aisle and it was Mast, as I say, just like a book. He bent down and says, "Hello," he says to her, and I said, "Oh, it's Mast!" I could then see the expression in the eyes. It's funny how you don't see anyone for years and years like that, and when you see them the first time, you think, "Oh, how awful," but then you get to revert and you see them as you left them. I could just see him all over again, just as a very young boy. I said to him, "It's just like you are looking at a book of this chapter and turning this over and coming back." He has been very successful down there, a hospital specialist, quite renowned.

Selix: Well, he's really a leader in the medical community in Monterey.

Marcus: Yes, he is.

Selix: And he's about seventy-nine years old, I think, and still practicing.

Marcus: Yes. But he's slowing up a little, I think, because—Ellen's been there five years now. Up until last year, he used to come in to see two or three of his patients there, twice a week, and now he's not coming unless they ring for him; so, I think he's slowing up now.

Bonn: Well at seventy-nine he's—

Marcus: Entitled to doing it, especially the type of work—and he carried out the thought of visiting, the house calls and like, which so many of them don't do.

Bonn: That's right.

Selix: After Ellen married, and her children—I remember that even at Wonderhill, which was the summer place near Redwood City, that her boys would often stay there, although it was supposed to be the Girls' Club. But they used to make exceptions for some of the boys like—

Marcus: He was so little; he was only seven at the time, Billy.

Bonn: We used to fight to have him sit on our lap.

Selix: And I remember Rose Stiller was there one year, with her two boys, and we're trying to get an interview with Norman.

Marcus: Well you remember Eva, wasn't that Eva Olsen?

Selix: Well, I'm trying to get an interview with her; she's not too well, but she still lives in Berkeley. She was at the club a good many years, many years.

Marcus: Yes; she was so beloved.

Selix: Yes, very much so. Margaret Hall's activities, as we remember, Margaret always had a basket of flowers on her arm [laughter].

Marcus: Right, and she would always run away when they wanted to introduce her.

Selix: Right, she always did.

Marcus: She was so modest and bashful and shy, all the result of her father and mother; they held them down so, you know. And she still had a little surrey and a horse, you know.

Bonn: Oh, did she?

Marcus: Yes, and she used to ride Ellen around. [inaudible] would invite her on a Saturday afternoon. That was before she became a part of the club, that she just visited, and she used to take Ellen around riding on that little horse and surrey.

Bonn: We saw a picture of her, and she was just lovely.

Marcus: Who's that?

Bonn: Margaret.

Marcus: Oh, she was just darling; and she got the attention of Mark after, you know—

Selix: Oh, that was a great romance.

Marcus: That was nice; I was so glad that they both had it.

Selix: Yes, it was wonderful, a wonderful thing. I think Margaret always arranged the flowers in the building.

Marcus: Oh, they were so beautiful. You remember the tables that she decorated for the dinners? I was the speaker at one of the dinners, and I'll tell you, I never had such nerves in my life. Oh, I'll never forget that. I didn't care about being on the stage and being in the plays, but to be myself, you know! You know, how they chose a chairman each time, and I was one of the chairmen; I'll never forget it because I'd never had such a case of nerves in my life, and that was so horrible.

[Session #2, April 8, 1973]

[Tape 9, Side A]

Selix: Sylvia, you were telling me how you felt and how nervous you were when you were a speaker at the senior dinner. The senior dinners were an annual event and a very important event, and one of the members of the club would act as chairman. In those days, there was no women's lib, so we didn't think anything about being called chairman. And there would be a toastmistress; and usually the dinners revolved around a theme; it might be music or drama or hobbies. When the gymnasium was dedicated,

we had a dinner, and it was devoted to the subject of health. The speaker of the evening would be an authority on whatever particular subject was the theme of the evening. I remember the dinners very well, because I was the toastmistress or chairman for quite a few years; and this was something that Eva Wolfsohn inspired me to do. I did things that I thought were beyond my abilities, but as far as Eva was concerned, nothing was beyond your ability. Do you have any recollection? I figured that there were usually about sixty members in attendance at those dinners.

Marcus: Every bit of sixty.

Selix: At least sixty, sometimes one hundred perhaps, because some of the dinners were held in the big room. The guest speakers would often be professors from the University of California. They could be famous musicians or singers. We've had rabbis and doctors; and I remember one dinner of which the theme was hobbies, and Dorothy Wright Lebus was the speaker of the evening. The dinners were usually prepared by the Mothers' Club, and they did the cooking. Then the girls who were in high school, who comprised the [Vesta?] group, served the senior girls, who were the girls who were out in the business world, working. They were always very great occasions.

Marcus: Yes, we looked forward to them.

Selix: Yes, and we have very fond memories of them.

Marcus: Oh, very.

Selix: In all the years that you were at the club, did you ever feel as though the members were patronized in any way, or felt that they were being patronized by the board, or—?

Marcus: No, I never had such a feeling, because they were really friends of the club. I never felt that way; in fact, I think that they made you feel very comfortable, and it was their hobby actually, in sponsoring worthwhile hobbies and that was it. It really was worthwhile, because it had such great influence on everybody.

Selix: I always felt that Eva made us feel that we were favoring her by contributing our time and our talent to activities of the club. I never had a feeling of being patronized.

Marcus: I don't think anybody had.

Selix: The Girls' Club never gave you the feeling of being an institutional type of operation, but rather the feeling that you were a guest in the home of dear friends, and the environment of the club gave you that feeling, of it being a private home. I was figuring out the number of years that you and Ellen and your mother were active in the Girls' Club. Your mother had a period of about forty years.

Marcus: Yes, she did, I guess.

Selix: Yes, and Ellen was active for sixty years or more, and you were active for at least twenty-four years, although, even after you married, you continued to come back for different occasions and activities at the club?

Marcus: Not too often, because at that particular time, after I married, which is forty-nine years ago, it was considered an effort to go from here to there, in the evening especially. After your husband came home from the city, drove down here, to ask him to go back again after he'd had his dinner, wasn't so convenient; so I didn't go too often after I was married.

Selix: Wasn't it about the time of your marriage that they started the Men's Club, though?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: Wasn't it just about that period?

Marcus: Yes, it was.

Selix: Up until then, they didn't have any Men's Club.

Marcus: No, that's true, because Lou was quite active in it. That was just previous to our moving down here, you see. For the first few years, we lived in San Francisco, of our marriage; and at that time, he did go to those meetings then. They were quite interesting; I sat in every once in a while, and I enjoyed it very much. There was a columnist named John Barry, remember?

Selix: Oh yes, he wrote for the *San Francisco News*.

Marcus: Yes, and he was very interested in the Men's Club. He came very often, and I so enjoyed whatever he had to say.

Selix: Did the men meet alone, or did their wives—?

Marcus: They always had a speaker. No, the men met alone, while the women were attending the other classes which they were interested in; but every once in a while I'd slip into the next room. I was very interested in the men's speakers. [Lionel Allison?] his name is now, I think he changed it to some other name, but he was extremely interesting, I thought. So many of the men had really high standards, who would give up their time, and it was so worthwhile.

Selix: To come and talk to the Men's Club?

Marcus: Yes.

Bonn: Do you happen to recall the men that were in that group at the time, the name of the men?

Selix: Probably Peter Iversen, and I think, [Quentin Pittman?] was a member of that.

Marcus: Yes, I think he was.

Bonn: Was there a Mrs. [Debbonham?]?

Marcus: That rings a bell.

Selix: Mrs. Debbonham was quite interested in the club.

Bonn: [Mr. Cane?]?

Selix: Yes, that's right. Do you recall Mrs. Bernard C. Brown? Was she a board member?

Marcus: Oh yes, well, she was the wife of the original [Brown Company?] in San Francisco.

Selix: Was that Charles—or Chas?— Brown, the hardware people?

Marcus: Yes, that's right. She became quite interested in the afternoon girls, and also the evening as well, but I think mostly the afternoon.

Selix: And I think she taught French.

Marcus: She taught French to the young Mothers' Club, which was called the Rachel Wolfsohn Mothers' Club. I attended once or twice, but it was just at that time that we moved down here and I didn't continue, but my sister got a great deal out of it; she was very interested in that class. She was a very good teacher, they say. Her daughter lives down here, you know.

Selix: Are they the Liebes girls?

Marcus: They both married two Liebes boys; and they built their home the same time as we built this.

Selix: Mr. Leon Liebes used to speak at the club, as I recall. That would have been the father of the two girls, wouldn't it?

Marcus: Oh no, Leon had no children. He was married to Dorothy Liebes. He married later in life, and had no children.

Selix: I see. You had mentioned that your family and the Wolfsohn family had a personal friendship. What can you tell us about the personalities of the individual members of the Wolfsohn family? Did you ever know Father Wolfsohn?

Marcus: No.

Selix: You didn't know him. Mother Wolfsohn?

Marcus: Oh, very well, I knew her very well; we were very good friends.

Selix: What can you tell us about her?

Marcus: First of all, she was a very beautiful woman, quite tall and slender and the blond type; very much different looking than any of her children, who probably took after the father, because they were all so dark.

Selix: She was from England, wasn't she?

Marcus: I think probably; she wasn't born in England, but I think her parents were. She was born there, I'm quite sure.

Selix: Was she a Jewess?

Marcus: Yes, although it was questionable at times, because of her fairness, you know, she was extremely fair, but she was because I knew her sister—

Selix: Mary Wolfsohn's sister?

Marcus: Yes, and her name was Augusta Abrams.

Selix: Augusta Abrams? And she was a San Franciscan?

Marcus: Yes. She was just the other extreme in coloring than Mary. She had a very, very recognized physician as a son—I have to think back—I can't think of his name at the time, but I may think of it later.

Selix: What else do you remember about Mary Wolfsohn? She was active at the club, wasn't she?

Marcus: She was my very first teacher in the Girls' Club.

Selix: And what did she teach you?

Marcus: She taught me to darn when I was seven years old.

Selix: Well, she was still teaching darning when we were children.

Marcus: It helped me, I can tell you; up until the last ten years, when you don't darn anymore, you just throw those runs away. But up until that time, I was called in always to my sister's household or my household to darn, whether it be a sweater or a sock. She really was an excellent teacher. She had given a prize to the best darning and I was given it at seven.

Bonn: The way she taught it, it was like a weaving process.

Marcus: Yes, especially when you use that stitch on a sweater it's [inaudible]. And she was just an excellent cook. I remember coming in from high school, because I was taking elocution lessons around the corner from her, and I'd always stop in to say hello after my lessons, and she would entice me to take some beef-à-la-mode, as she called it. It was really pot roast, but she did it so exquisitely, and she served you so exquisitely that that was half the fun. She was a very educated person.

Bonn: I wonder what her background was.

Marcus: In education?

Bonn: Yes, or the type of family she came from.

Marcus: I only met the sister, Augusta, Mrs. Abrams.

Selix: Wasn't Mary Wolfsohn originally a professional teacher?

Marcus: I don't know that for sure. She was educated and very much a real lady.

Selix: Well, then your family visited in the home of the Wolfsohn family?

Marcus: Yes, I stayed there so many times. I told you that my sister was overnight with Ray the night of the earthquake. We lived on north of Market; we lived on Grove between Gough and Franklin and the club, as you know, was on Seventh Street. My sister had stayed overnight with Ray, and she had quite a time getting back to the other side of Market.

Selix: How did she get back, did she have to walk?

Marcus: She walked, yes.

Selix: She walked from lower Mission—

Marcus: To Gough and Grove.

Selix: You visited, then, with the Wolfsohn family, so you must have watched all the children grow up.

Marcus: Well, no, because I was the youngest.

Selix: Oh, you were younger than the Wolfsohn—?

Marcus: Oh, yes.

Selix: Well, that's right, you're more Mast's age, and Julian and Fred and the others were all older than you.

Marcus: They were older than Ellen, too. Fred was in college the same time that my sister was, but he was ahead two or three years.

Selix: Oh, I see. What can you tell us about the personalities of the individuals of the family? Do you recall any little incidents or any personal things that happened during the years of your relationship with them?

Marcus: I think I told you last time about Ray's charm, of making the most insignificant outings seem so important and so marvelous. The picking of the wildflowers, going out to the beach; and by the time you get home, they were all dead, but she kept us for hours as a child picking those wildflowers. She just made any simple occasion seem like a tremendous outing. The poor thing had suffered so with these migraine headaches. Every once in a while we'd be all ready to go, and she couldn't go because of these migraine headaches.

Selix: Do you know how many years she was ill?

- Marcus: I think she passed away at the age of forty-two.
- Selix: And that was in 1915.
- Bonn: When was Eva born?
- Selix: Wasn't she fifty-four when she died?
- Marcus: Eva?
- Selix: Yes.
- Marcus: I think it's about that.
- Selix: And that was in 1934. What do you recall about Mark Wolfsohn? He was so active at the club.
- Marcus: Mark was the hero of that house, in my opinion.
- Selix: He was the hero of the family.
- Marcus: I think so, because he was the oldest and he—of course, they went through some financial difficulties that made him go to work earlier than his younger sisters and brothers, and he educated—
- Selix: What kind of a business was Mark in?
- Marcus: Import. I think he was a remarkable person.
- Selix: And was he a successful businessman?
- Marcus: That I wouldn't know because I was quite young at that time and didn't know—
- Selix: But he was successful to the point of being able to help the education of—
- Marcus: He did to all of them. In fact, Fred had graduated as a mining engineer and he was unhappy in it, and they suggested that he go back to college and take up orthodontia. I think that Ray was most influential in that, but I think it was Mark who financed it. The whole family recognized Mark as quite the outstanding, unselfish person. He would do the most unselfish things even when he was involved in the club in later life. He would go down so early in the morning, four o'clock in the morning, for the flowers, the wholesale flower business; the club was never without flowers, as you know, no matter what time of the year.
- Bonn: They carried them home.
- Marcus: They carried them home at four o'clock in the morning, because I had stayed overnight the night before, and I'd hear them going out. I thought, "My goodness, that is a dedication, to get up at that time and go."

- Selix: What happened in Mark's life that in later years he didn't have a source of income and he didn't have work? Was that because of the Depression, or do you have any idea why that was?
- Marcus: No, I wouldn't know, but I would think that it was just a natural thing in the fact that he was older and business took on different turns, I suppose. But no matter what he had, he looked the part of the most successful person, because he was always so well groomed and he was a real, real gentleman, in every sense of the word.
- Selix: Oh yes, and he was very much loved.
- Marcus: Oh, everybody loved Mark, I think. He was the most unselfish person I've ever met.
- Selix: Yes, and he was such a great help to Eva at the club. He stayed there and he acted as the host for the men's groups.
- Marcus: Her right hand. Yes, he was a very, very friendly person and intuitively understood people's problems, too. In fact, I think that's quite an attribute of the whole family in being understanding with other people's problems.
- Selix: And he always had connections. If anybody ever had to buy anything, didn't he always say, "I can get it wholesale?"
- Marcus: That's right. My sister always tells the tale of when she—she married after I did, four years after, and Mark said, "Now, if you want anything, you just come to me, and I'll take you because I can get into any wholesale house." She was so amused, because when he would go into these—[Mi Wong?] Company, a Japanese company—he used to [inaudible] Company [inaudible] and it always went over. Nowadays, she would have to [inaudible].
- Selix: In other words, he was not timid about going in anyway.
- Marcus: Oh no, he made such a picture of success; whether Mark had it or not, he looked it, he strutted it. He was so erect and so kindly; and he looked as if he could put over any kind of people. He was the epitome of honesty.
- Bonn: I had the feeling in later years that Eva was supporting Mark.
- Marcus: Well, it would have been a good idea if they all did.
- Selix: Well, that's what we understand, that in later years that the other members of the family took care of Mark.
- Marcus: I don't know of that, but I think that would be probable and certainly it would be in order.
- Selix: And the romance between Mark Wolfsohn and Margaret Hall, did that start as soon as Margaret put in an appearance at the club? Have you any idea how she happened to come to club in the first place?

Marcus: She came to teach.

Selix: Oh, what did she teach?

Marcus: It would be something along the art line. I don't remember just exactly, but I know that she came and gave her services as did many of the other people, who didn't have to earn a living, would come and teach different arts and the like. Then, there came a time—well, it was after Margaret's father died that she came as a paid worker. The mother had died before, I remember.

Selix: Oh, the mother died early?

Marcus: The mother died earlier; as I remember, she died earlier, because my sister-in-law and Margaret were very good friends. Before even Margaret came as a paid worker, she used to take Ellen riding. She had a horse with one of those little carriers, and they would go through Golden Gate Park, because her father had a great deal to do with that park, as you know; so, that was her second home.

Selix: Do you have any idea why Mark and Margaret never did get married?

Marcus: No, I couldn't say but I have an idea; maybe he wasn't able to afford marriage. I really don't know.

Selix: This is one of the mysteries of the family, the reason why Mark and Margaret didn't get married, because they were so devoted to one another.

Marcus: I'm sure they wouldn't have objected.

Selix: No one would have objected.

Marcus: No, and I'm sure of that because they were so fond of Margaret.

Bonn: It's been intimated that her family objected.

Selix: Well, that was just a supposition, Adrienne, that because she was from this Southern aristocratic family, that they may have objected to her marrying someone who had a Jewish background, but this is just somebody's supposition. I was never aware of anything like that at all.

Marcus: I wasn't either.

Selix: No. You don't have any other recollections of the individual members of the Wolfsohn family?

Marcus: Well, the first person in that family, first child, was Rachel, who was a genius, absolute genius; it could be recognized by a child as young as I was, you know, and even younger. I think in those instances, the other two that followed had a hard time keeping up with such an image. Then when Ray died and Eva came along, everyone thought that Eva could never hold down that job; and she just showed them what she could do, because she carried on in a different way, but so beautifully. She had a heart of gold,

and she took everyone's troubles right to heart, and she never ever agreed to take a lesser person to help. For instance, in the health line, she would never take a doctor who wasn't known; it would have to be the one who's known and at the top, the very top; and always the fees were always governed by what the person could pay.

Selix: Ludwig Emge was very active at club, was he a personal friend of the family?

Marcus: The way that Lou—I call him Lou Emge—came into—we were personal friends, too—was in 1915, that he married, and he came to the fair at the time—it was the 1915 Fair, and he wanted to see Edith Heinrich.

Selix: Oh, he was a friend of Edith Heinrich?

Marcus: They had the common German background. In fact, Lou Emge had just recently had come to the United States from Germany, and he married [Elsa?] in Chicago in 1915. They came to the fair to meet Edith, and that is how I met him, and I was with Eva. So, that's where we met him, and we became very, very close friends. And I was his last patient; I had my last operation five years ago.

Selix: Was he practicing then?

Marcus: Four years ago. He came back for me.

Selix: How old was he then?

Marcus: I think he must be about eighty-seven now, and this was four years ago in December.

Selix: So, he was about eighty-three, wasn't he?

Marcus: Yes. And two or three months previous to that, he had retired but he was just taking up loose ends with patients, you know, clearing up—but when I needed attention four years ago, he came back, and I was the last patient he had.

Selix: Had he been your doctor through the years?

Marcus: Oh yes, you ought to see the file [laughter]. [Doctor Bodolucci?] is taking his place; and when he operated on me, he had Bodolucci there, who is a young Italian doctor. When Bodolucci saw my file—because it was nearly fifty years ago, and I had four children, I lost two, and Lou brought them.

Selix: Emge delivered all of them.

Marcus: Yes. [inaudible] obstretician.

Selix: He came to the club and gave lectures.

Marcus: Oh yes, he not only gave lectures on medicine, but he gave lectures on art, because that was his great hobby, was his art, art and hiking in the various parts of the whole world. Every year he went hiking in some parts of Europe. He's an outstanding person, just outstanding. But Elsa is not so well; she's in a chair most of the time. He can't get

around too well, I don't think now, because I haven't seen him—I go back to his office there; he wants me to come back there every six months to a year. I go once in awhile, but I don't like to bother [Elsa?] when he's not there to answer, so I hesitate about doing it; but I think they're both getting along pretty well.

Selix: Well, Flora Wolfsohn goes to see them every two weeks, which is nice.

Marcus: Yes, she was quite friendly with them, too. We were the first friends—

Selix: And his wife, Elsa, didn't she play a musical instrument?

Marcus: Yes, piano, very well.

Selix: And didn't she play another instrument?

Marcus: Not that I know of.

Selix: She played the piano as the accompanist for many of the singers that we had at club.

Marcus: Very well, she played very, very well.

Selix: And she was active in the club activities?

Marcus: I don't remember, but I do, as you say, remember her accompanying people on piano and hearing her play in her own home.

Selix: Do you remember at any time knowing about how many members the Girls' Club had?

Marcus: No, I wouldn't know.

Selix: It seems to me that I vaguely recall that when the Community Chest came into the picture that they were interested in numbers; and I think at that time, they numbered the membership at about five hundred, including all the different groups. But Eva always said, "Once a Girls' Club member, always a member," so some of those members were still on the roster although they were no longer active.

Marcus: She was the most unique person, I think. She could say things that were so amusing, you know, and I was always such a giggler. Every once in awhile she'd lose such patience with me when I was in my teens; she had no patience with me. If she would make a slip and say something funny, it would strike me so funny that I'd just laugh and laugh, and she'd say to me, "How do you expect—you know me so well and you act that way and you have that influence on the other girls." I giggled even then.

Selix: That's wonderful. Do you remember the background of Rose Stiller?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: She started in the club as a child—

Marcus: She was there when I came.

- Selix: She had already started?
- Marcus: Yes, she was there. Her mother had a second-hand store, down on Howard, near the club; and I understand that she—from hearsay, I didn't see it but I heard that she was quite the businessperson of that particular family.
- Selix: The mother was?
- Marcus: The mother was.
- Selix: Was the father still living?
- Marcus: He must have been living, but he was never much in evidence. The mother sat outside of the store—this is how the story went—and would talk to people that came along and ask them to come into the store; you know, she was such a super salesperson.
- Selix: Her name was Goldblatt. What was her first name, do you remember?
- Marcus: The mother? I don't know. But Rose was just an outstanding person; did you know her?
- Selix: Oh yes, I remember Rose.
- Marcus: And as a little girl—she was a few years older than I was—she looked much older because she was so heavy and so tall.
- Selix: Was she always heavy?
- Marcus: Always, as I remember, tremendously heavy. I think you knew her at [Olinas?] because she had started to work after her husband, Stiller. [inaudible] [Maury?] Stiller? [inaudible] it's the brother.
- Selix: Wasn't [Harold Stiller?] her husband?
- Marcus: That doesn't ring a bell.
- Bonn: Did he die or were they divorced?
- Marcus: It seemed to me it was a divorce, but I couldn't say.
- Selix: I remember vaguely that they were divorced.
- Marcus: I think Rose was a very intelligent person.
- Selix: Extremely.
- Marcus: Extremely intelligent person, but I guess she just didn't seem that satisfied.
- Selix: She went to work and raised three children.
- Marcus: Yes. I think she went to work when they were grown.

Selix: Oh, when the children became teenagers.

Marcus: I think so, yes.

Selix: Her husband's brother, I believe, was Maurice Stiller.

Marcus: That's the one with Garbo.

Selix: He brought Greta Garbo to this country.

Marcus: That's right.

Bonn: We have a picture of Rose when she was a young woman, and she was just beautiful.

Marcus: Oh, she has a beautiful face.

Bonn: I didn't realize how good-looking she was.

Marcus: Oh yes, and she had such red cheeks, always so red, and her lips were so red. She looked the picture of health except for this enormous weight, very, very heavy.

Selix: I remember she had back trouble, too, because of her weight and because of lifting those heavy fur coats.

Marcus: Then she went to work at Liebes—and she was phenomenal at salesmanship—I know Leon Liebes told me several times that he doesn't know what that department would do without Rose because she was the outstanding salesperson, and she had the least experience. She had inherited a good—

Bonn: She knew furs; and she knew how to sell.

Marcus: Oh yes, I bought two or three from her right after we were married.

Selix: She learned the business.

Marcus: Yes, and I wouldn't pass on anything if she would shake them around.

Bonn: I know one time she said, "If you are going to buy a fur, you'll always grow into it."

Marcus: I got more at that time and I would go to Rose, but I wouldn't buy anything unless I did get Rose's sanction even though I didn't buy [inaudible]. She passed away not long ago, didn't she?

Selix: Yes, the only one that's left of the family is Norman.

Marcus: Her daughter passed away, too?

Selix: [Rita?] has died and the other son—what was his name?

Bonn: Harold.

Selix: Harold Stiller? The other son died and Rose died. Norman is the survivor. He's an immigration attorney.

Marcus: He was a very heavy person too.

Selix: Yes. You know that he is still on the board of the Girls' Club, which is now Mission Neighborhood Center. He's been active on the board—he started on the board while his mother was still on the board. I was on the board until 1957 and Rose was still on then; and I don't know how many years after that she was on the board. Norman came at that time, and he's still serving that agency. All of the family, Rose, Rita and the brother, all died of cancer and all within a short time, just within a few years of one another.

Marcus: How sad.

Bonn: I think Rita died after Rose, didn't she?

Selix: Yes, she did. How did you meet your husband, Luis Marcus?

Marcus: Through his sister, you know; his sister was a member of the club.

Selix: Oh, she was a member of the club before you met Lou.

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: How did she happen to come to the club? She lived in Alameda.

Marcus: Well, because she married Max Cohn, and that really goes back a long ways, because Max had gone to the Columbia Park board and Ray was a Columbia Park board member. Ray took this great interest in Max because he was outstandingly brilliant too, a self-educated man.

Selix: What was his career?

Marcus: He got up to the manager in the Post Office department; and the reason that he stayed in that department was his super intelligence; he really had super intelligence. But because of the hour—he could go early in the morning and get there at seven o'clock and so, correspondingly, he would be out around three, so that he could go to the bookshops of San Francisco; he had tremendous volumes. In fact, I have a lot of his books here that he left me. He had so many first editions and was so interested—any subject you wanted to talk to him about, he knew. That's why he kept that job all the time even though he had so many offers for other types of work; he stayed with that because of the time. He could read more and collect these first editions.

Selix: Then he had a very satisfying life.

Marcus: Very. And Ray was Lou's sister, you know?

Selix: Yes, well, did Ray Marcus belong to the Girls' Club?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: As a child?

Marcus: Not as a child; Ray was brought in by Max when he became engaged.

Selix: Oh, I see.

Marcus: And she was in her early twenties. That's how she came into the fold. Then they married and lived in Alameda; and he built a house in Alameda for her, and invited me over there.

Selix: That's how you met Luis.

Marcus: Yes.

Bonn: It's funny how all roads lead back to the Girls' Club.

Marcus: Yes, it does. Well, we spent so much time there.

Selix: It was our life.

Marcus: You wouldn't take another appointment if it conflicted with Tuesday night or Wednesday night?

Selix: Tuesday nights we used to go and there were about—was it eight of us or twelve of us who would have dinner at the club?

Marcus: Then when I began to work, I came right from work.

Selix: That's what we all did; we came from work, and we would have our dinner there, and then stay for the activity of the evening. And then as we got older and we went to work, then Eva sort of depended on that age group to keep the club going, because we all gave our time and our talents to many different things that were going on in the club, not only just to our own group, but to help in the other activities and to keep the membership going along.

Marcus: I think they instilled loyalty, if nothing else; loyalty was—

Selix: Yes, the loyalty was terrific.

Bonn: I think today it's so shocking, because no one seems to have it anymore.

Marcus: No, no. I was so surprised when I went into San Francisco, you know, the other day because my going in—when I first came down here, when I'd go up to San Francisco, I had to have a hat and my gloves and a tailored suit. In fact, I took one out of storage when I went in Thursday. I guess just automatically I put on a suit and gloves, but not a hat; I didn't succumb to that. When I went in and saw the people shopping downtown, I was on [inaudible], I was just shocked to see the way the people were attired, you know, especially the young people.

- Bonn: Well, we were downtown Saturday and I think we saw two people with clothes on, very discrete, all the rest were hippyish, including myself.
- Marcus: Oh, I don't believe it [laughter]. But no thought is given at all to, "We are going into San Francisco." From down here, the people would wear their scarves and their tailored suits and their hats. I still felt that I had no hat, but I did wear the suit and gloves, and I guess I was the odd one.
- Selix: Well, it's really always the older women who still dress when you go downtown; none of the young people dress.
- Marcus: Yes.
- Selix: Well, you met Luis at your sister-in-law's, and was he at that time engaged in the—?
- Marcus: Wholesale beauty parlor business.
- Selix: He was in that business then.
- Marcus: And doctor's equipment.
- Selix: Oh, doctor's equipment. And what was the name of his firm?
- Marcus: Marcus Lesoine.
- Selix: And wasn't he one of the very early firms that went into the wholesale beauty—?
- Marcus: He was the first one.
- Selix: He was the first one. That was what I thought because—
- Marcus: He was the first one this side of Chicago.
- Selix: Because that was when the first permanent wave machines were invented.
- Marcus: Yes, and he conceived of one that didn't have the pedestal. He didn't have too great a success, but the people would bring in things, you know, that had to be worked upon and financed.
- Selix: You mean inventions?
- Marcus: Yes. Someone brought in a pin sometime and he developed it for them; and he named it bobby pin.
- Selix: Oh, really?
- Bonn: Is that so?
- Marcus: He named that; and it was during the time that Vernon Castle and his wife, the dancer, Irene Castle—she bobbed her hair.

Selix: Oh, she was the first one.

Marcus: She was the first one who cut her hair, and I think I was the second [laughter]. I followed suit. It was quite natural that he could think of a name like this. He named it the bobby pin, and nobody else thought of it at that time. Then he had this woman travel all over Europe, places all over Europe, but the patent, after a few years, they began to copy it. The patent didn't hold if they named it "the curl" or something like that, named it a name [inaudible]; they got around it. They'd call it the "girly pin" and they were getting around it. But nevertheless, they got the cream of it.

Selix: They were the first in the field.

Marcus: And named it.

Selix: Well, he was very creative in his business then.

Marcus: Yes, he was creative.

Selix: And very successful.

Marcus: Yes, he's a self-made person and also self-educated. He also was like Max. He lived within—you see, when he would go on the road to places with the different articles that he sold and come back in three months. At that time, you know, the transportation was different from now, there was no air travel at that time. His headquarters were in Alameda with Ray and Max.

Selix: I think you said that his name spelled Luis, is it Spanish in origin?

Marcus: Yes. He didn't know Spanish. I think they didn't know how to spell it, and they probably told him L-U-I-S because it sounded like that [laughs]. That's what I think.

Selix: Oh, he's not of Spanish background?

Marcus: No, goodness no.

Selix: What is his ethnic background?

Marcus: He was born in Winnipeg, Canada, but I think his parents were born in Russia.

Selix: Oh, really? Of course with his connections with Max Cohn, it isn't necessary to ask you if Rachel or Eva Wolfsohn approved of him as a match for you, or did you meet him after Ray had died?

Marcus: Oh, no. Ray had died about five years ago.

Selix: No, no, I mean Rachel Wolfsohn.

Marcus: Did I meet her after—repeat the question.

Selix: After Rachel Wolfsohn died, when did you meet Lou, at what year about? She died in 1915, was she still living when you married?

Marcus: No, we were married in '24.

Selix: And Lou was a very good friend of Eva Wolfsohn's I remember; she was very fond of him.

Marcus: Right, most people really take to Lou, because he's another Mark in a way in that he's always helping people and he enjoyed doing that. And he has just a marvelous disposition.

Selix: Yes, he's a real extrovert.

[Tape 9, Side B]

Selix: And he has a wonderful sense of humor.

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: And is very enjoyable company.

Marcus: Even when we go down to see Lala—we call Ellen, Lala—

Selix: Is that L-A-L-A?

Marcus: L-A-L-A, because my daughter couldn't—at the time, before she went to college, her name is Ellen, but her girlfriends were calling her Ella, and so in trying to teach my daughter how to—Lala's name, we would say El-la. It sounds to the baby like La-la, so it stuck, and everybody calls her that; everybody calls her Lala. What was your question again?

Selix: You were saying that when you go down to see—

Marcus: Oh yes, in talking about his being an extrovert is the fact that yesterday we were down there, and the mother superior [inaudible], and takes him into her private quarters to show him—she's retired now, this last year, but she's still there—but takes him into her boudoir, and shows him the plant that was growing so beautifully. I don't know whether he was interested or not, but she was so friendly with him. And another one in the hall, you know, [inaudible] all of the sisters [inaudible]; he's thoughtful of them.

Bonn: When you like a person, you like a person.

Marcus: Well, some people grow well and some don't; but I think their whole family are blessed with such beautiful dispositions.

Selix: Yes. Well, that's great. You were married in 1924, and what year was Ellen born, your daughter?

Marcus: '25.

Bonn: Oh, well! [laughter]

Selix: 1925, and she was your first child. Tell us about her, she went to school in Hillsborough, and did she go to public high school?

Marcus: Yes, she went to San Mateo High; in fact, to Burlingame and San Mateo High. She graduated from San Mateo High and she graduated from Stanford.

Selix: What was her major?

Marcus: Political science.

Selix: Did she start a career after she graduated? What did she do?

Marcus: Yes. Four other girls all graduated with honors and went to Washington, and they were going to show Washington how it should be run.

Selix: What year would that be? She was born in 1925—

Marcus: 1946, I think.

Selix: 1946, right after the war ended.

Marcus: Yes. The war was still on—or '45.

Selix: Yes, the war ended in '45.

Marcus: '45, because I know that she had a very close boyfriend who was sent there—she met him there and they were engaged for awhile. I think that was '45.

Selix: She went to Washington?

Marcus: She went to Washington, and that was where she met her husband.

Selix: Did she work in Washington?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: In the government?

Marcus: Yes, and in fact, she did the public relations under Kennedy and Johnson, the administration there, for three or four years.

Selix: Kennedy and Johnson?

Marcus: Yes, at different periods.

Selix: Oh, well, this was long after she was married and raised her family, wasn't it?

Marcus: Yes. The first job that she had there was for the Republican administration, I think, just before Truman, because Truman got in the year that she was married, in '48. She writes very well and she did the research work of the minority committee at the time.

Selix: Didn't she have some active part in the meeting of the United Nations?

Marcus: Yes. [laughs]

Selix: What did she do when the United Nations were in San Francisco?

Marcus: Well, I don't know, I should have had those things looked up for you yesterday; we have them in the library there. She was the editor of the Stanford paper, the night editor. They wanted her for the day as well, but she was matriculating in the political science, and they wanted to give it to one who was majoring in literature or—can't think of the word. In any event, that was how she got into the United Nations, is that she thought that would be a good big scoop, and it was. She got in there and met all these various men there. They wondered who she was because she was such a little girl, you know. She got such news in the Stanford paper that it was all over the San Francisco papers that this nineteen year old girl got in and all of the men were wondering—Anthony Eden—she got picked as—Anthony Eden—all that crowd at the time, and all of them were inviting her to England. [inaudible] so much further that when she did graduate, she did contact some of them, and she was going over there, but then this ended up being her chance to go to Washington and it delayed that. She made friends with Anthony Eden, quite good friends. In fact, she also was an extrovert and she could make friends easily. She was on the train going back to Washington, just when she thought she would like to follow a political science writer in Washington, and she saw Mrs. Roosevelt sitting—

Selix: Eleanor Roosevelt?

Marcus: And she said, "Nobody was sitting in that chair right next to her, so I went over and introduced myself to her." I think it was a four-hour train from Washington to New York; and Mrs. Roosevelt was always interested in all people, and she became extremely interested in her and vice-versa, that she had a great influence on her life, I think.

Selix: Oh, really? Did Ellen continue a friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt?

Marcus: I don't know how closely, but of course, when she was working right in the White House—

Selix: When Mrs. Roosevelt was there.

Marcus: Yes, and she went to the functions of the White House.

Selix: Oh, she must have had a marvelous time.

Marcus: Yes. Then, you see, the reason that she stopped her paying position as public relations in the Johnson administration—there was a woman—I can't think of her name—she was the assistant Democratic chairman, [inaudible] and Ellen—her name is Ellen, too—

did all the public relations work and sent papers and the like, and went to conventions and traveled around with them. Even she followed up with Pierre Salinger, another personal friend of hers. She worked on his—and did all of his legwork all up and down the state here. He got to be senator. Oh, the reason that she gave up her pay job was because her husband was successful [inaudible-in the government?]. And when she married him, was Miss Averill Harriman in England, so it became necessary for him to go over to Vienna as the chief administrator, some problem there—that was five years ago—and they were over there for two and a half years. Now she's back home.

Selix: Well, in the meantime she's raised three children, hasn't she?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: Did she work while she was raising her children?

Marcus: She might as well have been paid, yes. She was doing volunteer work.

Selix: In the different parties?

Marcus: Yes, until that time that she went in to do the public relations work. They were in their early teens.

Selix: The children were.

Marcus: Yes.

Bonn: Well, she's had an exciting career.

Marcus: Very, she has; and she's a very interesting person.

Selix: Oh, she must be.

Marcus: Talking detachedly, she's very interesting to most anybody.

Selix: Is she still engaged in political activity?

Marcus: She was out here just a few weeks ago and she's—[Gardener?], what's that thing she is interested in now? But anyway, she's with him now. It's getting away from me, but Lou will remember.

Selix: What is Ellen's married name?

Marcus: Mrs. Robert L. Oshins, O-S-H-I-N-S.

Selix: And is her husband still employed in the government?

Marcus: No, he had a heart attack; so, they have a home in Santa Barbara as well, and Ellen can do work either place. The boys are both in college. One is graduating this June, at Santa Barbara Cal [University of California, Santa Barbara]. He really wants to settle there because of a certain democratic organization that has—

- Selix: [The Institute for Democratic Studies?]
- Marcus: That's right [laughter]. I'm not a politician; you see how I hesitate upon all of these things, but that's it, that's it.
- Selix: And that's why her husband wanted to settle in Santa Barbara?
- Marcus: Yes, that's why.
- Selix: Well, that makes a wonderful home base for them, doesn't it?
- Marcus: Yes, and their home is lovely, right on the ocean.
- Selix: The two boys are in college and the other one is—?
- Marcus: Senior high.
- Selix: A senior in high school. Well, that's great that you have Ellen so close. How many years did she live in Washington?
- Marcus: Well, her husband proposed to her from Paris. He was working in Paris and he came from Paris and they married in 1948. When they went back, when Harry Truman upset the apple cart—
- Selix: Oh, when he won the election over Dewey [Thomas E. Dewey].
- Marcus: When he won the election, they went back to celebrate with him.
- Selix: And did they live in Washington, then, for awhile?
- Marcus: They lived in Europe for two years; his work took him a year in Paris and a year in Athens, Greece, and then back to Washington.
- Selix: Well, then they've done quite a bit of traveling.
- Marcus: Oh, yes.
- Selix: When did they settle in Santa Barbara, what year was that?
- Marcus: Just about two years ago.
- Selix: Oh, that's all?
- Marcus: Yes.
- Selix: Well, then you haven't really had her close to you.
- Marcus: We were down there, you know, every three to four weeks or she was up here. The minute she comes in the house the tempo changes. All of her friends—she never forgets one friend; she has that attribute. [inaudible] get to know that she's here.

Selix: What about your other daughter?

Marcus: Our other daughter graduated from Castilleja High School; that is the private one in Palo Alto. Then she went to Stanford. She has talent; she's dramatically inclined and she sings; she's musical and she's artistic, too.

Selix: Did she major in drama at Stanford?

Marcus: Yes. And then when she—at a Christmas holiday, she went down to The Pasadena Playhouse and interviewed them and she phoned and—I guess she was in her third year at Stanford—and she said there was an opening. At that time it was very difficult to get in, in mid-season in Pasadena, in fact, it was hard to get in at all; so, she said that she could get her diploma there as well because it would be more concentrated. Then when she was in Pasadena, within a quarter of her graduating from there, a scout saw her and asked her to go back and do summer stock in upper New York. She came back to Hollywood and did something that was very, very difficult that she got disgusted with it. She's now also in Santa Barbara, and she was telling us—I spoke to her the night before last—that she joined a group that plays nineteenth century music. She was also in a tennis tournament that she won that day. She's always studying.

Selix: What year was she born?

Marcus: Seven years later than Ellen.

Bonn: Sounds like you have two live wires.

Marcus: Yes, I can tell you we wonder where we got them. [laughter]

Bonn: That's great though.

Marcus: Yes, they are really involved.

Selix: What is your second daughter's name?

Marcus: Elaine is her middle name; that's what she goes by. The name I gave her was Audrey Elaine.

Selix: Oh, Audrey Elaine Marcus.

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: She never married.

Marcus: No.

Selix: But she has a very fulfilled life with all her activities.

Marcus: And many, many love affairs. [laughter]

Selix: Then you have your daughters both in the same place.

Marcus: Yes.

Bonn: Are the two girls close?

Marcus: They are growing more so. Now the question—like you and Helen were quite a bit different, weren't you?

Bonn: Yes, ten years.

Marcus: Well, it approximates, then, but as you get older, it does make a difference, so more so now.

Selix: Get closer.

Marcus: Yes, more so now.

Selix: Well, that's nice that Elaine has Ellen and her family down in the same place where she is. Is she pursuing any theatrical—?

Marcus: She's always involved in something. You know what she's doing—she's always doing something so different and surprising to me—she's taking a real estate course. It's so contrary to any of the artistic things that she's done, and she's extremely interested in it. If she does nothing else with it, it will inform her; that and law, I think, those two things would come in quite handy.

Selix: Does she have an occupation besides—?

Marcus: Well, when she left here just last year, she was the coordinator, they called her, of the peace movement down here, of the whole of San Mateo County; she's a smart little thing. That also surprised me; after doing all these artistic things, you know, that she would go into any sort of business thing that would require her to get up at a certain time, but she was quite successful at it. But now she has no use for it.

Selix: You mean now that the war's over?

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: It isn't really, but we like to think it is.

Marcus: Yes, don't we. But they still contact me to get in contact with her; and she's the least likely person that you would connect with it. This is what she looks like. This was just a snap taken of her; some boyfriend took it about three or four months ago. She looks anything but—

Bonn: It's a marvelous portrait.

Marcus: That was just a snap and you know what she was doing? They were at a party, a weekend kind of thing—she had no bathing suit, so somebody gave her a bathing suit. She's very slight and they gave her such a big bathing suit that she put it on and she got a laugh about it, and one of her boyfriends snapped it. It's an actual picture.

- Selix: I think that the artistic background and interest that she has will fit very well into real estate.
- Marcus: She says everybody is saying that she's a natural for it.
- Selix: I would think so.
- Marcus: But she's very effervescent. She's so enthusiastic about everything.
- Selix: Yes, she has great spontaneity. Well, what else can you tell us about your family, you have three grandsons?
- Marcus: Yes, and the younger one is—they have the strangest idea about education. I think it's fine and I rather admire them in a way, but it's nothing like we would think of it. We would go and enter into high school or college and we'd know that it's four years here, four years there, you know, but they take time off and do things.
- Selix: Yes, they prolong their education.
- Marcus: Yes, but it makes an interesting person. You're wondering when they're ever getting out. The little fellow, who is seventeen, is a senior in high school; and I was wondering how he would ever get out, but he's gotten interested in medicine at the clinic down there. He goes three or four times at night, you know, of his own volition; and they're giving him credit for all of that that he's doing, towards college. He's really a very bright youngster; in fact, a little bit too bright that he was a headache to all of the teachers. He would sit there and the teacher would ask him a question just to see if he was paying attention, and they were always surprised to learn he had a book under—he was reading, and he would always come up with the right answer; but they wouldn't recognize that in marks, they were disgusted with him. But now, there's a school there—Santa Barbara is quite advanced in so many cultural fields, too, and education; and they think he's fine at that particular school, think he's all right. In fact, last weekend a group of them who were interested in the clinic, went to a medical convention in Colorado and he went, with his long hair, hair to here; and they think he's going to graduate.
- Selix: Graduate from high school.
- Marcus: Yes. He's been out so much and traveled so much that—they're interesting kids. The way that we were taught we were going to get into high school this year and four years from now be out, but they are sort of in school and out of school, and the parents just sort of went along with it.
- Selix: The parents do seem to go along with it. Do you think he'll go into medicine?
- Marcus: I don't know, that's what he plans to. He's got the mind; he really has quite an intellect.
- Selix: What are the interests of the older boys?
- Marcus: The older boy had a birthday day before yesterday and I phoned and he was en route—his father told him he could do anything for his birthday, so he was en route to go to Los

Angeles; they are always traveling somewhere and doing the most crazy things [inaudible]. He wanted to go to a rock concert, so he invited three others, and they went down just for the evening to Los Angeles; it's two hours away. He's interested in political science; and I'll tell you a strange thing about him, he also took out six months from college last fall for the convention, the Democratic convention in Washington. He went back to Washington and his mother introduced him to Larry O'Brien. The second day that he was there *The Washington Post* came in to interview some people in the office and of all people—this is his second day—they pick on him and photograph a life size picture on the front. He was there just the one day! I thought that was so strange. All he was doing was filing, I'm sure, but he looked so important. I thought, "Well, isn't that something."

Selix: Where did the picture appear?

Marcus: In *The Washington Post*. My sister and my daughter said some of those people who are taking the doctorate degree in political science would give their eyetooth to have that opportunity. He must have gotten quite a bit out of it, because when he came back then to UC Santa Barbara, they had him lecture to the class about what he had done and what he had learned. Now it seems quite prosaic to him to read in a book but—

Bonn: Great experience.

Marcus: Yes.

Selix: With his background, he certainly should be a natural at political science.

Marcus: Yes, he should.

Selix: And how about the middle boy? What is the name of this oldest son?

Marcus: Jeffrey Marcus Oshins, and the little one is Robert.

Selix: What are his interests?

Marcus: He was on the radio at the college and he was interviewing people on the radio, the last time I saw him.

Selix: You mean a talking show?

Marcus: I don't know. Yes, talking all about the things they are doing at the college. The day that I heard it, he had a poetess girl in the college and was interviewing her and having her read poetry, and he commented on—I don't know whether he's an authority or not; that amused me [laughs]. I say that he should be a [inaudible] interviewer, because he interviews—it's like you, he has the same type of intelligence, I think, as you have.

Selix: Oh, really? I feel very complimented.

Marcus: Well, it's true; there are some people who can get information out of another person. I don't think I could, but since he was a very little boy, he was interested in [inaudible]—once he said, "Your hands are old, aren't they?" He looked at me, and then he came up

with questions that are embarrassing, at least for me it was. I rather think that it will be along that line. And he also is—I think he's dramatically talented. When he was in Vienna, they had picked him out for several plays; he's nice looking.

Selix: These children have gone to school all over the world practically.

Marcus: Yes, they have, they've been in more schools, and the International School in Vienna. That was a tremendous experience; they all want to go back there.

Selix: This is the end of the interview. The following information is narrated by Leah Selix. The husband of Sylvia is Luis J. Marcus, who was born October 12, 1888. His father had been the operator of a grocery store. The family came to America from Russia by way of Winnipeg, Canada, where Luis was born. Luis had a very successful career in his own beauty supply business of Marcus Lesoine. He started partial retirement at the age of fifty, was fully retired at sixty, and now at the age of eighty-five, he is a man of many hobbies. He golfs three mornings a week; he is a great lover of classical music, vocal preferred. He makes his own cassettes of which he now has over 100; among them, fifty arias by Enrico Caruso. His collection includes grand operas, operettas, musicals, and fine arias going back to original Redfield Records. He is a serious student, and recently acquired the Time Life series of thirty volumes on science, thirty volumes on geography covering every nation on earth, thirty volumes on nature, which traces the development of man. He has on order the series dealing with the encyclopedia of man, which traces man through the periods of evolution. The all time favorite readings of Luis are Shakespeare and Omar Kayyam.

Sylvia, no less active at the age of seventy-eight, plays golf and works out at a gym three days a week. They make frequent motor trips to Santa Barbara to visit their children, and then go on to Palm Springs. The two daughters are gifted. Ellen L. Oshins heads the legislature division of Common Cause. The daughter Elaine has had a theatrical career using the name of Elaine Sinclair. The husband of Ellen, Robert L. Oshins, has written [The Groaning of America, A Musical Fable for Our Times?]; book and lyrics by Robert L. Oshins, music by [Roger Chapman?] and [African Folk composers?], copyrighted 1970 by Robert L. Oshins under the title [Guilt?]. There was a showcase performance in February 1973 at University of California, Los Angeles, and it will be shown in Santa Barbara University of California in the fall of 1973.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—CELENE SHELDON OLSEN

INTERVIEW WITH CELENE SHELDON OLSEN

Date of interview: February 27, 1973

[Tape 10, Side A] 327

Funding for the Capp Street building after the earthquake and fire of 1906, a description of the building—Girls' Club classes, teachers, members—Family background—Parents' courtship, siblings—More on attending Girls' Club after earthquake and fire of 1906—Singing lessons at the Girls' Club—Career in singing, studying with professor Otto Fleissner, retiring from singing at age seventy-six—Marriage to Harold Matthew Olsen; daughters, grandchildren.

[Tape 10, Side B] 341

Sister, Catherine Sheldon, and her involvement with the Girls' Club—Catherine's marriage to Edward Gnos—Schooling, typing classes at Lux College—Courtship, husband and marriage—Spending time in Healdsburg, CA—Mother's activities at the Girls' Club, Stella Bonn, Delores Mothers' Club—German families in the Mission District and elsewhere in San Francisco—The earthquake and fire of 1906—Furniture in the family—Parents' relationship—Christmas at the Girls' Club.

INTERVIEW WITH CELENE SHELDON OLSEN

[Date of interview: February 27, 1973]

[Tape 10, Side A]

- Selix: When did you first hear of the Girls' Club, Celene?
- Olsen: After the earthquake and fire, as soon as the ground was cold enough, my grandfather built flats at 344 Capp Street. Soon after our flats were built the Girls' Club was built, so that should make it about 1907.
- Selix: Do you remember who the people were who made it possible for the building to be built?
- Olsen: Well, I can only say who was on the board as I remember when I was a little girl; that's a long time ago. Mrs. Moses Gunst Sr, Mrs. Leon Sloss Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Lilienthal, Mrs. Leon Guggenheim, Mrs. I.W. Helman.
- Selix: I have heard a story that after the early quarters of the Girls' Club had been burnt, this group of people got together at a dinner and pledged and in one evening pledged about \$40,000 to finance the building of the Capp Street building. Do you know whether or not that was how it was financed or—?
- Olsen: I think I was too young then to know that, because I think I must have been about ten or twelve years old, after the earthquake and fire. How old was I during—?
- Selix: Yes, and the members—at the time that you started at the Girls' Club, who was in charge of it?
- Olsen: Miss Rachel Wolfsohn and later on her sister joined her, Miss Eva, and then, of course, Miss Gussie always came in and out. Miss Gussie was a nurse. Miss Rachel was the head for as long as she was alive.
- Selix: What can you tell us about Rachel Wolfsohn? Can you tell us what she looked like?
- Olsen: Yes, I have a picture someplace around which I thought I could find for you. She was rather slim and very kind and very gentle to all children and really it was beautiful; it was a beautiful experience to be there. It was a marvelous, marvelous place.
- Selix: Can you describe the building?
- Olsen: Yes, there was a big courtyard in the middle and the building was sort of built on an L. The back room was a beautiful entertainment room like with a lovely, lovely fire place and a lovely stage where we used to have plays—well, just everything that was marvelous was held back there. Upstairs in the club were little workrooms.
- Selix: And the balcony.

Olsen: And the balcony was all little work rooms where you could take jewelry making, dress making, copper—you could do anything. After school you could go and take a class of this or that or the other thing.

Selix: They had drama.

Olsen: Drama.

Bonn: Did you go to the afternoon classes?

Olsen: No, seldom. But actually I started to take singing lessons; that was my first singing lesson.

Selix: Who was your teacher?

Olsen: Mrs. Simon. She was a pupil of Mrs. Blanchard and she took the young pupils first, before we were ready for Mrs. Blanchard, so I went to Mrs. Simon—

Selix: That wasn't Sarah Simon, was it, who was the mother of Ella and Sylvia?

Olsen: No, no, not that family. This was another Mrs. Simon.

Selix: At the time that the club was first built, where did the members live who attended?

Olsen: Most of the members lived right in the neighborhood. Seldom did they ever come from very far away.

Selix: They were within walking distance.

Olsen: Yes, they were.

Selix: Do you remember who any of the teachers were at the time, in the other groups?

Olsen: Well, let me see. I'm not quite sure about Mrs. [Charles] Stewart, whether she came later on, but she taught something. Of course, you know who else taught there for a while was Miss Eva and Miss Ray's mother.

Selix: Mary Wolfsohn.

Olsen: Mary Wolfsohn, the mother of both those girls.

Selix: What did she teach?

Olsen: Needlework, sewing, very, very beautiful little seams and things like that.

Selix: And darning?

Olsen: And darning. She taught all that, yes, that's true.

Selix: Isn't it true that most of the teachers who taught in the early days were volunteers?

- Olsen: Oh, they were all volunteers, all volunteers, except like when I took my singing lessons, I think that that was a very small amount. If it was a dollar, I don't know, because I couldn't remember back that far, and I didn't pay it then, of course.
- Bonn: It wouldn't have been a dollar unless it was a dollar a year.
- Olsen: No, it was very cheap.
- Selix: Maybe a dollar a month.
- Olsen: It could have been a dollar a month, it could have been that. And Mrs. Simon and I think Frederica Rohrer was one of us too, then.
- Selix: And what would you say was the ethnic and religious mixture of the members?
- Olsen: Oh my, everything; there was a mixture of everybody: Italian, and there might have been a few little Negro children there, too. There were lots of Jewish children, there were Irish, there was a mixture of everything.
- Selix: And every religious group.
- Olsen: Do you know what else I can remember? Do you know Mrs. Applegarth, the architect's wife?
- Bonn: Yes.
- Olsen: Well, when I was about in the teen ages, she taught ukulele there. She had a class of us, and I became her star pupil, as you know I still play, pardon me, very well. [laughs] The kids say, "Mom, do you have to do that?" Her name was Powers and she married Applegarth, the architect, and her sons are now—I think she's still alive. She was a lovely lady. She taught me all the Hawaiian tunes and how to play the ukulele, which I did for years and years and years.
- Selix: About what age were the girls when they joined the club?
- Olsen: They could be very small, and then when they got to be teenagers then the teenagers would bring their boyfriends and Mrs. Wolfsohn would have nice little dinner parties for the young people; she was a marvelous woman, in fact they both were.
- Selix: Wouldn't you say that the length of time that people went to that club—I always remember that Miss Eva Wolfsohn always said that once a club member, always a club member.
- Olsen: Right, I can remember her saying that myself.
- Selix: So some of us had periods of twenty-five to forty years in the club. Your own mother was in the club would you say how many years? From 1907 until—
- Olsen: From 1907 on until my mother almost passed away, until she—

- Bonn: Until she moved out of the neighborhood.
- Olsen: My mother never moved out of the neighborhood. My mother was still in her house.
- Bonn: Well, when she was sick.
- Olsen: Oh, yes we did. We moved from 344 Capp Street then with my grandmother and we moved up into Grandma's house, 437 Capp Street, opposite you.
- Bonn: I thought you had lived there all the time.
- Olsen: No, no. I was born on Guerrero Street and the fire took all of that and we were wiped out of everything, and then we moved in with my grandmother and grandfather at 437 Capp Street. Then as soon as the ashes were cool enough he built us the flats, you see, next to the Girls' Club. We lived there until my grandmother passed away and then my grandfather had to be taken care of and so we all moved back to 437 Capp Street to the old house.
- Selix: What year was it that your mother died? [tape interruption]
- Olsen: My mother had a continuous membership in the club for about fifty-six years until the time that she became ill and had to be taken to the hospital and then to a nursing home.
- Selix: Can you tell us the year of your mother's birth?
- Olsen: 1874 I think, because we have a little picture—Betty has a painting of Granny and I would say 1874, but I can look that all up.
- Selix: And when was your father born?
- Olsen: My father was born—now our name was Sheldon—my father was born in Sheldonville, Massachusetts.
- Selix: Oh, Sheldonville, Massachusetts, was named after your father's family?
- Olsen: Yes, my father's people. There is a graveyard there, and there is a museum.
- Selix: And do you know what year that was that your father was born in Sheldonville?
- Olsen: I'd have to look that up, because I have all that data but I haven't looked it up now. My father's house is still standing in Sheldonville, Massachusetts.
- Bonn: Whereabouts is that in Massachusetts?
- Olsen: Sheldonville must be near Newtonville. I have never been there but it is in Sheldon—
- Bonn: I always thought your father came from Boston.

