

Sierra Club Oral History Project

SOUTHERN SIERRANS

Dorothy Leavitt Pepper	High Trip High Jinks
Richard Searle	Grassroots Sierra Club Leader
J. Gordon Chelew	Reflections of an Angeles Chapter Member, 1921-1975
E. Stanley Jones	Sierra Club Officer and Angeles Chapter Leader, 1931-1975
Marion Jones	Reminiscences of the Southern California Sierra Club, 1927- 1975

Preface by Philip S. Bernays
Introduction by Dr. Arthur A. Hansen

Interviews Conducted by Students
in the Oral History Program
California State University, Fullerton

Sierra Club
History Committee

1976

PREFACE

Before giving the "once over lightly"--to use an old newsman's expression--to those five Angeles Chapter members who have been interviewed by the Sierra Club's History Committee for publication in this volume, I shall take the liberty of recording for future Angeles Chapter history the names of some tireless workers in its founding days. To name just a few at random who deserve recognition: architect Lester Moore, who donated plans and supervised the building of Muir Lodge; Charles J. Fox, Chester Versteeg, George McDill, Hiram Bailey, Carrie Tracey, Mabel McCalla, and Alice Bates. My apologies for omissions which may occur to those with memory for names! Of course, Clair Tappaan was always of material assistance as our only member on the board of directors for years.

This writer's earliest recollections of E. Stanley Jones was as head of the business department at Belmont High School in Los Angeles. Stanley, as a club director, took an active part in defending our chapter against the threat of expulsion on the charge that it was too social. For the past twenty-odd years, Stanley has served faithfully and efficiently as the chairman of the Pasadena Group, automatically elected by that active body. Stanley and Marion Jones, as a brother-sister team of chapter workers, are unique. Marion recounts the High Trips with much pleasure, while Stanley refers to conservation issues in which our chapter took action.

J. Gordon Chelew's anecdotes of club outings and local trips indicate nothing of his popularity when he often proved to be the life of the party. "Dot" Leavitt Pepper gives a lively account of the High Trip High Jinks, entertainingly. Dick Searle, standby oral history interviewer, discusses the Sierra Club Council and Dave Brower. Dick is one of the most willing, unselfish workers in the entire club.

Phil S. Bernays
Sierra Club President,
1931-1933
March, 1976

INTRODUCTION

This volume had its inception at the Oral History Association Regional Workshop held at California State University, Fullerton in January of 1975. After most of the participants had left at the completion of the workshop, Ann Lage, a member of the Sierra Club History Committee, remained to discuss some ideas that had galvanized during the conference. For some time, she explained to Gary Shumway, the workshop chairman and then director of the California State University Fullerton Oral History Program, the history committee had been obtaining interviews with persons who had significant recollections relating to the Sierra Club. Having learned at the workshop of the impressive work being done by students in the Oral History Program at CSUF, she wondered if it would be possible to develop a joint project between the University and the Sierra Club.

If approval were obtained from both institutions, the Sierra Club might furnish biographical information regarding a number of southern California Sierra Club members and funds to cover the processing of taped interviews and other expenses relating to this work. The Oral History Program would then be responsible for training interested students, conducting interviews, and completing the work necessary to convert oral reminiscences into documents ready for printing.

Professor Shumway was equally as excited as Ms. Lage about such a joint effort, and she returned to San Francisco committed to winning approval for the project. Marshall Kuhn, chairman of the Sierra Club History Committee, was immediately receptive, and within weeks the project began.

The students involved in the Sierra Club Project from the outset shared the enthusiasm for it felt by Ms. Lage and Professor Shumway. Having been provided with biographical information on a number of southern Sierrans, Virginia Bennett, Paul Clark, Terry Kirker, Frances Leysack and Cheryl Patterson selected Stanley Jones, Richard Searle, Dorothy Pepper, J. Gordon Chelew and Marion Jones as their respective interviewees. Ascer-

taining the willingness of their interviewees to participate, the students polished their interviewing techniques, steeped themselves in background research and then began the very exciting and rewarding work of guiding the reminiscences of persons who had lived so much of the history of the Sierra Club.

After all interviewing was completed, the tapes were transcribed by the CSUF Oral History Program staff. The transcripts were then edited by the interviewers, checked by Professor Shumway, and returned personally to the interviewees for amendment and/or amplification. Finally, after being returned by the interviewees, the transcripts were given a final edit by Dr. Shumway or Karen Speers, an Oral History Program staff member. These were then sent to Ms. Lage, who began the detailed work of bringing about the publication of Southern Sierrans.

The Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton is indeed proud to have had a part in bringing to light the information and perspectives contained within Southern Sierrans. For long the Sierra Club has had a well-deserved reputation as public conscience for and guardian of America's environmental heritage. If in some small measure the CSUF Oral History Program has through this collection of interviews further enhanced that reputation, the hope articulated at the time the program was created that it serve a critical, humanistic function has taken another step toward fulfillment.

Arthur A. Hansen, Director
CSUF Oral History Program



Sierra Club Oral History Project

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DOROTHY LEAVITT PEPPER

HIGH TRIP HIGH JINKS

An Interview Conducted by
Terry Kirker
California State University, Fullerton
Oral History Program

Sierra Club
History Committee

1976

SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

Dorothy Leavitt Pepper is a Sierra Club outing veteran, well remembered for her abilities to spark laughter and song around the campfire. An elementary school teacher by profession, Mrs. Pepper was born in 1905 in Chicago and raised in Los Angeles. She became a Sierra Club member in 1926 to join that year's outing to Yellowstone National Park.

From that time she was a faithful participant on yearly High Trips. Later she joined Oliver Kehrlein's base camps and still later experienced the more austere backcountry trips of the 1960s and one of the club's early international outings. Her lively and entertaining account of forty-five years of Sierra Club outings reveals a light-hearted side to the Sierra Club and includes relaxed portraits of club leaders such as Clair and Francis Tappaan, Ansel Adams, Cedric Wright, Joel Hildebrand and many others.

This interview was conducted on March 24, 1975, at Mrs. Pepper's home in Laguna Beach, California. The interviewer was Terry Kirker, a student in the Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton.

Ann Lage, Editor
Sierra Club History
Committee
April, 1976

INITIATION TO SIERRA CLUB HIGH LIFE

Childhood in Southern California

Terry Kirker: Mrs. Pepper, would you tell us something about your very early childhood, where your parents came from, and how you came to California?

Dorothy Pepper: My father and mother were both born in the state of Iowa in a little town called Waterloo on the Cedar River. They moved to Chicago, where I was born in 1905. About 1906, just after the earthquake, we came out here to California for my health. My grandparents in Waterloo cried because they thought they'd never see me again. I was such a puny child, my sister dressed me in her doll clothes.

We came out and rented a house on Lake Street, right across from where Bullock's Pasadena now stands. We were there six weeks when my father telegraphed and said, "Send the furniture; I've shoveled the last bit of snow and coal." And we never went back, except to visit. We moved to Los Angeles in 1907, and my brother was born. We lived in the same house until my mother died in 1956.

I was always glad when I went back to visit my grandparents in Waterloo. I was so grateful that we had moved to California, because as the train went through those acres and acres of corn fields, I just hated that flat country. I'm a real Westerner. Whenever I come back this way and I see the mountains I know I am coming home.

My father was very much interested in having us see all the things that were possible along the way. I

DP: remember one time we spent the summer in Waterloo and we couldn't come back here until the fall. My mother was ill so we had to wait. We came on the train through the Colorado mountains. We went to bed and about ten o'clock at night, my father came and shook us. He got my brother and me out of bed, wrapped us in our coats, and to the great amusement of the people in the observation car, he took us outside and showed us snow, and it was deep. That was the first time we'd seen snow, and we were thrilled to death. Everybody on the train laughed because they just couldn't imagine two children never having seen snow. I remember the next day, the train travelled through the mountains, and it was so beautiful with that snow coming down. The cowboys were rounding up the cattle, and they were building great fires and standing around. The stream was down beside us, and oh, it was just Western Home to me.

I loved everything to do with the out-of-doors. We went back to Iowa about every other summer to visit. One time when we came back, when I was ten years old, we stopped at the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. Coming down, my father made a detour at Watsonville, and we went over and saw the Big Trees. I had no idea there was any such thing. I remember walking up on the trunks of these great huge trees that had fallen there. We were absolutely thrilled with it.

We lived all our life in Southern California, and my father didn't know a hoe from a needle. He had no interest in the out-of-doors. My mother did; she was a great one to be out-of-doors. To her, having a picnic was just something else again. I'm sure that I inherited that love of the out-of-doors through her. I have a brother and a sister, and neither one of them would walk anywhere. They were not in the slightest bit interested, but I always have been.