- Olsen: No, Sheldonville. In fact, Papa brought out the first auxiliary fire alarms in the early days. Those little red boxes on the street in all the buildings? My father brought that system out here in the early days from back there, from the East.
- Bonn: Yes, and then he was always connected to the fire department.
- Olsen: We always had a ticker in our house, and we always had a telephone from the time I could even remember. That's how during the earthquake and fires we happened to have a horse and buggy, because we had him inspect all the fireboxes. You still had to break the glass like you do now.
- Selix: That was his occupation.
- Olsen: Yes, he brought that system out, the auxiliary fire alarm, in the early days.
- Selix: And what was his full name?
- Olsen: Francis Alonzo Sheldon.
- Selix: And what was your mother's maiden name?
- Olsen: Hildenbrand.
- Selix: And her mother and father, that would be the Hildenbrands, do you know what year they came to San Francisco?
- Olsen: I don't know, but my mother was born in San Francisco.
- Selix: But her mother was not?
- Olsen: No, her mother was born in Le Havre, France.
- Selix: And her father?
- Olsen: Did you know that her grandfather fought in the Civil War? I have the parchment where he got a little—what do you call it? from the government, \$12, I think; my great-grandmother used to get \$12 a month.
- Selix: A pension from the Civil War.
- Olsen: Yes, a pension from the Civil War, I think, was \$12 a month.
- Bonn: This was your grandmother's—
- Olsen: This was my great-grandmother's husband, Peter Heckman was that name. Jan has their pictures in a gorgeous frame; she's going to do something with the frame. I have the parchment dismissing him from the Civil War; he was discharged.

- Selix: You have so much material that it's going to be difficult to keep this in some kind of a chronological order, but let's go back to the courtship of your mother, when your father courted your mother.
- Olsen: That's very interesting because my father was an early-comer to San Francisco and my mother was—well, she must have dressed very well because my grandmother always had a kind of a couturier for her every time she would go someplace. My father belonged to the Red Men in early days and they led the cotillions and my mother always was—you can see by her clothes and her shape, she had a little bit of a waistline, you know, and she dressed very well. My father was [white?] and he was very young too; he was quite a handsome man when he was young. So he courted her at 437 Capp Street.
- Selix: And he used to use a horse-drawn vehicle.
- Olsen: Well yes, he had a horse and buggy.
- Selix: Oh, he had his own horse and buggy?
- Olsen: It was for the fire alarm company, you see, because he was inspector. He brought that system here in the early days and that's what he had if he had to go out if there was a fire. Then he'd have to go and put new glass in and report that. We had a ticker in our house from the time I could even remember.
- Selix: What year were your mother and father married?
- Olsen: I don't know. I don't know. If I knew when this picture was, if it said on the back—. There's no sign. I don't know. [tape interruption]
- My mother and father were married in 1895 in San Francisco at 437 Capp Street, in the living room of a house that is still standing on Capp Street.
- Selix: Tell us about that house. I understand that as long as your mother lived there that she never had a gas stove; she always cooked on a wood stove.
- Olsen: Right. Of course, in early days nobody had a gas stove except a gas plate, but you see there were no fireplaces. There were no furnaces in those days; there was nothing. So my grandfather used to order a ton of coal and put it in the back shed, and they'd stoke this kitchen stove with coal, coal, coal. It would be red hot and my grandmother used to call me and say, "Come Bobby, come and dress yourself where it's warm," if I'd stay all night, you know. I'd go into the kitchen with my clothes, and I'd dress in front of the fire.
- Selix: You mentioned the name Bobby, tell us why you were called Bobby instead of Celene.
- Olsen: Yes, that's very interesting because I was the first born and my mother and father had selected the name Robert for my name. It so happened that I wasn't a boy but a girl and so they nicknamed me Bobby, and I've been Bobby ever since to people who know me best.
- Selix: And how many years later was your sister born?

Olsen: Seven years later my sister was born. Well, my brother comes next. My brother was born—twenty-two months after I was born my mother thought she had a tapeworm, and she went to the doctor and she said, “I think, doctor, I have a tapeworm; I don’t feel very good.” He examined her and he said, “I think Mrs. Sheldon, your little tapeworm will come around October the first and my brother was born October the first.”

Selix: What was your brother’s full name?

Olsen: Same as my father, he was a junior, Francis Alonzo Sheldon Jr. My sister was seven months old during the earthquake and fire time and she was—

Selix: Well, then she was born in 1900.

Olsen: Right.

Selix: And your sister’s full name?

Olsen: My sister’s full name is Catherine Sheldon [Gross].

Selix: And why was she called Pete?

Olsen: Because, that’s very interesting, Dr. Peter Kearney—and this also is very interesting if you ever read *Mammy Pleasant*?

Bonn: Yes.

Olsen: The doctor who attended when this person fell down the stairs and this book *Manny Pleasant* in this old fashioned house—Dr. Peter Kearney was the doctor in those days and Dr. Peter Kearney was called, and he was the doctor who brought us all into the world. He had short little legs and his name was Peter Kearney, and that’s the reason why when Pete was born—she was a small baby with short legs and they named her Pete after the doctor, after Peter Kearney.

Bonn: That’s her nickname.

Olsen: Her nickname, yes.

Selix: My main recollection of the Sheldon family was when I was about ten years old and lived in the Mission district. Your sister, Pete Sheldon, took me to Sunday School every week to the Trinity Sunday School at Twenty-third and Capp Street.

Olsen: And you know what, let me tell you something else, this is off the record—

[tape interruption]

It seems strange that you mention Trinity Presbyterian Church because I went there as a little girl myself. After I was quite a seasoned singer and had many a church job, they were going to do over the organ at Twenty-third and Capp Street. Uda Waldrop was hired to be the organist and I was hired to be the soloist to open that new organ, and that place was jam-packed. Mama and I walked up Capp Street, she went with me, and then

we came outside because there was a round of applause—I sang “Praise the Lord on My Soul” by [inaudible], I’ll never forget it. They applauded so much my mother said to me, “I am so proud of you.” Nobody in my family talked like that to me; they took me with a grain of salt, really. So anyhow, I dedicated that organ, and it seems so strange that you went to that church, and I went to that Sunday school myself.

Selix: I don’t remember you in my childhood, but I do remember going to Sunday school with your sister.

Olsen: Well, because, you see, she’s seven years younger.

Selix: Was she teaching at the school?

Olsen: No.

Selix: No, she wasn’t. Let’s go back to the Girls’ Club and tell us when you first started going to the Girls’ Club, when it was first built on Capp Street, which was 1907 and Rachel Wolfsohn was in charge. Why did you start going to the Girls’ Club?

Olsen: Because as I said, it was after the earthquake and fire and as soon as the ashes were cold enough my grandfather built flats where our old flats were, and of course it was all burnt down, flat. Everything was burnt on that side of the street so that the block including 437 Capp and 344, all that was just flat. Mission Street was all flat up to a certain point.

Selix: No, not 437 Capp, that didn’t burn.

Olsen: No, but across the street, that side burned down. As soon as the ashes were cold, Grandpa built the flats at 344 Capp, and soon after we built the flat, then the Girls’ Club was built.

Selix: And you started immediately.

Olsen: Immediately.

Selix: And what classes did you take when you started?

Olsen: I think I did take some sewing, and I took the ukulele lessons from Mrs. Applegarth, who was then Miss Powers; she was a charming lady, too. Then I took singing lessons from Mrs. Simons and later on with Madam Blanchard.

Selix: Let’s follow your career from—how many years did you spend in the Girls’ Club in singing lessons?

Olsen: Well, I can tell you when I was married, so I can tell you it was almost up to 1917 because I was married in 1919, after my husband came back from the First World War; he was gone for two years.

Selix: You were in the club as a child up until the time you were married, which was a period of about twelve years.

- Olsen: Yes, because Miss Eva Wolfsohn gave me for my engagement a beautiful brass bowl from the [inaudible] which I just gave to Betty; it's a beautiful one too, beautiful one, beautiful.
- Bonn: But you were a member all the time; even after you got married you were still a member.
- Olsen: I was a member, and I used to go back with your sister, Add, and do all the singing for the Christmas programs and all the things. Your sister would accompany me, and I would sing all the Christmas things and do anything that I could there. And then, of course, I sang for the funeral for Miss—I'm not sure if it was for Miss Gussie or Miss Ray I sang for, in the big room.
- Selix: Miss Eva.
- Olsen: It was Eva.
- Selix: It was Miss Eva's funeral.
- Olsen: Yes, it was held in the big room and I did "But the Lord is Mindful of His Own" from the oratorio Elijah.
- Selix: And Mr. Mortimer Fleishhacker Sr. gave the eulogy?
- Olsen: Yes, I believe so.
- Selix: When did you first learn that you had a singing voice?
- Olsen: Well, I think from the time I was little and I would hum a little bit, I discovered I had a voice. All through my school days I led the—oh, I was just always singing, always singing. I went on to Lux College for Women where I went to high school there and the college part too, and I was always doing singing for them, too. I have always sung, but it was from the Girls' Club that I first took my singing lessons, from Miss Simons and then Mrs. Blanchard, and I studied with Mrs. Blanchard long after my children were born.
- Bonn: Bobby, you have such a beautiful voice, how come you weren't an opera star singer?
- Olsen: Never liked it. I always stayed very close to church music; I loved the real church music, I loved that. I have stacks and stacks and stacks. I have two solos of everything I've ever sung.
- Bonn: Do you have recordings?
- Olsen: Oh yes, we did "King David" at Trinity Episcopal Church, and I have a recording of Elijah. I have a recording of some of the other things we did at Trinity.
- Bonn: You should have, because you have such a beautiful voice.
- Selix: Did you always sing solo?

- Olsen: Yes, I always sang solo. I never did any chorus work until I went to Trinity Church.
- Selix: What range was your voice?
- Olsen: Mezzo, mezzo, always mezzo, never very high.
- Selix: And what were some of your experiences as a singer?
- Olsen: I had so many of them, it seems that's all I ever knew. I was not a very good housekeeper, I'll tell you that; my thoughts never went to good housekeeping or the vacuum cleaner. When my children were born I would rush down with my babies to my mother at 437 Capp Street, and I'd leave them at my mother's. I'd go for my singing lessons, or I'd go to my rehearsals for the First Presbyterian Church or the other churches I sang in. Then I'd come back in the traffic and I'd pick up my babies and go home and get the dinner on the table, and iron a shirt quickly and—I wonder how in the world I ever had the ambition to do—because I wanted to sing so badly.
- Selix: Was your family sympathetic to your singing?
- Olsen: Very. My father and mother very much, but my husband never was.
- Selix: Your husband didn't appreciate your singing.
- Olsen: No, he didn't appreciate it at all because I earned money with it and could buy things that maybe he wouldn't buy, and I would—that was very bad. [laughs] Anyhow, my father was my guiding light always. No matter where I went to sing I would call my father and he would say, "Do your best. I know you can do it." That's all I needed, that's all I ever needed, no matter how big the auditorium was filled.
- Selix: What were some of the churches that you sang in for long periods of time?
- Olsen: I first went—and that was—this was very strange because it was during the first World War and my first job as a substitute singer was at Tenth and Howard at a Catholic church. Mrs. Blanchard, my singing teacher then, had been a soloist there years and years and years before and she said, "Why don't you go down to Tenth and Howard?" I used to sing [Savve Regine?] or something, you know, with the Latin words, and she would coach me in it. And of course my voice was very young then and very strong, and Tenth and Howard was filled, filled, a packed church with Irish people from Tenth and Howard, you know. I used to sing solos there and they might have paid me two dollars-and-a-half because the Catholic Church was the worst pay in the world; oh, it was just terrible. So I would go and I would sing there.
- Finally the organist said to me, "Miss Sheldon, there's a job open at the First Presbyterian Church at Sacramento and Van Ness. I think you have a very good chance of getting it." I said, "Oh, I couldn't do it." "Go and talk to Mr. Otto Fleissner, who is the organist there, Professor Otto Fleissner" and she said, "I almost am positive he will take you." I said, "I haven't got the nerve to go." She says, "If I call him up and tell him you are coming will you go?" I said, "Yes, I'll go."

So I went and I knocked at the door at the First Presbyterian Church, and I said, "I'm Celene Sheldon and the organist at Tenth and Howard—I forget what the lady's name was who was the organist at Tenth and Howard—she sent me, and she thought you'd like to hear me." He said to me, "How old are you?" and I think I was nineteen. He said, "You haven't had too much experience, but your voice is lovely for oratorio." I sang all of the sacred songs I knew for him, and he said, "You know what—and we were wearing the flu masks at the time; San Francisco had the flu then. He said, "Let me hear you again." So we went into the organ—and the big church is still there at Sacramento and Van Ness, the First Presbyterian Church. The contralto job was open and my voice was always mezzo and he said, "Young lady, I would like to hire you, and I would like to train you the way I want to train you in oratorio." He knew Mrs. Blanchard very well and he said, "Between Mrs. Blanchard and me, we should make a very good church singer out of you."

And you see, that's what always guided me, because I had the most magnificent help from Professor Otto Fleissner who taught me all the oratorios I ever knew, every oratorio which is beautiful, I knew all those solos, and Mrs. Blanchard, who coached me with the oratorios solos besides, so I had two gorgeous coaches. I always said that I owed everything to Mrs. Blanchard and to Professor Otto Fleissner for all of the marvelous things that came to pass. And, of course, from that First Presbyterian Church I had so many weddings. I met a girl just the other day and I sang at her wedding fifty years ago.

Bonn: Is your voice as good today as it was then?

Olsen: Well, I'll sing to you later on. [laughs]

Selix: How many years did you sing at the First Presbyterian Church?

Olsen: At the First Presbyterian Church I went and I stayed eighteen solid years, sang two services every Sunday. At the meantime, my young man came back from the war and I got married, and do you know, the night that I was married I sang a solo. I remember it was a lovely gray dress and I perspired so, that I had a great big mark under the arm.

Selix: Were you singing at your own wedding?

Olsen: Not especially, but I had to do the church service before I went to get married; he wouldn't let me off until Sunday night. I sang two services, you see, every Sunday and went to a rehearsal besides.

Selix: Did you also sing for private parties and weddings?

Olsen: Oh, I sang for everything! And I sang for funerals and at [Halstead's?] and of course Mr.—the man who owned the funeral parlors on Divisadero—

Selix: Gray.

Olsen: N. Gray and Company. His uncle started that and he was a member of the First Presbyterian Church and every time they needed a contralto I was asked to sing. That was sometimes fifteen dollars and sometimes ten dollars for two hymns. And, of course,

ten dollars for one hymn or two hymns was very easy money; you just opened your mouth. I discovered that in my early married life, it was so easy for me to open my mouth, and I could earn money, and that's the reason why I used to buy all—but I always made up my mind, I would never use any of my singing money for groceries, never, so I never did. So as a result I have all the things that I bought.

Selix: You have beautiful things.

Olsen: They couldn't afford to keep us any longer, during the Depression, the quartet; they had a paid quartet of which I was the alto. I sang with many famous people, because I was always the youngest one. All the rest were older singers, more seasoned than I was, but I had a very fresh voice because when you're young your voice is very fresh. The older ones had the experience, but you don't buy experience, you have to go through it yourself. They couldn't afford to keep the quartet any longer and they dismissed the two men, and they kept Muriel Bates and I on for six years, singing duets every Sunday; two services every Sunday until finally the church got—at that time churches were doing badly.

They gave us a gorgeous reception and we were dismissed, with gorgeous overnight bags with all the trimmings inside, but oh how I cried. Oh, I cried, because I loved Otto Fleissner, the professor; he was my guiding light and he adored me and I adored him. He always said he wished I was his daughter-in-law. His wife was dear, too. They were dear people, very cultured people, and I tended that. I never liked anything that was very ordinary, never in my life. That's the reason my husband used to always say I had my nose in the air, but it wasn't that at all; I just didn't like ordinary things. I never liked a man that was ordinary and that's the reason I hated fishing and hunting, because my husband loved that fishing, and I used to hate it.

Then from there I had—Muriel Bates went to sing at the Trinity Church at Bush and Gough; it's the oldest Episcopal church in San Francisco. Benjamin S. Moore was the organist then and they didn't have a paid soloist then. Oh, first—I beg your pardon—first I was sitting in what used to be our breakfast room when the children were small, which I've made into a little sitting room for myself. The telephone rang upstairs and I ran up stairs and it was Andy Robertson, the man who was organizing the quartet at a Baptist church in Oakland, if you please. He offered me a fantastic salary and I said, "Yes, I'll do it," because I was miserable without singing. Oh, I was very miserable. My husband said, "You're not going to take that job, are you?" I said, "Yes, I am." But my dear, I took that job and I crossed the bay four times on Sunday. Four times because I sang two services every Sunday at Twenty-second and Broadway, at that Baptist church.

In the Baptist church they dunk the people; they baptize them under the water. The minister loved me there, too, and I loved the people but a—a lot of colored people belonged there, and they would sing "Hallelujah, Amen!" I wasn't used to that kind of thing because the Presbyterians are very staid; they are fine people. So anyhow, I stood it as long as I could, and I guess I got to be more than a bore and maybe on the verge of a nervous breakdown, which I was, and my husband said it was either the job or him or the children or something, and I quit that job. I wrote a letter and I said, "Please accept my resignation to take place immediately," and I got a right letter back saying, "What has happened? We like you so much!" Well, I couldn't go any further, you see, I was on

the verge of a nervous breakdown. I was home for nearly a year before I would go to start to sing again.

Then Benjamin Moore, who was considered the best organist in San Francisco at the Trinity Episcopal Church at Bush and Gough—Muriel Bates had gone to sing with him and I knew some other people there. They would love to have me come but they didn't have any money to pay me. I said, "I'll come for nothing, just to sing again. I'll come for nothing." I went and, of course, I sang for nothing for awhile, and I got very close in the hearts of all of those people because I stayed twenty-one years.

Selix: Singing voluntarily?

Olsen: No, no, no, then I became a paid soloist for many, many, many, many, many years. That's where "King David" is from, which is a magnificent oratorio by [inaudible], too.

Selix: I think that's the performance that Add and I went to, to hear you.

Olsen: It was jam-packed. You know Cantor Feldman from Sherith Israel was the tenor soloist in there, and we had an orchestra. [inaduable] was the concert violinist. Oh, we had a magnificent time! I sang that, yes, I did.

Bonn: We were there.

Olsen: Were you there?

Selix: We went to that performance, I remember.

Olsen: Did you? Did you really? Now for heaven's sake, I don't even know where that program came—it was with those pictures, but that was a magnificent performance.

[muffled pause in conversation]

—until I didn't like it any longer. I couldn't stand it any longer and my family—
[laughs] Then I left there. I left there, but I stayed for twenty-one years. In the meantime, of course, I sang at the synagogue.

Selix: On Saturdays.

Olsen: At Beth Israel and all the holiday time, which I adored. I loved Cantor Cycowski. He was the grandest cantor.

Bonn: Which temple is this?

Olsen: That's the one at Fillmore and Geary. So many people I used to know from the Girls' Club used to go there, and I'd see them. That temple holds about 2,500 people. My!

Bonn: It's not there any longer, is it?

Olsen: Yes, it's still there, but the temple has moved to Brotherhood Way, Beth Israel has moved to Brotherhood Way, and now they rent that out. Oh, how I used to love my

holiday time. I loved doing it with Benjamin Liederman at Sherith Israel because that temple, you know, survived the earthquake and fire.

Bonn: Which one is that?

Olsen: Webster and California. That temple survived the earthquake and fire and then, you know, the Superior Court was held there after the earthquake and fire. I sang with Benjamin Liederman. He was the cantor and he had a voice like—he was a miserable man to get along with, very miserable. I was there for six years and then I went to sing with Cantor Cycowski, and I stayed there for fifteen years for all the holiday time, and oh, I just loved him. He had a great, big, immense voice and I loved him; I just loved doing that. If I miss anything now at all—it's only about four years now that I don't do holiday work anymore—if there's anything I miss, it's holiday time. In the synagogue, there's no printed music; it is all manuscript. Everything is manuscript and once you know all the ritual, it's like in the Catholic Church; it's just a different musical setting; you just get different musical settings. If you sing, "Shma Yisroel, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad," that comes in every kind of setting. So when you once learn it—that's the reason why they keep you so long, see? Do you know June Wilkins that sings with the Lamplighters?

Bonn: No.

Olsen: Georgia Prugh?

Bonn: No.

Olsen: Georgia Prugh sang with me for years and years. She's going to do the Lamplighters right now. June Wilkins was the alto with us; we were twelve singers, and it sounded like opera. When you get twelve good voices together, it's magnificent, very thrilling, very thrilling. You can count all this up on your fingers, and you know I didn't have time for anything else. I belonged to the St. Francis Woods Music Club, but they were all so terribly snooty they made me—none of them could sing.

Bonn: Very dull.

Olsen: Nobody could sing except me, to tell you the truth, and I did all the singing while they did all the snooting. It used to make me wild. [laughter]

Selix: Did you sing for any other church after the [inaudible] that we—

Olsen: No, no, no.

Selix: You quit completely.

Olsen: I quit completely because it was time. Don't forget, I'm just seventy-six years old. Don't you think it was time? There's time for living, and there's time for dying, and it's time to do all these things. But I sing for my neighbors now, to tell you the truth, because I have a darling colonel across the street and every time I sit down to the piano he comes out to shine his car. [laughs] He loves "Love is a Many Splendored Thing." He had a love affair, I think, when he was stationed in Japan, and, of course, that was

centered in Japan. Every time he comes over to fix something for me, which I call on him regularly, not having a man in the house; I'm living alone in this house, why, I'll say to him, "Would you like a little drink?" Sometimes he stays a little longer than he should, because his wife is a little on the nervous side; she has a little nervous trouble. The first thing he says is, "Why don't you sit down and play something for me?" I say, "What do you want me to sing?" He says, "Love is a Many-Splendored Thing." So I sit down and I play and then sometimes the phone rings, and she'll say, "Will you tell the colonel his dinner is getting cold?" I say, "He's going down the back steps right now." [laughs] I call on him for everything; he's a dear man, a dear, dear man.

Selix: What year were you married?

Olsen: I was married—my husband went to the First World War and was gone for two solid years.

Selix: What was your husband's full name?

Olsen: Harold Matthew Olsen. I can appreciate these people coming back from the war now because after him gone for two years it was like kissing the policeman on his block, on the street; it really was. It was like meeting a strange man all over again. I was married October the 19, 1919. Then in '21 my first child was born. I was singing at the First Presbyterian Church then, and I left for one month and went back again after one month.

Bonn: What is your oldest daughter's name?

Olsen: My oldest daughter's name is Betty Ann Oman. And seven years after that I had another daughter; they are seven years apart, Janet Tippett. They are both married to the most magnificent, successful, handsome young men, and I have the most handsome grandchildren you have ever seen in your life.

Selix: How many grandchildren do you have?

Olsen: Jan, the youngest one, has two; she has a boy and a girl. The little boy is sixteen now.

Bonn: Sixteen years old?

Olsen: He is sixteen, and he looks just like his father: tall, blond and very handsome. Frank Tippett is six-foot-two or three. Philip Tippett is sixteen and Cathy Tippett is going to be twenty-one pretty soon. And Betty, my oldest granddaughter, was just married on September 2, and she was twenty-three years old; it's the only one they have. So I have three magnificent grandchildren and my children are beautiful children. Frank Oman is the vice president of the [McKeown?] properties. He built—

[Tape 10, Side B]

Olsen: Frank Oman is the husband of my oldest daughter Betty and he is the president of the Marin division of [McKeown?] Properties. They have but one daughter who was just married, and she's twenty-three.

- Selix: What did your sister, Catherine or Pete Sheldon, study at the Girls' Club?
- Olsen: Well, my sister, who is seven years younger than myself, studied with the Anita Peters Wright dance group at the Girls' Club. She became very, very good at it and loved it and had a chance to really go on the road with them, but our parents wouldn't allow it, and she always regretted it. She just loved it, and it started from the Girls' Club.
- Selix: And how many years did she go to the Girls' Club?
- Olsen: Oh, she went years and years and years. She graduated from Lux in '24. She must have gone until 1920 or 1919, I'm pretty sure.
- Selix: In other words, she went until she was married.
- Olsen: Yes, she did.
- Selix: And who did she marry?
- Olsen: She married Edward Gness, whose family owned a great deal of property in Novato and they owned thousands of chickens; egg people in Novato. At that time, they had a lot of chicken ranches in Novato. She lived in San Francisco for awhile and then he became ill, and they had this little house on some of the land. He had to get out of the city, so they took this little house. It was very warm, you know, and very, kind of, dusty in Novato in those days when she moved to Novato. They did over the house and kept adding one room after the other until it's really darling now, since that time, and they have never moved back to San Francisco. He's retired now anyhow. They have no children; they concentrated on one dog after the other. They had really hard luck with their dogs, too.
- Bonn: There's an airfield up there by the name of Gness. Is this related to the family?
- Olsen: Is there really?
- Bonn: Yes, I think maybe it's for his brother.
- Olsen: Maybe it is, for the supervisor; he was supervisor. Which Gness is that now? Bill Gness, yes, that's his brother.
- Bonn: He has just the one brother?
- Olsen: No, three; he's got three brothers. He's a fine man, too. You talk about somebody waiting on me. I don't know how I'd do if I didn't have somebody wait on me. In the next world, I'm going to be a daddy woman or something else, to tell you the truth; that's the truth. He waits on her hand and foot, and she's always got something wrong with her. She's had one thing after the other. They're very happy, very happy together, very happy.
- Selix: And your brother Frank, did he ever attend the Girls' Club? I know that some of the men in the neighborhood did belong to the orchestra.

- Olsen: No, he didn't because he worked very early. He became a pattern maker. He went to Lick [Wilmerding High School] and he was always very good with his hands. About the third year at Lick when he took pattern making, he got an offer to go into a pattern shop and, heavens, he made money hand-over-fist as a pattern maker. He worked and worked and worked until, of course, when he died, he owned his own shop, you know.
- Selix: A pattern-making shop?
- Olsen: Yes, Sheldon Pattern Works, oh yes; he was very good at it, very good. But my grandfather was always very good, too, with his hands. [tape interruption]
- Selix: What grade school did the three of you attend in the Mission district?
- Olsen: All of us went to the Marshall Primary School, which is on [Julian?] Avenue and Sixteenth Street and still is there. Then the Mission Grammar School, which was brand new after the earthquake and fire, because that all had burnt, you know, and that was a brand new school then. Then from Mission Grammar School—I graduated from there and then I went to Lux, and my brother, when he graduated, he went to Lick.
- Selix: Companion schools.
- Olsen: Yes, they're tuition schools. It's work you do with your hands, the [inaudible]
- Selix: Vocational school.
- Olsen: Vocational school, but they "do the common things of life uncommonly well," was their motto. Yes, "Do the common things of life uncommonly well." I just read in the paper a few nights ago that Lick, down here on Ocean Avenue, is going to be coeducational now; they never had girls before at Lick. So when I graduated from Lux my sister entered in—but she graduated in '24 from Lux, and I graduated in '15. I also sang at the 1915 fair, out in the open if you please, and I accompanied myself on a grand piano and guess what I sang. Because Lux College put on the whole day out there, and I sang "The End of a Perfect Day," Carrie Jacobs-Bond.
- Bonn: This is the 1915 fair?
- Olsen: Yes sir, yes sir.
- Selix: Wasn't it during 1915 that Rachel Wolfsohn died?
- Olsen: I couldn't tell you that.
- Selix: I seem to remember that it was the year of the 1915 fair that she died.
- Olsen: I have a lovely picture of her standing in a doorway as you go in, you know, in a long white dress. I have it someplace, and if I come across it I'll save it.
- Selix: When we first arrived at your home today you showed us the beautiful china bowl that you said you had bought from the Lux school just before they demolished the building.

Olsen: Right. Because, you see, Mrs. Pheobe Apperson Hearst, she gave us our diplomas when we graduated, and we made our own graduation dresses, if you please. There were only a few in the class; it was a very small school. She was one of the sponsors of that school and so that came from her own beautiful house in Pleasanton. One day she sent a private train for us, and the whole school went to her house in Pleasanton. And again, in her living room, Miss [Theresa] Otto, the dean, said—she left a note for me at the school, “Celene, see me. TMO.” That was “Theresa Otto.” She was the dean of girls at the school. We were going to go to Mrs. Hearst’s house in Pleasanton, and I was to sing, “The End of a Perfect Day” after we were finished, and that’s exactly what I did. She said, “Remember now, she likes you, she might do something to further your musical education.” So I sat down at the piano—so that’s the reason why when she gave that to our school for the dining room we used it. We always had a lot of fruit in the dining room. I loved that bowl and I knew it was very nice and somebody else may not like it and somebody else maybe—I know how much it’s worth. It’s worth a lot of money and it’s worth a lot, because I know where it came from, and if you wanted to buy it you couldn’t buy it now because it’s in China anyhow. So I put in my bid for it and they said, “Celene, you have first choice of it.” So I had first choice to buy it when—they sold that whole building to a union of some kind. It was a beautiful building with beautiful murals inside. So that’s how I happened to buy that bowl, that beautiful, beautiful Canton bowl.

Bonn: Wasn’t Lux out around—

Olsen: Seventeenth Street and Hampshire.

Bonn: Oh, is that where it was? I know the building, yellow brick.

Olsen: Yes, yes.

Selix: In later years I know that Miss Eva used to get volunteers from Lux school to come and teach classes at the Girls’ Club.

Olsen: Yes, that’s right, that’s right, because every student went in—. In fact, I took millenary one semester and even after Jan got married—and, you see, I was alone in this house then because my husband had flown. My father said, “You must have something to do besides your singing.” So I called Miss Smith up, the new dean at the school, which I didn’t know as well as Miss Otto, and I said, “This is Celene Sheldon Olsen, I graduated in—” “Oh,—” she said, “of course, of course.” I said, “You know, I was just wondering if you’d have some room for me to take a typing course?” She said “Celene, come over. We’ll arrange something for you,” and I went to Lux College and took two semesters of typing.

Selix: What age were you then?

Olsen: Well, my youngest daughter was married, mind you, and I wanted something to do. And you know, Dr. Harry True, who was a very fine—he was a member of my church too, the Trinity Church. He had lost his wife, and I knew his wife, and he was very fond of me. He had written a dental textbook and that’s considered something, and he had me all started out, you see. He was on the board of directors at Lux College, because they taught a dental assistant course and he was the head of that. So while I was still taking

my typing course, word came to the office, “Mrs. Olsen, Dr. True is going to call you.” I thought, “Oh my God, what does he want now?” He was a little bit older than I was but he always had his eye on me, he loved my singing, and so forth and so on. So I called him, and he wanted to take me to the graduation because he had a group of girls there, dental assistants, you see. He had his eye on me for a long while but you know, I don’t think I ever cried so much in my life because I was in love with somebody else anyhow.

When he came to the door the last time here—. Of course, first he would pay for my dinner at church and he would say he’d like to take me to the opera. He took me to the opera and he took me to this and took me to that. Then he wanted me to go with him to see his flat on the marina, and he took me down there after a beautiful dinner and something else and oh, I just didn’t like [it?]. And of course, he took my coat, and then he wanted to show me where his Mary died—I knew his wife—where she slept, where her sewing box was. Then he said, “You’re not afraid of what the neighbors say?” and I said, “Of course not, of course not.” He used to come here then, every once in awhile and take me someplace. Then last time he came he wanted to play duets with me, and he came with a little Japanese parasol, and when I opened the door he stood with a Japanese parasol over his head. I didn’t insult him, but I gave him his duet books back again and I closed the door and I cried like a fool. I thought, “That’s the last time—” And you know, there was a woman in church who had her eye on him, much older than myself, Edith, and I loved her, too. I liked her very much, but she had her eye on him. Really, she was well brought up, and she was more his age and she fit into his life.

Bonn: She got him?

Olsen: She married him, and I became very friendly with her, too. Very, very, very. I used to go to dinner at their house too. They lived in this gorgeous Victorian house; it was her house. So I’ve had many a heartache, you know.

Selix: What year did you marry your husband?

Olsen: October 19, 1919. I would have been married [tape interruption] sixty-four years.

Selix: What was your husband’s occupation?

Olsen: He was a diesel engine man with Fair Banks Morse and Company. He was with them until finally he went to Salt Lake City and was a branch manager of the Salt Lake City branch; he had a very fine position. He was up there for about eight years.

Selix: Oh, did he travel back and forth?

Olsen: Oh yes, he used to come back and forth. It was very difficult when he used to come back, though. I wouldn’t do that again, never, never.

Selix: But he took care of the family?

Olsen: Oh heavens, yes, of course! He would say, “Who pays your taxes? Who takes care of you?” For me he was very independent and, of course, I don’t think he ever could put his foot in the threshold unless he was well-fortified, which—. Of course, I would be

standing all ready to go sing or something, like he'd come Christmas time, and I never took a drink and I was always very well-groomed. I think he knew just before he opened his mouth that I could even—. He used to always say I could smell it over the telephone [laughter]. It was true. That became very difficult.

Selix: What year did he die?

Olsen: He died in '68.

Selix: At what time was he in the navy?

Olsen: In the interim, when business was so terrible he went into the navy for a few years.

Selix: Was that during the Depression?

Olsen: Yes.

Selix: What rank did he attain in the navy?

Olsen: Command in the navy.

Selix: He was a lieutenant commander?

Olsen: He was a smart guy. He really was, very smart.

Selix: He enjoyed being a uniformed man?

Olsen: He sure did. He sure did. [with a tone of resignation]

Selix: And he was a great sportsman.

Olsen: Well, we had 160 acres in Dry Creek, out of Healdsburg, where we had our country house and a whole grove of redwood trees. When our children were little we used to go there, because he loved it so much and I used to hate the very place. It was magnificent—Pop and Mamma used to go up—you remember, they used to go up there all the time. The most beautiful place after we got there but you know, city-minded girls don't like that, especially when your children are small. The rattlesnakes were under the house! The redwood trees were as big as [Armstrong's?]; it was beautiful. And, of course, he had his beautiful guns; he had all of his men friends that drank and loved to shoot, and they'd bring down the bucks like nobody's business. They'd go every weekend and they were drinking men. They were men that liked that kind of stuff. I got so that I couldn't stand it any longer.

Bonn: And you had to cook venison.

Olsen: Oh, I used to hate that dumb stuff. I used to hate it and hate it. Of course, our children were small—. I don't suppose you ever heard the story of Ruth [Hanson?] stayed up there with Betty when Betty was little. Betty ran underneath the house and here a rattlesnake was right there. Harold had left a gun for her, even filled it with a bullet in it, and told her if she ever needed it, it was all loaded. Betty ran up to her and screamed

“Rattlesnake, rattlesnake, under the house!” Ruth went downstairs and she didn’t even aim and she shot the whole pistol of bullets and she killed it.

But you know, the wild azaleas and the tiger lilies, just a magnificent place. We didn’t sell it until after he died. My son-in-laws can’t catch a fish. They can’t even put a worm on a hook, neither one of them; they can’t!

Selix: Well, maybe their wives are just as happy about that.

Olsen: They are. Oh, my children don’t like it. I didn’t want it either, but my husband got so he strayed with somebody who liked it, don’t you see.

Selix: We would like to hear about your mother’s activities at the Girls’ Club, when, at that time, a woman was not allowed to become a member of the Mother’s Club unless she had a daughter enrolled in the Girls’ Club.

Olsen: I believe that’s right.

Selix: And your mother had two daughters enrolled in the Girls’ Club and Adrienne’s mother had two daughters enrolled in the Girls’ Club. What were your mother’s activities at the club?

Olsen: Well, I think Grandma very often brought the sugar for the girls’ party. I think Grandma used to see to it that they got two pounds of sugar or five pounds of sugar, cubed sugar, but I don’t know if she had that many activities. Oh, I think Add’s mother and my mother used to go and set the tables. Your mother would pick up my mother and then go and set the tables for their parties.

Bonn: There were party days, but there were also workdays.

Olsen: My mother never sewed.

Bonn: It didn’t matter; they still went anyway.

Olsen: Oh, they did.

Bonn: And they would wrap things and—

Olsen: If my mother had a slip that was too long, your darling mother would take it up for her.

Bonn: Oh, would she?

Olsen: When she had her birthday parties, you know, and all the old girls and I’d go down and see if we could order sandwiches from the catering place, and those old gals would come, “Oh, my—” [inaudible] She’d order cakes by the wholesale and my grandmother’s big dining room table would be filled with all these women, and I used to bring down my silver servers; it was a waste of time. Anyhow, I used to work like a slave for them.

Bonn: Was this your mother’s house?

- Olsen: Mama's house, Mama's house. Sometimes I would order a cake down there for her; sometimes we'd do that.
- Selix: You mean at the club?
- Olsen: At the club. Sometimes we'd order a cake sent down there for the girls. She liked that, too. She liked any attention.
- Selix: There were about forty women in that Mother's Club group at the time.
- Olsen: I don't know how many because they came and—how many are in that picture about? Can you count them?
- Selix: That was 1940, that's recent.
- Bonn: In 1940, there was a special day at the World's Fair at Treasure Island. Twenty-nine ladies appeared on the stage at Treasure Island and that was their day. The name of their group was the Dolores Mother's Club. But then wasn't there a change of name?
- Olsen: I don't know.
- Bonn: Oh I know, there was the Dolores Mother's Club and then there became a Grandmother's Club, because all these young women were coming into the Dolores Mother's Club—
- Olsen: My mother never sewed. I know that. She never could sew but your mother was always a beautiful sewer.
- Bonn: They made layettes, originally I think, for unwed mothers.
- Olsen: That's right, they did, but you know somebody told me—I don't know who it was that told me—how good my mother was to somebody in the Grandmothers' Club that couldn't afford some groceries. She'd stop at the corner and buy groceries. I don't know who it was; I couldn't tell you. I don't know a thing about that, but somebody told me that.
- Bonn: Well, they were all very fond of each other. Of course, originally they were all in the neighborhood but then they moved out, but once they were a member they would come back. Like Mrs. [Crastalian?] who lived miles away would come every week to the club.
- Selix: Those women didn't drive; they would travel by streetcar.
- Olsen: Let me tell you something that's really funny, when my mother would have her birthday parties at home and I would be there to serve the coffee, and sometimes I'd have to bring down some extra cups for her and I'd bring some of my nice English cups and my silver server—I say it was a waste of time because by the time you got around you might as well serve it out of a glass pitcher [laughs]. But anyhow, she'd get all these little gifts, you know, and they'd go into the living room and they'd sit down. She'd say, "Let's sit down. Let me see, now, what I got." You'd sit down and she'd say, "Do you

like that? Don't think you're going to get it, because you're not going to get it." And, of course, those girls make beautiful dish towels, magnificent dish towels, and my mother would stack them up in her drawer and she'd look at them as much as—"You can just look at them, but don't you dare take any of them." So sometimes if I had done something nice for her she would say, "Oh, I have something nice for you," and she would give me either a cute apron—because all those women gave awful cute things.

Bonn: Stella, my mother, was a member since the club originated but then she had to drop out when she went to work, you know, when my father died she went to work for fifteen years.

Olsen: Did she? I remember that, but I don't know where; I've forgotten where.

Bonn: At Schwartz's at Twenty-first and Mission. She was a saleslady there.

Olsen: Oh yes, I remember that.

Bonn: And then afterwards she went back to the club, so there's a fifteen-year period where she wasn't a member. She wasn't an active member but she went to any shows or anything she could go to. My mother, Stella Bonn, and your mother, Celene Sheldon, would go to clubs, and they were neighbors right across the street. They were friends for over fifty years but they never ever called each other Stella or Celene, it was always, Mrs. Bonn, Mrs. Sheldon or Celene Sheldon.

Olsen: Oh yes, my mother loved your mother. And I loved her, too, because when Mama got so bad, I'd go over and cry on your mother's shoulder and she'd say, "Come in. Sit down. What's wrong now?" "Oh, she's treating me terrible today," and your mother would say, "I can't understand her."

I remember your father baking Boston beans and bringing over a pot of beans; they were so delicious. This was a special deal when your father brought over a pot of beans. Pop was a dear friend. He was kind of naughty sometimes, and of course, when mom would wave that checkbook underneath his nose and say, "It's all my property, and it's my checkbook—" and I think he'd have to do something to—. So he'd take himself an extra little drink as we all know, but he was a dear, dear man, especially in his later years; he was so sweet and gentle.

Bonn: He'd drop over to see if there was anything he could do for Stella. That whole community, they were devoted to each other.

Olsen: Oh yes, all except Mrs. [Wilhelm?] and she was always kind of a standoff—

Bonn: Well, I think there was something wrong with her. And Mr. Wilhelm, he was very nice but very distant, very quiet.

Olsen: Oh yes he was, and, of course, that girl was most peculiar.

Bonn: Well, they had a son.

Olsen: I remember. He was my age, you see. Wally.

- Bonn: Wally married—
- Olsen: That funny little girl. Flo?
- Selix: You mentioned that there were a great many German families in the community in the Mission district and in that area who later became very, very wealthy.
- Olsen: Right, and that's the reason why it always amuses me so much when people turn their noses up at the Mission, and they say, "Oh, that horrible Mission district." And you know, I always feel like if I'm someplace I'd like to say yes, and some of the wealthiest people that I know today, and I know a lot of people today of the German ancestry—the Remensberger were one. The Centers, the Heuters—Ernest Heuter was a big paint concern—the Spreckles, all of those people originally settled in the Mission because it was the warm belt, and that's why it was lovely. And the [Crimms?] across—which had the property from Capp to Howard, which, of course, was Howard Street originally but called South Van Ness.
- Bonn: I think the original people in San Francisco lived around Fourth and Brannan; that was the first settlement. Then from there they went to the Mission district. At least that's the way my family migrated. And then from there, as you get richer and wealthier and fancier, then they moved on to other areas.
- Olsen: That's right, yes. Because, you know, even the Centers and the Windlers and the—I know all those people now. Edna Remensberger is one of my best friends. She went to Lux too, you know. She was Edna [Puckharbor?].
- Selix: Did she go to the Girls' Club?
- Olsen: No. She was Edna [Puckharbor?] and she graduated from Lux. She went to work in the Enterprise Brewing Company, which the Remensbergers owned and, see, my grandfather was the master plumber of the Enterprise Brewing Company for years and years and years.
- Selix: Now which grandfather was that?
- Olsen: Hildenbrand. He was the master plumber. And did you know that after the earthquake and fire the Homestead Bread Company there at Nineteenth and South Van Ness was the bread company?
- Bonn: You know, that building is down now.
- Olsen: Is it down? Well, when I was a little girl and after the earthquake and fire, that was still standing and my grandfather was instigated—at least they called my grandfather to come and do the plumbing and do something that had to be done to start the bakery up. That's when that bakery—after the earthquake and fire they started that bakery up and that's where people would stand in line to get a loaf of bread, rich and poor; you didn't have any money, you know.
- Selix: And what do you remember about the earthquake and fire?

Olsen: I remember everything. That's the worst part of me being alone. When I am alone, I'm not afraid of a man, but I am deathly afraid of an earthquake; I have the feeling like I want to run. It was Easter time and April the Eighteenth. My grandmother was a very liberal old French lady and always had money in her pocket, in her snuff box. Brother and I always had one beautiful outfit from David [Shernwasser?] for Easter. My dress came from David [Shernwasser?] and Brother's came from Ruth Atkins with a whistle—a sailor suit with a white whistle on the side. I wanted to stay with my grandma that night, and so I took off my new white shoes and my beautiful lingerie dress and the petticoat that went with it and left it where my mother lived on Guerrero Street where I was born, and went to my Grandma's to stay all night and that's where I was.

Selix: That was on Capp Street, 437 Capp.

Olsen: Right, that's where I slept that night and so, you see, I never went back there again. But the strange thing is that when I was born—it's an Eastern fashion, it was then—that your family would send the new baby a silver spoon with a name on it and your birth date on it. My grandfather always had a safe in his house—I can tell more tales, honestly, because Grandma used to say—they'd put everything in the safe that was valuable. They didn't have safe deposit boxes like they have now. He had all these silver spoons in this safe, and that's how, after the earthquake and fire, these silver spoons that I had from the time I was little were in that safe. Because my mother lost her silver, her piano, everything she had, because when they came out of their house to walk—Pete was six or seven months old—she put Pete in the buggy and they walked, you see, to Grandma's at 437 Capp—

Selix: From Guerrero Street.

Olsen: From Guerrero Street. You see, they came Valencia Street and the Valencia Street Hotel had sunk in the street and people were yelling, moaning and screaming because the whole hotel went—

Bonn: It was three stories high and the top story was level, is that correct?

Olsen: Yes. When my grandfather first came here in the early days, that was a swimming pool; they swam on Valencia Street!

Bonn: In the creek.

Olsen: In the creek on Valencia Street!

Selix: Wasn't that around Eighteenth Street?

Olsen: The Valencia Street Hotel was about Eighteenth and Nineteenth, yes.

Selix: There was a creek running through Eighteenth Street.

Olsen: Yes, it's the truth!

Bonn: Where was the hotel, then?

Olsen: It was up on Valencia and 18th or 19th.

Bonn: With the creek?

Olsen: Yes, yes.

Bonn: I see.

Olsen: So by the time they got to my grandmother's, my mother with her babies—and I was there and Brother was only little—they never could go back in again, because when my father went back the soldiers were already there and wouldn't let him go upstairs. Then they bombarded—. It wasn't the earthquake that flattened those houses. They bombarded to try and stop the fire, because they had no water to stop the fire.

Selix: So you stayed at 437 Capp Street?

Olsen: We stayed at 437 Capp Street.

Selix: Your whole family was there, then?

Olsen: We even slept on mattresses; we were all scared to death to be separated. I was little, awful little then, and brother was little and my mother was nursing Pete, you know. And Pete was sick; she had a lump come on her neck; I don't know what from. Oh, I could tell you the whole story. And the Crimms had a horse in the barn and during the course of—this is when we came back, I guess that happened, though—. So anyhow, before we—we waited until the fire, as I remember, got to Sixteenth and Mission and then my grandfather came with a beer wagon from the Enterprise Brewing Company and they put mattresses on the beer—the beer barrels set on these open things—and he hauled us up to Twenty-seventh and Chenery Street on a corner, and we laid in a lot up there.

My grandmother had inflammatory rheumatism then, and my mother took refuge with some people that were nice to Mama and Pete. I would never leave my father's hand, so I walked all night, but if there was a little light or candle, why the soldiers would say, "Put out that light or I'll shoot," because they were afraid of starting the fire. When the fire stopped we went back again to Capp Street. There was a windstorm then too, you know, a terrible windstorm.

Bonn: Was that caused by the fire?

Olsen: I don't know. I can't tell you that.

Selix: No, the wind came up, it was a natural—

Olsen: And do you know that when we came back after the fire was over everybody would say you were not allowed to build a fire in your stove. They tore down all Varney and Green signs all over the city, and they built these little houses on the sidewalk; in front of each house there was a little house like a lean-to. Everybody had their kitchen stove on the sidewalk in front of your house, and that's where you cooked your food.

Bonn: What's the Varney and Green signs?

Olsen: Varney and Green were the advertising people at that time and they had great big wooden signs, so people didn't have any wood, and they tore down the signs to build these little lean-tos to put your stove in. You made your soup, and you made everything else right there on the sidewalk, because you didn't dare put a fire in your house because it would start more fires.

Bonn: Well, the Bonns and Robins, my family, they had to go to Mission Dolores Park; how come you people didn't go to Mission Dolores?

Olsen: Because my grandfather came with this big beer wagon thing and hauled us off. Then, of course, after the earthquake, I think I can still remember lying on the floor in Granny's parlor and you know, up in the third bedroom up there where I keep the junk room, too, which was the girls' room, you know—I brought home her little velvet sofa and I brought home that beautiful old-fashioned dresser that was in Granny's room, which belonged to my great-grandmother. It was in Mama's bedroom. It had the marble here and the marble here and the pretty things, and had the long mirror with the head up here, a Victorian piece of furniture. It was my great-grandmother's.

When we sold Granny's house I brought that home and I brought the old [hack...?], which is upstairs in the hall. My grandchildren were dying to have it so one day—my daughter just had her—about the fourth or fifth house out here—I told you—the beautiful three stories with the sliding doors that look over the ocean out here; a beautiful, beautiful house. Two kitchens, family room, Frank has his own this and his own that, awful big house. And the great big entrance hall—she called me because she had been pricing pieces for the entrance hall, and when I first saw the home I said, “Why don't you take that big beautiful piece that was your great grandmothers?” She said, “Oh I just couldn't,” so I said no more. I said, “Well, I'm bringing it home and I'll put it up in the—.” So she called me and she said, “Mother, what do you think if I took my great-grandmother's piece for my front hall?” I said, “You darn fool you, I've been trying to tell you this for years! All you need to do is use soap and water on the wood,” and it was perfect, you know. I said, “The only thing I ask you to do is to bring up the chest of drawers from downstairs so I have a place to put junk.”

She came with a man and hauled it off to her hall, and it is magnificent in her hall. She has more compliments on that piece. Nobody has it—nobody's had a great-grandmother, to tell you the truth, that they have a thing from; it's the truth. And you know what she keeps on it? You'd die. I have two maidenhair ferns and they were from Granny's hot house but I have had them here for a long time and they've just grown and grown and grown. Granny always had a [inaudible] under the bed and they're good iron stone china, so I brought one home and I gave it to her, and that's what she keeps on top of that, that Victorian thing with beautiful plants in it, and it's beautiful. She's had more compliments on that! Oh my goodness, yes.

Selix: The cottage which is 437 Capp Street is still standing, isn't it?

Olsen: Oh heavens, I should say so. I should say so. Do you know that I left the old O'Keefe and Merrit, that stove that Mama paid five hundred dollars for and fifty dollars extra for that clock that never worked.

Selix: When did she buy that stove?

- Olsen: She bought that very late in life. Heavens, she wanted a new stove and so—
- Bonn: You mean they stopped using the wood stove?
- Olsen: Oh yes, a long, long time before that. They had a new floor put in the kitchen and new linoleum and everything.
- Bonn: I thought they always had the wood stove.
- Selix: Oh, she bought the O’Keefe and Merrit gas stove.
- Olsen: Then she bought—my son-in-law got it wholesale for her and it was a five-hundred-dollar O’Keefe and Merrit—it was a magnificent stove—and a new icebox too; she never knew what to do with the icebox either. So anyhow, she said to Frank, “Get me a beautiful stove.” She picked that one that they thought they liked and they got rid of that whole business and got new linoleum on the floor and so forth and so on. Then Frank said, “You need a clock on the stove. Do you want the clock, Grandma, or not?” She said, “I might just go have the clock.” Grandpa said, “We might just go first class,” and she paid fifty dollars extra for that darn clock and she never knew how to work it—
[phone rings and pause in tape]

My father and mother were really very close to each other even though my father got out of line every once in awhile. But it was mostly due to my mother who held most of the purse strings, because it was her father who had left her all of her money and her stuff and her property, you see. Mom was the kind of woman that she’d do something for you but—like to me, she’d say to me, “I’m not going to leave you anything in my will. You either do this or to heck with you—” and I’d tell her what to do with it and she didn’t like that. I guess it used to get under Papa’s skin an awful lot, because Papa did everything; he scrubbed, he shopped. She did do a little cooking, but her heart was never in cooking a lamb chop. If you ever saw her cook a lamb chop, you’d know. I think of her a lot now because now since I’m older, I can see why; we get sick and tired of cooking.

- Bonn: Not much to cooking a lamb chop, is there! [laughs]
- Olsen: Heavens, no. So Papa waited on her hand and foot, but she really adored my father and you know, he went to the hospital—oh, I will never forget this, never in my life—he went to the hospital because he had a hiated hernia, you know. He had to eat baby food for many years. He’d sit down to my lovely table with all the people eating turkey and everything, and I’d say, “Papa, what kind of baby food will you have today? Will you have mashed carrots or the pureed peas?” “Just bake me a potato,” he’d say and he’d do the carving half the time, because I’d always sit him at the top of the table, you know. So he went to the hospital to have that done because the food wouldn’t go down any longer and he kept getting thinner and thinner, and so brother and I decided he must go. So we made the appointment for him to go, and I had to go to a synagogue rehearsal that day and I stopped in to see him, and they couldn’t get the blood out of the veins.

I went down to the house in the morning, and the phone rang and my mother was sitting on the couch in the dining room. My brother said, “The old man didn’t make it.” Ohhhh. My mother looked at me and said, “What am I going to do? What am I going to do?”

She finally realized that Papa had meant so much in her life, you know, what was she to do? I will never forget it, never as long as I live. I think I was a very good daughter, because after the funeral my sister says, "Come along Ed, we have to go home. Mama do you want to come?" She says, "No, I don't care to go. I'll stay here." Brother says, "Well, I'm going to my house at the Russian River, Rio Nido. Good-bye, we're going," and Mom and I are left alone. I said, "You're not going to stay here alone tonight. Come along, you're coming home with me." So I brought her home, and I think the next night we had dinner at Townhouse or something, but she wanted to go back to her house just the same; she didn't want to be here. It's quite different when you're in a house for so long.

Bonn: They always want to go back to their own homes.

Olsen: That's the reason why brother and I both insisted on keeping the heat on in that house and then we had a special [cop?] for a long time because we thought if something happens—and we didn't know exactly what to do for a long time. You always wonder what's coming next because you don't know, because you haven't been through it before. And I thought if we ever did anything about the house and she—we'd die, you couldn't do it. Sure, you've gone through the same thing, so you know exactly what I'm talking about.

Selix: Your mother and father, didn't they used to have a tradition of going downtown for lunch or dinner once a week?

Olsen: They certainly would, and my father would say, "Mama, you need a new tablecloth. Let's go to Macy's," or we'd buy some sheets for the children like for Christmas time or something; they'd never know what to buy. My father would say, "We are going to buy them beautiful sheets. You can always use beautiful sheets," and they'd buy us beautiful sheets. And of course, it was very traditional, too, because my mother and father were married on Thanksgiving. So that's the reason why we went to Grandma's every Thanksgiving for dinner and my father would cook the dinner, a twenty-five pounder turkey. And, you know, in that small dining room as the children married and the children had their children and Pete had her husband and Barbara had her little girl and then finally her young man came into the picture and Betty and her child, and me trying to serve around this big table and, of course, the sink was so small you couldn't really manage. Oh, I'll never forget the last Thanksgiving and Papa said, "We can't do it anymore." So that's the reason why I took over.

Selix: I remember seeing your father in later years when he used to do the marketing for your mother, with a knapsack on his back to carry the groceries.

Olsen: I was saying that to Adrienne. Your mother used to say to me, "I saw your father going up the street to Safeway with a knapsack," and he'd buy everything.

Bonn: I don't remember the knapsack.

Selix: I do.

Olsen: Yes, it was easy for him to pack in. But you know, he had that prostate gland operation when he was eighty-two years old and he came out of that with flying colors, flying

colors! Oh, he thought he was something when he had that done, because he really came out with flying colors. [tape interruption]

Selix: Many people have the idea that the members of the Girls' Club were predominantly Jewish and the families living in the area were, but as I remember we celebrated the Christian Christmas and those were great occasions. I remember you singing in the Glee Club, tell us about those annual get-togethers.

Olsen: They were simply magnificent because they housed every nationality in the world, we had for Christmas time. It wasn't only Jewish people, far from that. We had stockings and presents and carols, and Mrs. Blanchard would direct us in singing these beautiful "Good King Wenceslaus went out..." Oh, that was one of the favorite ones.

Selix: And the wassail song.

Olsen: And the wassail song, "Here we come a-wassail..." and "Deck the halls..." All of those magnificent ones! And I remember, I always had a solo in one of those, I forget which one. I think it was "Good King Wenceslaus." Yes, I think it was that one. I can still remember Mr. Jesse Lilienthal; he was a very handsome man, distinguished looking. Do you girls remember him at all?

Bonn: No.

Olsen: Ohh. He was a very distinguished Jewish gentleman and had a lovely, lovely face, very gentle face. He would watch my face and I used to sing to him, and he would applaud and applaud and applaud, and we had to do it over again for him. Who was Mrs. Gunst's sister?

Selix: Rose [inaudible].

Olsen: No. Who was the sister that lived down in—

TABLE OF CONTENTS—PAULINE HARRIS BOGART

INTERVIEW WITH PAULINE HARRIS BOGART

Date of interview: May 27, 1973

[Tape 4, Side A] 359

Introduction to the Girls' Club at age ten and its influence—Close relationship with Rachel Wolfsohn—Rachel Wolfsohn's memorial service in 1915—Studying piano with Albert Elkus—Receiving scholarship to attend University of California, Berkeley, from Girls' Club member—Importance of relationship with Albert Elkus—Connection to Kahn and de Young families—Mission District—Wolfsohn family members—Orchestra at the Girls' Club led by Hosther Wismer—The Sargent family—Wonderhill—Marriage to Zachary Paul Bogart, teaching music—More on Elkus family—Cohn family—Son, Paul Bogart—Retirement—Clarification regarding the Elkus family.

INTERVIEW WITH PAULINE HARRIS BOGART

[Date of interview: May 27, 1973]

[Tape 4, Side A]

- Selix: Pauline, what is your first recollection of Rachel Wolfsohn?
- Bogart: My father had a store on Mission Street.
- Selix: What kind of business was he in?
- Bogart: It was a general merchandise store. Ray Wolfsohn came in to purchase something, and she said to my father, "Do you have any girls in your family?" He said, "Yes, I have one little girl." I think I was ten years old at the time. "Well," she said, "we have a girls' club," and this was about a block away—"why don't you have her come there." So my father told me about it and I was always a very curious kind of kid so I went over there.
- Selix: What was your father's full name?
- Bogart: George Harris. I came there, and of course the building itself was new, which was to me so exciting, and I loved all of the things they were doing there, being in drama. Helen and I and Nettie were all in a play. Did you ever see that picture? Did your sister—?
- Bonn: I don't know.
- Bogart: Well, we were in a play. The three of us are in the play and I was some kind of a big fat man with a pillow. I'll never forget it because I was plump, very plump in those days; I was the plump one. Your sister Helen was the comedian and Nettie was a beautiful heroine, really very funny. I have that picture somewhere and I cannot find it. If I ever find it I'll send it to you.
- Bonn: If you do, we'd like to have it.
- Bogart: Yes, if I can possibly find it. So anyway, Ray Wolfsohn greeted me and I told her who I was and all of that, and she said, "Oh, we're so happy you came. Now, what would you like to do? You can have a sewing class; you can have a dancing class." I said, "Oh, I want to do everything," and she was so amused. Incidentally, at that time I was already playing the piano. I must have been eleven. I don't know. It was either 1912 or 1913.
- Selix: How long had you been studying the piano?
- Bogart: I started the piano I think when I was about seven or eight, and I showed what they call talent, so I really played very well for a kid that age.
- Bonn: You were a virtuoso, weren't you?
- Bogart: Well, at that age I played better; I don't play at all these days. But she said, "Oh, well that's nice, and you can play for the girls and all that." So I played the piano, and I was in a drama class and I was in this—and she took a great fancy to me. I don't know why

but she especially seemed to like me. She was always, at that age, seeing to it that I got tickets to go to the symphony and then I had tickets to go—I remember, through her, or through the Girls' Club I should say, that I had really great opportunities. I even saw Casanova, you know, it was a period in San Francisco at that time. I heard Paderewski and, you know, she saw to it. Then she even saw to it that I got my piano teacher, who was Albert Elkus, who was quite famous at that time then. Well, now what year was her death, I can't remember?

Selix: 1915.

Bogart: Now, I remember the memorial service for her death, and I remember how upset I was as a child. They had the memorial service in that big hall, the auditorium. Is it still there?

Bonn: Yes.

Bogart: And I remember that Eva Wolfsohn—because she knew her sister was so terribly fond of me—I don't know whether I was singled out or whether everybody was but I know that she was very loving to me. Eva Wolfsohn sat in her chair and I sat on the floor right next to her, and she had her arm around me. I don't remember who spoke; I know there was music. I just have a vague recollection, after all, it's fifty-eight years ago.

Selix: What was the date of your birth?

Bogart: November.

Selix: Of what year?

Bogart: Nineteen two [1902], so you see, I was thirteen years old. What month did she die, do you remember?

Selix: I don't know what month. It was 1915, that much we know.

Bogart: Well, it must have been early in 1915, and I'll tell you why, because that was the year of the San Francisco Exposition, which opened I think in February, and I don't recall her doing anything with that. But I remember going to the fair with different little trips that they arranged. Oh, they arranged so many things. I want to tell you that I owe that group so much culturally and inspirationally that I could never forget the work they did. And Eva Wolfsohn and I kept up our friendship until her death, I mean, that was a great blow to me. All the people—like there was Margaret Hall, who was one of the workers, and Edith Heinrich. Every time I went to San Francisco, you see, I would look these people up; this went on for years and years and years. Now to get back to that—I don't know if you want to question me at this moment—but I remember her at the memorial service. I don't remember a funeral. Now whether there was one or not I don't know, but I just remember this memorial service with all the girls there, and who spoke I can't recall. I don't remember.

Bonn: Was the casket in the big hall?

Bogart: No, there was nothing like that, it was just a memorial service. I have a feeling that the funeral proper must have been private, I don't know, but I do know that the only thing I recall is that memorial service. I can just see Eva Wolfsohn sitting on a chair and I'm sitting alongside, and I don't remember who the other kid was on the other side, there was another.

Selix: Then you feel that perhaps the Girls' Club was one of the greatest influences in your life?

Bogart: Oh, absolutely. Now I'd go on [inaudible], she got me a piano and then Eva Wolfsohn carried right on from there.

Selix: Rachel Wolfsohn got you a piano?

Bogart: No, no, I had a piano, she got me a piano teacher, and Eva Wolfsohn carried on from there. Then my mother decided—my father died and Eva and Rachel were very—in 1915, in May, actually in May, and they were both—I mean, Eva was very concerned about everything. But my mother decided that we should come to Los Angeles because she had a mother and four brothers here. You know, my grandmother and all the family all lived here. She had a few cousins in San Francisco but in her widowhood she didn't want to be alone, so we picked up and went to Los Angeles. Eva Wolfsohn came down here to visit, and she of course looked me up right away. She said, "Why don't you come up—"and I was studying down here, and she said, "Why don't you come up to San Francisco and we'll have a concert at the Girls' Club?" I came up and gave a whole music program; I had given one here. I was about fourteen or fifteen years old at the time. I came up there, gave the program, and then went home; and when I came home, I said to my mother, "You know, I think we would have more chances of getting places if we went back there." So my mother thought it over and thought it over and finally we decided we would come back. When we came back, Eva Wolfsohn found us a flat to live in. It was across the street from the Girls' Club and the Bonns lived the next block on Capp Street, just one block up.

Bonn: Didn't you live on our block at one time, originally?

Bogart: No, it was the next block, right across from the club, and you lived one block up from the club. That was the time she got Mr. Elkus—the first teacher was another man. [Shavage?] I think was his name, I can't recall—but anyway, I started studying with Mr. Elkus. I went to high school, Mission High, which was the closest; my mother went to work. We really had quite a struggle because, well, my father didn't leave us well fixed. Eva Wolfsohn got me Mr. Elkus in lessons at a very reduced price, as you well understand; it was not free, but it was reduced. I was constantly being supplied with concert tickets and this kind of ticket and everything else. Then when I graduated from high school I decided I would take a year off—I was very young, only sixteen when I graduated from high school—and just study music. Then I decided—and I talked to Eva and I said, "You know, the concert field is very nice, but not everybody makes it, and I ought to be prepared for something. I'd like to go to college," and Mr. Elkus said, "I think you're right." Eva Wolfsohn got hold of Mrs. Green, who was a patroness.

Bonn: She was a member of the board.

Bogart: Member of the board, who had been—Mrs. Greenbaum and Mrs. Jesse Lilienthal, I think, were sisters or related anyway, and the other lady was—there were three women of—four—

Selix: Mrs. Leon Sloss?

Bogart: Mrs. [Karshlan?] and Mrs. M.J. Brandenstein. I remember those ladies so well because they were—well, Mrs. Green, or formerly Greenbaum's, parents had endowed a scholarship at Berkeley; they had an endowment fund for scholarships, and I wanted to go to Berkeley. I was a very good student in high school, had a straight-A record, or something like that, so Eva went to Mrs. Green and said, "Now look, I want a scholarship for her."

Bonn: That's just like Eva.

Bogart: So Mrs. Green said, "I'll write a letter to the scholarship committee, but it's not up to us, we can only recommend. The money in the endowment is established by our parents." They had given a big sum, a trust fund, to provide scholarships for capable worthy kids and so on. "We will write a letter of recommendation, but that's all we can do, it's up to them." Mr. Elkus, who also was a graduate of Berkeley and knew lots of people and came from a very prominent family after all, Elkus, de Young—

Selix: It was the *Chronicle* family; his mother was Cornelia de Young.

Bogart: Well, I'll tell you more, there's another connection in another family. See, I got involved with all these people much more than you probably realize and probably maybe more than anybody. Anyway, Mr. Elkus wrote a letter to the scholarship committee, and his name was very important, so I got a letter asking me to come over to Berkeley for an interview from the chairman of the scholarship committee, one of the professors who was—I can still remember his name, a darling man, Dr. Blaisdell. I think he was the head of the chemistry department or something. He asked me to come over for this interview, and I was sixteen years old or something like that; I was almost too young to go to college; I was petrified. I went over that day to Berkeley and I visited in his home, and he asked me why I wanted to go to college, and he was very solemn, and I said I was studying music. He had sent for my record from Mission High School and he said, "Well, you've got a very good record. Do you think you can do as well here?" He said, "You know our scholarship program—" in those days, "—we never give a scholarship until the second year. The student has to come the first year and prove himself. Then if he does well, then we give a scholarship in the second year." But he said, "You have a good record and with these letters—and I understand that you won't be able to come if you don't—" because my mother couldn't afford to send me to college. She was working and I was giving piano lessons when I fourteen years old. I had about twelve pupils at twenty-five cents a lesson, but this is the way between us, we were making both ends meet, you know. So he said, "Well, I'll make a recommendation," and by golly it was passed.

You know what the scholarship was, twenty-five dollars a month. In those days that was enough to pay for my—the tuition was nothing then, and you paid like a five-dollar student lobby fee, but you didn't pay any tuition. That helped me to buy books and to live, actually, and so forth. My mother and I both moved to Berkeley and she commuted

to San Francisco to her job. Otherwise I would have to commute back and forth; there wasn't enough money for me to live, to have board and room in Berkeley, you see. So we rented a little small, tiny apartment, very small, and that gave me—I was at school; I could walk back and forth, and I had time to practice because I still had to keep my piano up, and my mother did the work. She went across the bay every day.

Bonn: How wonderful of your mother to do that.

Bogart: Yes, she was a very sacrificing person, and I was the only child, so everything was tied up there. Then Mr. Elkus decided that I had to have some money and he—now, let me tell you about his family. I think you have his mother confused. His mother was a Kahn, the [inaudible name] Kahn family. Irving Kahn was the vice president of Bank of America, the Kahns that owned Capwell's in Oakland, you know, the big department store—oh, I'm trying to remember, Mrs. Frederick Kahn—it was a big family and his mother was a Kahn; it was a big Kahn family. It may have been that the de Youngs were their relatives, but I think that Mrs. de Young was a Kahn. The mother of Charles de Young you know, that gave the—

Bonn: Museum.

Bogart: This was a big family and an old California family because Albert Elkus's father was the mayor of Sacramento, somewhere back, I don't know, in that period. Well, he had these cousins living in Oakland, the Kahn family that owned Kahn's Department Store and Capwell's—there were two big department stores—and his cousin, a Kahn, had children, and one girl was Rosetta Kahn. I used to keep up with these people for years, Christmas cards, letters. Then I'd go to San Francisco, I'd visit them. When they came down here they called me. He said Rosetta needed piano lessons, her and her younger sister, so believe it or not—I lived in this modest little apartment—these two little Kahn girls came to my house with a chauffeur, who waited outside while I gave the two little Kahn girls piano lessons. He arranged that.

Selix: And was that for twenty-five cents an hour?

Bogart: Five dollars.

Selix: Five dollars an hour?

Bogart: Five dollars for both of them; he arranged the price and he arranged everything. You know, he was going to see to it that I had enough money. That man became like a second father to me, you never saw anything like it. When I first started taking lessons with him, I think I was twelve years old or thirteen, and I'd come to his place—I'm trying to remember what street it was. Oh, Washington—

Bonn: Pacific Heights.

Bogart: Pacific Heights. We'd have it there, and it would be Saturday morning because I was in school, and he'd schedule my lessons at eleven-thirty or twelve o'clock or something like that. I'd come and he'd say, "Now, if you have a good lesson, I'm going to take you for an ice cream soda." I'd say, "Well, that's nice," and I'd come for my lesson and then

he'd say, "That was fine, come on." We'd get on a streetcar and go down and he'd take me to—what is it, the Golden Pheasants?

Bonn: Yes.

Bogart: But then he would say, "Well, ice cream soda isn't enough. We'd better have lunch too." I'd have lunch and an ice cream soda.

Bonn: How wonderful.

Bogart: Oh, that man was such a wonderful person, and you know, I kept up with him. Then when I graduated from college—see, I got married in college—and I went over to talk to him and he said, "Fine, it's fine, it's all right." Then when I moved down here, whenever he came to Los Angeles he always called me, came to visit me. When I would go up there, I always visited him and then—he's gone now. See, when I tell you—these people that had so much meaning for me, all through my life. Now I'm telling you all that, not because I want to tell you about myself, but I want to show you what the Girls' Club did for me, that's what I'm trying to show you. The contacts they provided for me, the people. I got a scholarship to college only through them. I got to know Mr. Elkus. I benefited from everything that this man had: his knowledge, his ability to teach, his family, everything. In my mind the Girls' Club was the most marvelous thing that ever happened to me; I don't know where I would have been without it, absolutely. That's why to me it's almost a sacred thing, the Girls' Club.

Selix: Do you have any recollections of the Mission district at the time you lived there?

Bogart: Yes, it was a very nice district; it was a family kind of thing. The main street was sort of—it was the same kind of a street that Fillmore was in the early days, you know, nice, nice families on the offshoot streets. Mission Dolores was right there. I went to Mission High School and there was a beautiful park across the street and nice flats all around. Very nice families, as you can see when you know the Bonn family and the [Bowen?] family, who lived on Howard Street, the next street, all of them; this was a really nice middle-class neighborhood.

Selix: Did you ever feel as though you were a deprived person, or did you ever feel that you were ever patronized in any way because of all that was—

Bogart: Never, never. That was the beauty of this thing, it was that here we have this lovely clubhouse and everybody's going to take part. We've got to share; we're all going to have a good time. Oh, I forgot to tell you other things that came to me. I got to know the whole Wolfsohn family. Mrs. Wolfsohn, the old lady—

Selix: Mary Wolfsohn.

Bogart: And I even have now—still have it upstairs—a little sewing box that she gave me for either my birthday or Christmas, the old lady.

Selix: Did you take sewing from her?

Bogart: I think Margaret Hall was the one that taught me how to sew. Of course, the only thing I can do is mend hose. It's so funny, I've never had much talent for that kind of—you know, sewing. I knew the doctors: Dr. Julian, Dr. Fred, and of course Gussie Wolfsohn. Is she still living?

Bonn: No.

Bogart: And there was one other brother.

Selix: Mast.

Bogart: Mast, that's right, the baby of the family.

Bonn: We interviewed Mast in Carmel two days ago.

Bogart: How is he?

Bonn: He's eighty.

Bogart: Is he the only one left?

Bonn: Yes.

Selix: He's still practicing medicine.

Bogart: I remember when he got married; it was someone that was related to your family.

Bonn: That's what we think, but I don't know.

Bogart: Well, your mother told us. She was a cousin of the [inaudible, name?] family or someone.

Bonn: Levy was her last name.

Bogart: I remember your mother was friendly with Mast, you know.

Bonn: She was?

Bogart: Yes, your mother and father—no, no, it was Ray Cohn that I'm thinking of. Well, let me tell you some of the other things from the club. They had all kinds of musical activities. We had an orchestra, and I was the pianist for the orchestra. Clinton Pittman, her brother-in-law, played violin in the orchestra; that's how I knew him so well.

Selix: Do you remember who the leader of the orchestra was?

Bogart: Yes, and I'm trying to remember his name.

Bonn: Hother Wismer?

Bogart: Wismer, that's right, and what a darling he was. And I want to tell you someone who's quite famous, who was in that orchestra. There was a woman named Genevieve Sargent, and she was either the wife of the curator of the museum or she had something to do with the art museum. She was a perfectly marvelous woman and interested in the Girls' Club, but especially interested in the music because she had quite a few children. She had two boys that she brought to this orchestra and one I've met here; he lives here and he—I have a memory for things—he remembers the orchestra and he remembers me, but he doesn't remember the Girls' Club.

Selix: What's his full name?

Bogart: Emmett Sargent.

Selix: Emmett Sargent, and is he still in music?

Bogart: Yes, he's a professional cellist, but his brother, who played, I think, violin, is the music critic of *Time Magazine*, Winthrop Sargent.

Selix: Isn't it *The New Yorker*?

Bogart: Or is it *The New Yorker*?

Selix: I think it's *The New Yorker*.

Bogart: Winthrop Sargent, he played in an orchestra that was sponsored by the Girls' Club.

Selix: Well, this is good to get this background, because we haven't been able to get it before. And Genevieve Sargent was a sister of Dr. Emmett [Ricksford?].

Bogart: She named her son Emmett after him then.

Bonn: Yes.

Selix: And she was an artist in her own right.

Bonn: She painted.

Bogart: That's right. I saw Emmett Sargent at a musical event a number of years ago, and I admired him. His mother was still living, so I don't know how many years ago it was. It was in the home of a personal friend of mine, who was having a chamber music concert, you know, friends. He said she was still living alone and terribly independent and everything else. Orchestra was a fantastic thing. And I forgot another thing that they did for me; you're bringing back all these things. When I said to Eva Wolfsohn, "You know, I may play the piano well, but after I go to all these concerts and hear these great artists, it frightens me because you have to be so, so superior." That's why I wanted to go to college. I said, "I want to be equipped, so that I can make a living and not just—because I have no family to rely upon." I was very, very good at type reading and accompanying, and there was a woman whose name is just like the woman who is the health food nutritionist, Adele Davis, the same name. Adele Davis was a professional accompanist, and she also gave piano lessons, and she also came to the club all the time.

If we had a live opera, she played the piano for everything, and she was really tremendous that way.

Selix: She was very active in the club.

Bogart: Yes. And so they saw to it that Adele Davis gave me training in accompaniment work: opera technique and concertos and all that kind of thing, and you have no idea what I learned from her. You know, as I begin to see all these facets of the things that I've forgotten, that—did anyone tell you about the summer place they had?

Selix: Wonderhill?

Bogart: Wonderhill, yes. Is it still in existence?

Selix: No.

Bonn: The building is there, but it doesn't operate as Wonderhill.

Selix: The club sold it. Did you spend time at Wonderhill?

Bogart: And how! We went—her sister and I were inseparable; we were such very, very close friends. If a trip was planned, we always went at the same time. There were boys there, and I think Clinton was one of them that went at that time. We were just kids in high school, you know, at the time. I think I was there at least twice. Oh, what a good time we had.

Selix: It was a beautiful place.

Bogart: And what fun we had. We hardly ever wanted to go to bed; we were laughing until all hours of the morning, you know, and it was just beautiful.

Selix: Did you graduate from the University of California?

Bogart: Yes.

Selix: And then after you graduated what did you do?

Bogart: I came down to Los Angeles.

Selix: Had you married by then?

Bogart: Yes, I married when I was a junior in college.

Selix: Oh, and tell us something about your husband.

Bogart: Well, my husband had graduated from there. He was not from San Francisco, he was from China; his family lived in China and he'd been sent over to come to college.

Selix: What was his full name?

Bogart: Zachary Paul Bogart. His family lived in China and then, you know, when the war thing began, it all impacted everybody—

Selix: Where were they from originally?

Bogart: Originally from Russia, and they had come down to Harbin, Manchuria. Of course, the other part of the story is I'm divorced, but then that doesn't have anything to do with that. He didn't know the Girls' Club at all.

Selix: What was his profession?

Bogart: Well, he graduated in economics and in business administration, and he was going to do an importing business. So he had an importing business with his family and connections and people in Japan and China; various relatives were all over. It was quite a large family and a very well-to-do family. Then when we came down here, he went to work for relatives of mine that were in business, so he was in various businesses. I went to teach in the high school.

Bonn: Here?

Bogart: Yes.

Bonn: Did you major in teaching?

Bogart: No, I majored in music, but I was very practical, I got a teaching credential, saying, "Well, maybe I'll need it, maybe I won't," but I decided that I would start to teach when I came down here. I was very young; I wasn't even twenty-one when I started to teach. I had to practically lie about my age because you had to be twenty-one to have a job. I went to work and taught music and I just loved it. I had a lot of friends in the music field, and I participated in various musical things. Then I took a leave when my son was born, and then after that I went back to teach again, and I'm retired now from the Los Angeles school system.

Selix: How many years did you teach?

Bogart: Forty, I think.

Selix: Oh, did you? All through your married life and—

Bogart: Practically all through, with the exception of a couple of—

Bonn: I didn't realize that you were a teacher.

Bogart: Oh, you didn't? I taught here in the Los Angeles high schools for a long, long time.

Selix: And your music has given you a great deal of pleasure throughout your life.

Bogart: Oh yes, it was practically the basis of my whole existence, that started from the time—the interesting part is that I had my credential in music but I began to—I had a second major, which was economics and history, and I decided to go back and get some extra

graduate work. The last years of my teaching I wasn't teaching music, I was teaching social sciences. You know, they go in for an economy program and decided they'll cut down on music and on art and on this. When they started to cut down on me, my principal said, "You're the only one in the music department that's equipped to teach anything but music, so will you teach some history classes?" I said, "Fine," and little by little I found myself involved in that. So I had sort of a dual—

Selix: Well, that was wonderful that you had your background, that you had originally decided you might need some day.

Bogart: Well, it was wise that I did. You know, if you have—here my mother was widowed, I had no one to depend on. It's true my mother had brothers and sisters, but everybody had their own family. Who was going to provide for me, and I realized that.

Selix: What was your mother's maiden name?

Bogart: Abramson.

Selix: What was her first name?

Bogart: Goldie, Goldie Abramson.

Selix: And was she from a San Francisco family?

Bogart: No, no, she was—I was born in New York, you know, and brought here when I was ten months old, to Los Angeles. But my father did not like Los Angeles, he hated it; he thought it was a provincial town, and that's how we went to San Francisco.

Selix: Getting back to the Elkus family, Albert Elkus's father, who was Albert Elkus Sr., was the mayor of Sacramento.

Bogart: Yes, for many years.

Selix: And he served many terms.

Bogart: Oh, many.

Selix: I knew him because for nine years I worked for his brother.

Bogart: Which one?

Selix: Edward Elkus.

Bogart: I remember, he used to talk about it. I used to go and visit—Miss Ray Cohn lived on Shattuck in Berkeley, and I always stayed with them, I mean, they were just practically my family. And that's another thing, certain friendships that I made came as a result of the Girls' Club. The Cohns, Ray and Max Cohn, when I was a little girl, they used to ask me to come over and visit them. Waldo was a baby, I used to play with him, and so Waldo considers himself practically my young brother. Waldo is an atomic scientist now, you know, in Oak Ridge; I don't know if you know about that.

Selix: No.

Bogart: Well, he's quite famous in that. He comes out to the Pacific coast on conferences, and he also does scouting for the—some national science foundation to give awards or grants to—and I'll get a phone call at eight o'clock in the morning, seven-thirty, and Waldo is at the airport and he says, "I'm here. If you're free, come and get me, if not, I'll be there," and he'd just arrive here.

Selix: Now, he was the younger brother of Max Cohn.

Bogart: His son.

Selix: Oh, Max and Ray Cohn's son.

Bogart: That's right. Now, Ray Cohn—

Selix: Was [Lou Marcus's?] sister.

Bogart: That's right, and Ray Cohn was in the original first Girls' Club, as a young woman, a young girl, seventeen or eighteen. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, that's where she met Max Cohn.

Selix: Yes, I believe she did; Max Cohn was a very good friend of Rachel Wolfsohn's.

Bogart: That's right.

Selix: In the very early days.

Bonn: Max Cohn is a soft-spoken man, had a round head and round body; a lovely man.

Bogart: That's right, and he was the second postmaster of San Francisco.

Bonn: Oh, I remember him now.

Selix: And he worked in the post office, so he would have time to devote to his studies and his reading.

Bogart: That's the man; I loved him.

Bonn: Did he play cello?

Bogart: That's his son, Waldo, that I'm talking about; the scientist plays cello. I just loved that man. He used to be in the post office at the Ferry Building. When I was a little girl, he and Ray Cohn were a young couple. They gave their time and they belonged to the young adult's club; they must have had a young adult's club, I was a kid. Max just loved me because I played the piano. They lived in Alameda or someplace, and they would invite me to come over. Waldo was a little baby at the time, and I remember how I used to trundle him around. I wasn't more than ten years old or eleven myself, but, you know, you play with a little kid, and developed a real attachment to those people and they to me. I became practically the daughter of that family, in a strange way. Every

time I went to Berkeley, after I had moved away from there and back here, I always stayed at the Cohns. It didn't matter, I could call anytime. The boys, the two boys—there's another son, Roy, he stayed here with me. They always stayed with me when I had a bigger house, of course, with a family at that time. That friendship has never decreased, I mean, that's been a lifetime thing. In fact, Waldo and his wife and his little grandson, who's six years old, were here a year ago on a trip. They were here visiting me and we had dinner; we had a wonderful time together.

Selix: Tell us about your own son. What is his full name?

Bogart: Paul Bogart; he doesn't like his middle name so I won't mention it. They are always confusing him with the Paul Bogart that directs motion picture dramas; strange coincidence. He's an architect and he's married to a very nice girl from Wisconsin, and they have three very nice children: a boy, fifteen, whose name is Zachary after his grandfather; and Ann is my middle granddaughter, she's thirteen; and my littlest one, Jane, is seven. Incidentally, Paul, my son, went to school at Berkeley, and my daughter-in-law graduated from the University of Wisconsin but did her graduate work at Berkeley.

Bonn: That's where they met.

Bogart: They didn't, that's what's so funny! And they were there at the same time.

Bonn: Is that so? How did they meet?

Bogart: Here, through some friends. I mean, he had an architect friend who was dating her roommate, and it was sort of almost like a blind date. She's a very, very nice girl and a very fine wife and mother; they have a very nice life.

Selix: I think you said your son was in Pacific Palisades.

Bogart: Yes. He told me when he enrolled at Berkeley, in the application they ask all kinds of questions, and then they said, "Have any of your relatives graduated from Berkeley or gone to school there," and they had a little space down here. So, he had a busy time because he had his father and his mother, my husband's sister and her husband, and my husband's other sister and her husband, and about five cousins, you know. Their father in China was a very wealthy man and he sent all his sons and daughters over to Berkeley, so all the Bogarts—well, the daughters weren't Bogarts, they were married to other men, but all of the—he said there wasn't any room on the page. He had to put his mother and his father and he had to add another page because he had about ten or eleven names who had graduated from there. I don't know whether my grandson will go.

Selix: But you say you don't play the piano at all anymore?

Bogart: No, something's happened to me, I guess.

Selix: How long has it been since you stopped playing?

Bogart: Oh, it's been a number of years. When I got involved in teaching social sciences, it required so much time and preparation, and when I would come home I would be so tired that little by little I just never went near it.

Bonn: That's a shame.

Bogart: And now I'm retired now. In fact, I had the piano tuned and I said I'm going to start to play again, and I don't know, I have no time. Every day it seems like something's happening, and I've been doing a lot of traveling. Last year I went to Russia, and the year before that I spent a month in England with a very dear friend of mine, and the year before that I was in the Orient, and I think the year before that I went to Scandinavia. I've tried to travel every year, if I can, because I never had much time. I had my mother, you know, with me all those years, and I was always tied down, especially the last years of her life.

Selix: Oh, she lived with you after you were married?

Bogart: Yes. And then there was a period of some years where she didn't live with me and then she lived with me again.

Bonn: When did she die?

Bogart: 1955, about eighteen years ago, but up to then I was very much tied down. I had a job and I was divorced and I had a son to send through school and take care of the two of them, so I was a very busy woman. So that's the way these things develop. Now, I've been doing the talking, you should have asked me questions.

Bonn: It's fine, we don't have to.

Selix: It wasn't necessary because you followed through so beautifully.

Bogart: All these things that come back to me.

Selix: But I did want to correct you a bit, that Albert Elkus's father was the son of a de Young.

Bogart: Oh, that's what it was.

Selix: Elkus married a de Young.

Bogart: Albert Elkus Sr.'s mother, in other words, was a de Young. See, I didn't know that, I thought you meant my Albert Elkus.

Selix: No, he was another generation.

Bogart: He was a Kahn; his mother was the Kahn family, because that's how I got the contact with the Kahns.

Selix: For the scholarship.

Bogart: No, the Kahns were the family that lived in—

Selix: Oh, who had the business, yes.

Bogart: Another Kahn, another girl who was—there were two first cousins of Mr. Elkus, whose mothers were Kahns. One of them—I'll think of her name—she went to school with me. Wait, one of them married—a San Francisco family. The other cousin was the one—

Selix: This interview ended abruptly as Pauline had a previous engagement and could not give us any more time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—FLORA WOLFSOHN

INTERVIEW WITH FLORA WOLFSOHN

Date of interview: January 27, 1973

[Tape 20, Side A] 377

Involvement with Girls' Club—Family background, birth and education in San Francisco in early 1900s—The Wolfsohn family: parents, eight children, loss of family wealth—Mark Wolfsohn, his romance with Margaret Hall—Rachel Wolfsohn and Eva Wolfsohn and their impressive work at the Girls' Club—Husband Fred Wolfsohn—Daughters and grandchildren—Fred Wolfsohn's relationships with other family members.

[Tape 20, Side B] 391

Mast Wolfson.

INTERVIEW WITH FLORA MARX WOLFSOHN

[Date of interview: January 27, 1973]

[Tape 20, Side A]

- Selix: Mrs. Wolfsohn has been very nice in granting us this interview; and now that we have started, can we get a few vital statistics about Mrs. Wolfsohn?
- Wolfsohn: You may.
- Selix: We would like to know when you first became aware of the Girls' Club.
- Wolfsohn: I became aware of the Girls' Club about a year and a half before I was married and I was married in 1927, so I guess I became aware of the Girls' Club about 1925. None of these dates are exactly clear in my mind as to the exact time.
- Selix: Did you become aware of the Girls' Club through Doctor Fred Wolfsohn or through the Wolfsohn sister who was operating the club at the time?
- Wolfsohn: I became aware of it through my husband, Doctor Wolfsohn, because when I met members of his family, when I heard about them, I knew what they were doing.
- Selix: And did you become active in the club?
- Wolfsohn: I became active in the club, yes, after I had met Eva; and Eva asked me if I wanted to do some work down there.
- Selix: And what did you do?
- Wolfsohn: I taught the young girls etiquette. I taught them—oh, I guess the girls were somewhere between eleven and thirteen or fourteen. We had fun in teaching them how to set a table properly, and how to serve properly, and how to clear up, and how to make a table look pretty.
- Selix: Did you enjoy your activity at the club?
- Wolfsohn: I enjoyed my activity very much. Then I helped Eva in all kinds of little things; I guess you might call me a jack of all trades. I went down to the library and helped in the library, I went with [inaudible] and Margaret Hall.
- Selix: Oh, she was one of the workers of the club at the time.
- Wolfsohn: Margaret Hall with Eva, and in the plays.
- Selix: You did help with the plays?
- Wolfsohn: Well, I guess I was jack of all trades too, probably like getting costumes and helping the girls put them on; nothing too specific.

- Selix: Did you draw a great deal of inspiration from working with Miss Eva—
- Wolfsohn: Yes, I drew a great deal of inspiration, and I came to love and admire her very deeply, because the work down there presented a totally different facet of life than I had grown up with. Because I grew up in a family that had a certain amount of material wealth and a certain position, and I had never come into contact with people whose place in society—had less than I had in material things, as it were.
- Selix: Tell us something about your own background. What was your mother's name?
- Wolfsohn: Her maiden name was Gertrude Ettlinger.
- Selix: And was she born in San Francisco?
- Wolfsohn: She was born in Dixon, California. She and her family moved to San Francisco, I think it was, a year after she was born.
- Selix: And her parents, where did they come from?
- Wolfsohn: Somewhere in southern Germany.
- Selix: Oh, really?
- Wolfsohn: Yes.
- Selix: And they migrated directly to California?
- Wolfsohn: They migrated directly to California. I just don't remember what my grandfather did. They bought some property in the delta of the Sacramento and started a farm there around by Rio Vista. I'd have to go back to the family bible to get all that information, which is in the hands of a cousin of mine, which I will inherit upon her death. [laughter]
- Selix: Well, your mother then was from a rural area.
- Wolfsohn: If you'd call it. But she really lived all her life in San Francisco.
- Selix: Oh, I see, she came here at an early age.
- Wolfsohn: At a year old.
- Selix: What year would that have been? [pause in tape] Your mother was born in about 1878?
- Wolfsohn: That's right.
- Selix: And came to San Francisco about 1879?
- Wolfsohn: I guess so, somewhere in that neighborhood.
- Selix: And was married when she was about—

Wolfsohn: Twenty-four.

Selix: And was twenty-five years old when you were born.

Wolfsohn: Right. I was born in December, 1903, and she was married in February, 1903. [laughs] So, it was a quick—

Selix: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Wolfsohn: I had a brother five years later.

Selix: And what was his profession?

Wolfsohn: Well, he graduated from Stanford University. He didn't train to be anything special, but he went into the ranching business, which my uncle, my mother's brother, handled for the family; it was quite a big ranch.

Selix: Where was that located?

Wolfsohn: Above Rio Vista, the delta of the Sacramento, where we had property of about, I think, four or five thousand acres up there. So, it was quite a concern; it was a family corporation.

Selix: What was your maiden name?

Wolfsohn: Marx, M-A-R-X.

Selix: You were Flora Marx.

Wolfsohn: Right.

Selix: And your brother's name was?

Wolfsohn: Melville Marx. And then my brother stayed with the ranch, I forget how many years, and then he joined [J. Balk and Company?], the stockbroker exchange. It's called Dean Witter and Company now, when it was bought out about a year ago, but my brother is one of the senior partners.

Selix: And he's still living?

Wolfsohn: Oh yes, very muchly so. He is right up here in the big building at 1750 Taylor Street.

Selix: In the Royal Towers?

Wolfsohn: That's right, yes.

Selix: And what about your father? Where did your mother meet your father?

Wolfsohn: I guess here in San Francisco, I presume; I never went backwards to their romantic days. My father was born here in San Francisco.

- Selix: Do you know where his parents were born?
- Wolfsohn: His father came, I think, from Mannheim, Germany. His mother was born in Holland, and her family left Holland and came to England. Then her parents came around the [_inaudible_] to San Francisco, somewhere around 1849 or '50. On my father's side, I belong to what is called a noble line of California pioneers.
- Selix: I can see that. And your father was—what was his profession?
- Wolfsohn: My father was the manager of the Columbia Theater, the old Columbia Theater, which was on Geary and Mason, which is now the Geary Center [Geary Theater]. Formerly, he owned the old Ballroom Theater on Van Ness Avenue that burned down in the fire.
- Selix: Of 1906.
- Wolfsohn: Of 1906, yes.
- Selix: Then you were born in San Francisco.
- Wolfsohn: I was born in San Francisco in 1903.
- Selix: What neighborhood did you grow up in?
- Wolfsohn: I was born on 110 Walnut Street; that's on Walnut between Jackson and Washington.
- Selix: And was it known as Pacific Heights in those days?
- Wolfsohn: I guess it was, I don't know.
- Selix: Where did you go to school?
- Wolfsohn: I went to Madison School for eight years, and then I went to Girls High School for four years, and then I went to the University of California for two years. Then my family decided I needed culture, so my mother took brother and myself to Europe for a year and a half. Then I came back, and I met my husband, and a year and a half later we were married.
- Selix: How old were you when you were married?
- Wolfsohn: Twenty-three.
- Selix: I can remember how pleased Eva Wolfsohn was when Fred finally decided to get married, you know, how pleased she was to have you in the family.
- Wolfsohn: I always think that I had—Eva tried to further the romance by having me out at the Girls' Club, so that she could make sure that I was okay for Fred.
- Selix: Do you think that she was trying to get better acquainted with you?
- Wolfsohn: I'm sure she was.

- Selix: Now, what can you tell us about the Wolfsohn family? Can you go back beyond Fred's mother and father?
- Wolfsohn: No.
- Selix: You don't know anything about his grandparents?
- Wolfsohn: No, nothing.
- Selix: Well, will you tell us what you can recollect about his mother and father?
- Wolfsohn: I knew his mother, but very unfortunately, I only knew her for about two years, because she died about six months before Fred and I were going to have our first child. She was old at that time; I think Mother Wolfsohn was almost eighty about when she died.
- Selix: Where did she come from, where was she born?
- Wolfsohn: Hull, England. Her name was [Williams?]
- Selix: What was her first name?
- Wolfsohn: Mary.
- Selix: This is Mary [Williams?], who was the mother of Rachel Wolfsohn and Eva Wolfsohn, who—
- Wolfsohn: Yes, and all the rest of the Wolfsohns.
- Selix: The two women were the only girls in the family. Oh yes, there was also Augusta Wolfsohn—
- Wolfsohn: Known as Gussie.
- Selix: Known as Gussie. But Rachel Wolfsohn and Eva Wolfsohn were the ones who were connected with the Girls' Club.
- Wolfsohn: That's right.
- Selix: Now, what can you tell us about Fred's father?
- Wolfsohn: I know very little about Fred's father, except that he was a merchant of some kind and was a very simple man, very trusting man. And in business, he trusted a bunch of people and he lost all his money.
- Selix: About what year was that, have you any idea? Was that before the family was grown?
- Wolfsohn: Yes, very muchly so.
- Selix: They had eight children, didn't they?

- Wolfsohn: Now, whether this happened before Mast was born or not, I don't remember. But it must have been because Mark and—oh, it must have been before Ray went to work, because he was a very rich man. And when this happened and he died, then the family had to go to work to support everybody else, so I presume that all the children were born.
- Selix: And the children, in the very early years then, were surrounded with wealth.
- Wolfsohn: Up to a certain age; I don't know how long that lasted. In the very beginning, I imagine, that the older members like Ray and Mark and—[pause in tape]
- Selix: Every member of the Wolfsohn family that I had ever heard about in my contact with Eva Wolfsohn—each one was an individual and each one made a name for themselves in some field.
- Wolfsohn: They did.
- Selix: Let's start with the oldest of the family who would be Mark Wolfsohn. Was that his full name, Mark?
- Wolfsohn: Yes.
- Selix: Tell us about Mark.
- Wolfsohn: Mark was a darling. He was very idealistic. He was full of schemes to make millions for the family, but these millions never came off. What the result is that—I guess you could put it that way—it was Eva's, Gussie's, and Fred's job, and Julian's to provide enough money to keep Mark going. I always remember Mark coming every Sunday morning to the house for breakfast, and he would bring a loaf of French bread, and if he couldn't get French bread, he would buy a loaf of twist bread. He was always wonderful to the children and loved them greatly, and of course, he stayed quite a bit at the Girls' Club; he ate quite a few meals at the Girls' Club. He was a very positive person, I mean, he was just sweet and darling and everybody loved him. Then, of course, he had this long, drawn out—I guess you'd call it romance—
- Selix: It was a romance.
- Wolfsohn: With Margaret Hall, but nothing ever came of it, because Mark had no money to get married, and I believe Margaret was tied down to her family, had to help support the family. [Pippin?] and [Pippiettes?] we used to call them. I mean they went on long hikes and walks, but I don't think that their—feelings were inside, but in those days, you kept your relationships pretty platonic.
- Selix: Yes, we remember those days, and everyone, who was close to Eva Wolfsohn at the Girls' Club, was aware of the romance between Mark and Margaret. Now, Margaret Hall, if I remember correctly, originally volunteered her services at the club, did she not?
- Wolfsohn: I couldn't answer that really, Leah; I have no recollection of that.

- Selix: She was a member of the famous Hall family of Virginia.
- Wolfsohn: Oh, is that right? I know her father's name was Captain William Hammond Hall; and they lived up on Jackson between Cherry and Arguello Boulevard.
- Selix: Her mother and father lived to be quite elderly; and Margaret had a great sense of responsibility.
- Wolfsohn: Yes, and didn't she have two sisters?
- Selix: Yes, she did. Her father, as I recall, was the engineer for Golden Gate Park in the early days. Now, let's get back to the Wolfsohn family. After Mark, came Rachel Wolfsohn.
- Wolfsohn: Yes. Well, Rachel then was the founder of the Girls' Club.
- Selix: And she became somewhat of a legend in the Wolfsohn family, and in the club—
- Wolfsohn: And in the community.
- Selix: And in the community, because she died at a rather young age, didn't she?
- Wolfsohn: Yes, I couldn't say when she died and how old she was, I don't remember.
- Selix: Rachel Wolfsohn, as I recall, died as a young woman, but as we said, she had become a legend in the family, in the club, in the community. Can you tell us some of the facts or the stories that came down through the years in the family about Ray?
- Wolfsohn: I don't remember too many. I only know that she set very, very high standards for them, both morally and otherwise; and perhaps she did more to raise the family than their own mother did. Between Mark—I think Mark acted more as a father, maybe slightly ineffectual, and Ray was more of a mother than their own mother was.
- Selix: Did their mother work after the father died?
- Wolfsohn: Their mother was a schoolteacher before she was married. I don't think she ever worked after she was married, because they did have money, and in those days, there was no reason, when the family had money, for the wife to work.
- Selix: After Rachel, Eva Wolfsohn was the next child.
- Wolfsohn: Yes. Didn't Eva join Ray before Ray died?
- Selix: Yes, she did. Eva started working in the club with Ray; and it was a decision on Eva's part as to whether or not she would continue the work after Ray had died, and she made the decision to continue it.
- Wolfsohn: Oh, I didn't know that. I only knew that she was with Ray, and I always thought it was just an automatic thing that she carried on after Ray's death. [pause in tape]
- Selix: The educational background of Rachel Wolfsohn and Eva Wolfsohn was what?

- Wolfsohn: I have no recollection where they went to school or anything about it.
- Selix: Did they have any college—you had mentioned that they had taken courses at the University of California.
- Wolfsohn: That's all I know; I couldn't answer that.
- Selix: In social service work.
- Wolfsohn: Yes.
- Selix: And that was their main background for the work they did in connection with the Girls' Club.
- Wolfsohn: Well, it helped. I mean their background—I always thought they did it because they had the ability, and the love, and really the instincts to do that type of work. They were eminently fitted for it because they were not—what is the word you would call it—pedagogical in their approach to what they did; they worked because they felt it was the way to do it.
- Selix: And they had a great deal to give.
- Wolfsohn: And they had a great deal to give, and everything came within [inaudible], and I think those who came into contact with them very quickly realized it.
- Selix: That was my own personal experience.
- Wolfsohn: We always used to say they had champagne tastes on a beer income [laughter]. You understand what I mean, they had grand and glorious ideas as to what they wanted to do and how they hoped to accomplish it, but there weren't always the finances to be able to do it. But they were very—Eva, because I never knew Ray—but Eva was a very cajoling type of an individual, and she could worm money out of her board. Sometimes they didn't want to do it, but to keep peace within the Girls' Club, they came forth with the money that she begged them for. I can always remember listening when they had board of directors meetings, and I was out on, I think, a Tuesday or Wednesday—
- Bonn: Tuesday.
- Wolfsohn: Was it Tuesday? And I can hear Eva say, "Dear Mrs. Lilienthal, I have to have that money." Mrs. Lilienthal was the president of the board, and she'd say, "Eva, we can't afford it, we simply can't afford it! Now, you know you've run over your budget; we can't afford it," and Eva would say, "But I've got to have it." I can see Mrs. Lilienthal look at her, and she'd say, "Oh, all right, but don't ask me for anymore because you simply cannot get it," and that was it.
- Selix: That was it for that board meeting.
- Wolfsohn: That was it for that board meeting. Of course, they adored her; but she knew how to wheedle, boy, she knew how to wheedle it out of them. I don't mean in a derogatory sense, but I don't think she would stretch them to the point where she knew they

couldn't do it financially and they didn't want to spoil that. I always remember Mrs. Lilienthal saying, when Eva passed away, that it was through Eva that she got—and Mrs. Sloss—saying that it was through Eva and the Girls' Club that they got the impetus for other interests in philanthropy in San Francisco.

Selix: Isn't that a wonderful tribute.

Wolfsohn: If it hadn't been for Eva, they would not have been as interested in people who did not have as much, if it hadn't been for her.

Selix: I always remember during my experiences at the Girls' Club with Eva Wolfsohn that she had the great reputation of being able to get anybody to do anything she wanted them to do.

Wolfsohn: Well, in that I think you're right, Leah, she could. You grumbled and you muttered, but you did it, and then she'd say, "Now, isn't that nice?"

Selix: And in that way, she brought out the best in everyone with whom she came in contact.

Wolfsohn: Yes. Eva was a very sensitive person when I looked at [inaudible], and you could hurt her very badly. She was particularly hurt by criticism, particularly from the outside. She could throw it off if the family did it, because she'd fight back at you, but she took outside criticism very hard, and she wanted absolutely no interference in the way she ran that club.

Selix: The next member of the family after Eva Wolfsohn was a sister, Augusta Wolfsohn.

Wolfsohn: Well, Gussie was trained to be a trained nurse, and she practiced nursing all her life.

Selix: Was she a nurse who took private cases mostly?

Wolfsohn: Yes, mostly private cases, yes.

Selix: And I recall that for many years she lived at the Fairmont Hotel and was a resident nurse there.

Wolfsohn: Right. And prior to that she did most of her work at what was then known as the old [inaudible] Sanatorium, and then it became Notre Dame Hospital on Broadway. And she was a very meticulous type of person, too. She was very, very sweet, and of course, we all loved her dearly.

Selix: I recall that Eva Wolfsohn was always very concerned about Gussie's welfare.

Wolfsohn: Yes, because Gussie was not a well person; she was ill a great part of her life.

Selix: Chronic illnesses?

Wolfsohn: Well, various things. Yet, she lived to be eighty-three.

Selix: Well, she outlived Eva by a great many years.

Wolfsohn: She outlived Eva and she outlived Fred by a year.

Selix: After Gussie, then there was Julian Wolfsohn.

Wolfsohn: He became a doctor; and he was a neuropsychiatrist and very, very up in his profession; I think he was quite outstanding in San Francisco. He was professor of psychiatry at Stanford.

Selix: Stanford University at Palo Alto?

Wolfsohn: Well, not in those days, well, Stanford was here in San Francisco. I mean Stanford Hospital.

Selix: Stanford Hospital here?

Wolfsohn: Medical school, yes.

Selix: Didn't he also have something to do with the city or the city general hospital in connection with his profession?

Wolfsohn: No, he worked down at the Palo Alto Veterans Hospital down there. And they always tell funny stories about him, that he would be going down there and he would be disobeying every speed law. The policeman would try to arrest him and he would say, "I'm late to an appointment, and you wouldn't want to arrest me when I have a crazy man down there."

I can always tell a funny story about Julian in connection with this. When we went down to Palo Alto for the summer, when our oldest daughter was a year old, I was going along Palo Alto, I guess it was about twenty-five miles an hour, and I heard the siren behind me and I thought, "Oh Lord." So, the policeman came up and he mentioned it, and I knew Palo Alto even in those days was demons on speeding. So, he said, "Lady, you were going twenty-five miles an hour in a fifteen mile zone." I said, "Oh, was I?" He says, "What's your name? Let me see your license." I took it out; he looked at it and he looked at me and he said, "Wolfsohn?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Are you any relation to that doctor, Julian Wolfsohn?" I said, "Yes, he's my husband's brother." He said, "That speed demon." Then he said, "Are you any relation to a Mary Wolfsohn?" I said, "Yes, she was my mother-in-law." I was trying to figure out what this was all going to lead up to. And he said, "She was such a good cook. When I was on duty in San Francisco I used to [_inaudible_] that way and I used to go in and have dinner with her once in a while." So, he looked at me and he says, "Well, behave yourself and don't go fast." He says, "I can't arrest a Wolfsohn." [laughter]

Selix: Yes, that's very interesting.

Wolfsohn: I don't know how relevant it is, but it's just, "Well, I can't arrest a Wolfsohn."

Selix: Now, the first four members of the family about whom we have talked, neither of those four were ever married, were they?

Wolfsohn: No, no.

- Selix: But Julian Wolfsohn was married.
- Wolfsohn: Julian married, yes.
- Selix: Did he marry someone who was born in England?
- Wolfsohn: He married Ethel Lebus who was born in London, was an Englishwoman. And English she stayed until the day she died.
- Selix: They had how many children?
- Wolfsohn: Two boys, Roger and Julian.
- Selix: And are they both still living?
- Wolfsohn: Yes.
- Selix: And what is their profession?
- Wolfsohn: Julian is—I think does something to do with toys, and Roger changed his name from Wolfsohn to Wilson and is a doctor.
- Selix: Specializing in any particular field?
- Wolfsohn: I think he specializes in TB and lungs.
- Selix: And are they located in this area?
- Wolfsohn: Yes. Roger works, I think, at the county hospital with his wife.
- Selix: The San Francisco County Hospital?
- Wolfsohn: Yes.
- Selix: Is his wife a doctor?
- Wolfsohn: No, she is an expert in diets for people who have diabetes and related subjects; that's her particular field. She's his second wife; his first wife died.
- Selix: When did Julian die, have you any recollection?
- Wolfsohn: Julian died, I think, 1944 and Mark died six weeks later, you see.
- Selix: About how old was Julian when he died?
- Wolfsohn: I'll figure that out. Julian was four years older than Fred, I think, so it would be—I think, something like that. [pause in tape]
- Selix: Julian Wolfsohn was about in his early sixties when he died.

Wolfsohn: I presume so.

Selix: Did he make his home in San Francisco?

Wolfsohn: Yes.

Selix: And then comes Fred Wolfsohn about whom you probably know the most.

Wolfsohn: I hope so. [laughs]

Selix: Tell us about Fred. Do you remember the year he was born?

Wolfsohn: 1886. Wouldn't that make it right, because Fred would be eighty-six this year.

Selix: And what year did Fred die?

Wolfsohn: Fred died 1968.

Selix: And Fred was an orthodontist; he was a dentist who specialized in orthodontia.

Wolfsohn: Yes. Did he do you?

Selix: And he was an instructor at the University of California Medical Center.

Wolfsohn: No, instructor at the University of California Dental School. But he was an assistant professor, so he had that title.

Selix: And he practiced in San Francisco.

Wolfsohn: Yes.

Selix: And he was very prominent in his profession.

Wolfsohn: As his wife, I would say, he was the best orthodontist in San Francisco—no, he was. I think he had the reputation of being one of the most ten outstanding orthodontists in the country. He had, I guess you would call it, a national reputation and didn't go internationally, but I mean on the American Association of Orthodontists, he was in line for the presidency. But due to the fact that he had migraine headaches, and smoke and all those other things bothered him, his loving wife persuaded him against taking the job, because it would have been too much for him. But he got all kinds of honors within the group.

Selix: You mention the migraine headaches, I understand that this was sort of a hereditary disease in the family.

Wolfsohn: It was. His mother had it, Eva had it, Ray had it, Fred had it, Julian would get them and it went down the line pretty well. Some of them got it not too badly, some of them got it very, very badly, Fred I think was one of the worst. Fred and Ray, from what I understood, had them the worst of anybody.