I met Julie Mortimer in 1926. We went on a camping trip up in Red Rock Canyon; it was the first time I had ever slept on the ground. I took Army blankets, and I might as well have taken tissue paper; I was frozen all night long. The next morning Julie and Alice Carter were talking about the Sierra Club. Oh, my ears just pricked up, and I thought, "I don't think I'll ever be able to walk with them." They talked about wanting me to join the Sierra Club, and I thought I'd have to pass

DP: some big, long hiking test, so I didn't think that I could do it. But they persuaded me that I could, and I joined the club in 1926.

The 1926 Outing To Yellowstone

DP: I went on my first trip with them. In those days there was only one trip the Sierra Club made. Every other year they used to go out of state. The club hired a special train and they went from Los Angeles and San Francisco to Yellowstone National Park. Well, Alice Carter Tracy and Julie Mortimer Stitt and I drove up there. We stopped at Bryce and Zion, and there again my eyes just went out of my head. We picked up the club over in Yellowstone Park. We had Julie's old Dodge car. All these people had come in by train, but we had the car with us. We kept it with us for a few days.

The whole idea of the club, and the people there, were all new to me. One of the first things that attracted my attention at the campfire when we all lined up for dinner was that they all appeared with a bandanna around their heads in gypsy style. They were beautiful and in all different colors. They wore them tied around their heads and the knots hung down the back. Well, it was more than just a look, it was for the mosquitoes. The only thing we had to fight mosquitoes with was citronella or mosquito netting. So that was an eye-opener to me.

There was a great deal of talk about the Jackson Hole country and a mountain called the Grand Teton. When we had approached Yellowstone Park, we drove by Jackson Lake and Jenny Lake and saw the Tetons and Mount Moran. When we joined the club there was this great desire on the part of the climbers to climb these peaks. They were trying to get transportation down and Julie had her car, so J.O. Downing and Alice Carter, Dottie Baird, Julie Mortimer and Norman Clyde were going to climb the Grand Teton, and I went along for the ride.

We drove down, and when we got there we camped. We went to a dude ranch near there, because there was a man who was a professional guide, and they wanted to get information from him. Well, when he found out that

DP: they were not going to hire him to guide them up the mountain for money, he gave them wrong directions! They got up early in the morning to start off, and I thought, "Well, I'll walk with them a little ways." But they were really walkers and climbers, and I only went with them for about ten minutes; then I turned back.

I made a bet with this man at the camp. I bet him fifteen dollars that they would get to the top. There were five of them, and I made up my mind if they didn't do it, they each owed me three dollars! I hung around there for the two and a half or three days they were gone. I used to go over to Jenny Lake and take a bath. There wasn't a soul around there. I had plenty of time with nothing to do. And the ranchers kept saying, "They'll never make it."

Well, back they came, and they had climbed the Grand Teton. The man was very skeptical, and the son particularly, because when they got to a certain place they went down, but then they had to crawl up that place. It didn't mean anything to me because I don't climb mountains, but I know how exhausting it was.

So they went over to Jenny Lake and they were going to get Norman Clyde, and give him a bath, and see that he got cleaned up. He said he didn't have a bathing suit. The women never used bathing suits. Well, they got him in the lake, and he got cleaned up. He was a strange person and didn't have very much to say. Anyhow, they climbed the Grand Teton. Then, he decided to stay down there and wait until the other members of the club came down. So the five of us drove back in the car. By that time the club members had gotten hold of trucks for transportation, and they went down. Norman was going to lead them up the Grand Teton, and he did. He led one fellow up in overalls! Bill Horsfall wore overalls just like a milkman. They were blue and white stripes, and no outfit at all.

While Norman was waiting for the crowd to come down, he went over and climbed Mount Moran all alone. The people around there had their telescopes trained on him because the north face was right across the lake and they could watch him. He climbed it all alone and then he came down and waited.

DP: Now I should tell you about the clothing in those days. People wore sweaters and shirts, but the pants were something else again. They were the sort of thing that the men wore overseas in the First World War. They were khaki pants and they laced at the knees. Julie had some tailored so they buttoned at the knees. We wore wool socks that came up to the knees and boots or tennis shoes or some kind of gear like that. Of course, there were no tents, that was absolutely unheard of. Nobody had a tent. We just slept out with the big ponchos from your sleeping bag, the big piece that we pulled over our heads. All the time we were going through the park, I would hear the Sierra Club people say, "Oh, this is nothing. You should see the Sierra." To me Yellowstone was grandeur, it was wonderful, but it was just sort of low-lying hills.

We had a terrible time with the packers. They just picked up packers from around the place, two or three from here, one from there. I would say there must have been about two hundred people on the trip, each limited to thirty-five pounds of dunnage. The mules and horses were stung going through the brush, and the horseflies were about as big as a walnut. They lit on these horses who would kick and run through the trees. The bags were torn and the stuff fell out.

Introducing Chef Dan Tachet

DP: I was taken with the commissary because I'd never heard that word before, and the whole thing was absolutely fascinating to me. In the first place they had this cook, Dan Tachet. He cooked for the California Club in the wintertime. They paid him five hundred dollars to come on this trip, and they furnished him with a horse. He was not a cook, he was a chef -- a French chef. The first thing they did when they got into a camp was to build him a kind of platform out of rocks. Then he had this big wooden tabletop thing that had a double top, and in between were all his knives. You never saw such beautiful knives in your life. Cedric Wright took a wonderful picture of Dan's hands. He just got the hands a certain way. He had an onion cut in half, and he was cutting it just beautifully. He diced all the vegetables. I afterwards worked for the commissary.

DP: We used to make eighteen gallons of soup every night for this group and we stirred it with an ax handle which was especially made for that.

Dan's two sons went along. Eddie was about sixteen or seventeen, and he was sort of a roustabout. Albert was the one who made the coffee. He wore gloves all the time. He made the coffee and tended the coffee fires. Now, nobody ever had coffee at night except the packers. The rest of them all had tea or they made cocoa. The coffee was just awful. I can remember one night one of the packers screamed out because he got to the bottom and here was one of Albert's gloves in the bottom of the pot.

Old Dan would stand there and say, "Eddie, Eddie, get me three pounds cheese." Eddie would go over and they had a whole wheel of cheese that must have weighed -- oh, I don't know how much -- but this kid would take his knife and cut off about a three pound hunk and bring it over there for the cooking. They carried along fresh carrots and potatoes and fresh meat.

They took along a baker, and he would walk from camp to camp carrying yeast in a bag. When they got to camp then they would set it all up, let it rise, and they made all the bread and biscuits. Every night they wanted some volunteers to come down and butter the biscuits. So I went down to see what it was all about. They had three big stoves set up. They were wood burning stoves. They were made out of sheet metal and they had ovens in them. They were set far enough apart so that after the soup, or whatever, was made, it could stand in between the stoves to keep hot. Dan would make I don't know how many huge pans of these biscuits. Then we'd go over and sit down on a log and open a can of Golden State Butter and butter them, getting them all ready for dinner.

Then they would ask people to serve on the line. The line was really long, starting at each end like a cafeteria. You got your soup, walked along and got your meat, potatoes, salad, and so on and then you sat down on the ground and ate them. Then they would give "last call," and the hungry ones would go back over again. Then they would have the dessert. I used to help them a lot because it was fun being down there, and Dan, who was a real character, liked me very much.

Take-Off on "Old Tap"

DP: Toward the end of the trip they had a show. They were going to have a take-off, and they came to me and wanted to know if I would do a take-off on Old Tap. Francis Tappaan's father was called Old Tap. He and Bill Colby were the men in charge of running the whole trip. At campfire Bill Colby used to get up and give the directions about where we were to go the next day. Bill was very tall and thin, and he had most of his height in his legs, so that when he walked he took tremendous steps. They always said that he kicked off the Colby mile. He gave the directions for the next day. Then Old Tap would come out, and he always wore a bandanna and a big leather jacket. He had very, very bushy eyebrows and was rather gruff. He could be fun, but he was gruff. He would come out with the lost and found. He would hold up anything that had been turned in during the day. Then they [Tappaan and Colby] would disappear, and there would be singing.

So, they wanted me to take-off Old Tap. By this time my cigarettes were running very low. So I said, "I'll do it on one condition; that you'll furnish the cigarettes." They said they would. They wanted to get together and rehearse. I couldn't see how you could rehearse him. It just had to be spontaneous. Elsie Bell Earnshaw got awfully mad at me. She was, or felt she was, the High Priestess of the Sierra Club. She got mad at me because I wouldn't come down there and rehearse; I'd be off someplace else.