- Selix: Would it make them ill for several days at a time?
- Wolfsohn: Yes.
- Selix: Then you and Fred were married.
- Wolfsohn: Right.
- Selix: And you had two girls.
- Wolfsohn: Right.
- Selix: And they are living in this area?
- Wolfsohn: Right.
- Selix: What are their names?
- Wolfsohn: The oldest daughter is Wilma Ray and the younger daughter is Gail.
- Selix: Have they been in any professional life or are they married and—?
- Wolfsohn: No. The oldest daughter married and had to get a divorce, so she had to go to work; she works at the Wells Fargo Bank. The younger daughter has been married seventeen years and is still married to the same man, but she never had to work either.
- Selix: And Wilma, the oldest daughter who works, did she have any children?
- Wolfsohn: She has two boys, one is—let's see, Paul is going to be twenty next month, and Mark will be seventeen next month.
- Selix: And the younger daughter?
- Wolfsohn: The younger daughter has a boy and a girl.
- Selix: And what are their ages?
- Wolfsohn: Dana is ten and Peter is just eight. We have three saints in the family, Peter, Paul, and Mark, and one red head in Dana [laughter].
- Selix: One red head in the whole family?
- Wolfsohn: One red head in the family. God, where she came from, God only knows. She was born, we took a look at her—my son-in-law looked at her and he said, "Where did she come from? Where are the red heads?" I said, "I don't know. What about your family?" I said, "You know, David, if she wasn't a spitting image of you, I'd say something has gone wrong." Then they found out—and his parents were just as bewildered. His mother did some tracing, and I think she found out that her great, great grandmother's great, great aunt had red hair. God knows how many generations the genes have lain dormant, but

here's this child with the most gorgeous, copper hair. It's not red; it's copper, copper blond, and she's got the blond eyebrows and the freckled face.

Selix: And very white skin probably.

Wolfsohn: Very, that burns at the slightest provocation. [pause in tape] You see, Fred went to—what was the name of the school right next to the Girls' High School? Hamilton, he went to Hamilton Grammar School; I think the whole family went there. Then he went to Lick; he graduated from Lick Wilmerding [High School] and went to the University of California and graduated from—he was a mining engineer. Then he went down to Randsburg, which is on the desert, way down in Southern California, as a superintendent of the Yellow Aster Mine. I think he stayed there about three years and saw no future in it. The climate was abominable. He always would tell us the story that he lost his hair in the heat. They'd go down in the mines, and they'd sluice the water over them, and they'd drink—they didn't have tomato juice in those days, but they had canned tomatoes, and so, he'd come back and he'd open up a can of tomatoes and swallow it down to get cooled off. So, then he came back, and he went to dental school; and during the time he was in dental school, he worked. Now, what he worked at I don't know, but he lived at the Girls' Club at that time; he did not live at home, he lived out at the Girls' Club on Capp Street.

Selix: Was his mother still living?

Wolfsohn: Oh, yes. And Gussie lived with her mother all the time, up until the time her mother died when they were living at the Carlton Hotel. You see, Gussie and Mrs. Wolfsohn moved from their house on Divisadero Street shortly after Fred and I were married and went to the Carlton Hotel and stayed there until mother Wolfsohn passed away. After that, then Gussie moved to the Fairmont Hotel and was, you might call it, house nurse along with her private practice at the Fairmont Hotel.

Selix: What was Fred's relationship to the other members of his family?

Wolfsohn: Well, they didn't see each other too often, everybody was very busy, but there was quite a tie there. They were rugged individualists, and each strove for—you might call it, I guess—for perfection in their various careers. When they did get together at family—it was especially when they got together to play poker, they would try to distract mother Wolfsohn's attention and deal her an open hand, so that when she opened them, she got full houses and three of a kind and everything. Then they would start to laugh until the tears rolled down their cheeks. Did you ever see the Wolfsohns get together and laugh? My God, it turned everybody on. And even in our own family, first Fred would start, and Fred would try to make Gussie laugh, and Gussie would laugh until she would cry. But I'd start to laugh, and the children would laugh, and we'd all but choke until I'd almost have to go out into the kitchen and get glasses of water and throw them at one another. And when it was over, we didn't know what in the world it was that made us laugh, but we would just go into stitches over it. They would criticize one another when they got together, and eventually sometimes kill each other and get mad at one another; but let somebody from the outside dare to criticize them or anybody, and they pull in the reins so tight and close the doors and that was it.

Selix: How did Fred feel about his sister Ray? Was he very, very fond of her?

Wolfsohn: I guess he did. I imagine that Fred must have been a young man when Ray died. There was a beautiful picture, if you remember, at the Girls' Club of Mast and Ray together. Did you ever see that one? When Mast was a little boy, he was lying down with his head in her lap. She virtually brought Mast up, I believe, because he was the baby of the family. In fact, they called him "Baby" up until the time he got married, and his mother called him "Baby." They always tell a story that when Gussie was in the hospital having her appendix out, she said something to the fact that "I'll wait until the Baby comes," and in walks the "Baby" and the "Baby" is Doctor Mast Wolfson. It was always "Baby," and I didn't know who in the heck they were always talking about when they—I say, "Who's Baby?" You see Mast came along rather unexpectedly, eight years later after Fred was born, and he was the baby; they always called him "Baby" and he was this gigantic man—tall, good looking man being called "Baby." Upon his marriage, everybody stopped "Baby;" he wasn't "Baby" any longer.

Ray must have been—as I imagine—she exerted quite an influence upon them, the family, and I think that she had a—they all had a very high sense of morality, and they were all very sensitive, and they were all very positive. What she did to inculcate in my husband as to her—what do I say? As to her qualities, I don't know, but he sort of regarded her as a statue, and I often wondered if the statue ever had clay feet. It was shortly after we were married, and I guess I must have said something or something must have gone wrong, and we were mad at one another, or angry, and Fred turned to me and said, "Well, at least you could emulate some of the qualities that my sister had." I got very nasty and I said, "I am your wife, I am not your sister." He said, "I'm not saying you are my sister, but you could try to do some of the things I told you about." I said, "You married me, you didn't marry Ray," and that was it.

[Tape 20, Side B]

Selix: Do you think of anything else that we can add about Fred Wolfsohn?

Wolfsohn: No, I don't.

Selix: I think you mentioned that Mast Wolfson was born eight years after Fred.

Wolfsohn: Right.

Selix: Was Mast his full name?

Wolfsohn: Yes. Julian was Julian Mast Wolfsohn. I think the family ran out of names by the time Mast came along. There was a man by the name of Charlie Mast, Charles Mast, who I think was an associate with the Wolfsohn family. Let's see the father's name was Henry, and I think Henry Wolfsohn and Charles Mast had some business together, and I think that's how both Mast got—Julian, his middle name was Mast, and then Mast was Mast Wolfson [correct spelling].

Selix: Now, Mast Wolfson was educated in San Francisco?

Wolfsohn: Yes.

Selix: And where did he go to college?

Wolfsohn: He went to the University of California, I think, and then he took his medical work at Harvard.

Selix: At this point, the interview ended, and the following was added by Leah Selix:

Mast Wolfson went to Monterey in the early 1930s. He practices internal medicine and cardiology. He is married to the former [Germane Levy?], whose family owned Levy Brother's Department Store in San Mateo. Their son is Mast Wolfson of Berkeley. This is the end of the tape.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—MARION BRUNE HAYES CAIN

INTERVIEW WITH MARION BRUNE HAYES CAIN

Date of interview: February 1, 1973

[Tape 5, Side A].....395

Grandparents, mother's interest in cultural life—Father—Early interest in theater—Experience in drama at Girls' Club—Director Eva Smith Hackett—Writing scripts for children's theater as an adult—Playing piano in the Girls' Club orchestra—Developing lifelong friendships and leadership qualities at the Girls' Club—Frederick Meyers and the School of the California Guild of Arts and Crafts—Rachel Wolfsohn and her work with impoverished children—Conception of the Girls' Club—Comparison of sisters Rachel and Eva Wolfsohn—Mission District in the 1950s and 1960s—Class background of members of Girls' Club/membership fees—Activities: dance, gym class, choral group, drama—Working with Mabel Gump and another skilled director—Schooling at Mission High School, Horace Mann Grammar School, Polytechnic High School.

[Tape 5, Side B]409

Involvement with drama at Polytechnic High School—Demolay Dramatic Club—Continuing interest in theater after high school—Introduction to actress Margaret Anglin through Wolfsohn family connections—The decision to attend State Teachers College of San Francisco and not Stanford University—Creating drama department at the college—Sister Helen's marriage to Joseph Hinchcliff—Teaching examinations—Securing first teaching job at Kate Kennedy School—Principal Anna C. Orr—Transferring to Farragut School and experimental work—Meeting future husband, Sam Hayes, at the Mountain Play—More on teaching career—Garnet Holmes, director of the Mountain play—Sam Hayes' background.

[Tape 6, Side A].....421

Sam Hayes' early work and theater life—His career in radio—Teaching at the Presidio Open Air School—Moving to Hollywood for husband's career—Husband's position as the Richfield Reporter—Leaving the marriage—Moving to Marin and teaching drama and music in a school in Novato—Founding the Novato Players and joining the Ross Valley Players—Radio work—Creative teaching year in Ross—Friendship with tenor James Schwabacher—Gifted students—Teaching drama at the Women's Club in Sausalito—Artist Edward C. Day—Returning to the Girls' Club as resident assistant to the director—Creating children's theater productions, the impact of the Girls' Club on children from impoverished backgrounds—Fire at the Girls' Club in 1941 and the decision to leave, creating a home with in-laws, teaching at Roosevelt School in Vallejo.

[Tape 6, Side B]430

Homemaker during the war years—Return to Marin County in 1948—Directing Marin Junior Theater—Changes in marriage—Position in drama at Dominican College in San Rafael—Continued work in children's theater in Bay Area—Conflict between artistic life and stability, son's polio and the decision to return to teaching in the public schools—More on Ross Valley Players, little theaters in the Bay Area, teaching privately at the Art and Garden Center, The Magic Circle Touring Company—The dream of bringing the best theater to as many children as possible, more on family.

INTERVIEW WITH MARION BRUNE HAYES CAIN

[Date of interview: February 1, 1973]

[Tape 5, Side A]

- Selix: The one thing that the three of us have in common is that we were all members of the Girls' Club in San Francisco. The three of us will join in the discussion but Leah Selix will act as moderator. The other member of the group is Adrienne Bonn. Marion Hayes Cain is really the subject of today's discussion because she has a great many things to talk about, so we're going to start with her. Marion, will you start by telling us as much as you can remember about your grandparents? Now, these would be the grandparents on your mother's side. What was the name of your grandfather?
- Hayes Cain: My grandfather's name was Henry J. Maack. He had a very interesting background because he came from a seafaring father out of Hamburg. His father was a ship's captain who sailed down around Australia and back up the West Coast into San Francisco and evidently spoke English quite fluently. He was a great influence in my father's life. He was a very intelligent man and a cultured man and influenced my grandfather's reading and interest in books, and other cultural things I'm sure. Because of that sea background, my grandfather, then, went to sea at a very early age; I think he was probably about fourteen.
- Selix: What was your grandfather's name?
- Hayes Cain: Henry J. Maack; that's what I stated before. He finally settled in San Francisco and remained there, and he met my grandmother in San Francisco. So they were both products of German families that had migrated into this country, but of course I think it was kind of a custom of those earlier days in the nineteenth century—the older brother very often in the family would come, so to speak, to seek his fortune, save his money and send for the next older one, and they would come and send for the next older one, and eventually my grandmother arrived here as part of this family group. There were quite a number of her brothers and sisters in the San Francisco area.
- Selix: What was your grandmother's maiden name?
- Hayes Cain: Maria Mangels. She had, I believe, four brothers and two sisters, some of whom I never did know, but one thing I do have that's very nice is the family memento, is the mirror in my lower hall that was a wedding gift to her and my grandfather from her three brothers, when they were married. So that mirror is now 100 years old; that's kind of a nice thing.
- Bonn: Were the three brothers here in San Francisco at the time of the marriage?
- Hayes Cain: Yes, they were. She was very fond of the family guys. Of course, I think the German family, as I often recall my early childhood, it seems to me there was a very close family tie always. We would spend Sundays visiting relatives and meeting cousins and having them to our house for supper; it was very much of a family thing, you see.
- Selix: What professions were her brothers in?

Hayes Cain: Well, let's see if I can recall. I really can't say that they were in any professions. They were all very active at whatever business they were in, but I don't believe any of them were really professional people in the sense of being in law, medicine or teaching, or something like that. But, what happened as the generations proceed, then, you see, my mother being the second child of this marriage—she had only one other brother who was about two years older—and she and her father, my grandfather, were very close. He was very appreciative of her great love of music; she used to sing and play the piano. She went to Cogswell High School in the Mission, which was at that time considered quite advanced for girls, you know, they didn't go much to college. She had a very good education at the Cogswell High School. She had, you know, a lot of cultural and literary interests that developed from that. But as my mother, she sustained a very strong interest in all cultural things through her entire life. In fact, when my mother was seventy-nine, she was still going out by herself to attend lectures, night after night, in the search of knowledge.

Bonn: I can remember your mother doing that.

Hayes Cain: She was quite a woman, really. And looking for beautiful things and wanting to go to fine plays. And in fact, we used to laugh about this, because she was such a character—in her late seventies, she was taking creative dancing at the women's YWCA in those filmy garments.

Selix: The Isadora Duncan School?

Hayes Cain: Probably [laughing] and she kept up with the PTA through her entire—well, this was kind of an amazing factor. I think my mother was sort of a “Ms.,” liberated woman in her time, which was sort of out of sight, you know, the women were supposed to stay home and cook and clean and take care of the children. But of course, she did that. When we were children my mother was always there, you know. I can never think of a time I came home from school my mother wasn't there. But as we got older, my mother became very active in PTA. So, she was the state historian and she was very active in the local chapter as well and she kept a membership in PTA into her old age. Up until the time she was bedridden, she was still a PTA member, and took an interest in other children and in the educational process. This was very remarkable, wasn't it? Really.

Selix: What was the year of your mother's birth?

Hayes Cain: My mother was born in 1875.

Selix: And when did she die?

Hayes Cain: She died in 1959.

Selix: How old was she when she died?

Hayes Cain: So you see she was eighty-three; she died just before her eighty-fourth birthday.

Selix: And what about your father's interests?

- Hayes Cain: Well, my father was connected with the Schmidt Lithograph Company for sixty years; that's another good record.
- Selix: What did he do there?
- Hayes Cain: He was an accountant, he was the cashier, he was the bookkeeper; he was always involved with the financial statistics his entire life. He started with Max Schmidt, and he recounted many interesting times of the early, early days in the nineties [1890s]. When Max Schmidt started this firm, it was just a small business, and he was Max Schmidt's bookkeeper. He went around with a cloth sack and collected all the money due them in silver dollars, and he said it was very heavy; that was one of his stories. [laughs] Wasn't that something?
- Selix: I bet it was heavy.
- Hayes Cain: So that business grew to be a tremendous big lithographing firm, and my father was connected with them and went to the office regularly for sixty years. It was sixty-four! He went from age sixteen to age eighty; he was dedicated to that firm. I really wonder if they know what they had, a totally honest man that would worry about one figure being off on the ledgers. One of the memories I have, which, I thought, was quite touching, because my father didn't talk too much about his achievements, or that he was inwardly pleased with the good work he did, but he didn't say too much about it. But, in my mature years, occasionally I went to the office to meet him, and I remember one Saturday, he took me into the vault and he said, "See those shelves—" The whole thing was lined, absolutely lined, with ledgers, every one of which he had kept. "That's my work," he said. Really something.
- Selix: That was a long time for anybody to be in the same job.
- Hayes Cain: I've never known anyone that stayed sixty-four years in dedication to a firm, but I think there was great sentiment. Old Max Schmidt, he was a very powerful, wonderful man, and the people who succeeded him in the firm later, his brother Richard and the nephews and sons, were not of the same caliber as Max Schmidt; he was a highly creative man. He did wood carving, and they had a gorgeous wood hand carved huge table in the lower hall there that he carved, and many objects of art that he had made. You know, really, it was quite a thing in our family, but of course Dad was always in the office. My father was a quiet man, and he was a very gentle and very sweet person, really.
- Bonn: He was a very handsome man; he had a little white goatee.
- Hayes Cain: Yes, he always wore a little goatee, and he was truly a gentleman, he really was, and he was very proud of my mother, very. He always said, "You go. It's fine, you do your thing." He had this open mind to my mother, who was always searching, going and looking for something intellectual or cultural. She went alone so much of the time, because my father enjoyed the home and he liked to come home and rest, you know. And so, it wasn't until my father was quite elderly that he began to take a real interest in my drama. When I was producing plays in Marin with the children, he and my mother came together. I can still see them sitting on the bench there in the Art and Garden Center, and he thoroughly enjoyed it, you know, he was pleased. But, never in my

younger days can I remember my father coming to the theater to see things I did; it was always my mother sitting there.

Selix: We didn't find out what year your father was born.

Hayes Cain: He was born in 1869. He died just before my mother in 1958. So you see, he was almost eighty-eight. And actually, I believe, my father would have lived much longer had my mother not been such a care because my mother was quite ill for several years, and he just devoted himself to her, and he was very tired, very.

Selix: He took care of her?

Hayes Cain: Well, they had help at home. They had a sort of a housekeeper, who would come in each day in the morning and leave in the late afternoon, but then there was, you know, the rest of the afternoon and evening. And he always made her breakfast in the morning and got up and made her breakfast. He always rose at seven o'clock no matter what happened; he was just a man of meticulous habits. He went to bed at ten, got up at seven. He was a great walker. Probably he maintained his good health because he was interested in health foods, too. I can remember him always eating apples, nuts and all the things the health people tell you is so good for you. We were never brought up on rich cakes and all that; my mother was interested in health foods long, long ago, long ago. No white sugar, no white bread, all that, and lots of fruit and vegetables, you know. It was very interesting.

Selix: That's probably where you have gained the energy that you've shown through these years and the career you selected [laughs].

Hayes Cain: I guess so, for an old lady I'm still hanging in here, you know.

Selix: Is it too soon to ask you when you were born?

Hayes Cain: No, everybody around here knows it. I'm going to be sixty-eight now in two weeks. I was born in February 1905, so this is my sixty-eighth birthday this year.

Selix: We know your sister. When was your sister Helen born?

Hayes Cain: 1900.

Selix: Did you have any other brothers or sisters?

Hayes Cain: No, never.

Selix: Just the two of you.

Hayes Cain: Just the two, right.

Selix: At what age did your mother realize that you were interested in the theater?

Hayes Cain: Well, I guess it was quite an early age because I can remember that I got into trouble. My grandfather—now her own father, Henry Maack—was a man of—how can I

describe it? Well, he believed in perfect manners, for example, and if he went out had to have the handkerchief and everything just properly, but as he got older, I know, I was supposed to take walks with him. I was a little child and I was always getting in trouble because I would skip and dance, and this annoyed him; he wanted me to be a very proper child, which I never was. My mother used to call me down for that because she was so fond of him, and he used to complain about me. And I wasn't a very conventional child, I think.

Selix: Well, you've never been a conventional adult either.

Hayes Cain: And I think this is exactly what I found in my teaching years, I would recognize a child that had some creative energy that wanted to let it loose. Because, you know, I've taught for so long, and it helped me greatly to understand children with dramatic impulses because they are always like this. They talk too much in class. They get into problems. They're very outgoing. They don't conform. I probably conformed very much as a child, because I was very quiet in school and very kind of proper as far as I can remember. I can remember entering high school and being quite timid because I was very small. I didn't get the growth I now have until I was about sixteen; I was the smallest one in my class with a black hair ribbon tying my hair back. But, I was involved in being, you know, a scholarship student, and I didn't really bloom out until I got full tilt into the drama, and I would say that happened in my junior year of high school when I went to [inaudible].

Selix: What was your first experience in drama?

Hayes Cain: Well, actually my first really formal experience with it was at the Girls' Club where my mother had brought me.

Selix: How old were you when your mother took you to the Girls' Club?

Hayes Cain: I was trying to remember that and I think I must have been around twelve or eleven.

Selix: Was Rachel Wolfsohn in charge of the club?

Hayes Cain: No, this was after Rachel. Eva was there, Eva Wolfsohn.

Selix: Eva Wolfsohn was in charge of the club.

Hayes Cain: Yes, and I was very fond of Miss Heinrich, because she always made my costumes, and she was very clever. She would rummage around with everything they had in their big collection and it was very glamorous. I was very excited about wearing a costume and I can tell you what I played. I was the queen mother in Cinderella and I remember it very plainly. I can even see part of the costume in my mind's eye.

Bonn: Who coached the play?

Hayes Cain: Eva Smith Hackett. Eva Smith Hackett was the drama coach and it was—I'll tell you something, it was just purely circumstantial that I really got into the drama because I went there to be in the dance class.

- Selix: Who was teaching the dancing?
- Hayes Cain: And that was Anita Peters Wright. My sister had her too and she was very influenced by that; a very high caliber of teaching that went on in the club.
- Selix: What type of dancing did you do?
- Hayes Cain: Well, Anita Peters Wright, I would think, was somewhat derived from Isadora Duncan. It was very free, relaxed movement, but then she would also develop dance routines. For instance—I didn't get involved in this but my sister did, and she was involved in the choreography for the Egyptian dance of an opera of Aida. She remembers that as one of the great things of her life. It was at the Greek Theater. I was in that beautiful room we all loved, where the fireplace was, you know, that lovely, large room was the auditorium, we could call it, with a little balcony; a lovely room. And I was walking across the floor, I'd had a dancing lesson, and it seemed that they needed one more child for this part. I can remember—you know you have such strong memories of certain things—somebody said, "What's the matter with her?" They said, "Come over here," and I got the part; that was how I got in it.
- Selix: And this was a part in the—
- Hayes Cain: I was the queen in Cinderella and [Nettie Valon?] was the prince, I always remembered. She always got the leads and I was wishing I were [Nettie Valon?]. She was the pet. Now I've played in a good number of plays at the club after that; I always was in the drama.
- Bonn: Tell us about Hackett.
- Hayes Cain: Eva Smith Hackett. Well, I didn't have a very critical eye at the time, but I thought it was pretty exciting, because we were doing plays, and I guess, it was obvious that she did quite a good job. Eva Smith Hackett was probably the best known in those days of the—this would be just before the twenties, like 1917—she was probably the best known of any of the directors who worked with children, because children's plays were rare in those days, you know. There was no such thing as children's theater, dear. The children's theater boomeranged and developed actually in the late twenties and I was really part of that movement. Although it became strong in the middle West and in the East, there wasn't that much of it in the West. I was connected with most of it around San Francisco.
- Selix: Well, would you say that the Girls' Club was one of the forerunners in children's theater?
- Hayes Cain: I certainly would, because in the later days when I returned to the club they still had in the library books on children's theater that Eva had collected. You know, she was aware she was looking for these new activities—
- Selix: She was very interested in the theater herself, in children's theater.
- Hayes Cain: Oh definitely, she was, yes, and that was its beginning actually.

Selix: Was Smith Hackett San Franciscan?

Hayes Cain: Yes, I believe she was.

Selix: Born in San Francisco?

Hayes Cain: Yes. She later married Alton Wood, who was a director and actor, not by profession but just as a hobby, and he was extremely talented. But she never did take the name Mrs. Wood, she was always Eva Smith Hackett, and they had no children either.

Selix: What age was she, do you think, at that time?

Hayes Cain: Well, I thought she was pretty old, but she was probably about thirty-two or something. [laughter] But I'll follow that up with an interesting story if you want to jump—or maybe you don't like to jump over the years. My relationship with Eva was in the plays she directed at the club that I played in, and then I hadn't seen her for some long years but I would read about her. Eventually the Junior League of San Francisco started the San Francisco Children's Theater. It's still going; it has never stopped. They have spring series of plays for children every year and it began in the thirties; the Junior League founded it in the thirties. Well, I would see there were three directors on the series each year. There would be Eva Smith Hackett, Ronald [Telper?], and that third one [stops tape]—the third director of that series of plays was Reginald Travers, and they were doing two plays each for a season of six plays. Now, Reggie and Ronald also did little theater work, they had studios. He had the Player's Club, and of course Eva was very close—

Selix: Eva Hackett?

Hayes Cain: No, Eva Wolfsohn always gave us tickets to go to these wonderful plays at the Player's club on Bush Street, the little tiny church; magnificent plays. Travers directed those. Well, you see, I had been in the meantime doing a lot of children's theater, and I had written a production of the wonderful *Adventures of Pinocchio*. I got the idea that I would like to see it produced in the San Francisco Children's Theater series, so I picked up that old association; I went to see Eva Smith Hackett. She was going to direct something, and I asked her if she would be interested in my play and she was, she did it, and she let me assist her. I played the blue fairy, that's what I did, and I sort of assisted with the casting. So that was the beginning of three plays I did with Eva, all my own script, and eventually I became the assistant director and worked and worked with her—

Bonn: Did Eva remember you from the Girls' Club?

Hayes Cain: Oh, of course.

Selix: When you say your own script, does that mean you wrote them?

Hayes Cain: Yes.

Selix: You wrote the plays?

Hayes Cain: Well, actually dear, I've done a lot of writing for the children's theater, but a lot of my work is what you call adaptations of the old tales. You have to be sure you have the rights, you know. If they're old, old tales, or fairy tales, or folk tales then you have the freedom to take the story and adapt it to the stage. Some of my plays have been original plots that I dreamed of, but I would say most of my work has been adaptation of the classics. But I have written now something like fifty-five scripts for children's theater.

Selix: Fifty-five?!

Hayes Cain: Right, and I've produced them all too, that's how much work I'm doing.

Selix: Well, now we're up into your adult life, but we haven't finished your childhood. Let's go back to your experiences with Eva Smith Hackett.

Hayes Cain: That was interesting how it followed in my later years, you know.

Selix: Yes, that was interesting.

Hayes Cain: It was very nice, really, to pick it up again as a mature person.

Selix: What other activities did you have at the Girls' Club?

Hayes Cain: Well, I never did get very much involved in art, although I do love it. I was very involved in music, because this was before the Community Music School was organized. And I studied piano; I think my mother took me, really, there to study piano.

Selix: Originally.

Hayes Cain: Yes. I'm beginning to see it now because I studied with Adele Davis, and she was very close to the club. She had a little studio a block down in Esther [Goluff's?] house. Do you remember that now?

Bonn: Yes, yes.

Hayes Cain: And she had a front room and she taught piano in it, and with her little studio she had a sofa where she slept, and she had a good many students. She was an excellent teacher and I studied with her for several years; those were the years I worked hard at the piano. I'm sure that's what brought me there, was the piano. Then I got into the Club activities through this, and I think, then later my sister got involved in the Club and we all got involved in it, you know. But I remember playing the piano for the orchestra.

Selix: The orchestra at the club.

Hayes Cain: The orchestra at the club. That was where I met [Clinton Pittman?] playing the violin, [Al Meena?] played the violin, Marcel Ehrer played the trumpet; old friends, you know, that we still keep up with.

Selix: You're still in touch with them?

Hayes Cain: Well, of course I don't see [Al Meena?], but Marcel Ehrer and his wife are among my sister's closest friends. They live in Marin. And Marcel—the whole friendship developed out of my knowing Marcel and the orchestra, and bringing him home with me, because he walked me home one day; he was older than I was, I was just a kid. My sister and her friends were in the teenage years, you know, like sixteen, seventeen.

Selix: How much difference is there between your age and Helen's?

Hayes Cain: Four and a half years.

Selix: Helen is four and a half years older than you are.

Hayes Cain: Yes, right. But I brought all these guys home, you see, talking and walking home. Then she met Marcel, and through that Marcel met her best friend Frida, and they got married, and they never had any children, but they're still old friends. Marcel was with the telephone company for long years; he's retired now. He was chief of the accounting office there; he had a very big position. They have a beautiful home now over Strawberry by the water, and I have noticed recently that he has just volunteered to do the tax returns for senior citizens free of charge.

Selix: Isn't that wonderful.

Hayes Cain: He's retired. I thought that was a wonderful thing to do. It was listed in the Senior Citizens Bulletin that Marcel would give free advice on your income tax.

Bonn: How nice.

Hayes Cain: Very nice, yes. So there are a lot of—life threads out into all kinds of mazes.

Selix: That is the thing that we found through our association with the Girls' Club, that we made so many friends, and those people are still among our groups of friends today.

Hayes Cain: Right. Well, you see, it was promoted there a wonderful feeling of friendship. You know each group, the girls in it, according to their ages—I became a member of the Vestas, in fact I was the president of it. I have in my papers somewhere a speech I delivered at the Vesta dinner, in my own longhand, and it was again the beginning, really, of developing leadership qualities.

Selix: Right, Eva Wolfsohn was great for developing leadership.

Hayes Cain: Indeed, indeed. It had a very strong influence upon our growing lives. Wasn't that such a beautiful place? It was so simple and in such magnificent taste. Even the flowers always were arranged beautifully.

Selix: Fresh flowers every day.

Hayes Cain: Oh, just a beautiful place.

Bonn: The fires in those beautiful fireplaces.

- Hayes Cain: Oh, and now I hear continually about Meyers' School of Arts and Crafts in the East Bay, you know. All that beautiful handcrafted furniture that we had in the Club came from Meyers' School of Arts and Crafts [formerly School of the California Guild of Arts and Crafts, now California College of the Arts].
- Selix: Fred Meyers designed it.
- Hayes Cain: Yes, he did, and it was gorgeous.
- Bonn: I never did know who designed the furniture there.
- Hayes Cain: That's the background from that same school that's still functioning in the East Bay, a very well known school of arts and crafts.
- Bonn: Of course, Fred Meyers is no longer around.
- Hayes Cain: No. And even the [inaudible].
- Bonn: Yes.
- Selix: Did he have anything to do with the furniture that was designed for Wonderhill in later years?
- Hayes Cain: Yes, I'm sure he did, because that wasn't that much longer that we went to Wonderhill, that was all part of the same years, dear. Who donated Wonderhill?
- Bonn: Fleishhacker.
- Hayes Cain: Well, you see, those well to-do families were terrific in what they did for the enrichment of a community like ours.
- Selix: Do you remember the names of any of the original board members? Well, that would have been before your time, the original board.
- Hayes Cain: I don't. I was not aware of how such an organization functioned. You know, I just went there for my music and dance and art, and it never occurred to me how such a place would be maintained or who paid the bills. It's marvelous when you're a child; you don't think of that. Children of today do; they have all kinds of questions, but not in those days.
- Bonn: One thing we're trying to find out is when Ray [Rachel Wolfsohn] died. Do you have any recollections?
- Hayes Cain: No, I have no recollection. I never knew Ray. I only saw pictures of her and she was a very gentle, beautiful woman. From all I put together though, it seemed to me that Ray started this whole family on an interest—because she was truly a social worker. I had heard how she went into the very poorest neighborhoods of the city and would sit down with poor children on the street and gather them together and try to find a place to work with them. Did you know these stories?

Bonn: No.

Hayes Cain: Well, I did. The wealthy friends of the family found a first place, which was just a room somewhere, that Ray Wolfsohn worked with these impoverished children. And the development of the whole idea of a neighborhood house grew from that, because it started in a room in some building, somewhere.

Selix: On Clara Street, wasn't it?

Hayes Cain: South of Market.

Bonn: Oh, it was definitely south of Market.

Selix: Well, we think it was Clara Street.

Hayes Cain: And she was relating to the poor. Now, you see, I think what happened—I don't really know what caused Ray's death but I think she must have died rather young.

Selix: I believe she did.

Hayes Cain: And I think because—I think, then Eva stepped in to carry forward the work because Eva was a great organizer.

Selix: Very much so.

Hayes Cain: She was a great organizer. And she was one who became extremely interested in every individual that came into that club, but I think it was her sister Ray that was really more of the humanitarian, you know, working at the floor.

Bonn: In thinking back, I think Eva was trained to be a private tutor. If she wasn't trained, that's what she did before she became head of the club.

Selix: A private tutor?

Bonn: Yes.

Hayes Cain: It was really a different concept, I think, from—and from all I've put together in my mind about Ray, I look at her as a real social worker.

Bonn: It was natural to Ray, and Eva had to take over after.

Hayes Cain: Right, and with Eva it was something she assumed; she carried on what her sister had begun. I really think the club, as I recall, did not involve itself too much with families that were very poor; we were all quite comfortable, weren't we?

Bonn: Yes.

Hayes Cain: I certainly was and you were. It was a neighborhood club. But now, you see, the district at that time, if it pulled the children from the Mission district, was in a sense a cultural

family nice area. The Mission was the beautiful place to live in the old days in the fifties and the sixties.

Selix: Where did you live in the Mission district?

Hayes Cain: I lived on Guerrero Street.

Selix: And what? Guerrero and what?

Hayes Cain: Guerrero, between Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth.

Selix: What class of the people would you say went to the club?

Hayes Cain: I think middle class. I don't think of any of them as being terribly poor. Do you?

Bonn: If you were terribly poor, you never knew it, because Eva took care of it.

Selix: That's right. There were poor children there, but they were treated the same as the others; and if they couldn't afford to pay, they were permitted to be members anyway. No one ever knew about it.

Hayes Cain: Well, what did we pay? Twenty-five cents a month, maybe.

Selix: That's right, twenty-five cents a month.

Hayes Cain: Even in later years, when I was there, it was twenty-five cents a month. [inaudible] So, you see, that it was practically free, and it was fostered by the wealthy families.

Selix: Before we go any further, I'd like to ask what activities your sister Helen was interested in at the club.

Hayes Cain: Well, Helen has always been really interested in art, you know, that was her big interest in the early years. She was very unusual in her approach to design and artwork in high school. She never followed it through as a very strong interest, but it certainly is part of her, and she reflects it in her home and she has good taste. She's mentioned it often to me, she doesn't have that drive to do something with it or about it or whatever; she's an appreciator, really, more than she is a doer. But she loved the dance activity in those days; that was the big thing she loved. She didn't go into music at all. I would say she was very active in sports, so I can see why she probably loved the dance too.

Selix: Did they have a gym teacher at that time?

Hayes Cain: Whatever they had, she was active in sports, I'm sure.

Bonn: The gym was later.

Hayes Cain: The gym did come later. She liked to play tennis, I remember.

Bonn: Wait a minute, Miss [Wichie?] had a gym class, Saturday mornings in the big room.

Hayes Cain: Well, she probably went for all of that.

Selix: Do you remember who was the conductor of the orchestra at the Girls' Club?

Hayes Cain: No, I don't. Isn't that funny, I can't remember that. I remember the beautiful choral group, though, because I was interested in singing. Barbara something—don't you remember they always sang the carols at Christmas? Oh, it was beautiful. They sang all the carols for Christmas every year.

Bonn: Oh yes, it was a beautiful group, but who was the leader?

Selix: Bobby Olsen—what was her maiden name?

Bonn: Sheldon.

Hayes Cain: She came later. I never knew Miss Olsen; I was gone when she came.

Selix: You didn't know the Sheldons that lived on Capp Street? The Sheldons lived across the street from Add.

Bonn: Bobby Sheldon and Pete Sheldon and Frank. Pete's real name was Catherine.

Hayes Cain: See, I didn't stay in the club that long, dear. I would say at the most three years.

Selix: Oh really, only three years?

Hayes Cain: That's why, I didn't stay. I was too involved in my high school life.

Selix: That's right, you started at the club at the age of twelve, and then how old were you when you went to high school?

Hayes Cain: Well, I was fifteen.

Selix: When you went to high school?

Hayes Cain: Guess so. Then I was part of the choral in high school, but not drama. I was still in drama at the club, and that's when I was so active with these young men that we remember we know, with Joe [inaudible] and others. I continued that drama. I can remember having night rehearsals later with Mabel Gump. Mabel Gump was the wife of Gump, you know, the big Gump shop.

Bonn: Yes.

Hayes Cain: And there was another very remarkable young director, who I'm sure had a big background. I don't know where Eva found him, but I came across his name later in issues of *Theater Arts Monthly*. I can't recall [his name], but he was very knowledgeable and I was quite impressed with his directing. I can remember going now to night rehearsals, so it must have been my early high school years. We did a number of very good plays, excellent.

- Selix: What was his first name?
- Hayes Cain: I can remember a name, something like [Le Claire?], or two names, [Lee Claire?]. I can remember he'd sit in that big room, and wait for us all to come before we had our rehearsals in the evenings. But then, you see, when I was a junior, I transferred and went over to [Polytechnic?] High School.
- Selix: You started at Mission High?
- Hayes Cain: I started at Mission; my sister went there.
- Selix: What grammar school did you go to?
- Hayes Cain: Horace Mann [Horace Mann Grammar School]. Horace Man was a sensational school. That had a big influence upon me too, I'm sure, because for its time, in those years, that school was like the juniors highs of today because they offered, besides the academic courses—let me tell you the courses we had. We had cooking and we had a special little building for the cooking, with all the stoves and everything in it, and uniforms and whatnot. We had languages, we had millinery, sewing, we had a glee club, a special science teacher; can you imagine that?
- Bonn: I thought every school had that.
- Selix: Well, that was one of the newer grammar schools of the city wasn't it? Wasn't it a fairly new school?
- Hayes Cain: I never thought anything of it at the time, but I know now that it was very remarkable. That was the time of the one-teacher-contained classroom, believe me, through grade eight.
- Selix: Oh, where you didn't move.
- Hayes Cain: And we moved wherever in the eighth grade; we were going all the time to special subjects. It was terrific. Imagine studying languages and all. Wasn't that wonderful?
- Bonn: Well, I went to Horace Mann, too.
- Hayes Cain: Didn't you have all that?
- Bonn: Yes, but I didn't realize other schools did not have it.
- Hayes Cain: No. Well, I didn't either but they didn't. That was a very remarkable school.
- Selix: Then you went from there to Mission. Were you involved in drama at Mission?
- Hayes Cain: No, not at all. I was just involved in my studies.
- Selix: Is that why you transferred to Polytechnic?

Hayes Cain: Well, see, I was involved with a choral group and harmony and the study of music; I was still very interested in music. In fact, later it became my minor in college, a music minor.

[Tape 5, Side B]

Hayes Cain: However, it was my friendship with Joe and all he told me about the drama activities at Polytechnic High School which led me to want to go there. I finally convinced my mother to let me switch high schools and go to Polytechnic. So I went to Polytechnic as a junior, and I immediately became involved in all the drama there for two years and music too.

Selix: Did you have leads in the plays at Polytechnic?

Hayes Cain: No, no. I had good sustaining roles like—we did Shakespeare. For instance, we did *As You Like It* and of course the two lead women are Rosalind and Celia; I played Celia. There was another girlfriend—she and I became quite close—who was usually playing the lead; she was very talented. But it's a funny thing, so many of my friends have lost this great drama interest, but it sustained me through my whole life. And in fact, when I graduated from Polytechnic some of my friends and I organized, within the alumni association, again a drama club, and we continued and did big shows as alumni members in the high school theater.

Selix: How many years did that go on?

Hayes Cain: Well, it was short lived because I got totally involved with the DeMolay, I was the leading lady of the DeMolay Dramatic Club for three years.

Bonn: Did Joe get you into the DeMolays because he was very active in that?

Hayes Cain: No, I got into it through my high school drama friends. Joe graduated before I did; I think he was probably a year ahead of me. Some of my friends that I did drama with in high school and continued with was Clayton Horn, is now one of San Francisco's judges. He was one of my friends that I played with. And there were several boys in that club who were very talented and they were DeMolays. They got me into the DeMolay Drama Club. So, I had really a magnificent time for a young girl, because I was the one girl with all the fellows, and I played all the parts. I had a great time there. I played there through college, and of course, I was totally involved in drama at college too, so I had a lot of it, all around. And then the Mountain Play, I got into the Mountain Play.

Selix: Did you get involved in the Mountain Play before you went to college?

Hayes Cain: During my college years.

Selix: Did you go directly from Polytechnic to State?

Hayes Cain: No.

Selix: And in those days wasn't State [State Teachers College of San Francisco] on Buchanan Street?

Hayes Cain: Right, Haight and Buchanan.

Selix: That's where I went to grammar school.

Hayes Cain: Oh, you went to the training school.

Selix: To the training school.

Hayes Cain: They always said, "You can get by with a lot in the [Training School?]," because they are all student teachers. But at any rate, that is when I became totally involved, when I got into San Francisco's—oh before. You see, I got so totally involved in my love of drama that I wanted to become an actress when I graduated from high school. And of course, then I can remember my father's feeling, which was typical of that period, it's a kind of a sinful kind of group of people. It's immoral and it's not the thing for a nice girl, you don't want to be an actress. My mother, though, had a sort of empathy for it because, you see, she was so crazy about the theater, so she wasn't actually blocking me too much; I think she was really quite open. Because when I got that opportunity to meet Margaret Anglin and all, she wasn't opposed to that.

Selix: Well, we better get back down, Marion, because—let's go back—

Hayes Cain: All right, that's after high school now.

Selix: All right. Now we are after high school period, before you went to college you weren't—

Hayes Cain: I guess Eva continued to have—one thing Eva Wolfsohn did, I'm sure with all of us, was to continue to keep a close interest in the family. "What are you doing and what are the girls doing?" I know that I was not as active in the club then, and I think that she was disappointed, because—I was having such a—you know, I've always been over active, always doing more than I can handle, and at that time, I really was doing more than I could handle, because in those two years of high school I had a lot of leadership. I was president of the girls' student body, and I was editing the annual, and I was president of the scholarship club, and I was working on the newspaper, and playing in the drama club, and all of this besides being a scholarship student. So, I was up to here, and there was no time for me to keep going to the club, and so, I just kind of made this switch at that time into this total involvement in the high school.

Well, I think Eva continued a very close interest in the family. I certainly can remember going to club for concerts and things. And it was through Eva that—since I was in a period of indecision, somehow Eva arranged for me to get a position with her brother, Fred Wolfsohn, who was an orthodontist and had a very delightful office on Post Street, on the corner of Grant Avenue. So, I guess I was eighteen, and I became his receptionist. I enjoyed working for Fred very much and I spent a lot of time talking with him. I remember that he was interested in my theatrical ambitions; and he was at the time engaged to Flora Marx whose father was a producer. Marx was a producer of professional theater, I guess, and so he had contacts. So, Fred was kind enough to have me meet Flora Marx, and she was most kind to me in introducing me to Margaret Anglin and Blanche Bates and trying to help me get into theater. It's a very strong memory I have of going backstage with her.

Selix: Yes, tell us about that.

Hayes Cain: She took me backstage after the performance. Blanche Bates and Margaret Anglin were touring the country on a series of plays. She took me backstage and introduced me to them, and made a very personal interview to see if they could consider taking me in their company, that I was a young, ambitious actress. They were very cordial to me, so I was extremely excited to think that maybe I could now get into the profession. But what happened was that when they took the play on tour, then they made a decision not to take any minor roles along with them but to cast them locally, so I lost the part. I was pretty sad about it.

And it was at that time that, I guess, my mother convinced me—and it was a good thing, because it served me well in later years, I must admit—it would be intelligent for me to get a teaching credential. At least get it, you know; continue my studies because I was a good student. Oh, there's something in my memory though, right here, which is very strange because I never can get it totally clarified. I always tell myself I had two scholarships to Stanford, and why did my mother send me to that old school on Haight Street. This is my memory that I had a scholarship to Stanford from the Girls' Club.

Selix: I didn't know about any of those scholarships.

Hayes Cain: And that I had one from my high school, isn't that funny? It must be true, because it's always was in my head: "Why did I go to State?" And the reason I hated to go to State was I wanted to go to Stanford; that was a very strong desire on my part to go to Stanford. Well, of course I came from a middle-class family, and the finances were never that advanced that we could just have money to do anything. I think the problem was that my mother thought I would meet a lot of girls who were well to-do, and I wouldn't be able to keep up, see? Well, anyhow somehow that all got settled within the family; and later, it was my big motivation in being so pleased to be engaged to a Stanford man, Sam Hayes. Every time I went to Stanford, I would say, "I'm here anyway, and he's in the drama department and I'm going to marry him." So, it took care of it.

Bonn: Didn't Joe [Capnitch?] go to Stanford, too?

Hayes Cain: I don't know where he went; I lost him entirely.

Bonn: I think so.

Hayes Cain: I lost Joe [Capnitch?]. After graduation from high school, I got so involved in my numerous activities that we lost track of each other.

Selix: Did you go directly from high school to the State, which was then the State Normal School for teaching?

Hayes Cain: No, dear, you see, I worked for Fred Wolfsohn first.

Selix: For how long?

Hayes Cain: Six months.

- Selix: And then you went to State Normal?
- Hayes Cain: In the fall. I graduated in December and I went to—I was the class of August '23; they always went by when you entered; class of August '23.
- Selix: Then, during your college years, you were very active in drama.
- Hayes Cain: Very, I did the whole thing; I founded the drama department at State.
- Selix: For the student teachers?
- Hayes Cain: For the whole college. There was no drama; I started it.
- Selix: And that was about 1923?
- Hayes Cain: There was no drama department at all, but I got something there. I won't say no drama department, because the drama was functioning entirely in terms of children, children's drama, but no college drama with mature plays.
- Selix: Do you mean children's drama in the grammar school, that was the training school?
- Hayes Cain: That was the whole beginning of the creative dramatics, in the late twenties. And there was a delightful, pixy sort of person there by the name of Jessie Casebolt.
- Selix: She was there when I went to the grammar school.
- Hayes Cain: I loved her dearly. She came from Berkeley. She lived in Berkeley; she commuted.
- Selix: Was she a University of California graduate?
- Hayes Cain: No, she wasn't. She was always worrying about her credentials because she didn't have the degrees, but she had enough to be on that staff, because at that time, it wasn't way up there with the universities. She was a great inspiration and, I'm sure, was my great motivator to the children's theater and to children's creative dramatics, right there. You see, she gave courses in it and in children's literature.
- And of course, I was dying to act, so I gathered together—we were all girls. There was only one boy in the whole school when I went there, one fellow—all girls. I gathered together all those who loved drama and was the first president of this club; and we did all the work. We made all the sets, we even made the lights out of cans. We made everything, there was nothing. We got the man that taught shop there to help us, and I used to direct, and we founded the drama club; that was the first drama club, and then it grew.
- Selix: And how many years did you spend at State Normal?
- Hayes Cain: I was only there two and a half years. I got my general elementary credential in two and a half years.
- Selix: So that you could teach in an elementary school.

- Hayes Cain: Yes. And I immediately got a job in San Francisco.
- Selix: What school?
- Hayes Cain: Kate Kennedy [Kate Kennedy Children's Center] in the Mission.
- Selix: In the Mission district.
- Hayes Cain: And the wind blew [laughs].
- Selix: Were you still living at home?
- Hayes Cain: Yes, sure, except we had moved. We moved to Eleventh Avenue in the Sunset, after my sister married.
- Selix: What year did your sister marry?
- Hayes Cain: '25.
- Selix: In 1925?
- Hayes Cain: I was in college when my sister married; and so, Dad and Mother and I moved to Eleventh Avenue.
- Selix: And your sister married Joe Hinchcliff.
- Hayes Cain: Joseph D. Hinchcliff, a Canadian.
- Selix: A Canadian. But was he not employed at Schmidt Lithograph?
- Hayes Cain: Yes, in later years.
- Selix: Not when they got married, though?
- Hayes Cain: No, no, my father obtained a position for him at Schmidt's later, which was very nice, I think. But at the time they met, he was working for a painter decorator, and he was the most artistic man; he used to do oil paintings and things.
- Bonn: He used to come to the house all the time, and he was handsome.
- Hayes Cain: He was a nice man.
- Bonn: He was a beautiful man.
- Hayes Cain: A very nice man. He was a Canadian; and of course, they had the one child, David. It was very sad about my brother-in-law because he died much too prematurely.
- Selix: How old was he when he died?
- Hayes Cain: He was probably—see, if I can put it together—I would say early forties.

Selix: Early forties?

Hayes Cain: He was older than my sister, so yes, I would say, not more than forty-five, I don't think. But, you see, he was in the Canadian Army during World War I, and he had been very seriously injured. He spent quite some time in England recuperating, and because he died very suddenly of this thrombosis—it just caught him suddenly and he just dropped dead, at his work, at Schmidt's. It seemed that, very likely, that he had had a clot in his blood from his injuries of the war, and it just got into the heart and that's it, it stopped dead, because he had not a history of heart attacks. That was quite a shocker. He just was at work there and all the sudden he just dropped dead, fell.

Selix: And after that happened—how old was David, their son at that time?

Hayes Cain: He was about eight.

Selix: And did your sister Helen go to work for Schmidt right away?

Hayes Cain: No. She had quite a hard time, actually. She began to take courses for herself in business; and she was doing all sorts of things, and taking part-time jobs. She went through a very difficult time. But of course, this was—it was my brother-in-law's death, actually, that brought me back to the Girls' Club. That is a very interesting memento.

Selix: Oh, oh, well, we'll get to that later.

Hayes Cain: See, because that was the year that he died that I again met Mark Wolfsohn, and he said, "Come and work for us." I met them at my sister Helen's house, because they had come with condolences about the death, and I was there with her that day; that's how it all came about. So, it's the same year that he died.

Selix: That you went back to the Girls' Club?

Hayes Cain: Yes.

Selix: You were out of college—

Hayes Cain: That was long years later though, now, dear.

Selix: Well, yes it was.

Hayes Cain: We're jumping from 1926 now, ten years.

Selix: Well, let's not jump. Let's go back to the point where you have graduated from Normal School and you're working at the Kate Kennedy School. Now, how long were you there?

Hayes Cain: Well, I had an interesting period in schools, I guess, really. I was extremely fortunate, because there were competitive examinations—and they still have them in San Francisco, I believe—in order to obtain a teaching position. I was awfully tired because I had finished all my own finals at college, and then I was taking this oral and written test for San Francisco School Department, and it was pretty grueling. I can remember,

we sat there all day long writing on five different subjects. That was followed by an oral examination. But, you see, how fortunate I was, because I graduated Friday and Monday I had a job. Wasn't that neat?

Selix: That's wonderful!

Hayes Cain: Mr. Anderson, who was the president of the college, personally endorsed me. He called me up and said, "You get down to City Hall, right now, Monday morning," and I didn't know I had a job, but I did.

Selix: I think we should go back to the point where you were so busy at college that you overlooked taking your teacher's credentials. I think we should go back to that, and explain.

Hayes Cain: [laughs] That's typical of me. I didn't overlook that, but part of obtaining the credential had to do with what they called practice teaching—now they call them cadet teachers or something—and you had to have so much supervised time in a classroom at Frederick Burke Training School. There were long lists posted, you know, long in advance, that you'd sign in, and get yourself in on a grade level, and get in. All of the sudden, the dean of women—became a very close friend of mine, too—Mary Ward—she was wonderful to me—she brought it to my attention but was too late. It was all signed in, and if I didn't have that experience, I couldn't have gotten my diploma and credential. I would have had to wait, you know, for next semester. So, they solved it by letting me go into that school and just doing special creative drama; I thought that was great.

Selix: You mean when you went to Kate Kennedy, you did special creative drama.

Hayes Cain: No. I went there as a first grade teacher, and I did the drama with my class, you know, creative drama, all the time. And in fact, the principal of that school—do you want to take this whole long history?

Selix: Oh yes, we want to know everything about you.

Hayes Cain: This wonderful, old lady, Anna C. Orr—she's long gone. She was quite elderly, but in those days, I don't know where they cut off the age, she was the principal. The Kate Kennedy School was way out in the Mission. I hope I have the name right. It was Twenty-ninth and Noe, and I landed—well, in the first place, I got this call, "Go to this school," and I thought I was going to substitute for somebody, and I didn't want to go; I was tired. I can remember telling my mother, "I'm not getting up." Mr. Anderson was on the phone, the president of the college, and he said, "Get down to City Hall." I said, "Well, I don't want to go," but he made it evidently plain that I should go there. So, I got up and went down there, and I was told to go to Kate Kennedy School. When I got there, I found I had a position; I was replacing a teacher who had been advanced to vice principal of some school. So, here I met this delightful elderly lady, Anna C. Orr. She was very charming, winsome, and of course, really—compared to the highly technical, knowledgeable principals of schools today—in those days, I was kind of shocked by what I saw in the school, because it was filled with old teachers. I had been brought up now on this whole project system of education, correlation of all the studies from motivation, and I was excited about it, really. So, I really got excited about teaching, and I had a very big class; I had, oh, I would say, forty-five, probably. The rooms were

dark, brown wood, you know, dark blackboards. My room was in the basement of the school, so the tops of the window barely showed from the playground. It was like in a well; and the teacher next door to me was a very old lady, really old.

Selix: How old?

Hayes Cain: Oh, gosh, I thought she was eighty [laughter]. I mean, to me, she looked eighty. She couldn't play with the children in the playground, and it shows the difference. There were quite a number of old teachers there. And of course, I was very young, and I was terribly motivated and I got terribly excited about my work. So, I just worked at it day and night. I made all sorts of things at home to decorate the room with, and bring a whole lot of color into the classroom, and made cushions to sit on the floor. Now, there is an old saying, "Sit on the floor." I was doing it then, see, in 1926.

Selix: You were way ahead of your time.

Hayes Cain: Yes, I was progressive, I was a progressive teacher. Well, then this principal got really personally interested in me, because every time she needed help with anything, I would volunteer; anything that there was to do, I would do. And the PTA would come along and want a program. "Fine, I'll do the program," and everybody said, "Don't look at me." So, I helped her and she helped me, and I was enjoying myself, but then I found that the teachers in the school were resenting me greatly and that it was becoming a problem. They would look in my room in the morning and say, "What are you doing now? What are you doing that for? Why do you work so hard?" I felt sorry for them, but I didn't see why I should have to stop it because I was excited, and I thought I was doing a good job, because I used to work every night at home on my stuff; I never quit. I taught for Miss Orr for a year and a half, and she was transferred. I've always heard it's very difficult to transfer schools. She was transferred to another school in—[tape pause]. Miss Orr was transferred to become the principal of the Farragut School, which was more modern and a better school really, you know, better building, better equipment, and she asked to take me along, and so I went along.

Bonn: What an honor, what a distinction.

Hayes Cain: It was. She loved working with me and she was very fond of me, and I was a very hard working teacher; so, it was an honor. Well, I was glad to go with her; I was very fond of her. So, I went with her to Farragut. Now, I really had a bad time there, because the teachers in the school very much resented the fact that she had brought me along with her—teachers pet or something—and it seemed that there was some sort of feeling of wanting another person to be the principal there, who didn't get the job. But anyway, whatever we were all trapped in, we were trapped in it together. So, it brought us closer together, and I worked harder than ever. I got acquainted quite well now with Julia Hahn, who was a very brilliant woman, and she was, what we called, the elementary supervisor. She used to make calls, and come by and observe you in class, and so on, and so—I had been observed by her, quite frequently. Then through Miss Hahn's efforts, I got into special work, and I had a class there, which was a readiness development program, which again is very advanced, like they are doing now. It's not kindergarten and it's not first grade, but there's this readiness to reading, which you either have or you don't. They were developing an experimental program on this reading readiness for children they didn't feel were quite ready for one, so I conducted

that work there. I had not too many guidelines, so I had to dream up all sorts of ways to stimulate children to want to read, which was very exciting. And of course, I did a lot of creative drama, and then all that again. I stayed there, with Miss Orr, for another year and a half. During that year and a half, I married Sam Hayes.

Selix: Oh, how did you meet Sam Hayes?

Hayes Cain: On the mountain [Mt. Tamalpais].

Selix: On the mountain—at a Mountain Play?

Hayes Cain: Yes. He was the leading actor in the Mountain Play, and I was there watching him, and that's where I met him.