I got hold of Tap's leather jacket. He must have known that I was going to take him off. Apparently this was the thing to do every year. His son, who was along then, was about fourteen. I got a bandanna and tied it on. Then we took some of this moss that was hanging down from the trees, and I made eyebrows. I put black all over my face, so it would look like I hadn't shaved, and I came out with the lost and found stuff. Well, anyway, Tap was always sort of quick on the retreat. There was a woman there named Kate Walker and she had lost a bandanna. I really did take the stuff that had been turned in that day, so I held the bandanna up. She came to get it, and I said, "You left it in my camp last night." It was the truth! As Dot Leavitt, she had left it in my camp, but as Tap, "my camp" meant something else again!

DP: The show was a great success. Young Francis Tappaan was so pleased that he came to me and threw his arms around me, saying it was the best one. Everytime I saw him he would tell me what a success it was. Old Tap never went on another trip after that. He was made a judge by that time and he couldn't get away. Colby came on the other trips.

The 1931 High Trip

DP: That was my introduction to the Sierra Club. I didn't go again until 1931 and this time it was in the Sierra. I realized what they meant when they said the Sierra. My first view of the Sierra was from Owens Valley. Julie Mortimer and some friends and I went up in the fall and camped at the base of the Alabama Hills. In the morning she woke me up and said, "Here's your first view of Whitney." I looked up and I was never so disappointed in my life. After we had left Yellowstone, we drove back home by way of Mt. Rainier and I saw all these snow-covered mountains. That's what I thought the Sierra was going to be, and to look up and see this great big hunk of granite without a bit of snow on it but so stark and bare, I was bitterly disappointed. But when I went on my first High Trip and got into it and camped in it, then I began to realize the grandeur of it, and I just loved it.

I met a lot of people that I had met on the other trip. Then at a certain time, I missed some of them, and I saw a lot of new faces. I said, "What happened?" I hadn't realized that the trips ran for two weeks, then some people went out and a new batch came in. In my first trip everybody had stayed for the whole month, and we got awfully well-acquainted. Here they were coming in for two weeks and going out for two weeks. Well, that was the first time that I met Ansel Adams.* He came along and jumped out of a car. Here was this skinny man with a bright red shirt and a black beard who just jumped over the edge of the seat. I was so surprised, I didn't know who he was or anything about him.

* Interview with Ansel Adams, conducted by Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, in process.

DP: I had gotten acquainted with the commissary and I began to help them. I thought, "Why don't I get a job with them? I've practically done this all the time." The women who worked in the commissary got nothing, except our transportation money up there and back. But no money would have recompensed for the fun we had in working with it.

GOURMET FOOD AND CAMPFIRE ANTICS

Trail Menus

Dorothy Pepper: The food was planned in San Francisco, and it was purchased in Owens Valley, if we went in from that side. The packers would go out and cache the food around the mountains. Then when we were staying at camp for a couple of days, they would go back to the cache and move it up and bring more food in. I used to put up the packers' lunches. I would put up nineteen lunches. That means a hundred mules because each packer took five and his horse made six.

The food was fabulous. It really was. Dan would make French pastries and I would help him. He would make a marvelous pastry and he would line muffin tins with the dough. Then we had to fill that muffin tin with dried beans. He would bake them with those dried beans in there. Then the shell didn't curl up or anything. As soon as they were done, we dumped the beans out and the shell was just a perfect shape. Then he would fill it up with custard, dried fruit, or different things like that, and get them hot.

He made great caldrons of chocolate pudding. The first instant vegetables I ever saw were dried beans. A lot of the soup was what they called dynamite soup. I had never known of it before I saw it down there. Knorr's made it. It was in the shape of a stick about six inches long and about one and one-half inch around. There were dried peas and I've forgotten what else there was; it looked just like a stick of dynamite. It was powdered. They'd say we were going to have dynamite soup, not Dan's, and he would use that as a base. Oh, he was so particular. He would make us rinse out every can. If we used tomato paste, we'd have to scrape out and rinse out every single bit of it.

DP: It was fun to watch him. He made spaghetti starting with bacon grease. He would put the grease in the bottom of this huge pan and then he would put the dried spaghetti in the hot bacon grease and turn it around and around until it was just warm to the touch. Then he would add tomato paste and water and onion, which I had browned in another pan. Incidentally, he very often sent those of us in the commissary out to get the wild onions. They grew in the Sierra very profusely and we picked them. He would always say, "Don't bring me any blooming onions. I don't want any blooming onions." So we could not bring in those that had the big lavender bulb on the top. Those onions are wonderful for cooking.

Then he would put this mixture over the spaghetti and set it in the oven and it would come out without any flakes on it. He did spaghetti, rice and macaroni all in the same way -- starting it in hot grease, turning it over, adding the water to it and then putting it in the oven and never stirring it. There was no draining. The rice, spaghetti, or macaroni came out just perfectly, flaky.

For breakfast we had homemade hot cornbread with butter on it, bacon, beans that we'd soaked and cooked, and dried fruit which had been cooked overnight. In the days that we stayed in camp, we had hotcakes. That was a lot of fun. He had three great big aluminum sheets that sat on the stoves, and we stood behind there and made flapjacks. The people would stand and wait for them. Paul Payne, who was one of the great characters of the club, and who, incidentally, was one of the outstanding geologists and oil consultants in the United States, would stand up there and make these hotcakes. He would flip them over there and say, "Now, when John Muir and I were making hotcakes in New York City . . ." and he always had everybody in stitches when he was doing it.

Breakfast was a great time to get acquainted with people. Dan, the cook, had a wonderful sense of humor. He and Francis Tappaan and Paul Payne worked up this little skit. They would go to some man who had never been along before, and they would whisper to him, "Do you know how much you weigh?" The man would say yes, and then they would say, "Don't tell me. Dan and Tap have a bet on that they can guess how much you weigh. If you know the weight, we are going to have a weighing contest." Then

DP: they would get up fifteen, twenty, thirty dollars. Now, you never saw money on the trip, but out would come this money. Paul would hold the money and Dan and Francis would stand there and argue back and forth and then they'd say, "All right. Let's guess his weight." He would tell Paul how much he weighed and then he would go back over behind the commissary. Dan would start at the top and put his hands all down his body measuring him, estimating. He would say, "Well, I'm not sure. I'll have to weigh you." Then he would get a hold of the man's arm and lift him up on his back and draw him across. When he did that everybody else that was standing around would come out with a piece of board and beat him on the butt. You could hear the slaps all over camp and people would know what was going on because of this laughter going on down there. The man who was being weighed was always a good sport about it and couldn't wait until the next man came along so he could be in on it and help weigh him. There was one man who had come along for a long time. His name was Clay Gooding and he was always fussing and complaining about something. When they got him up there and beat him, he was mad. He was the only one who didn't take it in good faith, and they never forgave him.

The lunches were something else again. He gave them out the night before. There wasn't anything such as bread. We had hardtack and it was really hardtack, about four inches round. There was that or rye crisp, and salami, chocolate, cheese, and dried apricots or raisins. That was what we had, plus plenty of tea bags. Kipper snacks were one of the favorite things. We used to get the kipper snacks all out of the can, cut up the cheese, and put it over the fire and melt it. Then you would take it out and put it on your hardtack. It was awfully good.

If there was any dough left from the hotcakes in the morning, Dan would let us have it. We would take it out and go for a fish fry and then we would have hotcakes. Now a fish fry was a very, very closed-circuit thing. Some of the fishermen would invite their friends and say, "We are going to meet over at the second lake today at noon. We are going to have a fish fry." Because I was working in the commissary in 1932, they would come to me and ask me for some butter for them or some extra chocolate. We would all go over to the lake, and the fishermen would bring in their catch.

DP: We took our Sierra Club lunches and we had this fish fry. If we had pancakes, we'd do that and as they bubbled in the pan, we would cut up cheese on top and turn them over so they were really hot cheese sandwiches.

They always had soup and crackers at dinner. The food was served cafeteria style. There was also some kind of bread, either biscuits or dark bread and butter. Then there was some kind of meat, as long as we had fresh meat. The packers brought it in with us. Then as the days went on, there was some doubt about whether the meat was going to be fresh. Dan insisted upon keeping it in the water, in the stream, and I remember one day somebody said, "Dan, come and get this. It is on the march." So that night we had enchiladas. But there was some kind of protein like meat, or corned beef, or beans, and potatoes.

The only dried things they used was dried string beans. We had lots of carrots. I well remember the carrots because when we were in camp, Dan would say to me, "We're going to do vegetables." I'd ask what it was and he would say that there was a sack of carrots, and I mean it was a gunny sack full of carrots. It was my job to peel all these. I can remember I said something to Paul Payne about it and he said, "Don't you touch those vegetables. You go in there and get all the paring knives that you can get, and your ukulele." So we went over and sat down under a tree. I took out the carrots and a knife and he said, "Why don't you sing me a song?"