Selix: Was that before he started his radio career?

Hayes Cain: Oh yes, heavens. He was at Stanford, dear; he was a Stanford student.

Selix: He was a Stanford student, when you met him at the Mountain Play.

Hayes Cain: Yes, right.

Selix: How long did you go together?

Hayes Cain: Oh, we went together for at least a year.

Selix: And then you got married?

Hayes Cain: Right.

Selix: And by then, had he finished Stanford?

Hayes Cain: No, he quit.

Selix: He quit Stanford!

Hayes Cain: He quit for the love of me.

Selix: Oh, for goodness sakes. How did he happen to get into radio work?

Hayes Cain: I got him in.

Selix: Well, tell us about it [laughter].

Hayes Cain: Sure. I gave the idea; I don't think he had the idea.

Selix: Had he been a drama student?

Hayes Cain: Now, let's see, we haven't finished Miss Orr, have we? We should finish Miss Orr; she was a dear. Okay, that year and a half was a very exciting, experimental year of work,

but it was very difficult for both of us because we were not made to feel welcome. I can remember my difficulties. When I went into the teacher's room for lunch, everybody would leave; I would eat my lunch alone.

Selix: It was that bad.

Hayes Cain: It was really bad. But when I departed I was going to have Ron Hayes, you know, I was going to have babies, and so, by that time, everybody had come around, and we had established a better relationship. I can remember the tears when we parted, and she said, "Well, we made it, we made it," and so, we parted. I really lost track of Miss Orr.

Selix: You never had any connection with her again?

Hayes Cain: I tried to see her a few times, but I got awfully busy with Sam's career too, and my baby, and everything; you know, how you drift. But I was really sentimentally very fond of Miss Orr. I heard somewhere later that she had at one time been a nun. Isn't that interesting?

Selix: Oh, before she became a teacher?

Hayes Cain: And that her health had not permitted her to stay in the order, and she left the order. She was a very sweet woman. She was sending her nephews through college. Jessie Casebolt was another one that did that, never married, but she sent her nephews through college.

Selix: Well, there have been a lot of wonderful women who have sent their relatives through college, single women. Many single women have carried big burdens. Now we are at the point where—

Hayes Cain: How did I meet—well, let's see, let's go back—since were talking about how I met Sam, let's go back to how did I get into the Mountain Play. You see, when I was still at college, I was also doing a lot with dancing; I was very crazy about creative dancing. I've done a lot with it, in later years too. The teacher, who had charge of the dance work at the college, was Virginia Whitehead. She was a very creative person, who did drama as well, and she was a friend of Garnet Holmes, who founded the Mountain Play. Garnet was, actually, the founder of the Mountain Play.

Selix: What year?

Hayes Cain: 1913. And also the founder of the Ramona pageant at Hemet—that's his play—and many other wonderful pageants and plays. Virginia had acted in the Mountain Plays for Garnet Holmes, and this was now 1925, I think. This is the history I helped edit, by the way, I'm looking at it. I'll have to give you a copy [stops tape]. While I was still in college in 1925—to backup some of these things—I was studying dance at the college with Virginia Whitehead, who was a friend of Garnet Holmes, who founded the Mountain Plays at Tamalpais. He had been asking his actors to bring to the next rehearsal some promising juvenile for a young, romantic role, so she asked me to go with her. So, I went with her, and I got the role, and that was where and when I met Garnet Holmes, who became one of my very closest friends in life. I played Drake. It was a pageant that Garnet himself wrote on the episode of Sir Francis Drake leaving

Plymouth, and coming here, and having the boat come into Drake's Bay. And so, the next year, Garnet asked me to return and play the Mountain Play. I played the Mountain Play as Rip Van Winkle's daughter, [Meeny?]. The next year, they did *Rip Van Winkle*, and the next year, they did a play called *The Gods of the Mountain*, and there was no female role in the whole play, so there was no part in it for me. But Garnet Holmes was, by now my close friend. And, at the same time, overlapping this, Garnet had been doing pageants around the West, and he had done a tremendous pageant in Yosemite Valley the summer before, and he had met there a young ranger by the name of Sam Hayes. He was a Stanford student, and he was earning some money in the summer as a ranger. He was quite a horseman, and he was a ranger on the floor of the valley.

Selix: Was he a San Franciscan?

Hayes Cain: No, he came from Michigan. So, he had played the young, lead role of the Indian chief in that summer pageant for Garnet. Now, Garnet got a hold of him to play this lead in *The Gods of the Mountain*, on Tamalpais. This year there were no women's roles. So I went up the mountain to see the show, and Garnet introduced us, and he really worked at it; he wanted us to get together. He had been asking Sam if he would play the lead in another pageant he was doing, up in the Redwoods, near Eureka, in Bowling Grove. Garnet was doing outdoor pageants all over the West; he was employed by the Department of the Interior. By the way, this is interesting, because it is the only time the Department of the Interior has ever employed a pageant master of the parks, and that was Garnet Holmes. He wore a ranger's uniform.

Selix: Has anyone ever succeeded him?

Hayes Cain: No one ever succeeded him.

Selix: Oh, he started out as a ranger originally.

Hayes Cain: No, he came from England; he was very well trained in Shakespearean theater. He was a very accomplished actor-director before he came to America. He was a very fabulous man. So, he had asked me then on the mountain that same day would I play the feminine lead. I looked at Sam Hayes and I said, "Yes, I would like to," and he looked at me and he agreed to play it, when he had agreed not to play it before; that was it.

Selix: Which play was this? *The Gods of the Mountain*?

Hayes Cain: That was it, that one day was the whole thing. We were in love, and that was the whole thing that exact one day.

Selix: Do you mean it was love at first sight?

Hayes Cain: Absolutely, really love at first sight.

Selix: And which play was this?

Hayes Cain: *The Gods of the Mountain*.

Selix: What year was that produced?

Hayes Cain: And that was the whole answer, from beginning to end, that one day, because we were already so deeply in love when we ever went to rehearse the pageant. We rehearsed this pageant, which was a very romantic pageant, which was something Garnet had written about a story of the Druids. There was suppose to be this golden bird—there was a wood nymph that changed into a golden bird at a certain time of the year; that was the part I played. And then Sam played the hunter from afar that came searching the golden bird. Romance, what romance! Great love lasts.

Selix: And he found the golden bird! How many years did you two play in the Mountain Play?

Hayes Cain: We played that pageant with Garnet after the Mountain Play in May. We played it in the summer, and we repeated it again in the fall. Then we both came back to play the Mountain, again, the next year—and that was when we were getting married—“Flamenco” we played. Then the next year was Peer Gyat; Sam was to play the lead role for Peer Gyat. That was the best thing he ever did, I think. And I had a little infant then, in my arms, so I couldn’t play, but I sat on the mountain and watched, and I rehearsed and studied with him on the role. I played all the women’s parts at home. This is a nice opportunity for me to be able to tell something about Sam Hayes’s background, because he’s been gone quite a while.

Selix: At this point, let’s identify Sam Hayes as—

Hayes Cain: Let’s. Sam had a very interesting background. His father was a minister. He was a highly, educated man; he was a Princeton graduate. He died very young. He was a total intellectual, and his mother told me later that he isolated himself so much and shut the door, when he prepared sermons and all, that he never ate, hardly. So it seemed that he died quite young, and left his widow with three young children and no money. She went through a most difficult period, you know, taking in washing and laundry, and what didn’t she do to raise her three children, because there was no inheritance. So the boys—Sam had an older brother who was very self-sufficient, and Sam himself went to work at sixteen, and was driving a big truck, and he quit school. I believe, from the stories he told me, that it was the beginning of his succession of later heart attacks. Because he was driving a big truck that would continually stall, and he would have to go out and crank it up, as they did in those older cars, and he strained his heart muscle. He had quit school to help his mother. In the meantime, his older brother had worked his way up, and come out to USC to go to college. And finally, whether it was the mother who encouraged him or what it was, he came West to—

Selix: Sam came West.

Hayes Cain: Sam came West to live with his older brother, and he returned to high school, to finish high school, but he was older than the usual age. I think he was almost twenty, and so probably it was very easy for him that last year of high school, and he had a gift of natural speech. He was a great extemporaneous speaker, so he became extremely active in debating. He was quite a debater, and at the time there was a great water controversy going on in the South, called the Owens River Water Controversy. Where’s the water coming down from Los Angeles? He went speaking on this subject all over, and he attracted the attention of a Club called the Hollywood Round Table Club, a group of businessmen, and they sent him to Stanford on a scholarship.

Selix: Isn't that wonderful.

Hays Cain: He didn't have a thing; he was very poor.

Selix: How long did he go to Stanford?

Hayes Cain: He went there for two years.

Selix: And why did he leave?

Hayes Cain: He would have made a wonderful attorney. He was really in pre-law, but he also had to help support himself, and so he was doing jobs of one kind or another, plus the scholarship. And almost immediately, he became again in debating, and he was announcing the big track and field meets there. He got into the drama club too; and he played lead roles in the drama club at Stanford. Now, you see, he was in all that activity when he met Garnet Holme at Yosemite and played the role for Garnet. So at the time I played the pageants with Sam, he was still a Stanford student, and I used to go down to Stanford to see him, because he was deep in his work or his studies, and I was teaching; I was then teaching in the city schools. He would get to the city occasionally, when he could, but as I recall, we never had any social engagements. We would eat together at my parent's house or something, but he never had any money; he was extremely poor. We were so much in love though, that, I guess, he really made the decision that he wouldn't continue college and stay out the four and five years for—it's hard to know when you look back when a decision was wise or not, at any rate, we got married.

Bonn: What did he want to be?

Hayes Cain: He was in pre-law; he would have made a great lawyer. But of course, he made a great career for himself anyway, so what did it matter. And we were very happy, and then, of course, we had a wonderful little baby, because I have just a beautiful son in Ron Hayes, and he's the product of that love for sure; he was a love child. We were extremely happy. Sam was working then for an orange juice company, and he used to—

[Tape 6, Side A]

Hayes Cain: He was very interested in the educational process and in the schoolwork I was doing, which was very nice, always very encouraging to my work. And I knew his talents were in theater, and of course my own work—I didn't really know where it was going to lead us, but again, what do you do at the time you're doing it. That same fall, he had an opportunity to tour with a professional company, through his contacts with his directors of the Mountain Play that he'd known, and I encouraged him to go. So he went on tour with a show called *Appearances*; he played the lead role. The company went broke, however, somewhere in the Middle West, and they sent the actors home after Equity paid for their passage home, and he was quite sick with pneumonia. So just before the child was born, I was quitting my job, and he was out of work, and there was a baby being born.

This was a time when we had to make some hasty decisions, and he had a lot of drive, so before long, he got himself a position selling stocks and bonds for [Franklin, Flick and Co.?], down on Montgomery Street. He used to put up a card table every night and

plan his whole method of selling, and how he would sell people, and how he would get ahead with this business of selling stocks. He was pretty involved in it. I guess he worked on commissions, but was tough going, you know, to get the thing started. So what I did, I remember, I drew out my retirement at that stage, after just three years, but I should have left it in, you see, but it helped us with a little more cash; one of those things you do. During this period, now, we were together thinking about the future, and one of the things I haven't mentioned was that I was very interested in radio work, and I had suggested to him—that was the time of *One Man's Family* and all those big shows—and I was suggesting to him that he should go there and audition at least, because it was obvious he had a lot of talent and a very good voice. So he went there and auditioned, and he immediately got into NBC, immediately.

Selix: Was that the first station where he auditioned?

Hayes Cain: NBC. They picked him up just right off the bat, and he played in NBC shows and became NBC's leading man.

Selix: Were those plays that he was in?

Hayes Cain: Yes, radio plays.

Selix: How many years did he do that?

Hayes Cain: He didn't do it very long, because it wasn't too long before he got an opportunity to be the chief announcer of the station.

Selix: At NBC?

Hayes Cain: Yes. No, not chief announcer, he was on announcing staff in San Francisco. And through that contact, he got another opportunity to be the chief announcer of another station, which was then on Fifth and Mission Street, but I can't remember the call number of the station. But he went there—see, this was a very fast progression.

Bonn: That would have been the *Chronicle*?

Hayes Cain: No, it's not the *Chronicle* building. It's kitty-corner, across the street in the Pickwick, used to be called the Pickwick. Anyway, he was chief announcer there. One thing just led to another with Sam. He got into this radio announcing business, and he had such a good poise and such good delivery that he progressed very rapidly. He went from there to Hollywood, to Hollywood Station, again as announcer, and that was the time, we picked up and moved down to live in southern California. So then the child was, I would say—well, I would have to backtrack here, because when he was beginning to do well at the NBC, we moved to Telegraph Hill.

We had an apartment on the top of the hill; on Montgomery Street, we had a lovely place looking over the water, with a little balcony. He was beginning then to get very involved in the social life of the studio, because his work was at night so much. And of course, I was there taking care of the baby, and I wasn't doing any of my own professional work, and our child got polio. Ron got the most severe case of polio when we lived on Telegraph Hill, and we had some very trying days because we had him at

Children's Hospital. He was quite bad, and he was only a year and a half old. So, when we got him out of the hospital, I had quite a lot of care; I had him in a plaster cast.

But it was at that time that I went back to some work too, and I went to this creative school called the Presidio Hill School of Creative Education, and I taught there in group one. You may have just heard, that school had a tremendous fire—it's a famous school—and they rebuilt the whole school; it's called the Presidio Hill School. It's a privately endowed school. Ever know about it?

Selix: It's a private school, isn't it?

Hayes Cain: We called it Presidio Open Air School while I was there, because, for instance, my classroom had French doors that went out. I was just getting back into my more creative work, and I did drama there, as well as first grade. That was where I met Jimmy Schwabacher, the great tenor, who was one of my very dear friends, and he was my student in drama there. He started all of his activities as a child right there. So, I gave up a very good contract, which I think would have led to some very interesting things for me, to go away with Sam, down to Hollywood. I just cut everything off, and I went with him, and the child was still not in perfect condition. You know, he was suffering from—he was very thin through his childhood, from this polio, and he had an arm involvement, particularly in his right arm. So, we found a place to live, and we lived in Glendale Highlands. He was doing pretty well now. We had a model house there, a nice little house. He went from the studio—while he was announcing at the studio, now, the Richfield Oil Company was looking for a voice, and while he was announcing, he put on a three-minute tape of a plug for Richfield. The board of directors at Richfield were listening for this, you see, and as soon as he did this, they were terribly attracted by his voice, and they signed him immediately as the Richfield Reporter.

Selix: And what year was that?

Hayes Cain: That's how he got the Richfield Reporter, because he was on that three-minute timed thing as an announcer. That was probably 1931. There were some years that followed 1931, when Sam's career grew. The Richfield Reporter became the most popular news broadcast of its time, and almost in every house, the ten o'clock news would come on with Sam Hayes as the Richfield Reporter; he was a popular household favorite. I've heard since that he was probably the best-known broadcaster of his time, and is well remembered by people of older years, never has been forgotten. This activity as the Richfield News Reporter led him to many civic affairs. He was involved in many governmental things, for instance, where he would christen new ships and be the main speaker at big banquets. He was very much in demand around the West; he traveled a great deal.

Later, he was involved in a new broadcast, which was again news for—Bank America sponsored this—and he continued that for some period of time. That in turn progressed to another morning program, which was called The [Speary?] Breakfast News, and he held this particular spot for some years, and had many personal appearances, and again, was well known as a newscaster. Actually, he was very busy with news casting up until the time of his death, which came very suddenly in 1948. He had a very sudden heart attack. He just fell at his desk in the early morning. This was really quite unexpected, and it closed his career very dramatically.

But he had a style that people tell me has never been quite duplicated. He had very clear enunciation and speech and he had a very rapid manner of delivery, so that a great deal of news would get into his broadcast. And he spent much time in the preparation of the dramatic reading of his news, which, of course, he always read from the prepared news sheets. He was not an editorial writer of the news, he was simply a voice, bringing news to the West. Our son, Ron, closed his father's career in a very sentimental way, and took charge of his funeral services, which were held at the Presbyterian Church in Hollywood. He was buried under a stone which says, "That's thirty-four tonight." That was always Sam's ending line on his news broadcast as the reporter sign-off; thirty-two always means the end. So that concludes the little story of Sam's career.

During the Richfield Reporter days, Sam Hayes and I decided to have a parting of the ways, and go about our own different lives. So, I took our young child and came to Marin County, which was the beginning of a very interesting new chapter for me, because it has been very close to my life ever since. I went from the Hollywood scene, which was quite sophisticated, to a small school in Marin County in Novato. Novato is to the north, approaching Sonoma County, and at the time, it was not populated, except for the dairy farmers and the people who were raising poultry. And so the school there, was a very sudden jump for me into a totally different kind of life, which I found very hard to adjust to at first. The school had four teachers, and there was an opening that had been brought to my attention by an old college friend, who had developed a very interesting music department in the small school. She was very anxious for me to come, and take her place and carry on her work. So, I accepted this position, and followed through, and did a great deal with music and drama in this small school.

I had the first grade, and then I worked with a big choral and with music appreciation and creative drama for the whole school, and it occupied my days very much. I also initiated a little theater group there called the Novato Players, which met in the school. It was surprising the talent that came out of the hills, and the most interesting people, that I never dreamed I would find in a small community came to join with me, and we had some very happy days together. At the same time, I joined a very active little theater group in central Marin called the Ross Valley Players. They had been in existence a few years, and they were the outstanding little theater group of that time in Marin County.

Selix: About what year would this be?

Hayes Cain: This would be 1933.

Selix: Did you get back into the Mountain Play group again?

Hayes Cain: Not at that time. I was now involved with the Novato Players, drama in the school, plus the school teaching, plus the Ross Valley Players, plus really my young child, so I was very busy. I made wonderful new friendships in the Ross Valley Players; I found very many talented people there. I made some lifelong friendships there. We did very significant plays, some of which were directed by a very dynamic young man named Cameron Prudhomme, who was quite well known around the Bay Area. In fact, he was a name who had been active with the old players club we discussed earlier. When Reggie Travers had his little theater group, Cameron Prudhomme was one of his most talented players. So I renewed an acquaintance, now, with Cameron Prudhomme, and I went to the city and studied privately with him, in techniques of radio acting, and I also

got involved in special creative dance studies in San Francisco. I don't know where I had the energy, but I was part of a very interesting dance group at the time as well. Then, because of this contact, Cameron Prudhomme got me into radio work, and I played for quite a time with Radio KFRC and did drama-acting roles.

While I was acting at this time, still not really directing as much as acting, with the Ross Valley Players, designing costumes sometimes, I became aware of the fact that there was a very interesting and unusual public school in Ross. Ross is one of the old, old communities of Marin, and the residents of this are mostly old residents of very established families, with sometimes very well-to-do backgrounds, as Ross still is today. So, I went there to interview, and I got a position to teach in the Ross school, and again, I had a very significant experience with a new principal by the name of Leitha Jenkins, who is still one of my great friends. Leitha was a very thorough teacher and a principal at the same time. She had the eighth grade plus managing the whole school. She felt the need for creative activity in that school, as well as academics work, and I was able to convince her—if I just had the freedom I could do a lot of very exciting things with children.

So, I went from the Novato school, after a year and a half, to the Ross school, and I spent a year there. At the same time, I was very active with the Ross Valley Players. I had a second and third grade, and when my class went home at two o'clock, I spent the last hour and a half of the day with all the older children of the school doing creative drama. I had a very remarkable and unusual year that year because of Leitha Jenkins' patronage. We wrote plays, we created pageants in the park, the children designed costumes, we had marvelous open house events. It was really—if I can look back, I have been to the Ross school as a consultant, about a year or two ago, and the teachers couldn't believe it when I told them we did all these exciting creative things in the Ross school in 1934 and '35, but it was really remarkable. I often took small groups of these talented students to my apartment, and I would meet them on Saturday, while they lay on the floor and spread themselves all around with their papers, and we would write creative things, which I would edit; it was a very exciting year.

I have the great pleasure of keeping up with some of my gifted students and seeing them in their mature years, doing such wonderful things. One of the boys that I had, in the early days of my activity at the Girls' Club, which I haven't gone into yet, but I guess I'll get onto that later. There was a period of time when I was involved in work at the Girls' Club, again as an assistant to the director of the club, and there I met a very talented young man, who was very poor. His mother was a widow, he had to work to help sustain her, but he had a gift in stage design, which I encouraged. I watched him over the years, and he became the main designer of the San Francisco State College Drama Department, and did very remarkable work, and he's now attached to the University of North Carolina. But to get back to my own teaching career—when that year closed—I'm trying to remember why I didn't stay there, I was so in love with the school, but I think there was a turning point in my life. I had a new friend, and I wasn't sure just what I wanted to do with my career, so I went to San Francisco, and I spent another year in a creative school back at the Presidio Open Air School; a very remarkable school. I met some very remarkable children there, whose careers I have followed. I think, probably the most significant is that of James Schwabacher, who is one of the prominent tenors of San Francisco, from a very outstanding family, reminiscent of families like the one that founded the Girls' Club; a very wealthy family.

There's been a very close friendship as teacher to student. Even though James today is at least fifty years old, he still looks upon me as the one who inspired and started his career, which is a very exciting thing—to feel like you are a part of such a beautiful career. He has been president of the symphony and of the opera company, and has traveled to many places in the world. I think, one of my very beautiful memories was when he had a big concert in Carnegie Hall, that he wrote to me and said, "I wish you were here to hold my hand." He came over here, at my request, to the Art and Garden Center one summer to sing in concert for the children, and it was delightful, because he has truly a beautiful tenor voice; a most gifted man.

Selix: What was his name, Marion?

Hayes Cain: His name was George Armstrong. I saw his designs at San Francisco State in the theater, and they were simply magnificent.

Bonn: I remember George Armstrong.

Hayes Cain: Right. He made all these little models of all Wagnerian operas; he had them in little boxes.

Bonn: Oh yes, he was tall, he had dark hair and bright eyes.

Hayes Cain: Yes. Gifted. It took him long years to get through college, because he never had enough money, but he finally made it. But, of course, we can go on to so many personal experiences, that one has the pleasure of having after having talked for so long, but to follow the activities in a logical procedure—I'm trying to think, after I left that Presidio—yes, I remember now. After I left the Presidio Open Air School, I did decide to make my home in Sausalito because I love Sausalito. My boy, Ron, was about eight years old, and he was a delightful child, and we spent wonderful days in Sausalito, living on the top of the hill on Sunshine Avenue. But I was not to stay away from my dramatic work for very long, because I joined the Women's Club, a very delightful Women's Club there, and became part of the drama section.

It wasn't long before people were asking me if I would take students. One lady in particular, a Mrs. Kelly, asked me if I would take her daughter, Marion, who was twelve, as a private student, as a favor to her. So, I took Marion, and I began to realize one can't do very much with one private student, because the elocution days are an old and antiquated method, so I began to put out literature for creative acting drama classes again, and soon I was loaded with students. I had just wonderful groups of students of all ages there for two and a half years, and Ron and I have said, many times, they were the happiest years of our lives; it was totally delightful. The Women's Club was a beautiful place to work; they let me use the building. I even had what you would call junior assemblies, on Friday nights for the young people to learn ballroom dancing. Occasionally, we would have costume parties. We just had wonderfully happy days. So, why did that have to end? Well, I realized that why it ended was I wasn't making enough money to really support myself. In looking over my old records, I see I was only charging twenty-five cents a lesson for students [laughter]. So, one would have to have a lot of students to make a go at that.

Selix: How did you ever manage it for two and a half years?!

Hayes Cain: It's really amazing. Of course, you know, everything was different. The little place we lived in was only twenty-five dollars a month rent, too, in those days, you know.

Selix: What year was this now?

Hayes Cain: 1937, and 1936, and 1938. They were very productive years. I had another wonderful man working with me at that time. He was a very gifted artist I had met in the Ross Valley Players, and he was in charge of the art department at San Rafael High School. His name was Edward C. Day; I have very fond memories of him. He has been gone some years too, of a heart attack, but I see his widow frequently, and we talk a great deal about these old days.

Selix: Edward C. Day, was he any relation to Ted Day?

Hayes Cain: I really couldn't say; I wouldn't know, dear. What did Ted Day do?

Selix: Well, all the knowledge that we have of him was after he was invalided. I don't know what his profession was, but they had property on Paradise Drive.

Hayes Cain: I really wouldn't know; I didn't really know his family.

Selix: Well, I would imagine he's of the same family, the Day family.

Hayes Cain: Could be. But anyway, this man was a magnificent teacher. He had a way of presenting his thoughts to a child, who was involved in creative art, so that he was a beautiful guide, without putting his thoughts into the child's work but bringing out the best in them. So, he worked with me, and he came and had Saturday morning art classes as part of my project, for another twenty-five cents a lesson [laughter]. And the children had all this wonderful material and paint and paper. I have a great memory of the beautiful Saturday mornings, on the open porches, with all the children just creating what made them happy, and his guiding lines going through the groups. It was quite beautiful. My own son, Ron, benefited greatly from this because he was extremely interested in art as a child, and did some very fantastic stage sets, and also, makeup design, costume design. He was thoroughly intrigued with the workshop method, and very often the children would help design things that we would use in production. So, it was a very exciting period.

Now, I wanted very much to stay in Sausalito, and it was by sheer chance that I made the decision to leave there and come back to my old club, the Girls' Club. It was at this time that my sister lost her husband, Joe Hinchcliff, and he died so suddenly of a heart attack. Well, I had been in the city to visit my sister, and the same evening, Mark Wolfsohn, who was the brother of Eva Wolfsohn and Ray Wolfsohn, came with a friend to call on my sister to offer their condolences, because my sister had been still active in going to the club for certain, I believe, craft activities, and engaged me in conversation about my present work and what I was doing. And they urged me to return to the Club, and carry on all the same work in the Clubhouse, because it was changing hands, and going into a new sort of status being supported by the Community Chest. They were needing a resident in the building to live there as well as conduct children's creative work.

So it seemed at the time a very practical decision to make, and so I did give up my whole self-leader dream, and I came to the Girls' Club once more to live with my boy, Ron. We made our home there, and I had the title of resident assistant to the director, and I organized the entire program for that club, for children and youth and theater; all three programs were extremely active. We were—in the time when the WPA was still functioning, and we were able to obtain teachers, through WPA, and staff quite an extensive program for boys and girls. There was quite a large staff that came in there. I had the position of totally organizing all the children's work, and scheduling it, and conferencing the teachers, as well as what was done for the teenagers and youth, and a whole new project in theater that we brought in, which involved a lot of stage craft and acting of some very fine productions. So, it was a busy life. I'm not sure it was happy for my boy, because I was very occupied all the time, and it was necessary for him to entertain himself somehow, which he did very well. He was still very interested in art, that he spent long hours, when he wasn't in school, on his sketching and painting and drawing and model making, so that it functioned quite well.

I had some very fine children's production there. It was very exciting to see the crowds of children that came in on Saturday morning out of the neighborhood, which had changed very much from the days when I was a child there. We had many children, very impoverished children, of various nationalities: Mexican, Puerto Rican, and so on, and very delighted with the prospects of the children's theater work. There was also a very fine dance program going on with Maria Von Sabern, who was a most excellent, esthetic teacher of very high standard. So I think we had a most unusual program for children. I was pretty much involved in social work really at the same time, because I called on many of these children in their home, to see what the home environment was like, and I found some extremely sad home conditions. I had some delightful little friends that I would teach how to wash and comb their hair properly; and I can still remember them coming to my door on Sunday to show me how neat and clean they were. I think probably we salvaged some boys who were of very low income families, boisterous, with no manners, and possibly on the way to delinquency; that through the theater work, and the backstage work, and the tech crews, I can think of some cases where I feel we put boys really on the track of good things. I used to dance with all these children. I loved to dance; and I remember some of my friends were shocked that I would be always dancing with these rough kids, but I'm sure it did them good, because I always tried to be a lady. I think it has its effect upon them when you treat them as though they are gentlemen. They rise up to the occasion and really change their patterns. I like to think that neighborhood housework has that really social effect; it's a marvelous thing to do.

Of course, the sad thing was that a terrible fire came to this Girls' Club, which has now developed into Mission Community Center. We had many things for adults as well as children. We had wonderful lectures there; we had a series of music discussions by Frankenstein and by the great critics of the [inaudible]. I met my second husband there, in the music lectures, and we became quite close in our work of drama, and pantomime, and music, and eventually we married. We married while I was still working there; and it was difficult to decide how to make it function, so we had a living situation with my mother-in-law in another place. Then I would go back alone to the Club, because it wasn't functional for it to be any other sort of situation.

But at the time that the fire came, of unknown origin, it was truly disastrous, because I was at that time working with the children who had come into register, or come in to talk to me, in my office on the second floor after school. It was, as I recall, something like quarter to four. I had a very traumatic experience, because I was aware of screaming in the building, and I ran out of my office to see what it was. I found the halls in total darkness, enveloped in smoke, and it was very terrifying. I, fortunately, was able to do subconsciously something, which I couldn't tell you—it's a time when you don't know what you're going to do, because I was surrounded with little children, but I shut the door tightly, and ran to open the windows. I had a feeling there would be a fire truck there, or a rescue squad, but there was no one, there were just crowds gathering under the building. It was fortunate for us there was a beautiful tree that grew up close to the building, past my window, and we all got out down the tree; fortunately, nobody was lost. But the fire raged through the building, and it was a holocaust, and it was very sad because there were three people burned in that fire. Then there was also another gentleman who was so badly burned that he was pensioned from the Singer Sewing Machine Company; he had come there to repair a sewing machine. So it was truly a tragedy, and it was a terrible emotional shock because I identified all the dead, as I was the only one who really knew who was in the building all the time. I found it very hard to go on with my work at the club, so, therefore, I retired that same spring.

Of course, the fire was in February of 1941, and there was an urgency to keep the spirit going, and the community of the Mission district came forward and offered us places in churches and stores, all sorts of help, so that the children could continue their class work in various places. The teenagers and children, I know, continued their work. I believe some of the adult classes did the same thing. From my point of view, it was quite difficult traveling from place to place to supervise everything, and see that it was going well, and interview the teachers, but it was a stimulating challenge, I must say. However, because of the emotional impact of thinking about the fire, I finally made a decision in the late spring to leave my work there, and I went home to live with my husband and my son, Ron, and his mother, my mother-in-law, Mrs. Cain, and his younger sister, Jean. We had a happy family life together in a very nice home, on Twin Peaks, that belonged to my own mother. She had it as a piece of investment property, and we rented it from her. My mother-in-law was a wonderful cook; and so, with her holding the family ties together and doing the cooking, I was able to go right out and seek another job, and I did, with the help of my principal friend Leitha Jenkins, from the Ross School, found an opening in Vallejo.

They were very happy to have me there it seemed, and I conducted not only class work, but also the usual creative drama, whenever there was an opportunity. The school was about to go into a new building, and the new building had a beautiful room set aside for a library, but it was absolutely empty. So, one of the things I accomplished there, that I look back on with pleasure, was I organized a library party, and every child in the school brought a book wrapped as a Christmas gift, which gave us a start to fill the shelves of the library. Every lunchtime, I would have story hours for the children on the floor of the new library, and it was very exciting. I have some interesting shots the newspaper came to take of all the children surrounding me in the development of this lovely, new library. This has become one of my great interests in my work, story telling for children; I've done a great deal of it; I still do. I love to have a large group of children around, to acquaint them with literature, and background material, perhaps, they haven't heard of before.

We had an interesting home life. It took me a long time to commute to Vallejo, because I was having to go from the bus depot all the way around the shores of the Bay to Vallejo, to my work.

[Tape 6, Side B]

Hayes Cain: I remained at the Roosevelt School in a very active position, but I was not involved with the community at all there. It was a strange community. Everybody was working double shifts, and, of course, the war was on while I taught there. So, I left there in December of '42, and continued my life through the war years with my husband. We moved to various places, both in California and even to Texas, and during that period, I spent most of my time being a home maker, and giving birth to two more children, Robert Cain and Tim Cain. One was born in '44 and one was born in '46. Finally, those years climaxed in the Ojai Valley, which was a very cultural community, and I participated there in drama, as did my husband when the war was over. But events and circumstances eventually led me back in the summer of 1948 to Marin County. I think this was really the beginning of my intense devotion to Marin County, which I've sustained now for twenty-four years. I have been involved there in many very cultural activities, particularly with children, and, hopefully, I have contributed something of value that will remain and perhaps grow from the seeds I have sown there.

I was called back through old friendships to direct the work of Marin Junior Theater. This had been organized in 1945 by a very cultured lady, who had two children, Mrs. Charles White; she was socially very active and she was a dynamic leader. During the war years of '45, the gas rationing was on, and it was difficult for people to bring their children to San Francisco to see cultural events, so it was her idea to bring some cultural events to Marin. She became associated in this enterprise with another very prominent woman, Mrs. Norman Livermore, who is a very big name in Marin County activities as a woman, who is not only a leader in culture, but also in the love of nature, and the maintenance of the natural life and beauty of Marin; a woman of great means, who had the ability to lead. Mrs. Livermore put up the money for Mrs. White to bring to Marin a performance of *Hansel and Gretel* by the San Francisco Opera Company. It was brought to the big auditorium at Dominican, and totally sold out, and Mrs. Livermore was repaid, and the Marin Junior Theater was launched in this way. Then many of the prominent women gathered together and decided they should continue this, and add to it not only events for children to see and hear, but also to establish workshops in which children could participate. There were originally seven workshops in the summer for children to involve themselves in children's theater as a workshop procedure, where they would help create the sets, and the props, and become part of the shows.

So, Mrs. White—you can see now how my old principal, Leitha Jenkins, has entered my life again, because Mrs. White had a child in the Ross School now, and she went to consult Mrs. Jenkins for leadership in this activity. They needed a director, and Mrs. Jenkins suggested that she go and try to find me, and see where I was. Through my mother, they located me in the Ojai Valley and offered me a position to come up and conduct the work of Marin Junior Theater workshops. So, I moved up here with my two little children, who were aged, then, two and four, and I conducted the summer workshop at the Ross School for the Ross Kentfield Unit. The same fall, Mrs. White made arrangements for me to give a course for all of the leaders in the Junior Theater workshops at the College of Marin. I gave a total course for leaders that fall in methods

of conducting the workshop and technical aspects of the work. I decided to remain in Marin and continue and pick up my work here.

My marriage to Bill Cain had changed somewhat. He was very involved in his own activities, and I was beginning to feel our family life was on the brink of not being very functional. This was a time when I changed, really, my whole pattern and went back to myself and my own career, rather than being devoted to the careers of my husband. At the same time, I went back to San Francisco State and involved myself in courses. I took advanced work in secondary drama and stage lighting. I was hopeful of continuing this and getting a degree that would qualify me probably to teach in a high school, or college, or something, but it was too difficult for me to study, and get to school, and take care of my young children; so, I had to give up that dream and accept the positions that I could find, that were at hand. There were many friends urging me to come back and teach in the schools again, and there were other friends, through theater, that were urging me to become part of some of that cultural activity. But of course, I was having to find a way to sustain the family finances, so the position I accepted was influenced very much by a delightful man by the name of Maestro Julio Silva.

He was head of Dominican's music department and a composer. He was a short, rotund man with a white beard, a very charming, old world type of figure. He became very interested in what I believed in, and he helped me to obtain the position at Dominican, which I held for three years, which was totally involved in drama. I had all the children in the lower school. Once a week, I went into every classroom in creative drama, and in the spring then, I produced an original play using every child in the school. I think there was something like 130 that used to participate in those. Dr. Silva created the music for these, which was a charming thing; and we were great friends. That led me to conducting drama in the high school, which I also did, and also into the college, where I gave three courses, one in acting techniques, one in production techniques and one in children's literature; I had a very, very big program in that school.

Selix: It was a very busy life because I had all the dramatic production on my hands, without very much material to use. We had to find ways to construct sets. That's when I went back to look for my old friend George Armstrong from the Girls' Club, and he came over, and began to help me design and make sets for the college work. And also my son Ron, who was now at Stanford, minoring in drama—he was a major, actually, in international relations—he came back and painted some fantastic things for me in one weekend, so that I could have some outstanding productions in the drama department at the college, because I didn't have a staff.

Selix: Now which college was this?

Hayes Cain: Dominican College in San Rafael is an institution of long standing; and, of course, is today doing a great piece of work at the college level in coming up to all the modern youth thinking of education today, studying of the social structure of the problems of the blacks, of whatnot, and doing a very fine job there. This turned out to be, for the time being, a very practical answer for me. The boys grew a little older, and I was involved in the work I love; and I overlaid that with other activity because every single summer I still conducted the Junior Theater workshops. I had the one in the Art and Garden Center. We began that one in the Ross School, and later in the Kent School, and eventually we went into the Marin Art and Garden Center; and I brought the children in

there the very first time when I produced *Rip Van Winkle*. Before the theater was ever used, there was an amphitheater, a natural amphitheater, on the grounds of the Art and Garden Center; and I brought the children up from the Ross School and produced a big show out of doors there before there even was a stage. People sat on the hillside, and we did *Rip Van Winkle* with a very large cast of children. I continued that work, conducting that workshop for seventeen years, every, single summer for seventeen years. I wrote all the plays. Every year, I adapted some famous legend, or tale, or myth, or tried to bring the children the very best of literature. And I conducted the whole workshop, even designing the costumes and sets sometimes; so you can see, I have lived a very busy life.

There were other friends in the school department that were urging me to come back into the public schools, that they needed me; so I finally made a switch again and came back into the public schools of San Anselmo; and I went to the Isabel Cook School. Isabel Cook had been a friend of mine. She was a magnificent woman, she was the principal of the school. After her sudden death, the school was named after her, the Isabel Cook School; it's near my home. I went there again to teach the second grade and to do creative work with the upper grade students. Now, I was there for two years, and at the same time, I was directing plays for the Ross Valley Players.

Instead of acting, I had now gone really more into directing. I had the Junior Theater; and I had also now begun touring plays to children's theaters around the Bay Area. I brought two plays a year to the San Francisco Children's Theater; and I went back to the work that I had begun, you remember I had told you before, with Eva Smith Hackett. There were people in the organization that remembered me, and they were delighted to have me come back. So, I toured here such plays as *Tom Sawyer* and *Heidi* and *Tales from the Arabian Knights* and myths of the Norse; and I enjoyed myself. It was really amazing how things came off. We used to go over the bridge with the truck, and all these young high school students that would staff my tech crews that weren't that knowledgeable, but somehow we did get together some fabulous shows. And George Armstrong designed and painted these huge canvas drops for backgrounds. Of course, we don't do that much anymore, but it was a real labor to rig and hang those tremendous drops. I remember, when we did *Heidi*, it was a three-set show; and we certainly worked hard at trying to bring good theater to other places.

After that two years, I had a great urge again, which has been part of my life forever, this sort of conflict between the necessity of my being a teacher and bringing to the educational development of children what I thought was important, or fulfilling my own creative needs by working with them only in a special field. This has always been a conflict of mine, a sort of a call to my own creative needs as against the stability of a teaching life, where you could stay in one school, remain there until you retired, and be sure of a very good income. I always, after a period of time, became very restless; and I have a terrific urge to bring creative life to children. So, I finally decided that was an important part of any child's life, as well as his academic learning; so, I, again, applied to my superintendent to leave and finish the year. I wasn't trying to get out of the contract; but, at the end of the semester, I wanted to leave and again try to organize just the creative work. I was very happy about it, because I felt I'd find the way, somehow. I was never a woman that had very much, of what you'd call, means. I was always having a comfortable living, but not that much basic security; I had to earn a living.

It's a very strange circumstance how life turns you about, because, after I put in my resignation, my youngest son contracted polio; and this time, it was really severe. Tim was a very, very severe case, waste-down paralysis. It was going to be long, long, long years of recovery, and it was unknown how much he would recover. He went finally, down from Marin General Hospital, for care at Stanford Hospital [Stanford Hospital & Clinics]; and he had marvelous care there. There was a lot of consultation that went on from staff, and doctor's rounds, and social workers; and they planned with me every, single step of the way how I would manage a child like this in the home I lived in, which is full of stairs. They didn't think I could do it. Of course, the child wasn't able to even get himself into a bathtub; so, there was a lot of care. They pointed out to me that it was essential that I give up my urges for creativity, and settle down to a very solid life of a stable income, and take care of my child.

I immediately applied for another position, and I went to the Kent School, and I had friends there. I was very fortunate, because I was immediately offered two positions; I could either take the eighth grade or the first. I decided on the first because I thought it would be a very happy thing for me to be with all these delightful, young minds and without the problems of adolescence in children, because I had so many home problems. So, I went back to the Kent School now in Kentfield, which is an area I love very much, and I spent nine more years of classroom teaching in order to see my boy go through the various stages of recovery, some of which were very lengthy. He had a lot of surgery; he went to the Shriners Hospital. It was magnificent what the community did for me because the Polio Foundation came out and paid all my bills for the hospital, and I went out of the hospital without owing a cent. But the ongoing care of braces, and equipment, and therapy, and all, of course, was extremely expensive; but I had great help from the community I love so much. In fact, even in Junior Theater, the next summer, the children would come with rolls of dimes to give to me for the Polio Foundation; you know, we used to always collect the dimes. And I accepted them, because I thought that it was beautiful that the children wanted to help someone they knew personally.

So, now you see, I found myself back in the public school. Well, again I tried to spread my love of drama through this school, which I did again. I worked with gifted children, I worked on gifted child studies, I became a master teacher, I did demonstration work for students at the college, and I continued my Junior Theater summers every summer. I continued my membership in Ross Valley Players, and I belong to it to this day. I became more active eventually in the Ross Valley Players. I organized a team theater group there; I believe it's the only time they ever had that. They gave me a choice: "Do you want to have a children's theater or a team theater?" So, I had a team theater there for three years, which was a very interesting experiment. I guess I had as many as fifty young people, boys and girls, that again wrote plays, did their own sets. The Players gave me a small income each month, to go on with this work. I have some wonderful friendships still going on from those young people I worked with, in those days, at the Ross Valley Player's barn.

Of course, the barn is a fabulous place. It's the original carriage house of the original property at the Art and Garden Center. There are only two buildings remaining there from the original property. One is what they call the "Octagon House," which is a beautiful building built in that old, octagonal style, which was constructed over the pump house. I believe, what I've heard the record is that the hired hand lived in that; it's

a two-story structure. And then the carriage house, on the hill, was the old barn; and it still is an old barn except that the Players reconstructed it. When I first went to work there, the back of the building still had the stalls with the hay in it behind the acting area; but eventually that was all dismantled, and the Players built themselves a better stage over that area and extended the building further back.

Of course, I think, as little theaters go, the Ross Valley Players is the one that has maintained through the years and is still going very actively in Marin. I've seen other very fine groups fade and go. There was at one time the Sausalito Players in a little tiny niche off the main street of Sausalito. They did outstanding work and excellent in production, acting, and direction; but that has faded from the scene. There was a time when [Jack Arenson] and his wife had a theater in Sausalito, in the Movie House, which was a very fine theater thing in Marin, and that eventually went. Of course, [Jack Arenson] and his wife still maintain theatrical activities; they give fine readings in various places. Another very fine theater that developed in Marin came from the leadership of Elizabeth Berryhill. She had a group in the East Bay called "The Straw Hatters," which became very famous. She and some of her friends organized it when she graduated from UC Berkeley. She came to the San Francisco Theological Seminary, on the hill of San Anselmo, and was involved in the teaching of religious drama, or something to the students in the seminary; and under her leadership, they took their old gymnasium and made a wonderful theater. Elizabeth had a most outstanding theater there doing very high-level drama for some years, and it eventually closed for lack of funds. We are talking in Marin at great length, now. How can we possibly sustain the beautiful, wonderful, cultural, living arts of this place we love, unless we find funding or money to make it a possible thing?

Now, we've just lost the Marin Shakespeare Festival. John Brebner, I've known for long years, he organized the Marin Shakespeare Festival at the Art and Garden Center. It was again fostered by Mrs. Livermore; I believe she made a very sizable donation to him to start it. They took over the amphitheater, where I did my children's theater. I gave up the amphitheater to Brebner, and I took my summer plays down to the lower part of the center because we were both working at the same time in the summer. His Shakespeare festival went on for twelve years, very high level. Eventually, they went to Forest Meadows, where the Dominican fostered them, and they had a beautiful, woodland theater. They continued to go in debt, however. Their drama season continued for several months, and it involved a great many people. It was really a very fine thing for Marin to have had it; but because the debts kept accumulating, this is the first time they've had to close now. The Marin Shakespeare Festival has gone from Marin, and this summer, they're hoping to pull it together. I understand they're trying to make arrangements at the Palace of Fine Arts for this to continue, but how can it any longer be the Marin Shakespeare Festival? So, that's gone.

I say, in my own field, though I've been trying to do this creative work privately, in public schools, for the community, touring—now, the last nine years finally, for myself, I decided I could maintain if I had private students. I always have seemed to be able to maintain and never give up. So, finally when my boy was able to manage himself, and I felt I could handle it, I left the Kent School again, much to the amazement of my fellow teachers because I gave up a perfectly stable job with tenure, where I could have remained until I retired. But again, I see I have this great urge for the creative life, so I retired from the Kent School, and I began to teach privately at the Art and Garden

Center; and it was a marvelous response. The first year, I organized the creative classes for children there; and the nice carryover is I was teaching it in the Livermore Room that was named after Mrs. Caroline Livermore because, of course, she's gone now. So, I had a nice overtone. I used to get notes from her saying, "I'm happy to see what you're doing, and it pleases me to know you're here," and so on, you know. Those memories are very nice. And of course, after her death, they named it the Livermore Room. It's a very large, very nice room, in one of the buildings of the Northgate Group; and I rented this room. They made the rent very reasonable for me; so, I've conducted activities there now for eight years.

I had private students in groups, according to their ages, and I gave two big productions a year, in the early summer, at the outdoor amphitheater, and in the winter, every Christmas for ten years; it became known there was going to be a great Christmas play in the barn. The Ross Players let me have the barn. That started as a mutual thing in the beginning, the Players fostered my Christmas plays, and eventually they became Magic Circle Plays and were promoted as Magic Circle Plays. Of course, I called my group The Magic Circle, and I think it's a marvelous name because, you see, the circle is the universal symbol of life, and it's a very beautiful thing. It has much significance to me because it also is the circle of the arts, it's the family circle. The connotations of my magic circle are very deep in my mind, and I tried to make it that. I tried to leave an impact on a child's life when I meet a child; I don't meet a child casually. I sometimes come to know them for many years later. I have taught second generation children there and, now, am beginning to teach the third generation children from students I had back in the Sausalito days of the early thirties; so, it's a continuous, beautiful circle of friendship, and love, and dedication to creativity at a high level. It's not a casual thing to make a living at something, it's involved a great deal of sacrifice on my part. I think Marin is a beautiful place. We all know how beautiful it is scenically. It's filled with many tremendous people, who are individuals, who move forward with a lot of courage in the things they believe in. I have met some wonderful people there.

So, where are we now? Well, I wasn't too well a year and a half ago, I had a back problem, so I had to stop teaching for a while. I had been touring plays now with adults and children to the Peninsula Children's Theater, to the East Bay Children's Theater, to San Francisco Children's Theater, to San Jose, to various colleges. The Magic Circle Touring Company was becoming known. I would involve talented adults, I would pay a big staff, and I would pay a designer. It was expensive, but I always made my expenses. I would involve talented children sometimes, but only if it was a child's role. But, at this time, I had to stop because I wasn't able to really function physically; so I employed two young teachers who had worked with me to conduct my classes at the Art and Garden Center. I decided that—now, last year that's just passed, 1972, I said, "Well, I won't teach children's classes anymore, I will try to involve myself, now, as I'm getting older in not so many projects but just one big dream, that I will bring the very best theater I can possibly put together to as many children as possible in this county."

So, I spent the entire year doing two huge productions. First, I did *The Wonderful Adventures of Pinocchio*, which was my own adaptation in a new Veterans' Memorial Theater, which is now the very first year that that has been open in the Frank Lloyd Wright Complex. It was totally professionally managed by professional technicians; I had a fantastic designer, [Alonzo Gonzales], who is one of the College of Marin Theater Group's designers; he is a most gifted man. We did an expensive technique called "rear

view projection,” which is a very expensive rental, expensive technique. I involved eighty-seven in the cast. Well, of course, we played to big houses. I really did it as a tribute to Marin Junior Theater, because I retired from Marin Junior Theater workshops four years ago. I passed them over to a young woman, who was at one time a student in Junior Theater that I knew would carry on the spirit of the work. And Marin Junior Theater, as an organization, has now moved on to something called “Youth in Arts,” which is just fantastic. They have strong, new, young leadership; and they’ve joined forces with the Marin Symphony, with Marin Civic Ballet, with the Marin Junior Museum, and with whatever theater people they can find to bring shows into a year of activity in the big Veteran’s Memorial Theater; it’s a 2,000 seat theater. This was their first year of this, so I developed a big play as an opener for their series, and I was very happy to do it. But, of course, I was unable to pay the expenses with the contract they could give me, so I ran my own show and rented the theater myself for two more performances. It was very expensive; I lost a lot of money.

Then, I approached the College of Marin to see if I could do again another expansive, very big production; I wanted to do *Peter Pan*. The community college district office was really, very kind to me. They welcomed me; they finally decided they would like me there; they would let me have the theater. I set up a program with them for six performances of *Peter Pan*. I worked on that about six months, and it was really highly professional, and I feel quite an outstanding performance of *Peter Pan*, even to the flying gear that Peter flies in the air. We used “rear view projection,” and again Alonso Gonzales designed the sets for me. It was a tremendous lot of work for both of us, but again I lost money. So, you see, I’m coming back now, this spring, to evaluating where are we. There are so many of us, who have struggled so long to bring the very best we can in theater to our county, and yet, one at a time, everybody gives up. Well, I have decided I’m not going to give up, because I intend, as long as I am able, to bring beautiful things to the children of Marin, but, of course, I’m looking for the way. I’m hoping now to establish a Magic Circle Incorporated, which is a total nonprofit, and of course, my whole work last year has all been donated. I did all my work all year gratis, plus losing a good deal of money; but I think the idea and the dream is not going to go. I mean, it’s gone in so many places that I’m sort of dedicated to seeing that this will continue. We’re trying to find grants, we’re trying to find wealthy people. You can go back full circle back to that Girls’ Club, and you can say, “How did we ever find that beautiful place, or how did we get it? Could anyone have built that?” Definitely not. It was a donation from the people, who are very wealthy to those who are not in order to bring culture and beauty to children. It was the same thing all over again. So, we have wealthy people, we have wealthy industry. We have to appeal to these people to continue this cycle of good things for beautiful children, and that’s about where we’re at.

We might conclude by bringing ourselves back to another circle, which is very close and loving and that is the family circle. I like to recall some incidents in my sister Helen’s life; it was quite turbulent. I only have one sister and that is Helen Brune Hinchcliff. She and I were very close in our childhood. She was four and a half years older than I. We were both equally influenced by our close family ties, by the loving relationship in our home, by a very stable father, who supported the family well, and by a very intelligent, cultured mother. As we progress, in parallel lines, through our lives, they naturally began to diverge, as we became ourselves as we were meant to be. My sister Helen was very dedicated to family life, to the rearing of her boy, her one child,

David, David Hinchcliff, who has had a very distinguished career in the Marine Corps and has gone very high in his position as a master sergeant. He has served the country well. He has been involved in the last conflict in Vietnam and has spent another year serving his country overseas, even though he is the father of two growing sons. I think, my sister Helen is quite proud of his service to this country and which is very justifiable that she should be. I know that my brother-in-law's death was very untimely. It came at a time when her child was young. She was not really trained for some profession. She had been involved in business. It came at a time when she had to begin again and find ways to support her son, which she did in a very fine manner. She took many courses and tried to find part-time work to help support her child and herself. She was always very fine at business and very proficient at business activities, so eventually it came sort of full circle again that she went to work for the Schmidt Lithograph family, as you can say, that my father was so close to. She was employed there for twenty years as a cost accountant, and was in close contact then with my father, from which she retired now some years ago. She is a woman who loves her home very much, and has a very artistic interest in lovely things, and reflects this in her home, and in her general care of her home.

My father came from a family that had two sets of children. The first wife died, and then my grandfather on that side of the family married again and had other children; and there were quite a number of intervening years between them. The oldest brother of this family, Henry, was a very successful businessman in San Francisco, and I believe it was he who paid my father's passage to this country when he was only sixteen years old, and helped him find his first employment. My father had a twin sister, and they were the youngest children in the family, but she never left Germany; she was the only member of the family who remained there. My father communicated with them through the many long years, even through the wars, and I can recall that he sent them many packages of food and clothing when times were difficult in Germany. It was very sentimental to him to always look after his twin sister. Quite touching, really, that he always maintained his ability to write letters in the German script, and continued to write, and do good things for his twin sister in Germany. I would also like to recall some family notes, which, I believe, we have neglected or incorrectly stated or overlooked. One of these is I believe, in hearing the tape, that we neglected to mention that my mother's maiden name was Helene M. Maack and my father's name was Fred Ernest Brune. The Brune family, as did my mother's, migrated from Germany, where they were all born near the city of Hamlin. My father talked many times of the old traditions of Hamlin and gave me some wonderful, engraved old cards showing the traditions of the Pied Piper of Hamlin, which I used when I produced the play of *The Pied Piper of Hamlin*. I was delighted to have those old family mementos. His own father, Ernest Brune, was the weaver of the community and he had a beautiful, little home which my mother and father visited in 1936. My mother had a natural instinct for history, so while they were on this trip, she recorded many family notes of both families, which I, now, have at my home. It is very fine to see the background of one's family from two very fine families, who achieved fine things in their communities.

There are two other corrections that should be stated. My husband Sam Hayes did not die in 1948, it was 1958. In the early part of the tape, I mentioned my great grandfather, who was out of Hamburg as a ship's captain, he had the great influence on my maternal grandfather, not on my father.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—PENDLETON WILLIAMS QUAST

INTERVIEW WITH PENDLETON WILLIAMS QUAST

Date of interview: June 12, 1973

[Tape 11, Side A]441

On name, “Pendleton”—Joining Girls’ Club at age eleven—Activities at the Girls’ Club—Eva Wolfsohn—Interest in drama and photography—Fire at Girls’ Club—More on photography—Marriage in 1928 and joining the Rachel Wolfsohn Mothers’ Club—Maria Von Sabern’s dance class—Husband Albert H. Quast and his career—Own career and hobbies—Influence of Girls’ Club—Evolution of Girls’ Club into the Mission Neighborhood Center—“Legend” of Rachel Wolfsohn—Daughters and grandchildren.