So I started singing something and two or three people came by and sat down and the first thing you know took their knives and they were scraping away. It was sort of like whitewashing the fence, you know. I looked up and Paul had taken a bandanna and had twisted it around over one eye and put out a tin cup. He went around begging while I was playing and neither one of us really finished a carrot. We got about fifteen or eighteen people. I can remember Ruth Currier came along. She was the most beautiful woman in the camp. She was so attractive. She sat down, took off her gloves, and went to work on the carrots. So I got them all done.

Then we always had a dessert of some kind. There was that wonderful pastry that he made. He made puff pastry, too. When we had a reunion in somebody's house after we got back from the mountains, I watched how he made

DP: it. He made it with butter and rolled it out. It was only about a quarter of an inch high and by the time it was done it was all flaky. One time he made a pastry shell and I served it and, oh, he screamed and he hollered at me to come back. I hadn't heated it and it had to be heated before it was served. He was a perfectionist on all those things. Then we had tea for dessert. Dessert was served over against a tree.

I can remember one night we camped in the rain. We had to makeshift the dinner that night. As I stood there in the open stirring the soup, I tipped my hat and about two quarts of rainwater went into the soup. We were really hard put for some dessert that night. We had come down by Marion Lake. Dan wondered what to do so he cooked up a whole batch of cornmeal. He put brown sugar and raisins in it. It was like concrete and not very popular. But one woman said to me, "That nephew of mine has had five dishes of it." I told her, "Don't let him go swimming tomorrow because he'll certainly go to the bottom." So at least somebody was pleased [laughter].

Ally Robinson was the head packer and he had packed the Sierra Club for years and years and his father had before him. He brought along some of the same packers every year, and we got to know them. He had the most beautiful string of gray mules that were matched. They'd say, "Here comes Pete Buckley with Ally's grays." Pete Buckley is still living. We hear from him. The last time we were up in the Owens Valley they said he was over working for somebody else. Those men came year after year and we knew who they were. They would help us out. I remember when I took a friend of mine out when she was so ill, on the way down we passed a lot of raw potatoes that evidently had come out of a pack that was coming in. Every time we came to one this man would get off his horse and make a little pile of these. He said we would pick them up when we came back. The traffic was so light that they were there when we came back. He had gotten a lot of clams down there and onions, and the packers had their own fire and made a great big pot of clam chowder. Then they invited a few of us to come over.

The dish washing was another thing in itself. We had aluminum plates that were not what I call foil, but were these heavy, sturdy aluminum plates. We had knives and forks and then you always had your own tin cups.

DP: They had big buckets of hot water. First they had what they called the chicky pail. We scraped all of the food that was left over, which wasn't much, in there. Then we washed the plates in hot, soapy water and rinsed them. Then we put them upside down out on big rocks to dry. When we picked them up, if they were damp we wiped them off with a dry cloth and put them in the buckets. There was no such thing as sterilization, it was hot soap suds and that was it.

We always carried our own cups with us. They gave us the cups, there was never any question of buying them. In those days the cups were inscribed with "The Sierra Club of California". I have given mine all away. They were just unlimited then, but now they are a rare item. Of course, since the club has expanded so much it is now just called the Sierra Club. It isn't called the Sierra Club of California anymore.

The Climbing Clique

DP: There were things about the club that were really undemocratic in those days. In climbing, they never put a sign up on a tree saying that there was going to be a climb up Mt. Everest or Mt. Whitney or whatever mountain it was. They got up their own party and decided whom they would ask. It would be about seven or eight people. It was very exclusive and if you weren't asked to go with that climbing group, you didn't horn in.

Norman Clyde suffered from this. He was a great climber, but he was very anti-social, and he was never invited on any of those climbs. Never. When the rest of them would go off, he would form his own little group. He might suddenly say on a Saturday morning, "Well, let's go off and climb." He would get two or three women like Alice, Julie, Dottie Baird and maybe Jay Oaks, and that was it. They would go climb some mountain, and then they would come back. The women were camping with me, and they would nearly always get back late at night and come into camp. Then they suffered from what one of the packers said was "hoof and mouth" disease. They walked all day and they talked about it all night!

They didn't use climbing ropes, there was no such thing. There wasn't a climbing rope in the place. They just

DP: had a rope to let them hold onto, but as far as tying it around their waist or rappelling or any of that stuff, there wasn't anything. I can remember in 1932, Robert Underhill, who was a friend of Francis Farquhar,* came out from the East with these climbing ropes. I can remember the first time they went up the east face of Whitney with all this equipment. Then they began to talk about carabiners and all that stuff. Before that it was just nails, so the climbing technique was just developed. It wasn't that way in the beginning.

In 1931 on my first High Trip we went down Tuolomne Canyon and Pate Valley, Virginia Canyon, Matterhorn Canyon, over Tuolomne Pass to Babcock Lake and over Vogelsang. I went for a month and stayed. We came home by way of Alger Lake. I'll never forget Alger Lake as long as I live. When we got there we were all so tired and so hot. They came in and said, "There's a dead sheep in the water." Nobody would touch the sheep. You couldn't even use the water for cooking. Some of them went way around the edge and got some.

We had to make a very early call. I remember that I had a little hideaway under an albercollis tree where there was just room enough for one. It was way up, and we were camped at nearly 12,000 feet. We had this call, when they yelled, "Everybody get up, get up, get up." The whole camp took it over, and you could hear it all over the place. That was the only sign. Everybody had gone to bed very late because it was the last night, and we had had singing and a show and we had to get up at three o'clock in the morning. We were absolutely hysterical. I have never heard so many funny remarks in my life as were made in those few hours. We got up and climbed through up to the top of the pass and then came down. I think the last day was really quite a long one. We went by Thousand Island Lake, Garnet Lake, and over the passes. It was just wonderful to me, and I began to really absorb the Sierra Club and the mountains.

I made a list of the dates. I went on 1931, 1932, 1935, 1936, 1938, and 1941 trips. Then, because of an injury, I was in the hospital and I didn't go in 1942. Then the war came and they didn't run anymore. I went on the last one. I feel that I've had the main fun of the best time.

* Interview with Francis P. Farquhar, conducted by Ray and Ann Lage, Sierra Club History Committee, 1974.

DP: In the evenings they always had entertainment around the campfire. We didn't just get together and talk. In the first place, Mr. Colby would give directions. Then Old Tap would deal with the lost and found. Then they had a program chairman, and they invited different people to put on different things. When they really ran out of stuff they would ask Norman Clyde to talk. We would sit there and he would say, "We went along this way and we went here," and people would fall asleep because he just wasn't a talker. He wasn't really a writer, although he wrote and had things published for the Automobile Club. He'd say this, "I climbed so-and-so clothed in a low growth of sage," which I was anxious to see! They always had a freshman show the last night.

Ansel Adams' Greek Trilogy

DP: Ansel Adams wrote a series of plays. I don't know whether you ever heard about them or not. Ansel wrote a trilogy in meter. They were take-offs on the Greek tragedies. In those days we had the Dean of Women from Stanford, Mary Yost, and we had Joel Hildebrand from Cal [University of California], and we had people from the Eastern colleges and from Arizona. They would be so willing to take part in these things. Ansel wrote the plays. One play starred Nathan Clark.* We called him Naked Clark. He's the brother of Lewis Clark,** who has been on the board of directors for years. Naked Clark was clothed in a G-string and a big red sort of thing. They took a tin plate and bent it for a hat. He had a sword and sandals that were laced up the side. He was the hero in the play. Ansel's wife was the pretty one, they called her Clyminextra.

Then Paul Payne appeared, and he was wrapped like the burlap. The toilets were made out of burlap, and the great joke was that you never called it "the john" or anything else except "the burlap". He was draped in burlap, and he had a roll of toilet paper on his head and a shovel in his hand. Ansel gave the prologue and he appeared in long white underwear. In those days he was thin as a rail. So he was in this long white underwear with his black beard. They found a piece of aspen

* Interview with Nathan Clark, conducted by Richard Searle, Sierra Club History Committee, in progress.

** Interview with Lewis Clark, conducted by Marshall Kuhn, Sierra Club History Committee, in progress.

DP: in a crotched position, shaped like a lyre. He came out to give the prologue, but before he got his hands up to the lyre, it began to play. That was Cedric Wright, behind the scene with his violin. The play went on in this way.

One day Cedric came to me and said, "Ansel is sick in bed, and we're going to take him his breakfast. Come on down to the commissary." We went down there and took one of these great big huge pans and decorated it. They put leaves and flowers on it and we put his breakfast on it. Then Cedric took a tent and wrapped it around his shoulders and over his head, so he looked like a pope with a mitre. Then he took a piece of skunk cabbage and held it in his hands, and we all marched along behind and had this procession. We took it over into Ansel's camp. He was simply convulsed, and we had more fun. A lot of people came around and we went on talking. Ansel picked up his pencil, and while this noise and everything was going on, he wrote the scenes for the next play. He was concentrating on this.

Cedric Wright was a violinist. He brought along his violin. I'll never forget one night out on the plateau there he stood above Merced Lake playing as the sun was going down. It was perfectly beautiful. As we turned to go back, I didn't have a flashlight and I was trying to find my way home. As I was crossing this meadow, I jumped on what I thought was a rock, but it was a bunch of grass and I went into water up to my knees. I was soaking wet so when we got back I had to dry things out.

"The Sierra Club on Parade"

DP: In those days the women were on one side of the camp, the married people in the middle and the men on the other side. It seemed to us that the men always got to camp down below the stream and they could take a bath down there. But the women were above the commissary so we couldn't bathe there because they were going to use that water to cook. As a result of that, one of the packers wrote this marvelous song, "With hobnail shoe, they came marching through, the Sierra Club on Parade."*

* See Appendix.

DP: There are four verses to it and it is a take-off on "Sweethearts on Parade". It is in the song book. So we always felt that the men got the better of it.

Cedric was always coming to the women's camp and taking pictures. Now why you should have a camp with the married people in the middle, I don't know. Nobody had a tent until much, much later. It was more fun. We didn't have the lightweight equipment that they have nowadays. Dr. Jane was one of the first women doctors on the trip. We always had a doctor with us. We had early calls and, working in the commissary, we had to get up early, before other people did. I bought a pair of big, high boots, but they were so stiff in the morning that I couldn't get into them. So I would leave them down by the stove.

One morning Jane got up and said, "I've got an infected toe." I said, "How do you know?" I can feel this lump in my groin," she said. I thought that was funny and couldn't see the connection. Later, I found out a swollen gland in the groin meant infection in the leg. So they took her out. When she went, we divided all the goodies that she had left. She had some wine and we took that, and we took some salted nuts and all her crackers. Then the next day she came back in, so we had to give it all back.

I first met canned beer in the Sierra Club. Helen LeConte couldn't go, so she stayed home, but she mailed in cans of beer. A friend of mine was taken sick, and I had to go out with her from the top of Whitney. When I came back in and brought the mail, they asked what the package was. I said I didn't know but it gurgled. Prior to that time we used to get the beer and get the alcohol from the hospital and make boiler makers. It would take your head off, you know.

Circuses and Scientists

DP: To get back to the after dinner entertainment, they had a circus. They used to do it at night until the photographers complained because they couldn't take pictures. Kitty Forester, the wife of C.E. Forester, was along one time. She arranged a circus to end them all. We never

DP: took along anything, everything was made out of what we had. They manufactured some kind of a high silk hat for the ringmaster. They took the black cloth that photographers put over their heads and made tails for the ringmaster and they fixed him up with a whip. They had a scene of statues where everybody got out their long underwear. Kitty Forester was a seal and she wound up her legs some way and kept going up over the dunnage bags and barking.

I was a tightrope walker. Being a blonde, I dyed my hair in beet juice and put it up in somebody's curlers. Then we took a washbasin, turned it upside down and fastened it on the end of my walking cane for an umbrella. I took mosquito netting and made a skirt that stuck way out. The rope was just on the ground but we walked along and balanced on it. Joe Wampler was a bearded lady. They always had a beard-growing contest, so Joe was right in it from two angles. He got this mosquito netting that was fastened on a hat, then he rouged his face and dressed himself up to look like a woman. Somebody else came as a ballet dancer. They made the costume out of skunk cabbage turned upside down.

Another thing they had was a dress-up night. Most everybody came in some kind of costume. I remember that one woman -- Miss Ivory, an ornithologist -- took a beautiful paisley dressing gown that she had, and spent hours sewing little pieces of pine all over the edge like maribou. Then she took white stockings and made them like gloves and put a wig made of steel wool on her head. She came as if she were going to the opera. We just got to know each other, and it was fascinating the costumes that turned up.

It wasn't all fun. They had serious talks. They had Vernon L. Bailey come out from the U.S. Biological Survey in Washington to go with us the whole time to study the flora and fauna.

I remember when we were going down into Pate Valley we stopped very early in the morning for a swim. It was about nine o'clock. I was in my bathing suit on a great big rock, and I looked down and there was a rattlesnake on the other edge of it. I let out a scream, and I took my cane and flipped the snake and it went swimming across the water. We went down into Pate Valley and we stayed there two nights during which time they killed eighteen rattlesnakes. People just moved camp.

DP: Dr. Bailey was very much interested in whether a rattle-snake could swim. He wouldn't take my word for it; he had to see it. They caught several alive and he threw one into the river and watched it go away. Then he held one by the back of its neck, and as it opened its mouth, he showed us its fangs and how they worked. Then we performed another experiment. At noon about thirty of us formed a huge circle in the hot sun. It was just broiling. There wasn't a thing around. He put that snake in the middle of that circle. We were ready with sticks and canes to drive it back if it came at us. Do you know that in less than three minutes that snake was not only dead, but it never moved. If you kill a snake they say its body will keep moving until sundown. That snake never moved again. Then they had to make rattle-snake stew and we wrote a parody on that. I didn't taste it. It looked like a chicken neck; it was white. Dan would have no part in it.

But I'll tell you one thing that Dan did do. He wouldn't allow anyone else to cook the fish when a fisherman brought his catch in. They didn't have a little private fire where you went to cook your fish; Dan would always cook them. I can remember that somebody came in with an especially beautiful catch of fish. He took one of the chopping boards out there and decorated it. He took Cream of Wheat, cooked it, and put it in the pastry bag, then squirted it all around the edge to make it look like mashed potatoes. Then he took ferns and put them in the middle and he put paprika along the edges. He brought out the fish as if he were coming out of Maxim's in Paris. It was a sight to behold. That was the sort of thing that he loved to do.

He was an artist. When we went from him to a man who was just an ordinary trail cook, we just groaned because Dan had been so wonderful. The reason he stopped going was because he had arthritis so badly that he couldn't go. He never would have gone for as long as he did if it hadn't been for the liquor they used to give him at night. I can remember when we were there at Tuolumne Meadows along about five o'clock, you would see the gang collect, and they would start over to the Soda Springs to get the cold soda and have their drinks.

Somebody from San Francisco sent in a couple of friends and asked Ansel Adams to keep an eye on them. They were there for about three days, and then they went

DP: out while we went on with our trip. The last mail came in, and we were all going out the next day. The packers came in to undo the camp and to take us all out, but they brought in the mail. We were all standing around in the commissary and Ansel came over and said, "Look what's here." These guests that had been in had sent I don't know how much liquor for the commissary. So, needless to say, dinner was late that night. Here were all these people in two lines waiting and waiting and waiting. The wood chopper came out with buckets of soup, one in each hand. He came out and swung those buckets around three times in the air and said, "Give the bastards soup," and he never spilled a drop of it. There were no long noses to it, and everybody just enjoyed it and thought it was a good time.

Another famous man who went along was Andy Lawson. He was one of the outstanding geologists of the United States and probably of the world. Andy Lawson got into an argument with another professor-geologist about the building safety of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Bill Colby and Other High Trippers

DP: I'd like to talk about Bill Colby because at the time that I joined the club, Bill was secretary and he was secretary for many, many years. Of course, he was Mr. Colby to all of us and always was to me. When he would get up to give the directions about the trail and so on, he would reminisce about the old days, and he told some of the things that had happened in the first of the trips. He said that if the Sierra Club wanted people to contribute money toward legislation or to expand the parks as they did in Yosemite, that you had to take people out into the mountains to show them what they were saving. It was not good enough to ask people for money, but they should be shown.

Then he would go on and talk about the first trips that they took people on. Weight was unlimited then. The people met and took trips to Yosemite. He said people came in boots and skirts and brought mattresses. He told about them trying to pack up these mules and tie the stuff on. You can imagine trying to tie on a mattress. They got one string of mules all tied on when

DP: the mules started to kick, and they got mixed up with the flume that was carrying water overhead. They got all tangled up and they kicked and the loads went all over the place. He just went on to tell funny things like that. I know I'd just lay on the ground and rock with laughter.

Edith Jordan was one of the early members and her father was the president of Stanford University. Mr. Colby told how he took a group of about eight or nine people from this regular trip on a special trip down to Hetch-Hetch because there was all that talk about whether they were going to build that dam there. Edith Jordan was one of them. When they got about an hour's way out of the camp and were sure that no one in the club would see them, then she admitted that she had a divided skirt and she exposed the division. Then the bloomers came in and the women went in those full bloomers all the time with those great big boots, too. The Sierra Club has a little hut in Yosemite. It's full of pictures of those early days.