INTERVIEW WITH PENDLETON WILLIAMS QUAST

[Date of interview: June 12, 1973]

[Tape 11, Side A]

- Selix: Today is June 12, 1973, and three members of the Girls' Club of San Francisco are meeting in the home of Mrs. Pendleton Williams Quast. The other members of the group are Adrienne Bonn and Leah Selix. Leah Selix will act as the moderator.
- Pendleton, do you remember when you first started at the Girls' Club?
- Quast: Yes, yes I do. It was when I was very young but it was a beautiful, beautiful home. Well, it wasn't merely a home, it was more of a community center, which had so many beautiful things about it and people who were charming people.
- Selix: You've also been known as the name of Penny. What is the origin of the name Pendleton? Is that a family name?
- Quast: No, it's not a family name. My mother as a young girl went to the St. Louis Fair, and of course, they had all kinds of new innovations like electric lights were just coming in there. And they had another type of it, I guess, a Pendleton there, and she thought that was the most beautiful word, and the most beautiful light, and electricity was so brilliant. She said, "If I ever have a child, be it boy or girl, I'm going to have a child by the name of Pendleton," and I got it.
- Selix: Are you known by Pendleton?
- Quast: Up to the time I went to high school and practically all through high school. But then was when I was really beginning to feel my oats and Penny sounded lots more fun, but all my relatives and everyone called me Pendleton.
- Bonn: Certainly Penny is a more intimate name than Pendleton.
- Selix: What was your experience the first day you went to school under the name of Pendleton Williams?
- Quast: Oh, that was quite a deal. I came from Oakland; from Oakland, we had lived for at least three or four years over in Oakland. Where we came from Fort Scott, Kansas, we bought a home over there, and by the time—my mother was at that time working for the City of Paris as a needlepoint instructor. She wanted to live here in the city instead of having to go across the bay every day. So, she would bring me over across on the ferry, because we had bought a house over here, and enrolled me in the school up here that was then Douglass Grade School. I would come from Oakland across the ferry, and get on the #11 car from the Ferry building, and come all the way up here to Twenty-fourth and Hoffman, and go to school. Then in the afternoon, because I was fully independent, I would come down to the house that we were living in at Twenty-fifth and Castro, and perhaps stop and have a bite to eat or something. Then get back onto the #11 car, go all the way down to the ferry all by myself, and go home to Oakland, until my grandmother died in 1919.

- Selix: But you had told us of an incident that happened your first day at school with the name of Pendleton.
- Quast: That was so funny. My first day of school—of course, all the children are—the teacher, the school principal, usually looks over the group of children, at least they did then, and here was Pendleton Williams. “That’s an odd name. I think I’ll have to find out who this little boy is.” So they investigated and came in looking for the little boy called Pendleton, and it turned out I was a little girl and I was. So, Mother always insisted that I be called by Pendleton, so can you imagine poor little kids having to say, “Hey Pendleton, hey Pendleton?” I would ignore them, I wouldn’t even accept that anybody was talking to me if they called me anything else.
- Selix: But now you go by the name of Penny.
- Quast: Well, after I got into high school, I began to have a little assertion on my own personality and I feel like a Penny [laughs]. Although half the people know me by Penny and most of all of my friends do, they think it’s Penelope or something else because they never would think of Pendleton.
- Selix: How old were you when you first went to the Girls’ Club?
- Quast: I would say I was about eleven because I was in what you would call grammar school then.
- Selix: And what was your first activity at the club?
- Quast: Well, I had been introduced to the cooking class. You probably remember, right? I think it was Eva Wolfsohn that was our teacher. Oh, I enjoyed that so, it was such fun. We all had our own little stove, and she coached us on how to cook things, and how to clean up after it; and it was just a joy.
- Selix: Do you remember cooking Spanish rice? It seems to me that every cooking class I ever took the first thing we were taught was how to cook Spanish rice.
- Quast: I don’t remember ever doing it.
- Selix: You don’t ever remember doing Spanish rice? I thought every cooking class started with that.
- Bonn: Well, they certainly did at Horace Mann.
- Quast: They did [laughs]?
- Selix: What was the date of your birth?
- Quast: January 21, 1909.
- Selix: Where did your mother and father come from? What was their state of origin?
- Quast: My mother lost her husband before I was born.

- Selix: And where was that?
- Quast: In Fort Scott, Kansas.
- Selix: Then immediately after your father's death, you and your mother came to California, to the Bay Area?
- Quast: No, we were there until—we came out here in 1914, so, you see, I was quite young.
- Selix: Oh, you were about five when you came to the Bay Area.
- Quast: Yes.
- Selix: And about eleven when you started at the Girls' Club. What else do you remember about the Girls' Club besides the cooking? Were you active in anything else?
- Quast: They had so many activities. In fact, you see, I would go down there after school and of course, I always had to be home by five o'clock, so there wasn't many activities I could indulge in because I was in school. I would go down in the afternoon for maybe two hours or three hours. And it took a little while to get home, you know, and I had to be home on time for dinner.
- Selix: What do you remember about Eva Wolfsohn?
- Quast: Oh, that was a fabulous woman; she was a great help for all the children. She seemed to have such an unlimited knowledge and I think she was a great help. Eva had an ability to surround herself with good helpers that was suitable to guide, and teach, and help children, especially children that in no other way would be able to have the privileges and the wonderful things that was offered under Eva's tutelage.
- Selix: Did you ever feel patronized in any way or did you ever feel poor?
- Quast: Oh, heavens no, no, no. No, we were family, and she was so good to us and such a pleasant happy woman. It never was that way, never.
- Selix: I can remember times when the drama coach would be absent and Eva would come in and coach the plays. I think we also recall times when Eva would join the gym class to inspire the girls and stimulate the girls to be more active in the gymnasium.
- Quast: Yes, that's true, she would. In fact, I've seen her down on the floor doing the—reach for the—
- Bonn: Trying to.
- Quast: Well, that too, she was kind of a chubby. But she would try so hard, and everybody was enthusiastic because she was right in there with us.
- Selix: When you became older and started high school, was that when you first became interested in drama?

- Quast: Yes, that was when there was wonderful coaches. I can't remember their names at this particular time, but we would put on a play. James Gill was a really famous coach, teacher, because we put on so many wonderful plays. We had the best of—everything that Eva offered us, we now realize was so valuable, and she gave us so much that we would never have had an opportunity to have.
- Selix: Well, it's true that the Girls' Club brought an element into our lives that we would not have had any other way. I remember you in the drama group, and especially one play of which I have never forgotten this particular line. You and I were both of sort of a buxom build in our teens, and I think it was called ["Madame President."?] Someone had a line that said, "Oh, she has a lot of club women behind her," and you were a very officious club woman, who was the leader of all these women. When this other line was given, "She has a lot of club women behind her," and my line was, "What do all those women do back there?" [laughter] I've never forgotten that, and in fact, I used that in conversation sometimes [laughter].
- Quast: Well, I guess my best remembrance of Mr. Gill's performances was when he chose me to be Lady Macbeth and that was—do you remember that?
- Bonn: No, I don't.
- Quast: You didn't come to see our play?
- Bonn: I never did like Shakespeare.
- Quast: Oh, but this was great, absolutely great! Would you believe, I had this long dress, you know, like Lady Macbeth would have, and along the balcony—I was tucked into one of those rooms up there—along the balcony in the auditorium, there were about four rooms. Well, I was tucked in one of them, and in this very sad theme, here am I coming down there with a lit candle and walking. I startled the audience, really; it was fabulous! I had a big, long, curly, blond wig on and it didn't look like me, but, oh my, it was me. As soon as I opened my mouth they knew it was me [laughs]! That was really a play.
- Selix: You enjoyed that part.
- Quast: As Lady Macbeth, yes! She was a witch, wasn't she?
- Selix: Then I remember that we started a photography class at club and—oh, I tried to learn photography, but I've never had a mechanical aptitude and cameras baffled me, so I never did do anything with it. But I understand that you eventually bought the equipment that we had at the club.
- Quast: Would you believe I've got it down in my bathroom now?
- Selix: You still have it?
- Quast: I still have it.
- Selix: And you went on and you're still in photography.

- Quast: I am still in photography. I'm no longer doing black and white though, I only shoot color now.
- Selix: And you're a member of two clubs.
- Quast: I'm a member of two clubs. In fact, when the fire occurred and burned the Girls' Club, I was down in my basement doing some photography, and my mother called down on my intercom from two floors up and told me that the Girls' Club was burning up. I had to stop doing what I was doing because I had to rush down and see whether I could help or see it, you know, what was happening to our beautiful club. It really was a sad thing, made you just sick, got down there and the whole building was blackened and burned. I understand where it started was around the switchboard of the back of the stage.
- Selix: I believe that was so.
- Bonn: Is that what they finally had decided?
- Selix: I believe so.
- Quast: Well, you could see that was the biggest damage. I took pictures of it later; the next day I went down and took pictures of the—
- Selix: Several people were burnt to death and some were asphyxiated.
- Quast: Yes, there were three. And it was through Eva Wolfsohn that she got the rest of them out.
- Selix: No, that was Marion Cain.
- Quast: Marion Cain, I beg your pardon, it was. She climbed from that little—what was it a cypress tree?
- Selix: It was a little room and there was an elm tree outside the window.
- Quast: I can't remember what it was, but she climbed out that window and helped people down so that they could get down.
- Bonn: There were children in the room at that time.
- Selix: Yes, when the fire started she was surrounded by a group of very small children, and as soon as she realized what was going on, she closed the door to the room and showed the children how to escape down the tree. That was a very traumatic experience for her; she never could have anything to do with the club after that.
- Quast: Really?
- Selix: No, she had to identify the people who had died and it was very traumatic for her; she never could go back. Your interest in photography took you into work with the *San Francisco Progress*?

- Quast: Yes, I took lots of pictures of the Girls' Club, and the people in the Girls' Club, and our Junior Mothers, and Senior Mothers groups.
- Bonn: Were you a freelance photographer?
- Quast: About that, that's what you'd call it.
- Selix: But you were doing that work as a profession.
- Quast: Not as a profession, no.
- Selix: You didn't get paid for it?
- Quast: No, no. It was delightful to have your pictures published in the paper, didn't you know that? That was the satisfaction [inaudible].
- Selix: Well, you didn't have a long period in the club as a child or in your teenage period because you got married in 1928 when you were only nineteen years old, and then you immediately went into the Rachel Wolfsohn Mothers' Club, which was the young married.
- Quast: Right.
- Selix: What were your activities in that club?
- Quast: That was when Eva would bring us lectures in the afternoon, you know. She had doctors come talk to us, she'd have attorneys come; we'd have all kinds of people who would bring us and broaden our knowledge.
- Selix: They were all professional people.
- Quast: Yes, I would say so. Even her brothers were called in to—
- Selix: Dr. Julian Wolfsohn, Dr. Fred Wolfsohn.
- Quast: Right, right, all of them.
- Selix: Shortly after you were married—you were married in '28— your first child was born in 1930 and your second child in 1932.
- Quast: Right.
- Selix: And you had been dancing in Maria Von Sabern's dance class.
- Quast: Yes, I used to bring my children along when they got big enough to walk around and learn dancing. Maria Von Sabern, she was a fabulous, fabulous woman.
- Selix: How old were the children when they first started to dance?

- Quast: I would say Felice, the older one, started about two, and then when Diane started toddling along—of course, they all enjoyed it. Go down there on Saturday and dance, oh, that was just the delight of their lives. We had Maria Von Sabern with us for many years, because as Diane grew up, Diane had long legs, and she always used to say, “You should be a dancer, you’ve got the legs for it;” big, long legs. And she had long legs, too. She was a student of Isadora Duncan.
- Selix: Did your girls take part in any other activities at club or just in the dancing?
- Quast: No, no, they had the sewing class and the cooking class; they went to all of that.
- Selix: Did they go in drama?
- Quast: No, no, they never were in drama; I was the drama student.
- Bonn: You know in my mind, I guess, Gerda Hoffman and Von Sabern mixed.
- Selix: Gerda Hoffman was the drama coach.
- Bonn: I know that, but still in thinking about them, did they have similar looks?
- Quast: Both were blond and they were both tall and willowy.
- Selix: They were both very ethereal looking.
- Bonn: Except Von Sabern had heavy, coarse hair.
- Quast: Well, it was long and—
- Bonn: Wiry.
- Quast: —and she draped it like that, you know; Gerda had it more tucked in.
- Bonn: Yes.
- Selix: What is your husband’s full name?
- Quast: Albert H. Quast.
- Selix: And what was his occupation?
- Quast: Well, he learned his trade in a company called Charles Fey Company. Charlie Fey was the originator of slot machines.
- Selix: The kind that are used for gambling?
- Quast: Right, with a handle and everything. So, my husband learned his trade as a mechanic under Charlie Fey. That was many years ago when the first slot machine was made, and Charlie Fey designed and made the first slot machine. He used to put them around at the bars. Well, Mills Company—well, it wasn’t “Company” then, but the man by the name

of Mills stole one of the machines, and he took it back to Chicago, and produced them, and put it under his name as he as the originator of slot machines.

Selix: Fey didn't have a patent on it apparently.

Quast: No, no. They don't always, you know, this was many years ago; 1886, or around there, was when the first slot machine was made.

Selix: Oh, did your husband then go around and service the machines at the different locations?

Quast: Right, he serviced them but he—well, he was a young man and he was learning his trade under Charles Fey.

Selix: What was the date of your husband's birth?

Quast: It was 1907.

Selix: Did he continue in that occupation?

Quast: No, because times changed; and during the wartime, why, the slot machines were taken out of circulation. Let's see, I think it was about two or three years after, about '49 or '50 [inaudible], so that we turned to another field which was music, the jukeboxes. When the service took my husband in the army, why, I had to take his place and operate the machines while he was gone.

Selix: How had you learned the mechanics of operating them?

Quast: [laughs] Quickly.

Selix: By trial and error or had he trained you?

Quast: No, he would show me. If a phonograph wouldn't operate, there were only a few things I could do to take care of it unless something got broken, and then I'd have to have my brother-in-law, a mechanic, come and fix it. We had a friend who was also in the same business but also a good mechanic, and he'd come and fix it for me, which, thank God [laughs]. Otherwise, if your machine isn't operating, you're not making any money and you had to make money.

Selix: Is he still in that occupation or is he [inaudible]?

Quast: No, we sold the music box business and proceeded to—he changed his field to electric lighting fixtures, which patterns have to be made, so now he is considered a tool maker for all these fabulous fixtures there are about this world of ours.

Selix: And then you also had a working career after you sold the business. What did you do?

Quast: Oh, yes—[clang in the background]—scared me—I turned back to a typist, and for several years I did partial typing and electrolyte coating for coating of lenses, which makes your lenses glass clearer, and I was in that for about three or four years. Then

when I got out of that business I was an invoice clerk for [Blum, Connect and Hyman?], which is an industrial chemical company. When my mother became ill, and we knew she was going to pass away because it was a terminal cancer, I brought her to my house and that got me out of the company. After she passed away, I wanted to become a typist for the state [inaudible]. So that was how I worked my way towards being a typist in the [state competition trust fund?].

Selix: And how long were you employed there?

Quast: Ten years.

Selix: And that's the job from which you retired.

Quast: Right, and I've been retired now going on four years.

Selix: Oh, have you? Is photography still your one great hobby?

Quast: Oh, yes.

Selix: Photography and gardening.

Quast: Right.

Selix: And what about your husband's hobby?

Quast: Well, he's a pretty good lettuce maker [laughs].

Bonn: Did your husband have any exposure to the Girls' Club?

Quast: Only to come and see me act in these plays. He would go along with that, and then when we'd have dances or something or—

Bonn: Just a social connection.

Quast: Social connection, right, he would come.

Selix: In what way do you feel that the Girls' Club influenced your life?

Quast: Oh, I would say greatly because of the contacts that Eva and Ray seemed to see to it that we were allowed to listen to lectures of—the whole thing was in the beginning of your life which you don't forget. I think—well, they say—

Selix: "Give me a child until they're six"—

Quast: "You'll have a good child the rest of your life," right?

Selix: Yes.

Quast: And I'm sure that it has influenced many, many, many people. Too bad we haven't got it yet.

- Bonn: Not to mention it, we don't have any famous crooks from club, we all turned out good, didn't we?
- Quast: We certainly did.
- Selix: Yes, yes, that's true.
- Quast: [laughs] [inaudible]
- Selix: I can't think of anyone who ever became notorious. Well, of course, Rachel Wolfsohn and Eva Wolfsohn were the guiding lights of the Girls' Club, and they brought something into it that was uniquely personal to them. I don't think that anyone could have come along, and stepped into their shoes, and carried out the Girls' Club as it existed in their time. After Eva died in 1934, Edith Heinrich came and she was there for several years, and the Girls' Club went along, but it began to fail in membership and the board of directors—
- Quast: She was a different type of a person.
- Selix: Oh, yes, entirely different. And I think the board became discouraged, and of course, by then you had the Community Chest involved. The Community Chest wanted the agency to serve more people; they wanted numbers. So they began to take in boys and families; and during the war, those were very trying years for the club, which by then was the Girls' Club at Mission Community Center. The Mexican people and the Latin Americans from the Southern states had come into San Francisco in great numbers to work in the war industries. That was the period of the zoot suiters; they used to try to hold dances at club, and it was not unusual for there to be knifing. This was such a far cry from what the club had been when we were members. I served on the board of directors until 1957 and saw it go through many transitions, and many phases, and many social workers, and it's still going on. It's now known as Mission Neighborhood Center and it serves a purpose for the community; so the seed that was planted, you can't say was wasted, although it's serving in a different way than it served us.
- Quast: I'm sure there is nothing—as you say, it was unique, and I am so happy that I had the privilege of being a member of the Girls' Club under those two wonderful women.
- Bonn: Well, I think this is the way we all feel about it.
- Selix: Did you know Rachel Wolfsohn personally?
- Quast: Yes, oh, yes.
- Selix: What do you remember about Rachel?
- Quast: She wasn't there as often but when she came, you were always impressed by her charm. She was truly a charming woman. I enjoyed—of course, as I say, life becomes complex, and your family starts growing, and you are involved, so you didn't see her as often.

- Selix: You must have started club much earlier than eleven years old because Rachel died in 1915 and you were born in 1909, and if you had been eleven, that would have made it 1920 that you'd joined.
- Quast: I remember seeing her.
- Selix: Well, then you started before 1915.
- Quast: Oh, I couldn't have.
- Selix: Well, then how can you remember Ray because she died when she was—
- Quast: Could it be that I remember her because there were many pictures around the place of her?
- Selix: Maybe you remember her as a legend.
- Quast: That's just exactly what it is.
- Selix: As a legend, and because you saw her pictures and heard about her. To all of us who came after her death, it was as though she were a living legend.
- Quast: Yes, that has to be it because I felt like I knew her. And getting down to the nitty gritty of dates and stuff, I couldn't possibly have known her. But she was there, and I can visualize her because I've seen so many pictures of her.
- Selix: Do you feel that the experiences that your two girls had at the Girls' Club influenced their lives in any way?
- Quast: Oh, yes, yes, very much. You know, when Maria Von Sabern taught in dance, it was done with the best of music; it was never slipshod, it was never done with—they get a great deal of their music implanted in their bodies, in their minds, when they're young. In fact, she had them do this Nutcracker Suite. Did you come to see that?
- Selix: I don't ever remember seeing that at the Girls' Club.
- Quast: The children put on that Nutcracker Suite that was just charming, absolutely beautiful; and I know that every time my children hear the Nutcracker Suite, they must have a strong recollection even though they don't know why they remember it, but it's in their heads, in their hearts.
- Selix: I understand that you have grandchildren, how many grandchildren?
- Quast: Well, Felice has four, three girls and a boy, and Diane has three girls.
- Selix: Do any of those grandchildren participate in any kind of cultural activities that were offered to us at the Girls' Club?
- Quast: No, nothing.

- Selix: No, because they don't have the opportunity.
- Quast: Right, it's not there. My daughter, the youngest daughter, Diane, lives in Sebastopol, and the oldest daughter—of course, they have a lot of activities up there. They have the 4-H group up there, which we don't have here. It's done a lot for her, which is about as close as you can get, I mean, in that type of thing to improve children.
- Selix: Do they live on a farm?
- Quast: No, no, they live in Sebastopol, which is growing daily from leaps to bounds.
- Selix: And what does your daughter do, what is her occupation?
- Quast: She works for the county up there, in the IBM section.
- Selix: That's Diane. And what does Felice do?
- Quast: Felice worked at [Granet Brothers?] for almost fifteen years until after she began having all of her children.
- Bonn: At Mission or downtown?
- Quast: At Twentieth and Mission. She was a jewelry designer, and she still is a freelance jewelry designer besides working for a company now that casts jewels, I mean, rings. She's a very talented woman.
- Selix: But both of your daughters are divorced.
- Quast: Yes, they both have divorced their husbands.
- Selix: What is Diane's married name?
- Quast: Clishan, C-L-I-S-H-A-N.
- Selix: And Felice's married name?
- Quast: Galloway.
- Selix: What were the occupations of their husbands?
- Quast: Diane's husband was a—he went through Davis and was going to be a veterinarian, but he got all kind of mixed up in his head and got influenced incorrectly with the people who said one thing and didn't mean to do it.
- Bonn: That's too bad.
- Quast: Yes, so then he became a truck driver, a teamster. Felice's husband is a—one of these days will become a famous artist. He has a skill and a gift for drawing whether with pen, or watercolor, or carving. He's done beautiful carvings. He's done those big casks over at Zacks in Sausalito, and he does a lot of that type of thing.

Selix: That's his profession, an artist?

Quast: Yes, that's what he is.

TABLE OF CONTENTS—SELIX AND BONN

INTERVIEW WITH LEAH SELIX AND ADRIENNE BONN

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	457
SESSION 1, January 23, 1973	
[Tape 17-1, Side A].....	457
Earliest recollections of the Girls' Club—Home life in the Mission District—Selix family music store—Merchants on Mission Street in the 1910s-20s—Anecdote about the earthquake and fire of 1906.	
[Tape 17-1, Side B].....	468
Bonn family background—Father's work as a clothing salesman—Mother's job as saleswoman after father's death—Dining on Mission Street.	
[Tape 17-2, Side A].....	476
Girls' Club membership—Board members—Founders—Jewish background of those involved—The Capp Street building, designed by architect Bruce Porter—Rachel Wolfsohn's impetus in creating the Girls' Club—The Wolfsohn family—Eva Wolfsohn's role in and vision for the Girls' Club—Values instilled—Activities—Mothers' Club and Grandmothers' Club—Eva Wolfsohn's relationship with the board—Board member Fleishhacker's donation of the country club at Emerald Lake in Redwood City—More on demographics of girls who attended the Girls' Club, racial and class distinctions—Selix's responsibilities as a child, her father's attitudes toward work and recreation.	
[Tape 17-2, Side B].....	488
More on Selix family—Attending high school and employment—Activities at the Girls' Club for older girls: lectures, dances, parties—The evolution of the Girls' Club into the Mission Neighborhood Center—Fees/funding at the Girls' Club—Role of the Community Chest and its effect on the character of the Girls' Club—On interviewing other members of the Girls' Club.	
CONVERSATION BETWEEN LEAH SELIX AND ADRIENNE BONN, March 17, 1974	
[Tape 18-1, Side A].....	497
[Tape 18-1, Side B].....	505
[Tape 18-2, Side A].....	513

INTERVIEW WITH LEAH SELIX AND ADRIENNE BONN

[Session #1, January 23, 1972]

[Tape 17-1, Side A]

Teiser: This is Sunday, January 23, 1972, and we're in San Francisco, and I'm doing the interviewing and my name is Ruth Teiser. I'm interviewing two neighbors and friends whose names are Adrienne Bonn and Leah Selix. The reason this interview is being conducted is that both of these women have had interesting early lives in a district in San Francisco that has a fascinating but not very well recorded history, the Mission district. What are your earliest recollections, Leah?

Selix: I was about eight years old when I first became a member of the Girls' Club, and I was too young to really appreciate just exactly how nice that was. But later on in life, I realized that I had been exposed to gracious living in a building that was conducted just like a private home. Beautifully polished wood floors, fires going in fireplaces constantly, fresh cut flowers every day, and a very well furnished home, where we attended classes and groups and had group activities. This was an important influence on my life for the rest of my life, not alone the environment but the people whom I met there, and they were among my best friends for the rest of my life. We studied dramatics, and needlework, and we had gymnasium, and ballet, and art classes, and any number of activities that we could pursue.

Bonn: When I was a little girl, we used to go on Tuesday afternoons to the Girls' Club, and there were groups of girls around teachers in different sections of the club building. Eva Neubauer was my teacher on a Tuesday afternoon and we made cardboard boxes. Now, they would fold. First we would draw them, and then we'd fold them, and then we'd put a little ribbon in the holes to make the shapes, and one was to hold a bottle of ink and another was for pens; a whole variety of boxes we made. Eva Neubauer was so gracious. Her husband was an attorney.

Teiser: This was what you'd call a craft class, was it?

Bonn: In those days, you didn't call it a craft.

Teiser: How old were you when you first went to the Girls' Club?

Bonn: I was born into the club. My mother was pregnant and Eva patted my mother and said, "This is going to be a girl, and she's going to belong to my club." So I've been a member all my life plus nine months.

Teiser: When did you first get there under your own power?

Bonn: I was always there. Somebody was taking me, I guess.

Teiser: When you were a little kid.

Bonn: Yes.

Teiser: So, you knew it all the time, while Leah came to it as something different from what she had known.

Selix: Yes.

Teiser: What was your home like, Leah? You once told me a little about it. I think you said your father had a music store?

Selix: Yes, my father had a music store and we lived in back of the store.

Teiser: Where was it?

Selix: The store was on Mission Street and the back of the store faced on Capp Street, and there was an empty lot behind the store where we played, where all the children in the neighborhood gathered. But I didn't have any home environment. We lived in back of stores until I was about sixteen years old, so the best home environment I had was the Girls' Club.

Teiser: You'd been in homes, I presume, so that you knew that this was more like most people's homes than yours.

Selix: I hadn't been in too many people's homes. I didn't know how most people lived, although I knew they lived in houses and not in stores, and it was always my ambition to live in a house.

Teiser: Did you go to grammar school during that time?

Selix: Yes, I went to grammar school in the Mission district.

Teiser: What school?

Selix: I think it was called Agassiz at the time.

Bonn: That's the one I went to. Did you go to the same one?

Selix: Yes.

Bonn: I don't remember you there.

Selix: Well, I was there at the same time you were.

Teiser: Do you remember Add, Leah?

Selix: Oh, yes, Add and I played together but not at school. She lived in the house on Capp Street, which adjoined this empty lot where we played, so we had our early years of playing cowboys and Indians—

Bonn: Baked potatoes?

Selix: Baked potatoes in the empty lot.

- Bonn: Delicious baked potatoes.
- Selix: And we used to smoke weed cigarettes if I remember correctly. [laughter]
- Bonn: Shhhh! You're not supposed to say that. [laughter]
- Teiser: How did you learn to roll them?
- Bonn: Leah taught me. [laughter]
- Teiser: Did you go into Adrienne's house?
- Selix: Yes, I used to run in there, in and out. Then I eventually took piano lessons from Add's sister about an hour a week. I was very envious of Add in her home life. They used to have regular family dinners every night, whereas we lived less formally in our back of the store quarters and meals were catch as catch can; we rarely sat down together as a family.
- Teiser: Was the store generally open in the evenings?
- Selix: Oh, yes, the store was open. There were three girls in the family and the youngest was six years old. She was too short to reach the record cabinet, so she would stand on a stool to play the records for the customers. So we started in business at a very early age because we waited on the store.
- Bonn: Was that your first store?
- Selix: Yes, the first store of our own. My father had worked for other people in the music business, but this was the first time he was in his own venture.
- Teiser: And what a music store had then was mainly records and a grind-up phonograph?
- Selix: A grind-up phonograph, and records, and sheet music.
- Teiser: And all of you took turns?
- Selix: Oh, yes, we waited on the store.
- Teiser: Did your mother, too?
- Selix: Oh yes, my mother did the bookkeeping and kept the living quarters of the home.
- Teiser: My word, that's interesting. That's unusual to have—oh, I suppose not at all really, but it seems unusual to have the whole family involved in a project like that and right there.
- Selix: Well, I don't think it was unusual in those days. It might be now but in those days, I think you had a lot of families in the Mission district living in the back of a store, because it was composed of a lot of small merchants, and you didn't have the big stores like you have today.

- Bonn: Did [Lucretia?] have the same condition with their father?
- Selix: Yes, I had a friend that lived on Guerrero Street, which is also in the Mission district, and her father was a tailor. There were three girls in that family and they lived in back of a store. They were all music students and their father was an extreme disciplinarian. Her background was very similar to my own, so eventually, why, the six of us, the three girls in my family and the three girls in her family, got together and played a program over one of the early radio stations because we were all studying music. Those girls played the string instruments and my sisters and I played on the piano, a trio; so we were one of the early broadcasters on the radio.
- Teiser: What year was that?
- Selix: I really don't remember. I imagine it would be about 1922 or '23, in the first days of radio.
- Teiser: Do you remember what station it was?
- Selix: No, I don't. I have the newspaper clipping at home but I didn't think to look it up.
- Teiser: For heaven's sake, how delightful. And it made the paper; it was that unusual.
- Selix: Oh, yes, we had our pictures in the paper.
- Bonn: It was a curiosity thing, I guess.
- Teiser: And all six of you went to the studio, the radio studio?
- Selix: Yes, and broadcast it.
- Bonn: You played and they broadcast it.
- Teiser: Did your teacher go with you, too?
- Selix: No, we all had different teachers [laughter].
- Teiser: Oh? Who organized it?
- Selix: I can't remember how we got on radio but somebody evidently organized it.
- Teiser: Did your family like music? Were they interested in music?
- Selix: My father had a feeling for music, and one of my sisters developed a feeling for the piano although she was never a very good player. We all studied but none of us were very good at it.
- Teiser: You studied because you enjoyed it or because you felt some social pressure?
- Selix: I think because my mother felt that we should, and all the children in those days were taking piano lessons or music lessons.

- Bonn: You were just exposed to it.
- Teiser: How about you, Add, did you have to take music lessons?
- Bonn: I took piano, yes. We used to go to the symphony. I'd come home and I'd play different tunes by ear, so they knew they had a genius in the family, so I had to take piano lessons and it was just a terrible bore. I would only play the pieces I liked, which were hunting songs and just things I liked. I liked to hear music but I didn't like playing it. I would play it in order to hear it, but it wasn't my forte to perform. We had a phonograph and we had some records, [inaudible] singing ["From the Bell"?] song and Wagner's "Rienzo Overture." To this day, I can't stand the "Rienzo Overture," I don't know why.
- Selix: That period was—I guess the reason my father was in the music business is because it was a revolutionary period; they were just going from cylinder records to flat records, from the old Edison cylinders.
- Bonn: Did they have the roles for the electric pianos, too?
- Selix: Oh, they weren't electric pianos, they were player pianos, you would pump them with your feet, and we had the rolls for that.
- Teiser: Oh, so platters were new?
- Selix: Yes, it was when they first came out.
- Teiser: Could people buy their Victrolas or their record players from you as well?
- Selix: Oh, yes, and pianos; we sold musical instruments, as well as records and sheet music.
- Teiser: That required financing then, didn't it? That required capital?
- Selix: Well, we never had any capital.
- Bonn: They never sold anything [laughter].
- Selix: Sometimes they financed it on paper.
- Teiser: So, did you have a piano in the store then?
- Selix: Oh, yes, we had more than one, and more than one phonograph, and other musical instruments.
- Teiser: You had them to sell right there.
- Selix: Yes, we did. But eventually, when I went to work, why, the family realized that my salary was going into the business to try to sustain the business and they were heavily in debt. So they decided they would have to give up the business and they finally went into the hands of the board of trade.
- Bonn: Didn't your father finance everyone that came into the store?

- Selix: Oh, yes, my father was a great one for financing wild schemes that people had. He would take money that was set aside for the rent and give it to somebody who came along with a story about how they were composing a piece of sheet music and they were going to get very wealthy, and meantime, would my father stake them? So they would give my father a supposedly diamond ring for which he would give them money, and then of course, he'd never see them again and the ring would turn out to be glass. My father was always falling for this sort of thing, and he often cashed checks that bounced. He was a very improvident businessman; he wasn't a businessman really. My mother was more a businesswoman than he was a businessman.
- Teiser: Did he enjoy being in business though?
- Selix: Well, it's hard to know whether or not he enjoyed it. He never could hold a job or work for anybody else and that's why he was in business for himself.
- Teiser: How long did he own the business then? From about what period was—?
- Selix: From about 1928 until about 1936.
- Teiser: First World War period then?
- Selix: No, during the First World War, he was not in business; he was not in business when I was born.
- Bonn: Well, that's not when you were born. It just seems like it was earlier than '28.
- Selix: Well, I was thinking of when I was eight years old, I'm going by that year. I was eight years old in 1928.
- Bonn: No, 1918.
- Selix: Oh, that's right, 1918. Then I would have been sixteen in 1926. So, that was the period that he was in business, and at one time we had three music stores. My mother took care of one, my father took care of one, and we three children took care of another one.
- Teiser: Were they all in the Mission district?
- Selix: No, one was in the Mission, one was over on Divisadero near Sutter where Mount Zion Hospital is now, and another one was out near Golden Gate Park.
- Teiser: What were they called? What was the name of the company?
- Selix: Music Land.
- Teiser: All three of them called that?
- Selix: Yes. The one that was out near Golden Gate Park had living quarters in the back of it, and we three children would stay there overnight very often by ourselves.
- Teiser: Did you enjoy having something to run kind of on your own?

- Selix: Yes, we enjoyed having our own store, but we would rather had been out playing or indulging in some kind of a child's activity.
- Bonn: Well, most kids play store and you were playing store in actuality.
- Teiser: But having to.
- Selix: Yes, we were really compelled to do it.
- Teiser: Was it after that expansion that you went into the board of trade?
- Selix: Yes.
- Teiser: During World War I, where was your family, here in the city?
- Selix: We were in Monte Rio, up the Russian River.
- Teiser: Oh. How did you happen to be up there?
- Selix: My father got involved with a grocery store up there. I don't know whether it was a partnership or what it was, and he moved us up there. We lived in a little cottage that cost about five dollars a month rent, and Mother kept chickens. And my father, after his experience in the grocery store fell through—as a matter of fact, one of my earliest recollections of life is a courtroom scene. Because my father in dissolving this partnership with the grocery man had to go to court in Santa Rosa and they took me with them. I can remember the people standing up and raising their hands; this is an early life recollection. When my father's experience with the grocery man fell through, why, he had all sorts of wild schemes for earning a living, which took him away from the house. So he wasn't there very much of the time, it was just my mother and the three of us. We had an interesting experience one year. All the neighbors came around three o'clock in the afternoon and told my mother that she had better move us out, that the river was going to flood and if it flooded, it would come up to the steps of our house. So Mother said, "Well, I don't see any water around here," she said, "I'll wait until the water comes." She did move all the chickens up to the porch, which was an elevated porch; and about two o'clock in the morning, the neighbors had to come and row us out.
- Teiser: Oh [laughs], what happened to the chickens?
- Selix: The chickens didn't get wet.
- Bonn: Why is it after all these years this sort of thing seems kind of glamorous?
- Selix: It doesn't seem glamorous to me!
- Bonn: It doesn't? Being rowed out at two in the morning?
- Selix: No.
- Bonn: I bet you haven't been in a rowboat at two o'clock in the morning since.

- Selix: No, I haven't, but it was far from glamorous.
- Teiser: Then you moved directly from the Russian River area to the city?
- Selix: No, we moved to Richmond, California, where my father got into partnership with somebody else in the record business. That was his first experience in the record business, and of course, my father, he was going to make a fortune because these new flat records were coming in. He always had the idea that he was going to make a fortune, but he didn't know how to conduct himself in a business, so he never really made good.
- Teiser: Richmond must have been a little town then.
- Selix: Oh, it was, it was a very small town. There was some kind of activity there, I think it was near the Hercules Powder Works [California Powder Works, and Hercules was its company town]. I don't think it's too far away from Pinole. The Hercules Powder Works, you see, had been going great guns; and as a matter of fact, we always said that my father ended the war because the day he got a job at the Hercules Powder Works the war was ended [laughter].
- Teiser: And so he was out of a job.
- Selix: So he was out of a job again; something he rarely had was a job.
- Teiser: What was your father's name? I forgot to ask you that.
- Selix: Joseph.
- Teiser: So then you went from Richmond to San Francisco?
- Selix: Yes.
- Teiser: Do you remember your first recollection of the city, moving here, then?
- Selix: I can remember Mission Street as it used to be and I remember what the stores looked like.
- Teiser: What was it like compared to what it is today?
- Selix: Oh, there was no comparison. I would say it was like a little village, wouldn't you, Add? You probably never got out to Mission Street.
- Bonn: [laughs] I really don't remember. I have no impression of Mission Street at all.
- Selix: I guess you stayed on Capp Street and in the house most of the time.
- Bonn: Not in the house but certainly on Capp.
- Teiser: You hadn't come from elsewhere, so it probably didn't impress you as it would have if you had been living on Russian River and in Richmond. Did it seem like a big city?

- Selix: I wouldn't have known because I didn't have any experience of a big city and I don't think I knew what to expect.
- Teiser: Did it seem like a friendly street?
- Selix: Yes, you had a feeling of friendliness. You knew your neighbors and they knew you, and everybody sort of worked together. Of course, people didn't have the standard of living in those days that they have now.
- Teiser: What did they do for entertainment around there then?
- Selix: We had the old Wigwam Theater.
- Teiser: What kind of shows?
- Selix: Live shows.
- Bonn: Al Jolson.
- Selix: They used to have plays and Vaudeville shows, and it was a big thing. Then, later on, we had a movie house. I can't remember how many years we were in that first store.
- Bonn: You weren't there too long.
- Teiser: Where was that? What location? That was on Mission—
- Selix: That was on Mission between Nineteenth and Twentieth, and then we moved from there to a store at Seventeenth and Mission.
- Teiser: That was the one that was backed on Capp Street.
- Selix: They were both backed on Capp Street. That Seventeenth Street store, I think that's where Lachman Brothers is now.
- Bonn: No, Lachman is at Sixteenth; [Newman?] would be Seventeenth.
- Selix: Newman, Newman, yes, I think that's the corner where we were.
- Teiser: Were they all small stores, none as big as now?
- Selix: Oh, yes.
- Teiser: Family businesses?
- Selix: Yes, they were, and the children of the families would be the same people that you would be going to school with.
- Bonn: This is funny. Mr. Lachman used to have a horse and buggy and he'd ride up Capp Street to do the collecting.

Teiser: Collecting for what?

Bonn: Well, for furniture, yes, I mean just the money, but it was that personal.

Selix: Those were the days when Caswell's Coffee used to have men out on routes with the different kinds of coffee and the teas; they'd come to your door and sell them. And then I have a very vivid recollection of a root beer stand that was across the street from the store. It was sort of an open area that they closed with an iron gate at night, and we were always running over to get cans of root beer.

Teiser: Cans?

Selix: Well, no, you brought your own container and they filled it up. It was fresh draft root beer and it was delicious.

Teiser: How much did it cost?

Selix: I think it was about five cents a glass.

Bonn: We used to take a pitcher around the corner to the dairy; there was a dairy on Mission between Twentieth and Twenty-first, I think. I don't really remember now just where it was but it was very close. You walk into this dairy, and they had these great big drums and it was immaculate, spotless, but it had this sour smell to it. I don't know what created it; I guess what they were manufacturing.

Teiser: Butter probably, when the whey—did you get buttermilk, too?

Bonn: Yes.

Teiser: I can remember when we used to be able to get buttermilk free here in San Francisco, one or two places.

Selix: I don't remember the dairy.

Bonn: Yes, I think the man had a limp. It was on your side.

Selix: I remember one Saturday my mother sent myself and my two sisters to the movie, and I think it cost ten cents to get in. Of course, that was an expenditure of thirty cents, which was quite an expenditure for the family in those days; and with the thought that, well, we'd be settled for the afternoon, and she wouldn't have us around annoying her. So, after we had been at the movie about an hour, we all came tramping home and mother was surprised, she couldn't understand that. We said, "Well, they were giving candy away as you left." In those days, they used to give candy as you left to get you to move out of the theater, so we said that we didn't want to miss out on the candy so we left [laughter]. Mother was so disappointed that we were home.

Teiser: Were you afraid that if you stayed the movie out, they'd run out of candy?

Selix: Yes, that's what we were afraid of.

- Bonn: Take your candy now, don't take any chances.
- Teiser: I never heard of that.
- Selix: Yes, they used to do that to get the kids out of the movie houses.
- Teiser: Did they ever have any contests or prizes at those movies or shows?
- Bonn: Just what you found on the popcorn box.
- Selix: No, I don't remember that. I remember that the Mission Merchants Association used to have a picnic every year and that was the big thing, that was the big event. We'd go to the picnic, and they'd have all sorts of races and contests there.
- Teiser: Where did they hold it?
- Selix: I can't recollect. It must have been that beach over in Alameda. Do you remember where they held it, Add?
- Bonn: Neptune Beach in Alameda?
- Selix: Yes.
- Bonn: No, I'm thinking of Alum Rock in San Jose, but I can't remember.
- Selix: And how did it get there?
- Bonn: Who knows? Horse and buggy all day. I really don't know.
- Teiser: There were still plenty of horses in—
- Bonn: The automobile hadn't been invented yet.
- Teiser: But I suppose there were more horses than automobiles in your early days?
- Bonn: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.
- Selix: Oh, I remember the ice wagon and—yes, I guess there were more horses.
- Bonn: All horses. Very few automobiles.
- Teiser: When you first knew San Francisco, it was earlier than when Leah did because you were born here, weren't you? You were born in San Francisco?
- Bonn: Yes.
- Teiser: When? What year was that?
- Bonn: 1911.

Teiser: And you were born where?

Bonn: 440 Capp.

Teiser: Right off Mission.

Bonn: Yes, right next to the place Leah was talking about.

Selix: Add, I think it would be interesting if you were to tell about how the house was the last to burn.

Bonn: Oh, during the fire and earthquake?

Teiser: Yes.

Bonn: Well, this is all hearsay but after—the house at 440 was a double deck, two-story house with a balcony around the second floor, built in the style of the Mission houses. Not Mission neighborhood but Mission period. We were the last house to burn in the Mission district.

Teiser: You were not born yet.

Bonn: No.

Selix: And didn't your family go to somebody's house someplace else and they left a note?

Bonn: Yes, they had to go to Mission Dolores.

Selix: Oh, to the park.

Bonn: Yes, to the park. And then when they went back to the house to see what was left, there was nothing left but there was a note there from Mrs. Madison saying, "Robin family, please come stay with us." Nan Madison lived on Capp Street right about Twenty-first, so I assume the whole family stayed with Nan Madison, I don't know. They, at least, had the invitation.

[Tape 17-1, Side B]

Selix: How come her house was standing if yours was the last to burn—oh, yours was the last to burn.

Bonn: Yes. And, see, after our house came the lot where we played.

Teiser: You said that yours was a two-story building.

Bonn: Yes.

Teiser: You were indicating that most of the stores, like the stores you lived behind, were one story.

Selix: Oh yes, they were small.

Bonn: When we rebuilt then, you see—the thing to do is to build immediately, so we had Mr. Wilhelm, who was a contractor—no, I don't think it was Wilhelm. Anyway, the house was rebuilt but not in the same style, it was just a seven-room bungalow then.

Teiser: One story?

Bonn: One story, yes.

Teiser: And that was where you grew up?

Bonn: Yes.

Teiser: What did your father do?

Bonn: He was a salesman for [Russe Brothers?]. He was very dapper, and that's all I know of him. In the morning, he went to work and every night, he came home.

Teiser: What was his name?

Bonn: Achille.

Teiser: What was his origin? Was he French?

Bonn: He was Alsatian.

Teiser: Did he come from Alsace?

Bonn: Yes. Of course, Mother was a native of California, of San Francisco, and Mother's mother was German and Mother's father was French. He came from [inaudible] Alps. My mother's mother and father met in Sonoma and came to San Francisco and raised their kids.

Teiser: What were their names?

Bonn: His name was Adrian Robin and my grandmother's name was Fredericka Fuss, F-U-S-S.

Teiser: F-U-S-S. It means foot. Your family goes back really far.

Bonn: Yes, it was in the time to discover gold but they didn't discover any, they didn't even try.

Teiser: How early was the first one here, then?

Bonn: Around '46, I guess. My grandfather came around the Horn on a boat, and my grandmother came across the continent by train, thirteen days or weeks after it was running; I don't know which days of the week but I know it was thirteen.

- Teiser: In 1869.
- Bonn: Yes. It took three months to come around the Horn.
- Teiser: Wow, he must have gotten stuck in Panama. No, he went around the Horn, didn't go through it. Yes, I can believe that. Wow, though.
- Bonn: It's rough, yes.
- Selix: I think, Add, it would be interesting if you told the story about how your grandmother went down to meet her sister.
- Bonn: Yes, my grandmother left Germany and said to her two sisters, "Now, when I get located, I will send for you." So, she came to California, she got located, and—
- Teiser: She came straight to California from Germany.
- Bonn: I don't know if she stopped in places along the line, but there must have been some correspondence because they came to San Francisco, the two sisters, one night. But my grandmother didn't know that they were coming, and she was asleep and she had this feeling, "I've got to get up, and get dressed, and go down and meet my sisters who are coming by train." So, she went down and, by golly, there they were. Pretty good, huh?
- Teiser: Yes, real extrasensory perception.
- Bonn: I think it's the only time it's ever happened in my family.
- Teiser: For heaven's sakes. How did they happen to come here, do you know?
- Bonn: That's why I say there must have been some correspondence between them for them to come to San Francisco.
- Teiser: How did your grandmother herself happen to come to San Francisco, do you know?
- Bonn: I don't know, no.
- Teiser: What year was it that your grandfather came around the Horn, do you remember? That was in 1846?
- Bonn: Yes, I think so, some time in that period.
- Selix: He was the one who courted Vallejo's daughter, wasn't he?
- Teiser: Which of Vallejo?
- Bonn: This is it, when we were up in Napa, I thought, "I'm going to see what she looked like." So we went to his home, took a look at his—I thought it was going to be his daughter and he had quite a large family, so I don't know which one Grandpa got involved with.
- Teiser: He was up in Sonoma, then.

Bonn: Yes.

Teiser: You mean that you went to Sonoma, not Napa, to see.

Bonn: That's correct.

Teiser: Yes, because that's where the Vallejo house is.

Bonn: That's right.

Teiser: Yes, he had a large family and quite a fine family. Then your father and mother had lived in San Francisco for some time, had they?

Bonn: Always. Well, my mother, because she was born here. My father was an import from France, from Alsace-Lorraine, and I don't know when he arrived.

Teiser: But I mean he came directly to San Francisco, you think?

Bonn: Yes.

Teiser: And did he go to work immediately for Russe Brothers?

Bonn: I don't know, I would imagine so.

Selix: And then a neighbor on Capp Street, he got him a job, and that man worked—of course, your father died as a comparatively, young man, but [Joe Levy?], for whom he got a job at Russe Brothers, worked there until he was about, what, seventy years old?

Bonn: Oh, eighty-something, until he retired.

Selix: Until he was eighty?

Bonn: I think he was in his eighties and he was still going to work.

Teiser: Did your father feel he had a good and steady job? Was that a pleasant life for him?

Bonn: I know he was in favor of the union, because they were working ten hours a day or twelve hours a day, something like this, and then he wanted the unions to cut the time shorter, which I think they did do. I think right now he would be horrified to know what the unions are doing, but it seems like a good cause at that time. Whether he was a union member or not, I don't know. I do know he was in favor of shorter hours.

Teiser: Did he enjoy his job do you think?

Bonn: Oh, yes.

Teiser: He felt he had a satisfactory career?

- Bonn: Oh, yes. It wasn't a career, it was just a job, but he enjoyed it. He enjoyed fashions, he enjoyed looking good himself. He had a little waxed end on his mustache and always a boutonniere and spats.
- Teiser: Did he see that all of his family were dressed with style and snap?
- Bonn: I think so. Of course, my brother was a young boy, too. I mean he was young when my father died, so he didn't have a chance to dress him.
- Teiser: What year was it your father died then?
- Bonn: I think 1921.
- Teiser: Oh, really?
- Bonn: I can remember when I had my picture painted, though. My mother went down to Russe Brothers and bought this dress for me.
- Selix: I didn't know they had women's clothes in those days.
- Bonn: Children's, sure. They must have had it for girls because that's where that dress came from, I think. I think it cost eleven dollars or twenty-one dollars, something like that, and my father was so angry that my mother had spent so much money on my dress, such a little dress.
- Teiser: And you had your picture painted.
- Bonn: Yes.
- Teiser: Who painted it?
- Bonn: Lazarr. I've never heard of him since, L-A-Z-A-R-R.
- Teiser: You've still got it?
- Bonn: Oh, yes, it's hanging in our office.
- Teiser: I'll have to look more carefully.
- Bonn: It's right there.
- Selix: It's a big portrait.
- Bonn: That was really quite an undertaking for a family, wasn't it, to have a child's portrait painted?
- Bonn: Yes. Papa said he wanted a painting of me, so Mama used to take me over to this studio on—I would say it was around Center and Octavia. I remember when I sat there on a stool, two-seater, I think, settee, with a basket of flowers in my hand. It was a very

artificial pose for me, but I remember my mother would feed me nuts to keep me quiet [laughs].

Teiser: Had you been interested in art before that? Do you think that interested you at all?

Bonn: Oh, no, I don't think that had any influence on me at all. I know the frame cost seventy-five dollars. I don't know how much the picture cost, but I do know the frame was seventy-five dollars.

Teiser: Oh, my Lord. That really was an undertaking.

Bonn: At that time.

Selix: It's a gold leaf frame.

Bonn: All the gold is off of it now.

Teiser: But still, that really was a financial investment at that time. Did any of the other—you had—what were—

Bonn: I was the [inaudible] of the family, brother and a sister, yes. No, I was the only one that had the portrait painted.

Teiser: They blew it all on the baby.

Bonn: I guess so.

Teiser: You were how old when your father died?

Bonn: I was ten, which came as a surprise to me because I always thought I was around six or seven; I really was ten.

Teiser: Did your family have a hard time after that?

Bonn: My mother was walking up Mission Street one day with me after my father died, and she met her cousin, and her cousin said to her, "What are you going to do, Stella?" Stella said, "Well, what do you mean?" She said, "Well, you've got to go to work. Someone's got to support the family." And this was the first time it dawned on my mother that she would have to go to work. So, she went to work for Schwartz's, which was a dry goods store at Twenty-first and Mission.

Teiser: That's a marvelous Mission speech, the Mission pronunciation. Spell Schwartz's.

Bonn: S-C-H-W-A-R-T-Z.

Teiser: Okay.

Bonn: How would you say it?

Teiser: A marvelous example.

- Selix: Well, it is a Mission accent.
- Teiser: That's a real Mission pronunciation. I'd say Schwartz's, that's because I'm from Oregon; that's an Oregon accent.
- Bonn: Oh. Well, you know I'm always meeting people that look at me and finally they say, "What part of the East are you from? It's not New York. Is it Upper New York? It's not Boston." They look very puzzled, and then when I tell them I'm from the Mission district, they're so disappointed [laughs].
- Teiser: It's a very interesting speech, and it is much closer to Eastern speech than any other Western, I think, than any other at all in the West.
- Bonn: Everybody in the Mission talks this way, they used to; I wasn't peculiar at that time.
- Teiser: So your mother went to work?
- Bonn: Yes, at Schwartz's, and worked there for quite a few years.
- Teiser: As a saleswoman?
- Bonn: She worked there for fifteen years, yes, as a salesperson. She had a marvelous position. People would come in just to get advice from her and she would cheer them up. And she and her cousin, Dodo, who also worked at Schwartz's, used to get the giggles and they'd have to sort of leave if they were getting into a giggling fit [laughs]. Mother knew nothing about selling, but she got onto it. And Mr. Schwartz was very, very nice. He used to take me to the baseball games; he loved children, yes. He had none of his own at that time. He didn't care much about the store, you know, the store could handle itself; so, it was opportune. He had a Buick he used to park outside and I would go sit in the Buick; it was a big deal for me to sit in the Buick, you know. Very few people had Buicks. Then once in a while, we'd go to the baseball game; that was great. He was a real nice person. He was just like a member of the family practically, rather than a boss. I can remember at Christmas time, I used to go to the store and help out just because Mother had no place else to put me. I think it was Christmas—I'm not sure which nights, when this happened, but maybe two times a year he would take everybody who worked in the store downtown to the [State's Restaurant?], and we'd have a lovely dinner. It was late at night and it was very exciting.
- Teiser: That was known as downtown then; that was more Market Street, wasn't it?
- Bonn: That was downtown, yes. That was Fourth and Market, I guess.
- Teiser: Were there any fine restaurants in the Mission district?
- Bonn: Oh, we never ever ate in the Mission district, never ever. I mean there wasn't any reason to; we lived there, so we would always eat at home.
- Selix: I don't remember any fine restaurants in the Mission. I remember the tamale place. I guess that was—

- Bonn: Johnson's?
- Selix: Yes, Johnson's; that was there as long as we were.
- Bonn: Yes.
- Selix: But I can't recall any restaurants. I don't think there—
- Bonn: There were ice cream parlors; there was Lindbergh's.
- Selix: Yes, there were ice cream places.
- Bonn: Beautiful ice cream. They were right next to Schwartz's. And then there was Verella's, but they weren't nearly as good.
- Selix: Well, that was an ice cream place, too.
- Bonn: Yes, but no eating places as I remember. People didn't eat like they do now. They didn't have sandwich counters and things. You had ice cream goodies. I think Verella's had some food.
- Selix: I don't recall that.
- Teiser: People would go—for instance, your father, of course, he wouldn't come home to lunch, would he?
- Bonn: Oh no, no.
- Teiser: But I don't suppose many people came to work in the Mission from other places so they'd have to eat lunch there? Did they?
- Bonn: I don't think so. In those days you, didn't travel. If you went downtown that was one thing, but you didn't go from downtown to Mission to go to work. You don't even go from one district to another district to work.
- Teiser: Did your father feel that he had a kind of a commute every day to get to downtown?
- Bonn: Oh, no, it was a pleasant thing. You took the streetcar and it wasn't crowded. You got downtown and got off where you wanted, and that was it. We always had good service from the Mission district to the downtown area.
- Teiser: So, you didn't feel yourselves to be isolated in any way?
- Bonn: Oh, not at all.
- Teiser: You were part of San Francisco; that was just a district.
- Bonn: Absolutely. My father had some relatives that lived in the Richmond district, and once in a blue moon, they would come to see us in the Mission. They couldn't get over our staying in the Mission district, they thought we were very barbaric, but we didn't think

so. We thought they were—who would want to live out in that fog where the sand dunes were and everything?

Teiser: That was a newer district then, wasn't it?

Bonn: Yes.

[Tape 17-2, Side A]

Teiser: Let's get back to the Girls' Club, then. Did all the girls you knew then go there or were there just select ones? How did you get to go to the Girls' Club? Who got to go?

Bonn: Any girl could go.

Teiser: Any girl who wanted to?

Bonn: Oh, yes.

Selix: And I think the story of how Add got her art education would be interesting.

Bonn: Well, Mrs. Sloss gave me a scholarship to [Cal School of Fine Arts?].

Teiser: What Mrs. Sloss was that?