Bill Colby was one who always wore one of these big neckerchiefs or bandannas and I remember he gave me one of his. It was a beautiful Chinese one. I was always sorry that I didn't keep it, but you can't keep everything. At the end of the trip they always had a showing of the bandannas. They took the ropes that belonged to the stock and they strung them up between trees. Then Elsie Bell Earnshaw would take over with her crew, and they would pin up those bandannas on the line. They would have a show and give prizes. The prize would consist of a can of sardines or a bar of chocolate or a can of deviled meat. There were all kinds of classifications. There was the biggest, the most beautiful, and the most worn. I remember one bandanna was so old that the pattern was all holes. It was the most beautiful thing. It got so that people brought special bandannas just for the show.

Then they had an art exhibit because Leland Curtis came along and he was an artist and would paint. Vivian Aiken was an artist from New England and anybody else that sketched came along. They put these up so they had the bandanna and the art show. It was all very refined because Dan had made cookies and they had punch. Somebody had gone off and gotten snow, so it was a real afternoon affair. That was one of the highlights of the trip.

DP: I want to give Joe Wampler credit for one thing. One of the outgrowths of the club trip was the Pennyroyal Society. I remember zig-zagging down a trail the last day out. It was never any good to hurry out to get to the roadhead because we had to wait until the stock got there with all the dunnage bags and all. So we were just moseying along, and we came down this hot dusty trail and here were Joe Wampler and Vivian Aiken feeling no pain at all, sitting there and singing at the tops of their voices. They were stopping people who were coming along in ones and twos and inviting them to join in a Pennyroyal party. The Pennyroyal was made by mixing snow with Pennyroyal and bourbon. Pennyroyal belongs to the mint family and it grows down at that level. You can smell it a mile away. These two were just passing these things out and this was the beginning of the Pennyroyal Society.

The next year, those of us who knew about it and had a bottle of bourbon invited people to come to the Pennyroyal Society. It was a great ceremony. We had them take the Pennyroyal and, with a spoon, rub it against the California part in the bottom of the cup. Then we gave them sugar and that went against the California. Then you stirred it around. Then you added the snow and you stirred and stirred until there was a white rim all around the outside of the cup. Then you added the bourbon. It was just like a mint julep, powerful and strong. If you were going to become a member of the Pennyroyal Society, then you had to promise that the next year you would bring in a bottle. That's the way it started.

It got to be a ceremony. We would initiate people by marking them with lipstick on the head or something like that. Then one of the men would wrap himself in a sheet and have them go through a whole ceremony. So, it has grown and grown and grown. Joe Wampler, who now runs trips of his own, and Vivian Aiken were the founders of the Pennyroyal Society. I know that Bill Colby would have loved that, but this was after his day.

I don't know if you are interested in other people who went along. I was just thinking that Aurelia Harwood was there. A friend of mine had saved her life. Aurelia was swimming in one of the rivers up there, and she got pulled out. Peg Tracey got a line of women to hold hands and they pulled her in. Aurelia was ever and ever so

DP: grateful, of course. In a year or two she was made president of the club. She was the dearest person. She was the only woman president we ever had. We were delighted when they built Harwood Lodge up there, because we liked Aurelia so much.

Songsters and Musicians

DP: Joel Hildebrand was fun to go along. He always sang a lot of the songs. One of the great favorites was "The Deacon". Do you know that old song? "The Deacon went down in the cellar to pray . . ." Everybody that sang it would have another verse to add. Joel Hildebrand would always add one or two verses to it.

I remember Ike Livermore was along and he was one of the handsomest young men we ever saw. He must have been six and a half or nearly seven feet tall. He was a different caliber than the packers. I didn't know who he was, nobody knew. He was just a packer, but he turned out to belong to the Livermore family. He was a college graduate, and he was trying to get the packers organized. He talked about having been over in the Vale of Kashmir. I always wanted to go there. When he got home, he sent me some material, and when I went to Kashmir I sent him some material.

The thing I remember about Ike was that he had an accordion. He and I used to sit around the campfire and whatever song I didn't know, he knew and I knew songs he didn't know, and we sang together. Sometimes we would sing for two or three hours after the regular campfire. We'd sing all the old songs. It was so much fun. You would hear these wonderful voices coming out. Not very often did I get a chance to listen, but one night I was not feeling well so I went to bed, and then I could really hear and appreciate how much fun it was. It was a great thing for making acquaintances and friends. They would all say, "Did you bring your uke along this time?" or "Are you going to sing for us tonight?" I liked to be able to contribute and I'm sure the other people liked it too.*

* See Appendix of Campfire Songs.

TK: What was the name of the violinist?

DP: Arturo Argiewicz. He was a second violinist, and his son came along with him. The father spoke with a very heavy accent. He came to me one time and he said, "I can't do anything with that son of mine. He's so dirty and he will not clean up." I said it was just typical. So he came around one day. He wasn't very old. I said, "Those are pretty gloves you've got on. If you don't wash those hands I'm going to take steel wool to them." Arturo was so gracious. Always before he played he would put his hands in a basin of hot water and exercise them. He brought along a very fine instrument. He was so generous about playing.

Cedric Wright was a violinist too, but not of the same caliber as Arturo. Ollo Baldauf sang. She had a perfectly wonderful voice. Dutch Levsky was along and they would sing German leieder and they would lead the group in singing.

MEMORABLE HIKES AND COMPANIONS ON THE TRAIL

Norman Clyde

Terry Kirker: Would you like to tell us something more about Norman Clyde?

Dorothy Pepper: I first met Norman in Yellowstone Park. He came toward me, wearing a Stetson hat left over from the campaign to get Pancho Villa, a khaki shirt, and those army pants and puttees. He never stood when he could lie down -- not sit, but lie down. That was his tradition. He was really a very relaxed person -- not a bit socially minded, just "Yes" and "No" for an answer and absolutely no sense of humor. I had known about him because my friend Julie had climbed with him and had done a lot of typing for him. He wrote.

He was a schoolteacher in the Owens Valley. I guess he was just the butt for all those kids up there. He taught Latin, of all things, to high school kids. You can imagine how popular he must have been. So they went out one Halloween night and turned over the garbage cans at the school, or something. He took a shot at them. I don't know how near he came, but I guess that was just the shot the people up there needed. They got rid of him and wouldn't let him teach anymore. So he had quite a time making a living. He did it from the stuff that was published, I guess.

He climbed every peak that ever was. When he came to see us, he would sit down, open up his book and say, "This is Mt. Whitney looking south. This is Mt. Whitney looking south by southeast. This is Mt. Whitney looking . . ." I think he took a picture from every one of the three hundred sixty-five degrees. There were just piles of them.

DP: One night Alice Carter and I couldn't stand it anymore. We thought we would get rid of him; otherwise he'd stay until one in the morning. So we got a bunch of alarm clocks, set them, and hid them all around in the furniture. Julie didn't know this. When the first one went off, she went to the telephone and said, "Hello, hello." Nothing happened. Then she went back and another one went off and it never fazed him at all. One night he came to the house with two neckties on, and I thought I was going to absolutely die. He had one the right way, another one way under his ear. He was so absent minded; the mountains were all he knew, cared about, and talked about.

When I first met him, somebody came along and said, "Norman, will you have a piece of pie?" He said, "I don't know. I've had three pieces and I'm pretty well tanked up." But he reached over and took another piece.

On the way down to the Tetons, somebody bought a lot of candy bars and tossed them in to everybody and when he started to get out of the car, he couldn't! His pants were just a mess. He had sat on this peanut cluster and it was stuck [laughter]. Everybody began to laugh. He was furious. "Nobody pointed it out to me," he said.

He would not wash. The same mosquito was on his face for three days. I didn't know for weeks that he was bald. He wore this army hat, and he never took it off. When he did, the top of his head was just as white as milk. The rest of his face was very red. He'd get sunburned and blistered.

He carried this enormous pack and was always willing to help people wherever he could, but he just didn't know how. I remember Alice saying once when they were way up on some ledge, they were going to cook dinner and firewood was very scarce. He said that he had something in his pack and took out a little pot. They were going to do some macaroni because they hadn't expected to be out. So they were working and somebody accidentally kicked, and put out the fire. Just imagine how somebody else would cuss at a person who did that. He never said a word. He just lit the fire and started all over again; he never said a word about it.

I know he was very upset and hurt when they never asked him to go on some of these climbing trips. He wanted

DP: to go and he was the best climber in the club at that time. But he was not a social asset, and so he wasn't invited.

I remember one time he was talking about young Starr. He said when he [Walter Starr, Jr.] turned up missing, they had planes searching all over for him and they had guides go out. I said, "Norman, what did you have to do with it?" He said, "I went up there with glasses, and I looked through them and moved them very, very slowly over and over again. And I finally saw a piece of cloth." Then he went over, and saw what it was, and he went out and reported it. He helped carry the cement up there where they buried Starr on the mountainside where the avalanche was. They put some kind of a marker over it. With all those planes and all those people they had out searching, he said, "Do you know what they gave me? What they paid a mule -- three dollars a day." That was just poor Norman.

One time he took some gal out on a trip for the day. There was a terrible storm and they got caught in the rain. They didn't come back. When he did come back in the morning with this gal, Young Tap, who was lots of fun, said, "Well, Norman, we'd better get out the prayer book. We're going to have to have a shotgun wedding here." Norman was furious. He just turned seven shades and walked away. He would never play along with any of those things. He just had hard luck all the time.

We were over in the Matterhorn area and he was leading a party across a snowfield, and he was very careful with his instructions about what they were to do. Somebody did not follow his instructions and didn't start off on whichever foot he told them to. It made a difference because you were going to step in the footprints ahead of you. If the footprint ahead is a right footprint and you land in there with the left foot, it's bad. Whatever it was, the fellow slipped and went down and hit a pile of rocks. They had to put his hip in one of those great big wire things and his head was all bandaged and they had an awful time getting him out.

I was very fortunate. There had been fatal accidents, but we never had any when I was along, thank goodness. We always had good doctors and a medical kit that they carried along. We had some bad accidents -- broken

DP: legs that they had to put in braces. But it seems to me that it was really marvelous the way they got them out so quickly.

TK: Did the stock come right along with you?

DP: In the early days when they would have about 125 to 150 stock, they would always have them unload in a certain place. Then they took them down and they had a big gate. They had a nighthawk, who was a man who slept down by that gate so the animals couldn't get into the camp, but they always did. We wrote a parody to "When the Mules Walk Over the Bedside and the Nighthawk Comes Whooping Through." They'd just come walking right through camp, mules and everything. That was quite a popular song. The animals always did seem to break through at one time or another. Then at times when they knew the feed was going to be bad, they actually brought in feed for them.

TK: Did they round them up every morning?

DP: Yes, but if the feed was thin they made a rope corral and they wouldn't let them out of there. You would hear them go out with the bells. It was nice to lie in bed and look at the stars, and hear the bells.

Over Forester Pass

DP: I'd like to tell you about Forester Pass because when we were in there we were camped near Center Basin. This was the highest pass of the Sierra. It was over 13,000 feet, and it had never been used. We camped down below. It had been a very heavy snow that year. They sent people up to look at it, but there was absolutely no chance of anybody crossing it. So about twenty-five of us, about seven women and the rest men, moved up as far as the mules could take us and made a camp there. The women did the cooking and the men went up and worked on the trail to scrape out the snow and dig it away. It was more fun because it was up so high. There was absolutely no timber there. We were camping in the granite. It was a moonlit night, just beautiful. The crags stood out so they were just in shadow with this moon. We really would have liked to have stayed longer but the men did as much work as they could. Then we went back and joined the camp.

DP: The next day when we started up, we had to wait until the pack train had gone over to be sure that they could get through. When we went by this particular overhang, we were told to take out tin cups and scrape away the snow to widen it. When we got up to a certain place on the rocks we had to sit there and not move a muscle because the pack trains were going to go over. If they couldn't get by there, then they would not be able to get down the other side, and we were going to have to go all the way back. So we got up there and sat very quietly. When the mules came along, they never could have gotten by this one ledge if everybody hadn't scraped away the side as we went by because it was a huge ice wall. We sat there and didn't move a muscle until the pack train got down the other side. Then when they got off, we got down.

It really is the most beautiful pass in the mountains because it is a gradual climb up, but when you get on the other side, it is almost straight down. It just zig-zagged all the way down. When we got down to the other side, we got great big cheers from a group of people who were waiting for us to break the pass open so they could get across. I have since been up Forester a couple of times. When I have been up that area I have walked up there and skinny dipped in one of those lakes with the snow in it -- just right in and out. It was something. That pass is one of my favorite places in the mountains.

The Specter of Brockton on Mt. Whitney

DP: I had an interesting experience when I was camping at Crabtree Meadows. Oliver Kehrlein, who was one of the old-timers, was very much interested in glaciers. He had four or five sons, and he used to go on private trips with them. When they got older, he would come along. He got up one night at the campfire when we were near Whitney, and he talked about the Specter of Brockton. The Specter of Brockton takes place when a person is on a high mountain in a place like Whitney or he said it happened at Tamalpais. The sun comes up over the earth and when atmospheric conditions are just right, your shadow is cast out into the atmosphere. He said there was always a good chance of that happening on Whitney.

DP: Well, I fell for it, so I decided that I would climb Whitney. I was working in the commissary, so I had to get somebody to take my place. I lay down for about two or three hours and then about ten o'clock we started up. I'm a plodder. I'm slow, but I can keep going. The rest of the crowd, which was about thirty or forty people, went on ahead and it wound up that there were three of us at the tail end. One was a woman and one was Primo, a packer who seemed to be about twelve feet tall. I've never seen such a big person. They called him Primo Carnera, after the prize fighter. He was going to walk up Whitney in his cowboy boots. We walked and she was slower than I was. Then I'd wait for them. They'd finally catch up with me, and then we would go on. Finally I couldn't wait any longer, so I walked that whole living trail alone. I didn't even have a flashlight.

That evening changed my whole thought on life. I'll never forget that night as long as I live. There had been a big rainstorm and the trail was full of hail. It was just as if it had been painted white for me. As we walked up I looked down and could see all these lakes and the stars were reflected in the lakes. I didn't see another human being. I had got up to this place and I looked, and here the trail stopped. I saw that it went down or to the left. I knew that it couldn't go down because I wasn't at the Whitney Summit. I knew from the description that Whitney was as big as a football field on the top. I knew I wasn't there, so I took the left hand turn. I walked along and began to look over and there were some sort of pinnacle things. Have you ever been up on the top?

TK: Not all the way.

DP: Well, there are great huge rocks, like pinnacles and then there are spaces in between. I could look 10,000 feet straight down and the whole Owens Valley was lit up. It looked like a necklace of diamonds; all the automobiles that were coming toward me were the diamonds and all those driving away were the rubies. It was alive. It was such a wonderful sight. I thought of Christ being up there tempted by the Devil. I kept on, and I kept on, and way off I saw one little light. I finally got up there, and it was the top of Whitney. Everybody else was up there.

DP: On the top of Whitney is a stone building that was put up there for some men who were going to use it for surveying. The rooms were only about ten feet square, and there were two rooms divided that originally had iron doors on them. One of the doors on one of the rooms had come off, so that room was perpetually filled with ice. Even in the daytime during the summer when it got hot enough to melt it, it was cold enough at night to freeze again. So, you could never go in there. Then the other room that we went into was filled with about thirty people. They were all in there. They had carried up wood and small sticks and things like that and had built a fire. There was no vent. They were trying to make some tea, and the place was full of smoke. So it was a question of either getting your eyes smoked out, or standing outside and freezing. So we stamped up and down. When we got out there the sun came up and there was no Specter of Brockton. I always said, "Oliver, you got me up there under false pretenses."

TK: Was it a joke?

DP: No, it really has happened. I don't know anybody who has seen it, but it really does take place. You can see your reflection in the atmosphere. He said you could take your hands and go like this and it makes a very large shadow of you off in the skyline.

The Year of the Big Snow

DP: When I was going by Thousand Island Lake one time, I looked up and saw Mount Banner and Mount Ritter. I said, "I don't climb. I've camped with enough climbers, I'm not going to ever do anything, but if I ever do climb a mountain, it is going to be Banner." They asked me why and I said because it looked so beautiful in the picture. Later on I did climb Mount Banner, but I climbed it in 1938 in the winter of the big snow. We walked right across those Thousand Island Lakes and the ice was eight feet deep! Oliver Kehrlein was going to lead the party. The two parties joined and we went up, climbed Banner and came down. I was so mountain sick I thought I was going to die. Dear Cedric was down there at the first timber photographing. He saw me coming so he took his Sierra Club cup and boiled water in it and made me a cup of tea. Ansel Adams was on the T.V.

DP: the other night and the first picture he showed was the picture of Banner, the very one that I have. I really enjoy having that.

One of the main rules about the club was that people never go off alone. I don't feel that this can be overstressed. We had a good demonstration of that on one of these trips. We met a young man who had a huge pack on his back. He was practically barefoot. He and some other boys had gotten together in Philadelphia, and they were all going to come out together and do the John Muir Trail. They didn't have enough money, so they drew lots. He got the money, so he came out here. It was the year of the big snow, and the rangers told him he shouldn't go alone. He disobeyed them and sneaked off at night. He went over Donohue pass, and he ran out of food. His shoes were so thin that he was practically walking on his bare feet.

When we met him he hadn't had anything to eat for two or three days. He had a map, but he didn't really realize where he was going. He didn't realize that he was getting in worse and worse. We took him in, and one of the men loaned him a pair of boots and gave him a job as a pot walloper with the commissary. He was one of these "know-it-alls"; you couldn't tell him anything. He absolutely disregarded the idea that he shouldn't go out alone. Well, we got into camp about six o'clock. I was the last man on the trail. They always had a last man. Dick Leonard came sort of fiddling along, and I said, "Dick, what are you waiting for?" He said, "Well, you're the last person." I said, "I'll be the last man. I won't let anybody by, I'll come in and report to you."