Bonn: Mrs. Leon Sloss; she was a member of the board. We had a board at club, a very wonderful board; and every time there was a board meeting, they used to drive up in their gorgeous cars, and their chauffeurs would stand in front of the clubhouse and sort of wait. There was Mrs. Fleishhacker, there was Mrs.—

Teiser: Which Mrs. Fleishhacker was that?

Bonn: Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker, Sr. And Mrs. Leon Sloss, Mrs. Eva Neubauer, Queen Stewart, wasn't she on the board?

Selix: I don't recollect that.

Bonn: Mrs. I.W. Hellman, beautiful woman; she used to have braids around her hair and a fur coat.

Selix: This was before the days of [inaudible] or Community Chest, and the club was supported by private funds from these board of directors.

Bonn: And Mrs. Jesse Lilienthal, who was always dressed in black; she was always in mourning.

Selix: Oh, yes.

Teiser: How come?

Bonn: I guess her husband had died.

- Teiser: Who else that you remember?
- Selix: I think we should mention that the club was started by Rachel Wolfsohn, and when she died her sister, Eva, carried on.
- Teiser: When was it started, do you recall?
- Selix: It was started—
- Bonn: Before the fire and earthquake.
- Selix: Yes, some years before the fire and earthquake.
- Bonn: They had their own private fire, and then they moved out to the Mission District at that time, didn't they?
- Selix: Yes.
- Teiser: Where was it located before?
- Selix: Fourth and Harrison, I think.
- Teiser: Oh, so, it was in that part of the city earlier.
- Selix: Yes, the lower part of Mission.
- Teiser: It sounds to me as if everybody involved in the organization, running it, was Jewish.
- Selix: It sort of was that way, and of course, a lot of the merchants in the Mission were Jewish; most of them were Jewish, I would say.
- Teiser: German Jewish or—?
- Selix: No, I think they came from all parts of the world.
- Teiser: I think there was a lot of French Jews in San Francisco, weren't there?
- Bonn: Yes.
- Selix: And the building was—I can't remember which member of the board paid for the building; it was a beautiful building.
- Teiser: It was located where?
- Bonn: On Capp, between Eighteenth and Nineteenth.
- Selix: It's still there, but of course, it's not beautiful anymore.
- Bonn: Bruce Porter was the architect. And you walked up these wide steps of maybe four steps, a landing, and another four steps. Then there was an inside court, and the building

was on three sides of the court. We had an auditorium and we had a balcony around the auditorium on two—on one side, it was divided into small rooms, and some of the classes that we talked about, Tuesday classes, were up there in one of the balcony rooms. We had a stage and then we had a cooking class downstairs.

- Selix: Yes, we had a kitchen that was all equipped with stoves, individual stoves, for about sixteen girls, and we all cooked something there on Tuesday afternoons during the cooking class.
- Bonn: We made chocolate there one day and it turned out to be a—I think it was a green color [laughs]. I don't know what happened but it tasted awfully good.
- Teiser: What would you do, go there after school and on weekends, too?
- Bonn: No, not weekends, just after school.
- Teiser: It was not open on weekends?
- Bonn: No, it wasn't.
- Teiser: What do you think the idea of it was? Why did they start it?
- Selix: At that time, they were just starting to have these clubs for boys, and Rachel Wolfsohn felt that something should be done for girls. In the early days, it seems to me there was some kind of a talk or a negotiating to make the Boy's Club a non—you know, either for boys or girls.
- Teiser: That's the Mission Boys' Club you are speaking of?
- Selix: I think it was the Boys' Club.
- Teiser: Just the Boys' Club.
- Selix: I think so.
- Bonn: Well, it wasn't the Columbia Boys' because that was another organization.
- Selix: Yes, I think it was just the one called Boys' Club. It seems that the people who were supporting the Boys' Club didn't want to have anything to do with girls, and Rachel Wolfsohn felt that the girls shouldn't be left out so she started this club for girls.
- Teiser: What was her background? How did she happen to be interested in this?
- Selix: She was from a San Francisco family of professional people. Her brother was Julian Wolfsohn. Was he a neurologist or a psychiatrist?
- Bonn: I think he was a neurologist, but he acted as a psychiatrist many times in court cases. He had to be a psychiatrist to have been there.

- Selix: And Mast Wolfson [named spelled without the “h”], who was a physician, who had a great deal to do with the founding of the Monterey Peninsula Hospital group, and Fred Wolfsohn, who was an orthodontist, were the brothers of these women.
- Bonn: He fixed my teeth. You forgot the oldest brother.
- Selix: Oh yes, Mark Wolfsohn. And then there was a sister—
- Teiser: What was Mark?
- Bonn: Well, we don’t quite know.
- Selix: Mark was the one who never had an occupation.
- Bonn: But he put his brothers through college, I believe; that was his occupation. He was a professional man of some type.
- Selix: Yes. Then there was another sister, Gussie Wolfsohn, who was a nurse.
- Bonn: Gussie may still be living, we don’t know.
- Selix: Oh, no, I don’t think so Add.
- Bonn: When Ray died, Eva had no intentions of carrying on; and then all of the sudden, it hit her that she should carry on Ray’s work, so she did. And incidentally, in this house on Capp Street, the clubhouse, there were living quarters upstairs for the director; it was a beautiful apartment, just lovely.
- Teiser: So, she had to give her really whole life to it.
- Bonn: Oh, she did, yes.
- Selix: She was there day and night. We always had tickets to go to the symphony, and to go to plays, and the opera. If it weren’t for the Girls’ Club, I don’t think I would have had any cultural background to amount to anything. Eva had a reputation of being able to get even the most prominent person in the world to come to the club to give a talk to her girls. One time the mayor of Rome was here and she approached him to come give a talk, which he did. Pauline Fredericks, the actress, was there and gave a talk one night. And of course, we had training in theatrics, too. We always had a drama coach and we always put on plays.
- Bonn: We had a green room that was full of costumes right off the stage, and Eva Olsen used to make the costumes.
- Teiser: Were these other people volunteers, like the drama coach and the—?
- Selix: Some of them. Some of them were paid people, though. Another person who was a member of the Girls’ Club was Hazel Salmi, and she later on spearheaded the Richmond Art Center in the town of Richmond, California. She got her art training through a scholarship from the Girls’ Club, and later on, she went on to do very

important things in the field of art, all as the result of the support that she had a young person in the club. She used to do the stage sets and the costuming at the club. Add, as well, did a lot of the artwork at club when her time came. Then she had the scholarship to the art school from Mrs. Leon Sloss.

Bonn: I remember one thing Eva did. We had a bulletin board in the main lobby downstairs and it was just chalkboard and Eva—this is the sort of thing Eva would do—she had me post every month the schedule, the events. I printed it and she paid me two and a half dollars a month just to print that once a month. She always made you feel you were far better than you really were; she had a way of instilling you with confidence and building you up.

Teiser: Did all the members of the Girls' Club have this personal relationship with her and with each other?

Bonn: I think so.

Selix: To a degree. Of course, Add and I were very close to her because we used to spend a lot of time at the club. For years, I was editor of the bulletin that came out every year, and I used to do all the mimeograph work and a lot of the writing. And Add did the artwork for it, so we spent more time in the building than many of the other people did. We were always underfoot.

Bonn: My mother was always saying, "Why don't you sleep down there, too?" And Eva would have a cook. See, we were just exposed to all these nice things. She would have dinners every Tuesday night, because Tuesday night was club night when you got older. Of course, when you start in the daytime, they were made Vesta Girls, and then when you went to the next group when you were a certain age—what was the name of the next group?

Selix: I don't remember.

Bonn: Anyway, you kept graduating from group to group. Of course, there was the Mothers' Group and the Grandmothers' Group, you know, you just went on; you spent your life at the club. These Tuesday evenings Eva would have—she would invite certain girls to come have dinner with her, and it was this lovely dinner, and it was always nicely served. She had a button under the table, and she would press it and out would come whoever was the cook at the time; it was just a real, nice thing.

Teiser: I suppose there's a whole generation of people of a certain class, women who have one leg longer than the other, from reaching for that button under the table [laughter].

Bonn: I'm sure.

Teiser: But she asked everyone, did she? She rotated to all the members?

Bonn: Well, there were certain ones that would be there every week, and then the others would be special invitations.

Teiser: How many members were there in all, do you know?

- Selix: I think they had about 500 at one time.
- Teiser: Did they have any other services like—oh, suppose somebody was ill, some kid was ill, and didn't have enough money.
- Bonn: Oh, Eva took care of that; she would get the doctor for them or whatever the problem was. If you needed an attorney, she would see that someone contacted you or she sent you to somebody. It was just magic; Eva just took care of everything.
- Teiser: So, it was a kind of a one-woman social service agency.
- Selix: It was, yes.
- Bonn: Yes.
- Teiser: But more.
- Bonn: Now, Eva's assistant was Margaret Hall, and Margaret Hall's father was the engineer for Golden Gate Park. Don't they have a building downtown, if it's still standing, at Post?
- Selix: The Hall Building?
- Bonn: No, there's another name for it, I think. That belonged to Margaret's family. Margaret had a sister that was a weaver. Margaret used to go down and get the flowers; she did the arranging of the flowers for club all the time. And then Eva's mother, Mary—wasn't her mother's name Mary?
- Selix: Yes.
- Bonn: She had a class in darning and I took that class; that's why I'm such a good darner. It was just a delight; even now to think about it is a delight.
- Selix: Yes.
- Bonn: And you just feel sorry that other people are not experiencing it.
- Teiser: You said that there was a Mothers' Club and a Grandmothers' Club, what did they do?
- Selix: They'd have coffee [inaudible].
- Bonn: They would sew. No, they made layettes for unmarried women, remember, mothers?
- Selix: Yes, that's right, they did make layettes.
- Bonn: That was one of their big projects.
- Selix: And they'd do bandages for the Red Cross or something like that, whatever the occasion called for.

- Bonn: They were always doing something constructive.
- Teiser: For the club itself many times or just other organizations?
- Selix: Yes, they used to make things, and then they'd have a bazaar and raise money for the club.
- Bonn: Whist parties.
- Teiser: What sort of things would they make and what would you sell at a bazaar, then?
- Selix: Aprons and potholders, and they'd embroider towels, tea towels.
- Teiser: Do you think it was mainly kind of a one-woman organization, then? Was it more—?
- Selix: Oh, Eva was a very strong, dominating personality and there was only room for one Eva.
- Teiser: You think it was she who got the board members corralled, then, and kept the board going?
- Selix: Oh, yes, definitely.
- Bonn: Oh, yes. And she always added, "I have the best board in the world."
- Teiser: Why, did they do what she wanted them to?
- Bonn: They were cooperative. And then the Fleishhackers gave us the country club, which was a beautiful building down at Emerald Lake.
- Teiser: When was that given?
- Bonn: That was before 1921 because my family was there and I was there. My father had borrowed a sailor suit for me to wear at this opening pageant, and I fell down and got grass all over the suit [laughs]. I wasn't supposed to do that.
- Teiser: Where was it, did you say?
- Bonn: Emerald Lake, which is three miles west of Redwood City.
- Teiser: And it had some architectural distinction, too, did it?
- Selix: Yes, it was a lovely building, had a dormitory that held sixteen girls. And as the years went on, they added to the available space by putting up tents, so some of the girls slept in tents. They used to have large groups. It seems to me that they had as high as sixty girls there, didn't they, Add?
- Bonn: I think so. It sort of seemed that way when you were doing dishes. And then we had our own cook there.

- Selix: Our own caretakers.
- Teiser: It was kind of like a camp, like a country camp?
- Selix: It was nicer than a camp.
- Bonn: Not a camp.
- Selix: We had a tennis court of our own.
- Teiser: Like a country club.
- Selix: Yes, it was like a lovely country club.
- Teiser: Did you have lots of grounds?
- Selix: Oh, yes, yes.
- Bonn: And then we would go down to the lake every afternoon to go swimming, and many of the people that lived around the lake did not particularly approve of us. They were not gracious about it, but that didn't deter Eva; we would still go down to the lake and swim, and Eva Olsen would teach us how to swim.
- Teiser: She could teach you how to swim?
- Bonn: No, Eva Olsen, she was a worker. We raised our own vegetables.
- Selix: And there were chickens and corn; we used to have the best corn.
- Bonn: Oh, the best of everything. One night, at dinner, the chickens got out and we had to run down these canyons and get the chickens, and the canes were loaded with poison oak. We were all sent home with puffed faces and swollen this and that because we just got into the poison oak too thick; it was terrible. You remember that?
- Selix: Yes.
- Teiser: The Fleishhackers gave the land or the building, too?
- Bonn: They apparently gave the land and the building, but they did not endow it and this frustrated Eva, because how could she keep it up?
- Teiser: How did she?
- Bonn: Well, we used to pay.
- Selix: I think it was about seven dollars a week.
- Bonn: It was very small, just enough to—
- Teiser: Would you go there for a week at a time, was that it?

- Selix: You used to go for the summer, didn't you, Add?
- Bonn: One summer only, because here, again, Eva made me a—
- Selix: Her assistant or something.
- Bonn: Yes, what do you call?
- Selix: Counselor?
- Bonn: Yes, something like that. I think we had another name for it, I don't know what it was. So I was able to go all summer, which I just adored.
- Teiser: Did you have some duties and get paid or get your room and board?
- Bonn: No, room and board, yes; no money changed hands.
- Teiser: What happened meanwhile back in the city? Who was running things at the club?
- Bonn: Club was closed in the summer. It closed every summer, and then the caretaker here at San Francisco was usually a man and a wife. The caretaker here would then paint the inside steps, and polish the furniture, and do everything to make it shipshape, because then when you came back this lovely clubhouse was available again.
- Selix: It was beautifully maintained, just beautifully maintained.
- Teiser: Well, Leah, you stuck around here in the summers. What did you do with the Club closed?
- Selix: I used to go down, but I could only go for about a week because my mother had three children to send. I remember Eva gave—I think it was seven dollars a week, but because there were three of us, she gave Mother a special rate of five dollars a week.
- Teiser: Oh, really [laughter]?
- Bonn: Then after dinner, Eva would say, "We must thank Mrs. So-and-so," and [claps her hands] everybody would thank Mrs. So-and-so for cooking our dinner, and you had a round of applause from many people. Many of the kids that would come down, you know, there were spoiled brats, they didn't like this, they couldn't eat that, and Eva said, "That's all right, that's all right, this is what you have." By the time the week was over, the kids were so hungry they were eating everything. It was all wonderful food, fresh food, but they were just [inaudible] idiosyncrasy.
- Teiser: All the kids were from the Mission district?
- Bonn: Oh, no, not necessarily.
- Teiser: All over the city?

- Bonn: Well, I think what happened, so many of them moved out of the Mission and then they would still come.
- Selix: But I think originally people in the Mission are the ones who attended the club, and then as they moved into another neighborhood, they would still attend. But I don't think it would happen very often that you would come from another neighborhood to become a member.
- Bonn: Well, you did later on when you were a grandmother or a [inaudible] member or something.
- Teiser: Were there kids who were fairly wealthy who came?
- Selix: There were a few, not many though.
- Bonn: How did you know a wealthy person in those days?
- Selix: I remember some families who were doctors and professional people; occasionally, here and there, you'd find a professional person sending their child there.
- Bonn: That's right, that's right. I remember one—oh, well, her mother had been—I'm thinking of Helen Reese whose father was a doctor but her mother had been a member before Helen, you see, so maybe Mrs. Reese had lived in the Mission.
- Teiser: You had no special—I mean, so, there were not many social distinctions I presume.
- Bonn: Oh, none whatsoever. In fact, we had—there was a colored girl that lived around the corner and she was a member. Remember she had blue eyes?
- Selix: I don't remember that.
- Bonn: There was never any—it didn't matter if you were Catholic, Jewish, black, white, Chinese, didn't matter.
- Teiser: Were there Chinese members?
- Bonn: There were lots of Chinese living in the Mission district, but right now, I don't remember any Chinese members.
- Selix: I don't remember any members in the club.
- Teiser: Japanese?
- Selix: No.
- Bonn: No.
- Teiser: Not many Spanish there then was there?
- Selix: No.

- Bonn: Well, yes, certainly, the Johnsons.
- Selix: Yes, but they were sort of an isolated family, Add. I don't think there were many Spanish.
- Bonn: They lived on the block; they lived two doors from the club.
- Selix: They were probably Mexican.
- Bonn: Yes, that's right.
- Teiser: But just one Negro?
- Bonn: That's all I know of, because we didn't have a lot in the neighborhood. Had there been more, they would have belonged had they wanted to. I mean certainly there was no discrimination against anyone, never ever.
- Teiser: To get back to your summers, Leah, when you went there for say a week, but did you miss having the club open the rest of the summer?
- Selix: Well, I was busy in the store; we worked all summer. I think very often it was to relieve the mothers that they sent the children to the country, to give the mothers some rest. We had some activities. I remember my father was a great one for passing out handbills, you know, little advertisements that you go and put in the doors in the neighborhood. Of course, these days you have to be licensed for that, but in those days, you didn't. So, he would send the three of us out with all these pamphlets, sales pamphlets, that we would have to put into the doors of everybody in the neighborhoods. And then—I can't recall where my father used to get the wood, but he got wood someplace, and we used to have to haul it from our Divisadero Street store to our—then we were on Scott Street, I think. Evidently we had a wood burning stove at Scott Street, because my sister had won a little red wagon in some kind of a contest, so we would haul—from Divisadero and Sutter, we would put the wood in the little red wagon and haul it over to Scott Street, Scott and Haight.
- Then after we got acquainted with this other family that had the three girls in it, who were musicians, we used to take the red wagon and go to Mission Dolores Park and just have a real fun time, the six of us. My family got acquainted with that family because my father was—I think he was selling signs; in addition to his music business, he usually had something else that he was trying to do. He went into this cleaning store to sell the man a sign, and they got to talking and they found out that they each had three girls, and then eventually he sold that family a piano. So, we all got acquainted, and it was a very nice thing. In fact, one of the girls I've kept in touch with all these years; I'm still in touch with her and I see her every once in a while.
- Teiser: Did she go to the Girls' Club, too?
- Selix: No, her father wouldn't let her, it was too sophisticated he thought; he wouldn't let her do anything. She was never allowed to go to dances or shows or anything.
- Teiser: For heaven's sake. Was it considered by others quite sophisticated?

Selix: No. I wanted to take her swimming at the YWCA one day, and her father wouldn't let her go because it was too sophisticated. In fact, he didn't like me to be a friend of his daughter because he felt I was too sophisticated, because I used to go downtown. We started going downtown at an early age because we used to have to go down to Sherman Clay and pick up the sheet music. See, they didn't have any deliveries for the little bit we bought, so somebody wanted a certain piece of music or a certain record and Mother would send one of the children downtown.

Bonn: What was that story about Ruth not being able to find the White House? What was that?

Selix: Oh, yes. One day my mother sent my sister down to Sherman Clay, and my sister phoned, and she was crying over the phone, and said that she was lost and she couldn't find Sherman Clay. My mother said, "Well, where are you now?" She said, "I'm at the White House." [laughter].

Teiser: Which was how many steps away?

Selix: Up the street.

Bonn: Down the corner.

Teiser: You kids were given responsibility, real responsibility.

Selix: Oh, we had a lot of responsibility, and it's too bad too because it affected the rest of our lives; that's why I'm such a serious type of person because I had this early responsibility. It affected all our lives.

Teiser: You think if there had been some boys in the family that it would have been easier for you girls?

Selix: Well, I don't know. My father was disappointed that we weren't all boys, and of course, we had this hanging over our heads, too. He didn't think that girls were good for much.

Teiser: Did he like the Girls' Club though?

Selix: He approved of it, yes. But he didn't approve of anything that was play, really. He felt that we should always be working. He always said, "Children shouldn't play, they should work." If he passed a field and there were big boys playing a ball game, he just thought that was terrible, that they were wasting their energy.

Teiser: What about his early life, where did he come from?

Selix: He had come from—his mother was pregnant when the family left Poland. There were eight children in the family. When they stopped in Paris, France, my father was born. So, the family made their way to—I think they first stopped off at Aspen, Colorado.

Teiser: Heavens, how did they get there?

Selix: I don't know; I don't know too much about the details. My grandfather was a tailor and he'd have a tailor shop; and if he wasn't off on a wild goose chase some place—he was

another impractical man. He'd go off and leave my grandmother with the children and the tailor shop, and he'd go off on some kind of a—

Selix: He would take Joe with him.

Bonn: He would often take my father with him; and of course, they always felt that that was one of the reasons why my father had the wanderlust because he was always going off on a wild goose chase.

Teiser: Did they go to the Yukon?

Selix: My father did, when he was twenty-one, went to the Yukon and he trapped furs.

Bonn: He didn't know they were finding gold. [laughter]

[Tape 17-2, Side B]

Bonn: We have a picture of Joe on that Yukon trail, don't we?

Selix: No, I think we have a picture of the Yukon trail, but no Joe in it. And then he went to Nevada; that's where my mother and father met was in Goldfield, Nevada. My mother had come West. She was a New Yorker and she had come West for her health, and she met my father in Goldfield, Nevada.

Teiser: How old did she live to be?

Selix: She lived to be ninety-eight.

Bonn: One week less than ninety-nine.

Teiser: And they met in Goldfield?

Selix: Yes. I was born in Goldfield.

Teiser: At the time of the mining.

Selix: Yes. I was born there and so was my other sister.

Teiser: Did you leave before you could remember it?

Selix: Yes, we left there when I was about three or four.

Bonn: In fact, your father had a grocery store there.

Selix: No, we left before I was three.

Bonn: Didn't he have a grocery store there, and he used to come home at night with sacks of gold and throw them under the bed or in the bureau?

- Selix: Yes, he had a market there and he accumulated a little money, I think about \$1,500. The mines ran out and the town was folding, so my father managed to sell the store. My mother took some of the money, and she was pregnant with the third sister, and she wanted to go to New York to visit her family; she had never been back. So, she went to New York to visit her family and my little sister was born there; and while my mother was in New York, my father took all the rest of the money and invested it in an airplane. This was the sort of thing he was always doing.
- Teiser: What airplane, where?
- Selix: I don't know.
- Bonn: The one that didn't fly.
- Selix: The one that didn't fly. [laughter] Someplace in Nevada. When my mother wanted to come home, there was no money to get her back, and so she borrowed the money from her brother. That indebted her the rest of her life because they never could pay it back. She was so humiliated with her family, you see, because she had borrowed this money and couldn't repay it.
- Teiser: Your backgrounds are quite different, and yet, you have had very parallel lives.
- Selix: Well, our Girls' Club experience was parallel, but Add's life was security and mine was insecurity.
- Teiser: And still right in the same area and with the same activities.
- Selix: Yes.
- Teiser: You went on then, both of you, to the same high school?
- Selix: No.
- Teiser: Where did you go?
- Selix: I went to Commerce High.
- Teiser: In the Mission. How did you happen to go to Commerce?
- Selix: Because my parents wanted me to have a business background. I had talked about going to college, but we just never thought that I'd be able to swing it, so they said, "The best thing to do is to go to Commerce, so you can get out and go to work." As a matter of fact, when we were about—I think when we were as young as about ten or twelve years old, we started on jobs babysitting. We'd read ads in the paper where the mother would want a helper, and we traveled to other parts of the city to work for a family, taking care of children, and helping with the cooking, and staying with children while mothers worked. And then when I was twelve years old, I can remember my first office job was stuffing envelopes. I think it was twenty-five cents a day.
- Bonn: Sixty years later, you're still stuffing. [laughs]

- Selix: Yes, I'm still stuffing envelopes [laughter]. Then when I was about sixteen, I started working after school and during the summers outside of the family business; I was always able to get good jobs. And then by the time I graduated from high school, of course, I was on my own. I still lived at home, but I had jobs.
- Teiser: Where did you work?
- Selix: I worked for Southern Pacific and I worked for California Packing. Then I went to work for a small glove jobber, and after ten years there, I changed to another glove company where I'm still employed, thirty-three years.
- Teiser: Well, you can't say that you've been unstable.
- Selix: Oh, no, no.
- Teiser: How long did you continue your activities with Girls' Club, then?
- Selix: I think I was probably in my—I don't know whether it was my twenties or my thirties—no, I was still active when I went to work on Mission Street and that was after 1938.
- Bonn: You're talking about Mission Street downtown, not Mission Street in our neighborhood.
- Selix: No, Mission Street downtown. I went to work there in 1938 and I was still going to club.
- Teiser: What were you doing by then? What sort of activities can an older person take in?
- Selix: Well, we used to have the drama and we used to have these monthly dinners, and I would be mistress of ceremonies. We'd have these very important speakers.
- Bonn: Wasn't there a lecture every week?
- Selix: There was a lecture every week and I used to go there for dinner almost every Tuesday night. It got to the point where—in fact, we were still active after Eva died, and I think she died in 1934. Other people carried on the work after she died.
- Bonn: Edith Heinrich came out and took over the club. She had been Eva's assistant, how many years prior to that, had gone East, and then they asked her to come back, which she did. She was there a good many years, but of course, it was never the same. Once Eva was gone, it was never the same.
- Teiser: She died when?
- Bonn: In '34.
- Teiser: As you progressed, what happened, for instance, when you started going out with boys, and going to dances, and things?
- Bonn: Oh, we had dances at Club.

Teiser: They invited the boys?

Bonn: Oh, yes, we had wonderful parties at club.

Selix: And I remember we weren't allowed to wear silk dresses, we had to wear cotton dresses because they thought maybe some girls couldn't afford silk dresses.

Teiser: Stockings, a lot of stockings, black?

Selix: Yes.

Bonn: I don't remember that.

Selix: Yes.

Teiser: But they were pleasant parties?

Bonn: Oh, wonderful, just wonderful. We used to dance and Eva always had punch.

Teiser: You had a record player or—

Selix: We had an orchestra, didn't we?

Bonn: Yes.

Selix: A band from the music school probably.

Bonn: I don't know; I don't think so.

Selix: That was [Mission Community Music School?] farther up on Capp Street.

Bonn: In fact, they're still advertising; I see them on television once in awhile.

Selix: Yes, I think they're still in operation. The Girls' Club is still in operation, but certainly, it's changed. Now it's a neighborhood center; it's organized into Mission Neighborhood Center, and they have more than just the building on Capp Street. They have an office space over at Twenty-fourth and Mission, I think. Now they're catering to the Mexican group.

Teiser: Which is the group that's there that needs the most, I suppose.

Selix: So, the club still goes on.

Bonn: Seems like they're demanding the most, too. We never had these problems.

Teiser: Well, people were more compliant, I suppose. Were there fees? Did you have to pay to go to the club?

Bonn: Oh, yes, absolutely.

- Selix: Twenty-five cents a month.
- Teiser: Twenty-five cents a month was your membership. Well, what about the classes, did you have extra things—?
- Selix: Once in a while there would be a class that you had to pay for, if they had a paid worker or there were certain supplies that they had to buy.
- Teiser: Well, if there were kids that couldn't pay, did somebody see that they could go anyway?
- Selix: Right, somebody let them in anyway.
- Teiser: Were the funds put out mainly by the board members?
- Selix: Oh, yes, they subsidized the thing.
- Bonn: We don't know if Eva had a private source of income, or whether the board paid Eva or—just how that worked out, we don't know.
- Teiser: But there was enough to keep it going always, at her standards.
- Selix: Until the Community Chest came into the picture.
- Teiser: When was that?
- Selix: I don't really remember what year it was, but when they first started Community Chest, there was a period there of great negotiations between Eva and the board that dragged on for years and years. Because these people were being asked by the Community Chest to give there, and they felt that they could no longer support the club as a privately endowed setup. So eventually it went Community Chest, and then it began to deteriorate.
- Bonn: Well, Eva had more problems, other problems; Eva was still running the club when it became Community Chest.
- Selix: I think so.
- Teiser: But then wouldn't it have to broaden its' base of services or—?
- Selix: Or was it after Edith came back that it went Community Chest?
- Bonn: No, it was Eva; I remember Eva being very upset about the whole thing.
- Teiser: So, it changed character after it became Community Chest?
- Selix: It didn't really change character until Eva died.
- Bonn: Eva, she was a strong person, she wouldn't let that happen.
- Selix: She was a guiding light.

- Bonn: But she had to comply to certain things.
- Teiser: So it ceased to be a small group, I suppose.
- Selix: Right, and it ceased to have the graciousness about it, and they eventually had to give up all of the luxurious things.
- Bonn: Not while Eva was living.
- Selix: No, not while she was living but eventually. In fact, that beautiful building has been turned practically into an office building, all cut up into little office rooms.
- Bonn: Oh, yes, it seems like any social work is the first thing—I guess I shouldn't say this.
- Teiser: First thing they do is cut it up?
- Bonn: They can't stand anything to look nice; it's got to look a certain way, shabby.
- Teiser: What happened to the property at Emerald Lake?
- Selix: That was finally sold because they no longer could afford to keep it. They couldn't get it endowed, and so it was sold to a private party.
- Teiser: When was that about?
- Selix: I really don't know the year.
- Bonn: And we went down there one time, the lady was going to have a reunion for the Club members; she thought it was just going to be wonderful. So, we went down, and I think you and I and one other person were the only ones that showed up, and it was just horrible what they had done to it. This beautiful fireplace and they had painted it with sparkly stuff, you know, this rock was pink, shimmering, and this was another color shimmering; oh, it was just horrible.
- Selix: It had been a beautiful stone fireplace. And here was this house that was big enough to house sixteen girls and a staff, and it was being occupied by two women. One of the women used a typewriter, and you know where she had it? In a bathroom over a bathtub [laughter].
- Teiser: My word! Two eccentrics, huh?
- Selix: They certainly were.
- Bonn: Mother and daughter, wasn't it?
- Selix: Yes.
- Teiser: What did they do with the rest of the place?
- Selix: They seemed to occupy it, I don't know.

- Teiser: What were their names, do you remember?
- Selix: No, I don't.
- Teiser: We're coming close to the end of this tape. I'm confused about the actual name of the club. What was the whole name of it?
- Bonn: The Girls' Club.
- Teiser: Mission didn't appear in it?
- Bonn: No.
- Teiser: Just The Girls' Club, I see.
- Bonn: And it wasn't The Girls' Club, it was the Girls' Club.
- Selix: We had our own logo.
- Bonn: Yes, I still have a pin. It was a beautiful experience.
- Teiser: I'd like to continue this at some point. I'd like to know a little more, Add, about how you felt it shaped your development as an artist, and designer, and so forth. I'd also like to know more about some of the people who you felt it helped, some of the people who are still alive or not still alive, who you felt had developed and gained from it as both of you have. So, maybe we could continue with it another time and discuss those things.
- Bonn: Wouldn't it be good to try and get in touch with some of the other people, some old members?
- Teiser: It would be wonderful.
- Selix: I think Hazel might be an interesting person to interview because she gained so much from the club.
- Teiser: Hazel who?
- Selix: Hazel Salmi from Richmond. She's a very interesting person, and it would be good to do that soon because she's not a young person.
- Teiser: Why don't you get Add's tape recorder—don't you go over to see her sometimes?
- Selix: We do, yes.
- Teiser: Why don't you take the tape recorder over and get as full as a recollections as you can of her.
- Selix: We don't know how to lead her; we don't know how to interview.
- Teiser: You know what I've just done.

- Bonn: Yes, you just have a conversation about the club.
- Teiser: You just tell her that you want to interview her because you were going to try to make—
- Selix: Well, then how would you get it off of our tape to yours?
- Teiser: I can copy it.
- Bonn: You can transcribe it from one tape to another.
- Teiser: Yes, you can use a little skip thing. That would be good, tell what we've done here.
- Bonn: Then there's Marion Brune. Marion came into the house the other day, our house, and she said, "Oh, who did this painting?" I said, "Hazel Salmi," and she said, "Oh, Hazel, she was a beautiful dancer." They had been in the same dance group at club; you're always finding your old friends knowing other old friends.
- Selix: Yes, another person is Marion Brune, who became Marion Brune Hayes; she was married to Sam Hayes, the Richfield Reporter, for years. And Ron Hayes, who appears on television, is her son. Marion got all her background at club, and she conducts theatrical groups in Marin County for the schools.
- Bonn: In fact, she usually coaches the Mountain Play, too.
- Selix: Yes, she does.
- Teiser: That would be interesting to get her recollections of it and her assessment of how everything—
- Bonn: We could even start thinking about—[tape ends]

CONVERSATION BETWEEN LEAH SELIX AND ADRIENNE BONN

[Date of interview: March 17, 1974]

[Tape 18-1, Side A]

Selix: Today is March 17, 1974. Leah Selix and Adrienne Bonn are conversing in their home on Green Street in San Francisco. It was two years and about two months ago that Ruth Teiser first interviewed us about the Girls' Club, and there are some corrections. As I said, this is two years and two months later, and during that period, we have interviewed about eighteen people who had been associated with or who had been members of the Girls' Club in the early days. So we are able to correct some of the information that we have on tape number one of the interview done by Ruth Teiser.

The first correction, when we made reference to the Boys' Club—this is on the second side of the first tape—it was not the Boys' Club, it was the Columbia Park Boys' Club, which was started by Sidney Peixotto, who was a great friend of Ray Wolfsohn. When Sidney started the Columbia Park Boys' Club, there was some discussion between Ray and Sidney as to whether or not it could be for both groups, but Sidney felt that he wanted to cater to the boys who, in the particular age group, should have their own place and not have the girls around. So that is what sparked Ray to start the Girls' Club.

The reference to the mayor of Rome coming to the club and giving a talk is merely a legend. The fact of the matter is that Rachel Wolfsohn had made a trip to Europe—this was long before our time—and during that trip had met the mayor of Rome. During the years, there was probably referenced this, to the fact that Ray had met him—I imagine that she had taken the initiative so that she could, and it became a legend in our time, that he had spoken at the club, which was erroneous.

Another correction that we'd like to make is in reference to Hazel Salmi. Hazel Salmi did not get her original art training through the Girls' Club. She had already graduated from the—oh, I can't remember what they called the art school in those days—the Art Institute.

Bonn: Yes.

Selix: When it was held—

Bonn: Mark Hopkins.

Selix: Yes, the Mark Hopkins Art Institute [Mark Hopkins Institute of Art].

Bonn: Yes.

Selix: When the classes were held on the present site of the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco, Hazel's family had sent her there for training, and after she finished at the art school, she was invited to come and teach at the Girls' Club as a paid worker. During the years, why, she designed the stage—well, really designed the stage sets and the costumes for the drama presentations.

Another erroneous statement that was made in the first tape was that Eva Wolfsohn organized the original board of directors, but in interviewing the other members of the club we found that it was Rachel Wolfsohn who had organized the original board of directors. We were given a book called *The Girls' Club*. The book was published in 1908, and it shows the address of the Girls' Club as 3740 Twentieth Street, former home, 262 Seventh Street. We do not really know the exact history of these different addresses because this was before our time. The only thing we do know is that it was after the 1906 fire that—well, it must have been well after 1908 that the building at 362 Capp Street was built, because this book covers the period of 1900 to 1908 and shows the address as Twentieth Street. They list the board of managers in this book and Mrs. Jesse W. Lilienthal started her service on the board of directors in 1900. In reading over some of the bulletins that were published—I have a bulletin dated in 1939, and in it they refer to the resignation of Mrs. Lilienthal from the board of directors—no, excuse me, that bulletin is dated 1937. Mrs. Jesse W. Lilienthal, in 1937, resigned as president of the board of directors, but was going to continue as the honorary president. One of the original members of the board of directors, Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker, succeeded Mrs. Lilienthal as president in 1937. Mrs. Leon Sloss was one of the board members in 1900, as was Mrs. Charles J. Durbrow, Miss Aimee Steinhart of the family that endowed the Steinhart Aquarium in Golden Gate Park, and Mrs. Paola D. Viechi became a member in 1901, Mrs. I.W. Hellman, Jr. in 1903, Mrs. Abraham Stern in 1904, Mrs. Moses Gunst in 1908. At that time, the head worker was Rachel Wolfsohn and the assistant head worker was Eva Wolfsohn—that was from the inception of the club, which was around 1897, I think the date was placed at, somewhere around there.

At the end of tape number one, we said that we would start thinking about interviewing people who had been members of the club. This was to lead us into an activity that involved traveling from one place to another, down the peninsula, to Monterey, to Los Angeles, and to Marin County, to find the people and to interview them. Several of the outstanding interviews that we did, one of them was Hazel Salmi, who had a Girls' Club background and subsequently, spearheaded the Richmond Art Center, which is nationally renowned. And Marion Brune Hayes, who was the wife of Sam Hayes, the Richfield Reporter, for many years and their son, Ronald Hayes, is a television actor. Marion and Sam were divorced and Marion, later, married William Cain. Marion is still active in Marin County theatrical work under the name of Marion Cain. Mrs. Fred Wolfsohn, who was the wife of one of the younger members of the Wolfsohn family, Dr. Fred Wolfsohn, who was an orthodontist, was interviewed. Lenore Peters Job, whose family has for—I guess it's the third generation now of conducting the Peters Wright School of Dancing out on Sacramento Street in San Francisco. Celene Sheldon Olsen, who went on to become a very fine oratorio singer in San Francisco. Frederica Rohrer, who was very active in the [California Federation Musical Society?- not mentioned in the Rohrer interview]. And Mr. A. Appleton, who was a famous San Francisco architect. His experience had been with the Columbia Park Boys' Club, so he was able to give us quite a bit of information about Sidney Peixotto. We also interviewed Mrs. John [actually, it was George] Applegarth as she had been a teacher of the ukulele at the Girls' Club in the early days, under the name of Lorraine—was it Lorraine? [It was Gwendolyn]?

Bonn: Powers was her last name.

Selix: Her maiden name was Powers and I can't think of her first name. We also interviewed Dr. Mast Wolfson, who is still practicing medicine in Monterey. He was the youngest in the family, wasn't he?

Bonn: Of Eva's family, yes.

Selix: Yes. And so it was—oh, and Mrs. Don Mozley, whose husband is the radio announcer. She was Barbara Stewart and her mother was very active at the Girls' Club, Mrs. Charles Stewart. She was the Santa Claus for years and years and years, and had a marvelous, outgoing personality and who used to sing for us.

There are a few dates that we'd like to get a record of. The first one is that the country club in the hills above Redwood City at the site of Emerald Lake was built in 1919. The grounds and the building were donated by Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker. In 1924, an additional building was bought on Capp Street. It was right next door to the club building, and Mrs. I.W. Hellman, Sr. had a gymnasium built as a memorial to I.W. Hellman, Jr., completed in 1924. Mrs. I.W. Hellman had been on the board for thirty-seven years as of 1937, as had Mrs. Lilienthal when she retired. In November of 1929, there was a memorial service to Mary Wolfsohn, who was the mother of the eight Wolfsohn children, two of whom were the founders and supporters of the Girls' Club.

In a bulletin that's dated 1929, there's an article about the fact that a new club is being formed at the Girls' Club and it's composed entirely of men. So, it was in 1929 that the first men's group was formed. It was formed because the husbands were in the habit of calling for their wives and daughters at the club, and they would chat together and form friendships. So out of these friendships developed the idea that the men should be able to have activities at the club and to participate. And Dr. Julian Wolfsohn was the speaker at their first meeting. In the same bulletin, there's an article written by Adrienne Bonn referring to the [Hile Brauner?] Room, which was a small—we used to call it the telephone room because the telephone was in there, but the room was redecorated. Hazel Salmi redecorated it, and it was dedicated to the memory of [Mrs. Hile Brauner], sister of Mrs. Leon Sloss and [Mrs. Louis Green].

We have a collection of Girls' Club bulletins that start with April of 1924, and there's a great deal of information in the bulletins, and they are available for reference at the Bancroft Library in Berkeley. One person that you will find contributed to the bulletins on almost every occasion that they were published was Helen Bonn. Now, Helen Bonn was your older sister.

Bonn: Right.

Selix: Can you tell us all about Helen Bonn? When did she start at club? How old was she when she started at club?

Bonn: She must have been before the age of ten, because when I was born my mother was a member. And, you see, in the old days, a mother could not belong to the club unless her daughter belonged to the club. First, the daughter became a member and then the mother could join if she wished to, so Helen must have been a member—

- Selix: Before you were born.
- Bonn: Before I was born. I would imagine Helen was a member when she was nine years old, and of course, Helen was ten years older than I, so that was—it could have even been before then but as a young woman, as a young child, she was a member. Helen had this tremendous sense of humor and she used to write very funny things, at least I thought they were funny. And she was always writing about things that were happening around the house where we lived, about the family. She never really did anything with it except for her own pleasure and our pleasure.
- Selix: Do you remember what year Helen married?
- Bonn: I think she married in 1925.
- Selix: And she became Helen Bonn Pittman.
- Bonn: Yes.
- Selix: Did she have any career before she married?
- Bonn: No, no, none at all. She had gone to secretarial school, and she really didn't know what she was doing. She had, I think, a new job every day because she got fired every night from the job she had that day. She wasn't built out for office work.
- Selix: I recall you telling me a story about how she met Clinton Pitman. He was a member of the orchestra at the Girls' Club, wasn't he, in the early days?
- Bonn: Yes, that's true. He was also—
- Selix: Is that where she met him?
- Bonn: Yes. He also was the boy that delivered the paper to our house, so I don't know what happened first, but we had the both contacts with him. He delivered the paper—he remembered my grandmother when he was a little boy—and then he also played in the orchestra at club, and Helen played the piano in the orchestra at club.
- Selix: And I remember you saying one time that when he delivered the paper, didn't Helen make the remark one time that she was going to marry him when she grew up [laughter]?
- Bonn: I don't remember that.
- Selix: I thought you told me that. You say that she wasn't cut out to be an office worker. Well, she certainly was cut out to be a homemaker because she did a great job.
- Bonn: Oh, yes. But she had to learn that, she didn't know how to cook when she got married. I guess she knew how to make beds, but she really learned everything. In fact, when they came home from their honeymoon, I went to their apartment on Twentieth Street every

day for a week and cooked their dinner for them, and left before Clinton got home. And Helen, you know, I taught her everything I knew, which wasn't too much. Except my grandmother was always the cook in the family, and my sister was clumsy, so my grandmother didn't want my sister in the kitchen when Nana was cooking. But she would let me in the kitchen because I wasn't as clumsy, and so, therefore, I learned a lot of things from my grandmother. As a matter of fact, when my grandmother died, I had to teach my mother how to cook because she had never cooked; it was my grandmother who was cooking all the meals in the house.

- Selix: I think the background of Clinton F. Pittman is rather interesting. I don't know how many children there were in his family, but his father was a salesman for the Caswell Coffee Company, and he used to go from door to door in a horse and buggy selling coffee, and spices, and things. Clinton grew up in the Mission and I guess his first job was in that bank at Sixteenth and Mission, wasn't it?
- Bonn: He was a teller for many years, yes.
- Selix: For many years.
- Bonn: Anglo California Bank, Sixteenth and Mission.
- Selix: And then he went to law school at night and became a lawyer.
- Bonn: Yes.
- Selix: Then he went to work for the state corporation department in the state building and he was there until he retired.
- Bonn: Yes.
- Selix: He was active in the Girls' Club; he belonged to the Men's Club when it was organized. What year did your sister die, do you remember?
- Bonn: 1960.
- Selix: Helen's writings appear in every copy of the bulletin that I've seen, first under the name of Helen Bonn and later on, under the initials of H.B.P., Helen Bonn Pitman. Her writing was very clever and very entertaining, as you say. In one of the interviews with one of the members, why, they told us of the Hi Jinks that they used to have every year, and Helen used to write the script for that, and it was really very clever; she was very clever.
- Bonn: I could never go to a Hi Jinks because you had to be a certain age to be able to go.
- Selix: The Hi Jinks was a spoof of the—
- Bonn: Of anything.
- Selix: Of anything and everything.

- Bonn: Yes.
- Selix: But Helen was a great mother and a great homemaker and a great cook eventually. Your brother, Sylvan Bonn, what year was he born?
- Bonn: He was born six years after my sister; in 1907 Sylvan was born.
- Selix: And he started working at rather an early age, didn't he, at Granite Brothers on Mission Street?
- Bonn: No, he finished high school and then he went to work.
- Selix: At Granite Brothers on Mission Street.
- Bonn: Yes. But he didn't go to Granite's until later.
- Selix: Well, what did he do first?
- Bonn: First, he was with a jeweler on Mission Street and then he went downtown.
- Selix: Oh, I think [Marcus?]-wasn't it, Marcus?
- Bonn: A name similar to that, I don't think that's quite the name. And then he worked downtown on Market Street at a jewelry store upstairs for many years, and then eventually, he worked at Granite's.
- Selix: Oh, I see, I thought that was his first job.
- Bonn: No.
- Selix: He was never active in the Girls' Club?
- Bonn: I don't think so. I think we were just too simple for Sylvan; he always thought of himself as a sophisticate. Actually, he wasn't but-I can't remember him at any activity at club.
- Selix: Well, he seems to know the people who-
- Bonn: Because everybody that went to club was also a friend of the family, you see. We spoke of them or they came to the house; it was all one big community.
- Selix: You know one thing that I thought was very interesting when we were doing these interviews during the past two years, why, one of the questions that I asked in the interview was whether or not anyone felt deprived or felt patronized when they attended the Girls' Club. Because here you had this board, and the board was supporting the club and making it possible for you to have this beautiful environment and the cultural advantages. Did you ever feel patronized?

Bonn: I never thought of the structure of the club, it was just a great place to go to and we always went because it was there. It never dawned on me to analyze whether or not I should go. The thing was I should go, yes, because it was so great but beyond that, I never thought; and I think anybody that felt patronized was being very foolish. I can't understand how they'd think that way.

Selix: Well, it never occurred to me until we met one of the previous members and asked her if she would be interviewed for the project. She refused an interview, but she did invite us to come to her apartment for a visit, and we reminisced with her for an afternoon. During the course of the conversation, why, she explained to us that her father used to feel very resistant and somewhat antagonistic about the Girls' Club because he felt that they were being patronized and were being looked down upon as poor people, and poor children who had to be kept off the streets, and poor children who were culturally deprived in their own home lives. This was quite a surprise to you and to me when this subject came up. The surprising part of it was that this member, who had that feeling, both she and her two sisters and her mother had been very active at club, and they loved the club, and they devoted a great deal of time to it. She was a very, very beautiful child—[pause in tape].

Let's talk some more about the background of your family, Adrienne. Tell us the story of your mother's father.

Bonn: My mother's father was born in France, and when he was a young man, his father put his four sons in a monastery to become priests.

Selix: There was some connection with Napoleon and your grandfather?

Bonn: I don't know if the timing is right, but the way I have it he was in disfavor with one of the Napoleons; of course, it had to be the last Napoleon. He was exiled from France, so he put the four boys in a monastery and he left France; where he went to, I don't know. The four boys were very unhappy in the monastery, so they ran away and they came to—

Selix: They were supposedly going to become priests, weren't they?

Bonn: I would imagine so or either that it was a boarding school, I don't know. I like to think the fact that they were going to become priests. They ran away from the monastery and came to California, and I think they settled in Sonoma. And one of the brothers married a half-breed Indian, one of the brothers lived with a full-blooded Indian and married her just a few days before he died, my grandfather married my grandmother, who was a German, and one boy went back to France. Now we've completely lost track of—

Selix: Now, what name would that be, Robin?

Bonn: Yes. There was, I think, more names after Robin, but Robin was the family name, or the name they used.

Selix: And your grandfather came to San Francisco from Sonoma.

- Bonn: Yes.
- Selix: Do you know what year that was?
- Bonn: No, I don't. I don't know why everybody went to Sonoma instead of San Francisco in those days.
- Selix: Well, maybe Sonoma was the capital then; you know, at one time Sonoma was the capital.
- Bonn: Yes, because Vallejo was around, it wasn't a state then.
- Selix: No. What was your grandfather's occupation? Now, this is your mother's father.
- Bonn: He had a French liquor store on Fourth Street.
- Selix: Fourth and Mission?
- Bonn: No, no, further down, Fourth and Brannan. And the family lived upstairs from the liquor store. They always had—you know, all the foods were in barrels. They never bought a small can of anything, it was always a barrel full of everything, like a barrel of anchovies and barrels of port wine. Every time he ran out of port wine, he blamed my mother. He says, "What's happened to my port wine? Have you been drinking it, Stella?" Because my mother couldn't stand wine, so she wasn't the culprit. It was certainly a way of life. Whether there was a saloon connected with it or not, I don't know. I've always thought of it being bottle goods. Maybe they had a tasting room, which could have been a saloon, I don't know.
- Selix: What other occupation did your grandfather have?
- Bonn: He was also a veterinarian. How he became that, I don't know, maybe just practice. But he used to take care of all the horses for the San Francisco Fire Department, and they used to call him "Doc Robins."
- Selix: Was that still while they lived around Fourth and Brannan?
- Bonn: Yes. Now, I don't know when my grandfather died. They moved from Fourth and Brannan to the Mission district, and at that time, it was country. The air was so pure that my mother and her sister would fall asleep in the afternoon from the fresh air, and they'd have to take turns taking naps; they just couldn't stay awake because of this beautiful, fresh air.
- Selix: Didn't some of the relatives, they used to come visit them and say, "Why did you move so far out in the country?" And this was at, what, Twentieth and Capp Street?
- Bonn: It was on Capp, which is between Mission and originally Howard, now South Van Ness, and between Nineteenth and Twentieth. There was a lovely park up there of warm weather, which goes from about Fifteenth to Twenty-third Street and from about

Shotwell to Guerrero. There's always nice weather there; if there's any nice weather, it's right in that pocket.

Selix: Your grandfather had built the place at 440 Capp Street. He had had that built, hadn't he?

Bonn: I'm not so sure. My grandfather really didn't want to get involved in anything. My grandmother was the one that pursued buying real estate. We had a piece of property on Church Street, which she later sold, and she was the one that, I think, insisted on buying the piece at Capp Street; so it was her doing, not my grandfather's. And I don't really know when he died. I should—

[Tape 18-1, Side B]

Bonn: I don't really know when he died, I should know that.

Selix: Your mother, and your father, and the children lived with your grandmother in your grandmother's home on Capp Street.

Bonn: Yes, that's right.

Selix: And your grandmother did all the cooking and took care of the house.

Bonn: Yes, it was her kitchen.

Selix: And what did your mother do before your father died?

Bonn: I don't know. She raised us, she took care of us, I don't really know. She baked, I think—no, I don't think she baked; I don't know what she did. In those days, you didn't really have to do something.

Selix: Do you remember anything about your grandmother's personality or strength of character? She was a very strong person, wasn't she?

Bonn: Yes, she was a very brilliant woman. I remember before she left Germany, her teacher—she went as far as she could go in school, and her teacher said that she should go to college but she can't because she's a girl; if she were a boy, she would have gone to college, you see. I don't know what part of Germany she came from; I guess some small little town.

Selix: You don't know the background of her parents in Germany?

Bonn: No.

Selix: What they did or what their career was?

Bonn: No, I don't. Wait a minute, yes, I think her father was a mosaic worker.

- Selix: What else do you remember about her besides her brilliance?
- Bonn: She was an avid reader. We had many books around the house, and, of course, she knew them all, and then I would go to the library; I would skate to the library at Twenty-second and Bartlett every time we needed a book. She didn't care what book I brought. I would just skate up there with a pickle that I bought at [Grade's Grocery Store?] for a nickel. I'd take off my skates, rush in, turn in the book, go to any shelf, pick a book, and take it back to my grandmother and she would read the next book; and that's the way it went.
- Selix: In reality, your mother really had a very sheltered life; then when your father died, why, she had to go out into the business world. She was a strong woman to have been able to do that, to just step out into the business world after having been so sheltered.
- Bonn: Well, it was a different world in those days, in the business world. It wasn't really a business world, she was just a sales lady. You just went into the store and they showed you where the stock was; and when a customer came in, you said, "How do you do? Can I help you?" You would try to find what they wanted on the shelves, and then you would write out the sales tag, and give it to somebody to ring up, and that was it, you see.
- Selix: Your mother's name was [Estella Robin?] Bonn, but she was known under the name of Stella.
- Bonn: And some call her Ester, Ester or Stella.
- Selix: She was a very beautiful woman.
- Bonn: Yes, I like to think so.
- Selix: She was. She was very active at the Girls' Club. She was president of the Mothers' Club for how many years?
- Bonn: Quite a few years, not quite as long as your mother was treasurer. [laughs]
- Selix: I remember you telling me that she would go to club—they would have the club meeting in the morning or was it in the afternoon?
- Bonn: I think it was in the morning because they would have something to eat at lunch.
- Selix: They'd have the club meeting in the morning and then after they would have their refreshments. The ladies would go home and they'd all be on the phone all afternoon talking to one another about the events that had taken place at the club; so their lives really revolved around the club activities.
- Bonn: And of course, their children were involved in the same activities in the same club, and their children's children, their children's husbands; it was everybody know everybody, and it was just a feeling that you'll never get again.

- Selix: Is there anything else you remember the family talking about of early San Francisco?
- Bonn: I think I was too young to pay much attention. One thing I remember was my mother said that she was so glad when they paved the street because it was so dusty in San Francisco. The wind would always blow the dust from the unpaved streets, and of course, they had the long skirts and it was muddy; it was a great thing when the streets were paved. When they lived at Fourth and Brannan, they would walk on Sundays up to Market Street and that was their pleasure, and then they would walk home again. Of course, when they went to Market Street, if there was legitimate theater, they would go and they saw everything; life was very good at that time.
- Selix: And they went to concerts and—
- Bonn: Oh, yes, yes.
- Selix: Well, you really had a good cultural background aside from the Girls' Club; I would say you had culture in your home.
- Bonn: Oh, yes, yes.
- Selix: Oh, incidentally, today is March 17, 1974, and March 17 was the date of Eva Wolfsohn's birth. She always celebrated her birthday on St. Patrick's Day, and it was always a great thing at the Girls' Club.
- Bonn: That's right.
- Selix: And she died in November of 1934.
- Bonn: Yes.
- Selix: We were both active in the club well up beyond 19—in fact, I was on the board of directors in 1957. That was my last contact with the club was as a member of the board after it had become Mission Neighborhood Center and had gone through that reorganization. So we had a long history in the club.
- Bonn: Well, yes.
- Selix: How did the club influence your adult career? You wanted to be an architect.
- Bonn: Yes, I really wanted to be an architect and Eva was against it. Now, usually Eva was for everything the kids wanted to do, but Eva was against my being an architect. Just to prove the point, she took me downtown and we went to see Mr. Applegarth.
- Selix: Applegarth or Appleton?
- Bonn: It wasn't the one we interviewed, it was the other one, Applegarth. We knocked on his door, and Eva introduced me and said that I wanted to be an architect and what did he think of it. She said, "Please tell Adrienne she's going to have to spend six months just on plumbing, and I don't think it's worth it." So, for some reason or other—well,

financially it was impossible for me to go to college anyway because the Depression was just about coming along when I finished high school, so everything worked out for the best. So, I went to work and I just hated office work. I had no intention of doing office work but you had to; the Depression was here. So, at night I started going to art school.

Selix: How did you happen to go to art school? Where did you get the funds for the tuition?

Bonn: I went to art school because my sister, Helen, had gone to art school, and she had had a wonderful time at art school. I thought, "Well, if Helen can go to art school, I can go to art school." I don't know if I went to art school first and then Eva got a scholarship for me, or if the scholarship came first and then I went to art school. But in any event, I went to art school and I went there for seven years at night; in the meantime, I was working in an office. Art has always been my pleasure.

Selix: You were working for a large insurance company, and eventually you became their design consultant, their staff decorator.

Bonn: Yes.

Selix: And took care of all the designing of the offices in the large building that they occupied in San Francisco.

Bonn: Yes.

Selix: And that career lasted until you retired.

Bonn: That's right.

Selix: Then you have also done outside decorating.

Bonn: That's right.

Selix: Of course, you had opportunities at the Girls' Club to pursue arts and crafts, because they had those classes. In grade school or high school, did you do any artwork?

Bonn: I did architectural drafting in high school, that's why I wanted to be an architect; I enjoyed it so much, just loved it, and I thought I could do it. As a matter of fact when I finished high school, Mr. Drew, who was principal of Mission High, gave me a letter of introduction to Julia Morgan, who was the architect for Mr. Hearst, and she was the one that did San Simeon. I never did go with my letter to her office. If I had, maybe I would have helped her with San Simeon, who knows? Architecture has always been an interest, and it worked out fine in the long end because I did need some of it in interior designing.

Selix: Well, I know that your architectural background has been a very good thing in managing and developing the property that we have on Green Street.

Bonn: Oh, yes [laughs].

Selix: And all the major remodeling jobs that have been done.

Bonn: Well, I could have been involved in the interior designing as well. Actually I never studied interior designing formally; it was everything I had ever studied coming together, and reading books, and exposing myself to people who knew interior designing, that it all worked out. The Girls' Club building was so beautiful that it really developed my taste in interior designing.

Selix: Now that we have covered the experiences of Adrienne Bonn, Leah Selix will now discuss her family and background. My grandfather was born in the section of Poland that changed hands between Russia and Germany over the years. Sometimes it was under Russian influence and sometimes it was under German influence. He was born in 1838. He had a very complicated name; Zelik, Z-E-L-I-K, was his first name and his last name was very Polish, like Bezirofski or some very complicated name. So, when he came to this country and he reached the immigration office, they asked him his name and he told them his name. They said, "Oh, well, that's too complicated, your name is Selix." That's how the family name of Selix was developed; it's purely a fictitious name. I understand that some of his brothers—one brother came through immigration and his name became Gold, and that family settled in New York. Another brother of my grandfather came through immigration and he ended up with another name. Now, we've heard of this happening with Chinese people, but we never realized that it happened with European people. My grandmother was born in Poland in 1848.

Bonn: Which grandmother?

Selix: This is my father's mother. Her name was India Leah Bozorouhski; that was her maiden name. When I knew her as a child, she went by the name of Lena. She died in San Francisco in 1934. I think we can trace the migration of the Selix family by giving the birthplaces of the children. There were eight children who survived; there were three who died in infancy. Anne Selix, who became Baron and then Lesser, was born in 1872 in Lumsa, Poland. My father, Joseph Selix, was born in 1875 in Paris, France. My aunt, Katie Selix, who became Brounstein, was born in 1877 in Paris. My uncle, Isadore Selix, was born in 1882 in Leadville, Colorado. My uncle, Harry Selix, was born in 1883 in New York. My aunt, Sarah Selix, who became Skoll, was born in 1886 in Aspen, Colorado. My aunt, Pauline, who was known as Polly Selix, who became Polly Wood, was born in 1890 in Aspen, Colorado. My uncle, Manuel, known as Manny Selix, was born in 1892 in Aspen. So, that sort of traces the migration of the family and they—

Bonn: They sort of went back and forth, didn't they?

Selix: Then they finally landed in San Francisco, and they were in San Francisco from a very early period. My uncle, Isador Selix, is the same Selix—he was known as Ed Selix—he was the Selix who started the formal wear firm of Selix Tuxedos, and that company is still being operated by his two sons. They were one of the original companies here who had a rental service for formal dress wear. Well, in fact, really, none of the Selix men were good businessmen, and the ones who made it, made it because they had wives—

Bonn: Made it financially.

Selix: Who made it financially, because they married women who had great business acumen. And in the case of Ed Selix, the tuxedo firm, his wife was a very brilliant businesswoman. My aunt, Sarah Selix, was married to Louie Skoll, who had a tuxedo place at Bush and Kearny for many, many years.

My father died at the age of eighty-four. He was a very improvident man. He never had accumulated any material means, but he had—all of the Selixs had a certain air about them. My father was always immaculate in his appearance and was quite dapper looking; as he grew older, he took to wearing a French beret. He used to go downtown and then he took to using a cane; he said that it helped him to get a seat on the streetcars [laughs].

Bonn: Everybody loved your father.

Selix: I know, he was very much loved and everybody called him “Pop.”

Bonn: He was a character.

Selix: He really was, he was quite a personality.

Bonn: I can't say that we always appreciated him but everybody else did.

Selix: Yes. But growing up with that kind of a father was rather difficult, because he didn't understand the necessity of providing for a family. And it was just fortunate that my mother was a hard worker; and in her early days, she had learned bookkeeping. So through the years, she was often able to get work as a bookkeeper, keeping the books for a merchant on Mission Street, and keeping books for a delicatessen store, and things like that, that added to the family income. If it hadn't been for my mother's business intelligence, why, we never would have stayed in the music business as long as we did.

Bonn: You'd go broke so many times.

Selix: Yes. My mother was born in Albany, New York, in August of 1873. Her background was French; both her mother and father were French. And her father retired—he was a French pastry chef, and he used to travel from one famous eastern resort to the other in his work. I remember my mother telling us about when he worked at Marblehead, and all through my early days I heard the name Marblehead; when I reached the age when I was traveling, we went to Marblehead to see what it was like. That was in Massachusetts, wasn't it?

Bonn: Yes, I think so.

Selix: My mother died in 1971.

Bonn: One week short of age ninety-nine.

Selix: She was not an aggressive person and she was very quiet, but she always got along with everyone; she never stood up to anyone or talked back to anyone.

- Bonn: Well, that person can get along with everyone.
- Selix: Yes. She was active in the Girls' Club after we all started to work, and after we gave up the music business, she became active in the Girls' Club, in the Mothers' group. Then when she went into the Grandmothers' Club, she became the treasurer. I can't remember how many years she was the treasurer, but I know that she was over eighty-five before she stopped that job. And whenever I'd go to her house to visit her, she would say, "Now, let me show you where I keep the money that belongs to the Club" [laughs].
- Bonn: Easily twenty years.
- Selix: Yes, easily, easily twenty years that she was treasurer. Of course, that's always a job that no one else wants.
- Bonn: Well, Georgie didn't want it either.
- Selix: No, no, but she handled it very well. Her family lived in New York. One of her brothers became a municipal judge in New York, the other brother died early. She had three sisters, one of whom died at a very early age. When Mother was in her thirties, she had developed some health problem and the doctor told her to leave New York and go west, and her first stopping off place was Pike's Peak, Colorado. She worked there for a while, and then she heard about the gold strike in Goldfield, Nevada, so she traveled to Goldfield and was working in a stockbrokerage office there. My father had come to Goldfield, I guess, with the idea of striking rich, and they met and were married there in 1909.
- Bonn: Was there a stockbrokerage out there?
- Selix: Oh, yes, there was a stockbrokerage house that sold the mining shares, shares in the mines. She also worked in a newspaper office there. When they first went to Goldfield, there were no houses, there were no buildings, and they lived in tents. Mother would tell us of how cold it was sleeping in those tents.
- Bonn: The only thing that kept them warm was a pint of whisky, wasn't it?
- Selix: Yes, yes, they didn't have any heat. Then my father went into the grocery business and had the grocery store in Goldfield. He carried luxury groceries, because money was flowing very freely in Goldfield at that time. We have a collection of pictures showing the donkeys—is that what they call them, donkeys or mules?
- Bonn: Mules, I think.
- Selix: The mules that they used to ride in Goldfield, which were the beasts of burden, and they used horses. They had to bring the water in, in a wagon, for the population. My mother and father stayed in Goldfield until the mines ran out, and it was then that my mother made her trip to New York, and the story of that is told in the earlier tape.

There are other details about my mother's background that I had unintentionally skipped through. Her mother was born in French Canada and her father was born in Paris, France. Her father's name was Le Rolle, and my mother's name was Georgette Le Rolle. Her father retired from his work as a pastry chef at the age of fifty, and said that he didn't expect to work beyond that age, that he expected his children to support him; he sat in a rocking chair by the fire reading all day. I do remember one of the books that mother mentioned that he read over and over again, it was Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. So mother had to go out—her brother and all the children in the family had to go out at an early age and support the family. Her first job was in a necktie factory and she worked as an order clerk.

Bonn: This was in New York?

Selix: This was in New York, yes. The bookkeeper left the company and my mother didn't know anything about bookkeeping, but she didn't say anything and she asked for the job because it paid better than being an order clerk. So, she went to a bookkeeping teacher, and every night she would go for a lesson and learn just enough so that she could do the next day's work, and she bluffed her way through that until she became a very good bookkeeper. That was her occupation during the years when she was married and helping to take care of the family.

We've strayed far afield from talking about the Girls' Club but now to get back to it, I have found some more notes. We always wondered how the club first got started and who supported it until the board was formed. Rachel Wolfsohn started the club in 1897, and Rachel and Eva worked as tutors to support the club until 1900. 1900 was the time when the board—well, they called them the managers in those days—the managers came and began to support the club with their funds. From 1900 to 1942, the Girls' Club—the Girls' Club was incorporated in 1910 as a nonprofit agency, so I guess up until 1910 it just operated on—maybe in those days, they didn't have that income tax proviso, that if you act as a nonprofit agency, why, it's a charitable deduction. Income tax laws were very different in that period. So, it was incorporated in 1910 as a nonprofit agency, and from 1900 to 1942, it was known as the Girls' Club. From 1942 to 1958, it was known as the Mission Community Center, and from 1958 up until the present date, it's known as Mission Neighborhood Centers, Incorporated. Now, this is 1974, so from 1897 to 1974, it has a history of seventy-seven years now of continuous operation. Although it's not the same kind of an organization that it was when it was started, it certainly is filling a need in the Mission District, perhaps even in a more practical way than it did in the very beginning.

All fees at the club were very nominal. There were extra charges to admissions to whist games, theatrical productions, musical presentations, and senior dinners, and so on. But the club was financially supported by those generous members of the board until they finally withdrew personal support and gave through the Community Chest, and that was a time at which the club became a Community Chest agency. When the Club first started great emphasis was placed on music, and by the time they were established in the new building at 362 Capp Street, they were giving individual lessons on most musical instruments. [Hother Wismer?] was director of the orchestra, which contained boys as well as girls. [Hother?] was a member of the San Francisco Symphony. One of [Hother's?] private pupils, Gwendolyn Powers, who later became the wife of George

Adrian Applegarth, architect, taught ukulele. Lillian Devendorf, who became Mrs. Edward Hohfeld—her husband was an attorney—taught violin. Lillian Devendorf's father was the founder of Carmel, California, and there is a statue of him in the Carmel Park. The musical activities in the club building at 362 Capp Street were such that they were absorbing too much of the space needed for other arts, and some of the board members founded the Community Music School [Center, not School] at 544 Capp Street, which is still operating. That was many years ago that the Community Music School evolved from the Girls' Club, but all of that whole activity started at the Girls' Club.

The observation of Christmas at the Girls' Club remains as a fond memory. Mrs. Milton Blanchard directed a group of talented singers. Year after year they sang the same songs that became a tradition for all club members: "Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly," "Silent Night," "Wassail Song," "Good King Wenceslaus," "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen." The singing always ended with "Ring Out, Wild Bells," and I guess we can still hear Bobby Sheldon Olsen singing that. The rooms of the club were decked with boughs of pine, there were roaring wood fires in the great fireplaces, there was a tall tree beautifully decorated, there were gifts for those who had contributed time and talent during the year.

[Tape 18-2, Side A]

Selix: There were gifts for those who had contributed time and talent during the year. There was always a Santa Claus, played by Queen Stewart, for many years, and the role taken over by Rose Goldblatt Stiller at a later date.

During the years of Eva Wolfsohn's period the Men's Club had been started. Mark Wolfsohn acted as host to the Men's Club and was a great help to Eva during the entire period of her regime. There was a short period when Margaret Hall was acting director of the Girls' Club; and after the devastating fire of 1948, she and Mark Wolfsohn motivated prominent people in the community to form a new board. Joe Thompson, brother of Kathleen Norris, was to be president of that board for many years. [Judge Twain Michaelson?] and many other prominent men were on and off the board. Several members of the board were women who had gone to club since childhood and they continued active as long as they were able. One of them was Rose Stiller. She was on the board and was very active, and then her son, who was an attorney, came on the board. That's [Norman Stiller?], he's an immigration attorney in San Francisco.

Bonn: Is he still on the board?

Selix: Last time I talked to him he was, he was still on that board, and he was on the board when I left in 1957, so he has a long history on the board. Margaret Hall died in 1967 at the age of ninety. Mark Wolfsohn had died at the age of seventy. Margaret Hall, when she was acting director, her salary was paid by funds that were obtained through the sale of Wonderhill. Because there was a period when the Club—I believe it was after the fire—had a difficult time getting financial support from the Community Chest until they were able to rebuild according to codes and do quite a bit of work on the building. And Mark and Margaret saw it through that very trying period until it was re-established with the Community Chest again.

Bonn: Did they get insurance on that fire?

Selix: They had some insurance, but they didn't have enough to cover all the repairs that had to be done, because that was a very devastating fire.

Bonn: Because the fire is vividly covered in Marion Cain's report.

Selix: Yes.

Letter from Adrienne Bonn to Regional Oral History Office Interviewer, Esther Ehrlich

Sept 13, 2003

Dear Esther;;;

Thursday we went to the Girls club to do a sketch....WELL I was so surprised... The building of course is still there, but stair ways have been changed for the use of handicapped. We entered the front door, and there was a group of women sitting, standing, waiting. Asked if one woman was the leader, and of course they do not speak English. I kept speaking the only language I know, and they kept to theirs. Everyone was very pleasant. I just kept looking around and talking to JoJo who knows some spanish, some Chinese if in the right dialect, some philopeno, but alas we could not communicate. So with everyone grinning, I just kept on talking (I guess to JOJO) The rooms seemed much smaller, but then I am fatter, All the nice stuff like the plantings and the friezes over the mantel pieces, and the lovely flowers which we always had, were not there.

Soon a tall, not bad looking dark skinned man shows up and introduces him self. Santiago E Ruiz, executive Director, of lthe Mission Neighborhood Centers, Inc. As a matter of fact, it says Mission Neighborhood Centers over the front metal gate. He was very interested, and they viewed me as a complete curiosity. I even gave one worker the chills.Anyhow, I said he would have a copy (am I out of line) Is this possible? Can I order extra coplies? Anyway, every room was overflowing with bodies, some small, some not so small. Eva would be delighted to see the activity as was I. Everytime you opened a door, It was like a pop-up,,,people came forth.- The gym is no longer a gym but small cubicles holding little people....

There is a photograph, nicely mounted over the fireplace in the Garden Room? Of Rae and of Eva. So nice to see!!!!

Of course it is well maintained but it lacks the elegance of the original. I took lots of pictures, one right after the other so I could do many sketches only to find out I did not have film in the camera...I still feel foolish about that.

Sam, which is Santiago's working name, has his office in Eva's bedroom on the second floor overlooking the garden. Which is no longer there. He has seen as have others, "sightings' of a woman in white roaming around, and the scent of gardenias. One caretaker quit (or moved out) because of these sightings. Sometimes Eva uses the rocking chair. I guess Eva is still active,,, The current budget is well over 1 million

I have turned the house inside out looking for my pictures of the Girls Club and Wonderhill, and I hate to give up but maybe I had better. If I do find them we can have book 2.. (I can't think in this heat, but then I cann't think when it isn't hot either)

The tape which I am sending confirms the dates and board members and Could you return it when you have finished with it because we have other material on there....



TABLE OF CONTENTS—RAY ANN IVERSEN DEMIRIS

INTERVIEW WITH RAY ANN IVERSEN DEMIRIS

Date of interview: April 17, 1973

[Tape 7, Side A] 519

Grandmother's and mother's membership in the Girls' Club—Artists Stackpole and Putnam—Reminiscences passed down about Rachel Wolfsohn—Girls' Club Christmas journal published in 1908—Christmas at the Girls' Club—Romance between Mark Wolfsohn and Margaret Hall; members of the Wolfsohn family—Wonderhill—Eva Wolfsohn's dogs—Activities at the Girls' Club—More on Wonderhill—The Girls' Club building—Father Peter Iversen—Bridge games with Gussie and Eva Wolfsohn—Whisk games at the Girls' Club—Influence of Girls' Club and Wolfsohn family—Gussie Wolfsohn.

[Tape 7, Side B] 534

More on Gussie Wolfsohn—Childhood interests—Marriage at age forty-three, career, father's work, family background—On the power of reminiscing.

INTERVIEW WITH RAY ANN IVERSEN DEMIRIS

[Date of interview: April 17, 1973]

[Tape 7, Side A]

- Selix: We are going to reminisce about the Girls' Club as we were all members of that club in San Francisco. When we entered Ray's home we were immediately aware of the fact that it has very much the same feeling that the 362 Capp Street building of the Girls' Club had, in that it is simple and has nice open spaces, nicely decorated, lovely wood pieces, lovely floors. We remarked on this to Ray and found that her home has many things in it that belonged to Rachel Wolfsohn and Eva Wolfsohn and Gussie Wolfsohn, that were originally in the Girls' Club building. As a matter of fact, Ray—were you named Ray or Rachel?
- Demiris: Ray.
- Selix: Ray was named for Rachel Wolfsohn. Can you tell us anything about your grandmother, who was a member of the Girls' Club?
- Demiris: Well, she joined the club after the girls had become members and they brought their mothers in—probably that happened to you too, Adrienne?
- Bonn: Yes, it had to be that way.
- Selix: Now, the girls that you refer to were the three Nordlund Sisters. There was Lula Nordlund, Edna Nordlund, and Myrtle Nordlund and your mother was Edna Nordlund.
- Demiris: Yes.
- Selix: They joined the club in the early years when it was down on Seventh Street.
- Demiris: Right, yes.
- Selix: Do you know what their activities were in the club?
- Demiris: As far as I know, just enjoying it. [laughs]
- Selix: Were they interested in drama or sewing or music?
- Demiris: Well sewing, I guess, the more domestic things, but they enjoyed many lectures and—oh, my mother took art courses. What is this Indian artist who was at Berkeley for a long time? Martinez is his name.
- Selix: Western Indian?
- Demiris: No, Mexican Indian. He taught at the club.
- Selix: Oh, did he?

- Demiris: My mother took some classes with him.
- Bonn: Xavier was his first name.
- Demiris: Xavier, that's it. And then, of course, Stackpole.
- Selix: Did he teach at the club, Ralph Stackpole?
- Demiris: I think he did. I remember my mother talking about these people. Let's see, who else, there was some other artist, too. There's Putnam that I was talking about [looking at photographs], Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Putnam.
- Selix: Were very active in the club. They were in the group of artists?
- Demiris: Yes. She was a writer, too, I think.
- Bonn: They come under the heading "Artist and Musician."
- Demiris: Yes.
- Selix: Ray, what is the date of your birth?
- Demiris: December 28, 1919.
- Selix: You were born during the period after Rachel had died, so whatever you know of Rachel is what you heard from your family.
- Demiris: That's right.
- Selix: Can you tell us any of the things you've heard about Rachel Wolfsohn?
- Demiris: Well, nothing but love. I don't know. They just poured out of my family, all of—my mother just idolized her; I think anybody that knew her did. There are so many things she's done for just everyone, I mean, just bringing a certain light—I really can't explain it, but I think that you probably—
- Selix: A spark of inspiration to anyone with whom she had contact.
- Demiris: Right. And just lovely things that she'd send people and buy for people. She just was so thoughtful of everyone. She was helpful and—I don't think anybody can put in words what she really was. She was just like a goddess.
- Selix: Well, she's been described to us as being a genius. She must have been. The Club was founded in about 1900 and now it's 1973 and we've talked to some people who knew her personally, and you can still feel this great emotion that they felt toward Rachel.
- Demiris: Well, it seemed like she had surrounded herself with such interesting people, such a varied group of people that were so interested in her it seemed like they'd do anything for her, people from all walks of life.

Selix: And they all contributed their time to the club.

Demiris: Yes, that's right. [tape interruption]

Selix: On this visit to Ray's home we have made a real find, a Girls' Club Christmas journal that was published in 1908. It contains information that we have been seeking for many months. The board of directors was at that time called the board of managers. Mrs. Jesse W. Lilienthal had been on it—these were the ones who started in 1900 at the founding of the club: [reading] "Mrs. Jesse W. Lilienthal, Mrs. Leon Sloss, Mrs. Charles J. Durbrow, Miss Aimee Steinhart. 1901: Mrs. Paolo de Viechi, 1903: Mrs. Eugene Gallois, 1903: Mrs. I. W. Hellman Jr., 1904: Mrs. Abraham Stern, 1903: Miss Alice Brooks, 1908: Mrs. Stall, 1908: Mrs. Moses Gunst," and the head worker was Rachel Wolfsohn, and the assistant head worker was Eva Wolfsohn. This book also contains a picture of the original clubhouse at 262 Seventh Street, about eight o'clock Wednesday morning, April 19, 1906, and it shows the building going up in flames. The workers and members, the artists and musicians connected with the club in 1908 and prior to that were Xavier Martinez, Arthur Putnam, Gottardo Piazzoni, Joseph Raphael, Charles P. Nielson, Maynard Dixon, Florence Manor, Mr. and Mrs. A. Fickencher, Julius R. Weber, Mrs. E. E. Young, Grace Freeman, Wallace Sabin, Martin Schulz, Mrs. Solomon, Miss Goodshaw, Mr. Ralph Stackpole."

The book that Ray has given us this afternoon contains a roster of the entire membership of the Girls' Club at the period of 1908, and it contains a total of 149 names. We know that as the years went by, the membership grew. The only other figure I can remember about membership was given some years later, maybe about 1923 or '24, when the membership was about 500, but I don't ever remember any other figure. Do you Ray?

Demiris: No, I don't.

Bonn: What groups are listed? Are there any mothers' clubs or are they just girls?

Demiris: I think the mothers are mentioned in there.

Selix: [reading] "Senior Group Evening Girls, Junior Group Afternoon Girls," there's just the two categories.

Bonn: I guess maybe the mothers' groups hadn't been formed yet.

Selix: Well, the mothers' groups hadn't been formed yet because in those days the girls gradually brought their mothers in and that was what happened in your family, in the Nordlund family. Your mothers and your aunts joined the club first and then your grandmother became a member. Did your grandmother teach a class there?

Demiris: I don't think so.

Selix: Did you say that your mother taught a class?

- Demiris: Yes, she had a little sewing—you know, they made napkins and things for Eva and embroidery like they are doing now. I think they were about nine or ten years old, not bigger girls; they were the little girls.
- Selix: Did any of your aunts have a class?
- Demiris: No, I don't think so.
- Selix: None of the others ever taught. I know that the three Nordlund sisters, though, were very active in the club, and they were very close to Rachel and Eva.
- Demiris: Yes, especially my mother.
- Bonn: When the men's group was formed, was your father in it?
- Demiris: Yes, and my uncle. Of course my other uncle—well, they were living in Marin County and, you know, it's hard, but we lived in San Francisco most of the time.
- Selix: Your mother became Mrs. Peter Iversen, and that was in 1907.
- Demiris: Yes.
- Selix: After she got married did she become a member of the Rachel Wolfsohn Mothers' Club?
- Demiris: Yes.
- Selix: Then the Men's Club was formed about 1924 and then your father became a member of the Men's Club, and he was Peter Iversen.
- Demiris: Right.
- Selix: Peter Iversen was the club member who every Christmas hung the garlands that had been bought—well, they were originally bought as greens and then formed into garlands by Girls' Club members. Then, on a Sunday before Christmas, your father would come and with a group of other people helping he was the spark—they got all these greens hung all over the building.
- Demiris: I'm sure they were directed by someone, because he wasn't very artistic, but everything looked great. [laughs]
- Bonn: Every year they were hung the same way; they were looped on the balcony.
- Demiris: And even down the stairways, I remember, you know, they had it entwined. And now, what a fire hazard; the fire department wouldn't accept anything like that.
- Bonn: It can be fire-proofed now.
- Selix: But the way that the club looked around the Christmas holidays is one of my fondest childhood memories.

- Demiris: Mine, too.
- Selix: And the way it smelled, the greens.
- Demiris: Not only the greens but the fire. I don't know what they used, oak or something; it just had a perfume like sandalwood all the time.
- Bonn: And the perfume of the oranges and the apples and the lovely red and orange bags.
- Demiris: Those shiny bags. They still have those bags. I think Nicole was probably responsible for that, and I can always remember her in her little closet in there, arranging flowers. She had marigolds all the time and hyacinths and bulbs and things.
- Bonn: Was this the room—?
- Demiris: Out by the sewing room, in the hallway.
- Selix: Yes, Margaret had her own little room there.
- Demiris: And I know she was always usually dressed in white.
- Selix: Oh, she was always dressed in white.
- Demiris: Even short sleeves all the time, it seemed; she was never cold. There she was always arranging the little flowers and—
- Selix: And she always carried a basket of flowers on her arm, and she was very reticent and very shy.
- Demiris: Her father was the one that did Golden Gate Park.
- Selix: Yes, he laid out Golden Gate Park, Hammond Hall. Did you know Margaret Hall very well?
- Demiris: She gave me a little silver napkin ring when I was born, I guess. Well, I knew her all the time.
- Selix: Did you know anything of the romance between Mark Wolfsohn and Margaret Hall?
- Demiris: Oh yes, we always had a little talk about that. It was too bad they didn't marry or whatever was going on.
- Selix: We always wonder why they didn't marry.
- Demiris: Yes, don't you? It seemed that he loved her, but maybe it was just a companionship that didn't need anything else.
- Selix: They used to spend a great deal of their leisure time together, going on hikes and walks; they did a lot of hiking in Marin County.

- Bonn: To get away from the spying eyes of the girls. [laughter]
- Demiris: Yes, all the girls. [laughter] And Mark, I know that he helped some of his brothers become doctors—not fully, but I know that he probably gave up part of his life for some of the other—as far as I heard.
- Selix: He sacrificed higher education for himself so that the younger members of the family could be educated.
- Demiris: And I think that’s why everybody wanted to take care of him, you know, he didn’t make it.
- Selix: You knew Gussie and Eva. Did you know any other members of the Wolfsohn family?
- Demiris: Well, Fred straightened my teeth. My bite was just like a bull dog and in six months he had it—In fact, I saw him about six months before he passed away; I talked to him.
- Selix: Did you meet him accidentally?
- Demiris: No, Gussie had a Persian lamb black fur coat, it was a nice coat, so Flora or somebody thought we might like it and so, “Well, okay.” So I went to pick it up at his office. He had me in his office and of course, his office was decorated in the style that we are accustomed to, you know, very artistic.
- Selix: The feeling of the Girls’ Club.
- Demiris: Yes. Probably he had decorators do it. Have you been in touch with Flora?
- Selix: Yes, we’ve been in touch with Flora Wolfsohn.
- Demiris: Their home is lovely.
- Bonn: Well, she has moved.
- Selix: She lives in an apartment building. You know, Fred died and—[Tape interruption] You were saying, Ray, that among your fondest recollections of the Girls’ Club were the times that you spent at Wonderhill. Wonderhill was a beautiful country home that was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Fleishhacker. It was located on the hill above Redwood City and above Emerald Lake, the natural Emerald Lake. We spent our vacations there.

It was originally built with a dormitory that would accommodate about, I believe, sixteen to eighteen girls. That was on the second floor and on the first floor there were living quarters for the staff. I can recall periods when we would have as many as sixty-three people there on a Sunday and we would even have maybe sixty-three girls living there, because by that time they put up platform tents and girls would be sleeping in hammocks. We really had a marvelous times at Wonderhill. Then at a later date there was a summer home built; it was called a summer house. It was a screened building so that we could have the feeling of eating outdoors, but because of all the gnats and mosquitoes we had to have it screened in. At a later date, tennis courts were added.

- Demiris: No, they were in from the beginning. [Elva Hougan?], she taught tennis.
- Bonn: And Eva often taught swimming.
- Demiris: Yes, she was my buddy; I loved her.
- Selix: She was a marvelous person. They also had chickens at Wonderhill and we could recall one evening when the chickens got out of the chicken coop and all the girls raced to chase them down the canyon to try to recover them, and it ended with maybe a half-a-dozen cases—very severe cases of poison oak.
- Bonn: I thought everyone had poison oak at that session.
- Selix: I remember Eva Wolfsohn taking care of those little children with these terrible cases of poison oak.
- Bonn: One girl came home in the back of a bus and her eyes were slits, and we put her on the bus and sent her home.
- Demiris: On the bus? I remember that. I remember Eva would take us down to some shop where they were having a sale on coffee or something and we would each go in and buy a can of coffee because there was only one allowed per customer. [laughter] That was really cute. Oh, I enjoyed every moment down there. You wonder how they got the food down there and everything.
- Selix: Well, they just brought them down in big—
- Demiris: And even there you had your napkins, everybody had their special little napkins. I know many of us did the dishes and everyone had their own jobs to do.
- Selix: Yes, everybody had their own chores. You waited on tables; you washed dishes; you dried dishes; you put dishes away.
- Bonn: And after the meal you called the cook in and you clapped and you said, “What a lovely meal that was. Thank you, Mrs. So-and-so.”
- Demiris: They had some very good people up there.
- Selix: Good cooks, good custodians.
- Bonn: And we had our own vegetable garden and we had the lovely fresh vegetables that were always good.
- Demiris: And fruit trees.
- Selix: And fresh eggs from the chickens.
- Demiris: Remember the walk down to the swimming? Everybody had to go march down the road and down the stairs.

- Bonn: And the sad part was that the other people that lived at the lake resented us; they didn't like us.
- Selix: They didn't like the idea of a summer home there for underprivileged children.
- Demiris: Well, I didn't feel underprivileged when I was there.
- Selix: I never felt underprivileged, and I never felt patronized. As long as I was active in the Girls' Club—Eva always made you feel as though you were doing her a favor. Another thing I remember about Wonderhill was that instead of sitting at a large table in a large group, the tables were small to accommodate four people, and we had lovely china, lovely silver, linen napkins. Even to this day, Adrienne and I at the table will say, "I hear flowers." If your silver touched your plate, Eva would say, "I hear flowers."
- Demiris: I don't remember that, but I know she'd stand somebody up every once in a while, all the manners you had to learn that maybe you didn't learn at home. Everything was so fine and cultured that it just can't help rubbing off.
- Selix: When Wonderhill first opened Eva had a Boston bulldog whose name was Sonny. Sonny used to walk around the dining room in between the tables during the meals and the children—there were some children who had aversions to certain kinds of vegetables and so Sonny would get all those vegetables that the children would feed him surreptitiously under the table. Sonny lived to be quite an old dog, as I remember. What are your recollections of Sonny, Ray?
- Demiris: I remember many times my mother used to go into "the bedroom"—that was Eva's sanctorum, I guess. She would be talking to my mother and then I'd have to be very quiet, but a couple times I was allowed to hold the dog. A child can't just sit there holding a dog, you've got to pet it or do something so it wouldn't take a bite. I remember it had watery eyes an awful lot.
- Selix: And he was a snappy little dog.
- Demiris: Yes, a very snappy little dog.
- Selix: Then after Sonny died, Eva Wolfsohn very shortly—
- Demiris: Her heart was broken with the loss of that dog.
- Selix: Yes, she was very devoted to Sonny. Then she acquired a Belgian griffin and one of the girls—I think it was at that time that that musical comedy that the Duncan sisters put on called "Topsy and Eva," and one of the girls in almost a joking way named Eva's new dog Topsy, so it would be Topsy and Eva.
- Demiris: It had blond curly hair, too.
- Selix: And then what happened to Topsy after Eva died?
- Demiris: Well, before she passed away, many times my mother had these visits with Eva, and I'd be there and I'd be playing with the dog. Eva would say, "Ray, one of these days, if

anything happens to me will you take care of my dog?" Of course, we never thought anything about it and we'd say yes. Then when Eva passed away we were willed Topsy. I think Gussie used to give us five dollars once in a while to pay for the dog's food, but my mother didn't want that because we enjoyed the dog. It was great for me to—you know, an only child.

Selix: Was that while you still lived in San Francisco?

Demiris: Yes, yes. In fact, my mother took that poor dog all the way down on the train to have it put away because it was having these heart attacks and what have you. We just didn't want to call the pound or anything so we took it to a doctor in Palo Alto, all the way down to Palo Alto, where we had to have it put to sleep.

Selix: How many years did Topsy live after you took her?

Demiris: I think about six years.

Selix: When you lived in San Francisco you lived on Church Street and you and your mother and father would walk from Church Street down to the club at Capp Street.

Demiris: Yes, because it was all down hill, Twenty-third Street.

Bonn: How did you get home then?

Demiris: We'd take the eleven streetcar, I think it was.

Bonn: Went up Twenty-second to Twenty-fourth.

Demiris: It went up Twenty-fourth, yes.

Selix: After you moved down to the peninsula, did your mother continue her activities at Club? Where did you move, to San Mateo?

Demiris: I think Eva had passed away and it was more or less over for us. We moved to Burlingame, my aunt moved to Burlingame, and Mrs. Marten's Lula moved to Menlo Park; that was quite a while before. But they usually attended the bigger luncheons and things after we had moved out.

Selix: They continued to do that?

Demiris: Yes.

Selix: As long as Eva was living.

Demiris: Yes.

Selix: Well, then they were active up until 1934 when Eva died.

Demiris: And Edith Heinrich I think they were with it through her period and then after that—

- Bonn: It kind of fell to pieces after that.
- Demiris: Didn't Eva Olsen try to keep it together, or somebody?
- Bonn: No. Eva left when—
- Selix: Well, I don't know but it was a combination of circumstances. When you went to the Girls' Club in San Francisco, what activities were you interested in?
- Demiris: I was in Miss Von Sabern. Do you remember her?
- Selix: Maria Von Sabern's dance class.
- Demiris: Yes, we had the dance class, and I was in another art class but it was later. The teacher, she lived in Burlingame, Mrs. Eastling, Hazel Eastling.
- Selix: Yes, I remember that name.
- Demiris: Well. she lived on [Eastern?] Drive and she passed away about ten years ago but I used to visit her here in Burlingame. She was a lovely person. Then we had the class—it was in the gym, up above you know, in the little balcony up there?
- Selix: Yes.
- Demiris: We had this art class there.
- Selix: Did you go to the club every week.?
- Demiris: No, not every week. I had other things—
- Selix: How old were you when you moved to the peninsula?
- Demiris: It was about 1938.
- Selix: You had a period of about nineteen years activity in the Girls' Club.
- Demiris: Yes. [Tape interruption]
- Selix: To get back to the days at Wonderhill, when you checked in, Eva Wolfsohn would immediately ask you if you had any money with you and tell you that you must give her all your money. Then if you needed any spending money, she would give it back to you as you needed it. Well, the only time that we had an occasion to use money was when we would take a hike down to Redwood City, which was about three miles away from Wonderhill, and Eva never could understand why, when we were going on the hike, we had to have money. But we would go to her and get some of our money so that when we went into town, we'd have something to spend. When we got into town we would go into the nearest delicatessen store and buy crackers and bologna and pickles, everything so that we could have a party in the dormitory that night.
- Bonn: At midnight.

- Selix: At midnight. It wasn't that we were hungry because we were very well fed, but it was just sort of the idea of getting away with something that we weren't supposed to do. We always selected the dressing room at the end of the dormitory that was immediately over Eva Wolfsohn's bedroom. As we grew older we were pretty sure that Eva knew just what those midnight escapades were and I think there was only one time, Add, that she came up and remonstrated about it. Do you remember that occasion?
- Bonn: Oh yes. The Redwood City episodes were when we were older, like in high school, but when I was smaller and everyone in that group was smaller, Eva came up and she said [makes knocking sound], "Girls, you all have to pack and go home. Everyone's got to leave. You were all naughty last night. Now you all must go home." Then she looked at me and said, "Add, no you were not naughty, you may stay, but all the others have to go home." Of course, I was bad as everyone else and I knew immediately that she was teasing us all, but it was such fun; it was such a great area to be in and to live in.
- Demiris: Do you remember the player piano that they had at Wonderhill?
- Bonn: Oh yes!
- Demiris: And oh I used to love—poor Eva must have been out of her wits with all that noise. And [Elsa Hougan?] would sing—what was it, something from the desert song? I was upstairs because I was a little younger and then I'd hear everybody downstairs. They were all singing and I used to—and here we had to be in bed and the next group was able to—
- Selix: The older group.
- Demiris: Yes, they were able to be down there and sing.
- Bonn: I have never enjoyed community singing, maybe that's why. [laughter]
- Demiris: Maybe. [laughs]
- Selix: And then on Sundays we used to—Sunday was visiting day and the mothers and fathers of the children who were staying would come and—
- Demiris: They would come and pick some up and the other ones would bring some—
- Bonn: And we had a performance.
- Selix: Sunday was a day for coming and going, some were departing and—it was just like a hotel lobby.
- Demiris: And they would cry when they were leaving.
- Bonn: Or cry when they were being left off.
- Demiris: And I remember we used to make costumes, even, for some of these plays.

- Selix: For the plays we would have on Sundays for the parents. I can remember us all being crowded into that big living room, and we'd have to sit there for hours sometimes, watching these plays, and the sun would be shining outdoors and you'd want to be out there running.
- Demiris: And the smell of the—I guess it was tarweed.
- Selix: Yes, I can remember that.
- Demiris: Whenever I drive through Redwood City—it's just Wonderhill, that's all. You remember that song we used to sing?
- Bonn: No. You don't get that smell any place else than Redwood City.
- Demiris: A lot of people are allergic to that smell, too.
- Bonn: It's a lovely fragrance.
- Demiris: I think so, too. Then down at the summerhouse, remember, there was always a big wicker tray of fruit that they'd pass around and everybody would have fresh plums or apricots. Just the way everything was done was so nice.
- Selix: I always remember the watermelon.
- Demiris: Oh yes! Oh yes, that was special!
- Selix: And the homemade ice cream. And then we frequently went for walks and hikes up into the hills.
- Demiris: Miss Hall would sort of guide you on some of those—
- Bonn: Miss Hall never came to Wonderhill.
- Demiris: No? Are you sure?
- Selix: She would come occasionally for the day, but she took care of the San Francisco club during the summer while Eva Wolfsohn was down at Wonderhill.
- Bonn: It was closed, wasn't it?
- Selix: No, I think that there were—well, there were no activities in San Francisco during the summer, but there was someone there. That was the annual renovation of the building and then when we'd go back in the fall, all the floors would be beautifully polished and all the wooden stairs would be freshly painted.
- Bonn: That building was maintained just like a private home; it was better than a private home.
- Demiris: Going down to the locker room, they were so beautifully kept, we used to sit on the top step and bump on our behinds all the way down to the bottom. [laughter] Do you remember the Stillers?

- Selix: Oh yes, what can you tell us about Rose Stiller?
- Demiris: I don't know anything about her too much but she did contact my—when her husband passed away my aunt, Mrs. Sullivan, contacted her; that was quite awhile ago. But I remember, he was so artistic, he did that other little room—what was it, a sitting room, that was by the stairway in back? The colors were sort of apricot and green.
- Selix: Who did it?
- Demiris: Mr. Stiller. He did the painting and decorating, I thought. It was something done after—don't you remember that room in the back?
- Selix: I remember the room. It was a little sitting room.
- Demiris: Yes, little sitting room, and it was sort of in these shades, sort of an apricot.
- Selix: Yes, but I don't remember Mr. Stiller being connected with any room.
- Bonn: He was a house painter.
- Demiris: Yes, but I think he painted the whole place.
- Selix: But they were divorced, weren't they? Maybe not at that time.
- Bonn: But he died.
- Demiris: Yes, he passed away.
- Bonn: Was he still married to Rose?
- Demiris: Gee, I don't know, I thought he was. I didn't know him. He was the brother of Maurice Stiller, that brought Greta Garbo out.
- Bonn: This we know; this is our claim to fame! [laughter]
- Selix: You were saying something about the fact that your father used to go to play bridge with Gussie Wolfsohn and Eva Wolfsohn. What were those occasions?
- Demiris: It wasn't only my father, my uncle, Mr. Arvid Soderman and my father, Mr. Peter Iversen, would play bridge with—both my aunt and my mother weren't too happy with bridge, but Eva and Gussie loved it and so did my uncle and my father. They used to play many times with Eva and Gussie and then after Eva passed away Gussie would invite my father, not my mother, because my mother couldn't play bridge. My father would get all dressed up to go down to the Fairmont Hotel and play with three ladies, and Gussie was the hostess. He just looked forward to those lovely evenings and now I wonder how my mother let him go with the three ladies.
- Selix: Now that you're married you don't think you could have been as—

Demiris: No, I don't think I would have. But of course, mother knew Gussie well, and she knew that she enjoyed the game and she knew that she couldn't play. A few times she would go and sit around, but I was always a care so she couldn't leave me. They really enjoyed cards.

Selix: We know that Eva Wolfsohn was a great card player and enjoyed—

Demiris: Didn't they have whisk games?

Selix: Oh yes, the Mothers' Club used to put on whisk games to raise money; they did that a couple of times a year, I think.

Demiris: I remember their whisk parties.

Selix: And wasn't it Mr. [Eirhorn?] who always used to—

Demiris: Oh, that name comes to mind. I don't know.

Selix: Mr. [Eirhorn?] used to take care of the whisk games.

Demiris: And then there was somebody named Rabbit. That name really—

Selix: Didn't Mrs. Rabbit used to wash the dishes after the dinners?

Bonn: Louise Rabbit, she had a daughter. I think they're both gone now; I know Mrs. Rabbit is.

Selix: Ray, how have you felt during your life having been named for Rachel Wolfsohn, and how do you feel that the Wolfsohn family and the Girls' Club influenced your life?

Demiris: Well, of course, through my parents they influenced us terrifically. I think each of our parents have brought this down to us, the culture that they learned from the Girls' Club. Also I remember when I was a very little girl that my mother took me to see Mrs. Wolfsohn, and I'd go to their home. I think Mrs. Wolfsohn was probably ill because I think she was in bed. My mother would bring me in and I'd be hiding behind her dress and she'd pull me out. And Mrs. Wolfsohn, she was very strict, also, she'd say, "Come here," and she'd say, "Now what is your name?" I'd say, "Ray." She'd say, "No, your full name," and I'd say, "Ray Iversen." She'd say, "No, your full name," and then I'd have to say my name was Ray Wolfsohn Iversen. Every moment that we spent with any of the Wolfsohns was really enjoyable, no matter where.

I remember shortly before Gussie went down to Carmel to a hospital, I remember visiting her and taking my husband to meet her for the first time. She was very hospitable and, of course, she loved everybody and she had a very infectious laugh. She was just happy to meet everybody's children and husbands; she was just thrilled at meeting anyone of the Girls' Club and their families. We remember when we were real little and we called them Aunt Eva and Auntie Gussie. For many years we called "Auntie Gussie" and then there came a time when Auntie Gussie told Mom, "Just have them call me Gus or Gussie," and then I guess we just got a little too old to be nieces. [laughter] We really got a kick out of that.

Gussie certainly enjoyed her several trips to Europe. I know Eva and the family took very good care of Gussie. She had excellent taste, of course. She had lovely clothes and just everything surrounding her was very lovely. She was a surgical nurse.

Selix: She had quite a career as a nurse. When she lived at the Fairmont she was the house nurse.

Demiris: In fact, I think she worked with Dr. Eloesser. Wasn't he in the Spanish Civil War?

Selix: Was it Dr. Eloesser? I always thought it was Dr. Emge.

Demiris: No, it was Dr. Eloesser. She had quite a career, actually.

Selix: But she was never very well; she was never in very good health was she?

Demiris: No, no she wasn't.

Bonn: Eva always worried about Gussie and said, "Who's going to take care of Gussie when I'm gone?"

Demiris: Same way with my family. My mother had a heart condition all her life and both my aunts worried about her all the time, and they took care of her. And I worried about her all the time, and here she is the last one, eighty-eight, still going strong. What about your folks, you said that—?

Selix: My mother was active in the Eva Wolfsohn Mothers' Club until she was about eighty-five, and in fact, she was the treasurer; she took care of all the money and kept the books. When I'd go to visit her she'd say, "Well now, let me show you this." She would show me where she kept the account books for the Girls' Club and she'd say, "If anything ever happens to me, this is where the money is, and this is where the books are." My mother died within about a week of her ninety-ninth birthday. And what about your mother, Add?

Bonn: Well, Stella fell to pieces at the age of eighty-five and then she lived to ninety-six, but she wasn't well the last eleven years.

Selix: We know that Gussie Wolfsohn, who was the surgical nurse, lived at the Fairmont for a great many years. I wish we had some idea how many years it was, but it seems to me that in all my period at the club that she was always at the Fairmont. While she was there she was the house nurse and took care of many prominent people who were guests at the hotel. And I guess you were as close to Gussie as anyone, weren't you Ray, of the younger group?

Demiris: Through my parents I used to visit Gussie. Around Christmas time we used to bring cookies or something. She always enjoyed having little cakes and cookies in her room because she didn't—I imagine Gussie lived at the Fairmont for about twenty years.

Selix: Oh, at least.

Demiris: Or twenty-five years possibly. I do remember that she lived in another area in San Francisco that I visited her in, but I can't recall—around Sutter and maybe near the Olympic Club, or somewhere in that area. Her room, like I had mentioned before, was tastefully done. She had many interesting people from the club still visiting her and she kept my folks up on everyone she had been in contact with from the club and her own family. She was very proud of her nephews and—

[Tape 7, Side B]

Demiris: I recall, the last visit I had with Gussie at the Gaylord's, I took my husband—and that was about eleven years ago—to visit her and introduce her to him, and, of course, she was very pleased. Though I did notice quite a change and she was quite forgetful and used wrong names and, you know, just a few little things that were not Gussie, because she was so astute and so clever about words, so we did notice a little change. She wanted us to have a drink, and she had wine and little cookies, and showed us all her lovely things, which my husband had never been subjected to. That's the wrong word. [laughter]

Selix: That was the last time you visited her before she moved to Monterey?

Demiris: Yes.

Selix: And then she became ill.

Demiris: I took my mother to see her a few times, and probably after I took my husband. She'd take us to lunch or when she was at the Fairmont she used to take us to dinner at the fancy dining rooms.

Selix: And then from the Gaylord's she moved to a convalescent hospital in Monterey, and she was under the care of her brother, Dr. Max Wolfsohn. How often did you visit her when she was in Monterey?

Demiris: It wasn't too often, maybe once or twice a year. How long was she there, about three years?

Selix: I think three years, yes.

Demiris: In that time, my mother wasn't too well so we didn't go too often; the ride was too long for her. Then just towards the end, then Ellen was there.

Selix: Oh, Ellen Simons was in the convalescent hospital.

Demiris: Just towards the end of Gussie's stay. [tape interruption]

Selix: Ray, you were brought up around Church Street and where did you go to grammar school?

Demiris: I went to grammar school at Frederic Burk on Buchanan Street.

Selix: Where did you go to high school?

- Demiris: I went to Girls' High and then I went to Lux.
- Selix: What were your interests when you were in school?
- Demiris: Working with my hands and drawing and art classes mostly, and sports, athletics, swimming.
- Selix: Did you have any particular ambition for a career?
- Demiris: I wanted to get married, and I waited a heck of a long time.
- Selix: How old were you when you got married?
- Demiris: Well, it was eleven years ago, so I was forty-three.
- Selix: You married at forty-three for the first time.
- Demiris: Yes.
- Bonn: Did you forget your ambition?
- Demiris: Yes, I never attained it; I missed the boat.
- Selix: Well, your father died—you were quite young when your father died, weren't you?
- Demiris: I had graduated from junior—I went to two years of junior college at Lux, continued there, and that was as far as I went in the college field. Then when my father passed away, I went to work.
- Selix: What kind of work did you do?
- Demiris: Display work. I was working at the Emporium for quite a few years and then I worked at the Lighthouse and then I worked at Healds, Grant Avenue, when they had that little store up in Grant; it wasn't there too long. Then I went to work for Sears and Roebuck, which was the best thing I ever did because I'm a stockholder now.
- Selix: Oh, that's great. You did window trimming, didn't you?
- Demiris: Yes.
- Selix: Did you enjoy that work?
- Demiris: Oh yes. In fact I go back every once in awhile when they need help, still. I enjoy just doing it now and then, but it's pretty heavy work.
- Selix: Yes, I imagine that it is hard physical work.
- Bonn: How do you get your props for the windows? How do you do it?
- Demiris: Well, we make them. We have salesmen that come and sell us a lot of the props.

- Selix: There are industries that manufacture props for display.
- Bonn: Would you design them and then tell them what you want?
- Demiris: No, they are all designed and then you choose them from photographs.
- Bonn: And then you put them together in different ways.
- Selix: You lived with your mother up until the time you were married?
- Demiris: Yes.
- Selix: What was your father's occupation?
- Demiris: He worked at PG&E; he was an electrician. He worked on the Bay Bridge and he was thrown off by cables and was saved, you know, on one of the pilings in the middle of the bridge, and received almost what we considered mortal injuries; he never became well after that. He broke his leg and it didn't heal and he was in the hospital for many, many months. Then he never actually got back to work.
- Selix: He never worked after that?
- Demiris: Yes he did, on different jobs, and then he finally became ill and had to—
- Selix: I think you said that originally he worked for the Alaska [inaudible] as a fisherman?
- Demiris: Yes.
- Selix: That must have been interesting work. Didn't he have interesting tales to tell you about it?
- Demiris: Oh yes, in fact he used to rig ships, sailing ships. When he left Norway at a very young age he was on German ships and they were all sailing ships, because I imagine—my father was quite a bit older than my mother and I imagine my father would probably be close to 100—
- Selix: If he were still living. And your mother's eighty-eight.
- Demiris: Yes. So he did live in those days, and he used to be pretty good at sketching, and he'd sketch some boats when I was young. On Sundays, he and I would go out and he'd take me, usually, to Fisherman's Wharf and we'd get shrimps, nice bay shrimps and look at the boats. I thought maybe my father never should have married, he should have been a seaman because he seemed like he always looked out to sea and sort of longed for—I guess my mother put that in my head because she thought he really belonged to a little more freedom than he had with a child and a wife.

All the members of our family, we've all been very close. My uncle, Mr. Soderman, was married to Myrtle Nordlund and they had a son, Robert, who was born and raised in San Francisco and then moved to Marin County and then Palo Alto. He went to Burlingame High and graduated and went two years, I think it was, to San Mateo

College, and was studying engineering. Then he went to Stanford and finished his schooling at Stanford and was Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Beta Pi and the Engineer's Society. Then during the war he was sent East to a company—well, he worked for the government and was sent overseas during the war, working on radar; that was when that was coming out. Then he located in Concord, Massachusetts, and he married a girl from Burlingame also, who was going to Stanford at the same time and they had three children. Now each of those children have had one child. And Robert's daughter, Nancy, lives in Carmel and the two sons, Dick lives in Vermont and Don lives in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. My aunt and uncle, the Sodermans, lived in Burlingame for many years and passed away within a week of each other.

Selix: How long ago was that?

Demiris: That was about eight years ago.

Selix: Nordlund, is that a Norwegian name?

Demiris: Yes, Nordlund is a Norwegian name, but my grandmother was Swedish and my grandfather was Norwegian; my father was Norwegian. But my mother was born in Santa Rosa, and Lulu was born in San Francisco. My aunt Myrtle was born—

Selix: Is Soderman a Scandinavian name?

Demiris: That's a Swedish name; my uncle was born in Sweden.

Selix: And how about Lula Martens; what ethnic background was Martens?

Demiris: He was German. His family had a bakery on Union Street and in fact they—well, maybe twenty-five, thirty years ago they sold the old bakery, and now it's quite the spot on Union Street, lovely stores right in there, bakery shops, little garden shops. But of course Lula's husband, Ernest Martens, was born in—he was a native son; he was born in San Francisco also.

Selix: There are San Franciscans from several generations.

Demiris: Yes. And Lula Nordlund Martens had a son, Henry Ernest Martens, and he went to Cal and then he went to Yale. He studied architecture and came back to San Francisco, and he has an architectural business in San Francisco.

Selix: Do you feel that the three Nordlund girls were greatly influenced by their experiences at the Girls' Club?

Demiris: Oh yes, there was always conversations about Eva and, of course Ray, especially Ray, and all the family, and all of the mementos that we have, gifts that they had given. They'd come to your home to dinner, and they'd bring you a bowl of fruit or something that was in a beautiful oriental bowl; all these things are really treasures. You just can't put them down in words at all, it's just too much.

Selix: Reminiscing is an emotional experience anyway and—

Bonn: [inaudible] you were in tears.

Demiris: Oh yes, I just said today, I'm really emotional anyway, as you knew over the phone. Anything like that can just well up in you, can just bring tears. Everything is so strong, and as you get older they get stronger. Things can get so strong that I guess it's just something to hang on—and I tell my husband, you know, I'm telling him all these stories. He's younger than I am, so he probably gets a little bored with ancient history.

Bonn: But it's important history.

Demiris: Yes.

Selix: Several people whom we've interviewed have made the remark that they talk so much about the Girls' Club that their husbands are really bored with the subject, and their children aren't interested because they had no connections with the—you know, the ones whose children didn't go back to the club.

Demiris: Well, I know from my mother and aunt talking about the club, even not too long ago, and still I should have listened. A lot of things you'd like to know now, and you wonder and think and you can't remember some of these things they've told you about the Club and people and many names that come up. It's very hard to remember everything. You're growing and you're enjoying you're own life and you don't care.

Bonn: It doesn't mean much.

Selix: And as people get older they liked to reminisce. They like to go back into the early days; they always think of the early days as the good old days.

Bonn: Well, it's true.

Selix: And now here we are reaching that point and going back and reminiscing about the Girls' Club and our good old days, but we often think that those years—well, our early years at the Girls' Club were really wonderful years and yet the world was in a turmoil, just as it is today.

That was the end of our discussion with Ray Ann Demiris but we want to clarify the spelling of the names that were mentioned in the interview. Ray's husband is an automobile insurance salesman for AAA Association. The Nordlund sisters were Edna Nordlund Iversen, who was born in 1885 and who married in 1907. She was the mother of Ray Ann Demiris. The name of Ray's father was Peter. Lula Nordlund Martens was born in 1890 and she died just a few months before this interview was made. Myrtle Nordlund Soderman was born in 1889 and her husband was Arvid Soderman. Peter and Arvid were very active in the Men's Club of the Girls' Club.