As I was going along I met somebody coming the other way. I asked him where he was going and he said, "I'm a scoutmaster. I'm resigning and my Boy Scouts gave me a very fine fishing knife which I left down there at the river when I was cleaning fish." I knew he had had experience so I said, "All right, I'll tell Dick Leonard that you're down there." So he went and got his knife. It was quite a way down. When he came back, he found this kid on his hands and knees crawling across the bridge. He was then about five miles from camp and had disregarded anything that they had told him. He had heard people talking about climbing Center Peak the next day and thought he would have it over them. So he went and tried to climb Center Peak, got on a ledge where he couldn't get up or down, so he jumped. He had a terrible foot

DP: so he was crawling on his hands and knees. This man told him to wait there. They had to catch animals and go back and get him, put him on the horse, send him out to the highway, telephone his father in Chicago and give him money for food. He never even said "Thank you." So it is a rule that should best be kept.

Roughing It in Changing Times

DP: In the 1950s I went on several of the base camp trips. They were two week camps. We went in and stayed in one place then went out -- by the day. It was fun. Then in 1961 I started on the back country camps and I've gone since then. You cannot imagine the difference when you go to a camp and see them cooking on a gasoline stove with no ovens. All this food has to be just boiled. For the weiners, for instance, they just put the cans in a bucket of cold water, put them on the stove and brought them to a boil. Then they would open up the can and that would be it. It was the same thing with the sauerkraut. There was never anything that was baked. For lunches, there was no hardtack or anything. You had to stand there and make sandwiches out of store-bought bread, as the kids say -- soft bread. They brought it in, mayonnaise and all. The whole lunch was an entirely different set-up. It was a shock to us. We realized that they couldn't go on cutting the trees down, and they couldn't go on taking 150 people, but it was a whole new ball game. I went on those trips until 1971.

Aside from the High Trips, I went on one of the foreign trips. It was the only one they ever had. I flew to San Francisco and on a charter flight to Switzerland. Then we walked a week in the Swiss Alps, a week in the Dolomites, and a week in the Austrian Alps. We just carried a sack with a change of clothes in it and we went to these huts where we stayed all night and where the food was all provided. You realized how different it was because the weather conditions were so bad over there that you could not begin to sleep outdoors. It opened up a country to many people who couldn't sleep on the ground. I could do the walking but I can't sleep on the ground anymore. I could go into one of those huts.

TK: Did they have cots?

DP: Oh, the beds were so funny, I never had so much fun in my life. Each place was different. Some of these huts were run by the government, and some by private parties. There were seventeen people in our party, and one party ahead of us. There were parties climbing in each one of these places at the same time, and as we moved out of Switzerland and went to Austria, the people who had been climbing in Austria went to Italy, and the Italians came where we had been. So it was just this go-around. Stew Kimball was the head of the whole set-up.

The party that was just ahead of us on the Swiss thing got caught in a blizzard and couldn't see their way. But all these places are connected by telephone. While they are not nearly as high as our mountains, the timberline is much lower. So the way they mark a trail is by painting the rocks red. When the rocks get covered with snow, you don't know where in the world you are going. So they had a terrible time. They called the little inn where we were and said we should get in touch with a Swiss guide. He came by train, met us and led us up there. He was a dear. His grandfather had opened that place, and it had been going for over one hundred years.

By the time we were nearly there a blizzard set in and we couldn't see a single thing. I must have fallen 120 times because my shoes were not right. When they got the literature here they said we would have to decide whether to take boots that were already broken in, or whether we were going to buy new boots over there. I decided to take the shoes I had. They were not the right kind of soles, what they called beaver soles, so I might just as well have had grease all over the bottom of them; I learned later and bought other shoes.

But anyway, we finally got up to this hut. It was dark and cold and we were all new and not well acquainted. We were sitting around wondering what to do as we waited for supper. It was adequate, but it was not a plush kind of place at all. Up from the cellar came the guide and opened up his rucksack and he had three bottles of red wine. Somebody said, "My goodness, did he haul those all the way up here?" We had them before dinner. We opened them, I began to sing that beer song and the rest of them took it up. That broke the ice. We had a wonderful time for three weeks traveling with the same people and singing every night around the table.

DP: We had to take our shoes off as soon as we came into this hut and put on bedroom slippers. When we got ready to go to bed, we wanted to go to the john first. Where was it? Underneath the shack! So we all went as a last resort. Then when we got upstairs, there were just two beds in the place. Each one was about twenty feet long. The lower one had individual mattresses, and there were blankets folded up at the end. You got on, pulled up your blanket and you all slept together. There was a man next to me and his wife was next. I thought if I had known them a little better I would have had some real fun! But we looked up and here was the same thing up overhead. So we were all jammed in there together. We began to laugh; we were wondering how were we going to get in and out, and how were we going to get our boots off? Believe it or not, somebody had to get up in the middle of the night, go down the stairs, take off his slippers, put on his boots, go down twenty-six icy steps outdoors, and then down to this john that was frozen. And then come back up the stairs again. Oh, it was something else!

Next day, when I was falling all the time, the guide lifted up my foot and said, "You've got the wrong shoes." I left the party then, and so did two or three others. We went over and I bought shoes. By this time the group came around another way, so we could make connections. If you didn't want to go to these huts, you could go down and then come around another way by train so you didn't have to walk and just kill yourself. It was a lot of fun and we met students from all the different places. They sang and we sang together. In one place the Germans were sitting in one spot and the French in another and we were in the middle. This funny little girl came over and said, "Would you write down the words, 'It's a Long Way To Timparari'?" (spoken in broken English). I thought "I bet she doesn't know that is a song from the First World War about the British."

Anyway, it was a wonderful experience. We had three weeks of that, and then we had three weeks on our own. The charter was for six weeks. I had been in Europe so many times I knew exactly where I was going. A couple and I were the only ones that went south. We went down to Rome and Florence, and we had the most wonderful weather. The rest of them went north and it was nothing but rain and cold there. Then I did go to Paris. We all came back and flew home. They never ran another trip like that again.

DP: They furnished the food. We had to carry our lunches for a week. They gave us a loaf of bread. We had a pen knife to cut it with. There were cookies. You can imagine what those cookies looked like by the end of the first week. But there were bars of chocolate. We were overloaded with chocolate and cheese. We gave some of our food to the people in these huts. A lot of the people came up there, and only paid for the privilege of sleeping in the hut. They ordered hot water and made their own tea and carried their own food with them.

Then I took a raft trip down the Green and the Yampa River.

TK: That was with the Sierra Club?

DP: Yes. I think that was the second year they had run them. We drove up to Dinosaur National Park. We went down the rivers with Bus Hatch and his sons. They had these big neoprene rafts, from the war. They held about thirty people, and were blown up very high. Then there were a few people who had those little foldboats, who were on their own. Bus would ask some of us to go with him. I don't know how I dared do it, now that I think about it. Three of us would get in with him. It was just an open row boat, and he would get down there and watch the big rafts come through and holler so they'd go over the rocks.

We had a wonderful time until the last day when I went in swimming with my shoes on and got caught in a whirlpool. They were able to fish me out, but I wouldn't even wash my face after that, I was so frightened [laughter]. But we saw beautiful canyons and we saw the Indian markings on the walls, hoping that they would be saved and not drowned out. I loved the petroglyphs. There was one of a little Indian. It was a stick figure and he was lying on his back with one leg crossed over the other playing a flute. We just hoped that those would be saved.

A P P E N D I X

SIERRA CLUB CAMPFIRE SONGS

SONGS FOR THE SIERRA CLUB BY DOT LEAVITT PEPPER

Dot's Own
(The Queen's Navee, Gilbert and Sullivan)

When I first went with the Sierra Club bunch,
I sat by a stream with my book and my lunch.
I washed my hair and drank my tea
And then I did all my laun-der-y.
I coiled my clothesline so carefully
That now I am a member of the Ph. D.

While others went off to climb high peaks,
And carry heavy knapsacks and be gone for weeks,
I stayed in camp and studied techniques
And let the other fellows climb each doggoned peak.
I learned technique so thoroly
That now I am a member of the Ph. D.

Now if you wish to learn to climb
Just sit upon a rock, but don't waste your time.
Learn to coil a rope so carefully
And imitate the climbers to the fraction of a T.

I'm Forever Washing Breeches
(I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles)

I'm forever washing breeches, dirty breeches in the stream.
They soak all day, while I've hiked away, alas for my hopes
they don't come clean.

Then I use the Wilson Washer, suction does the trick.
I'm forever washing breeches, dirty breeches in the crick.

Contents from Dot Pepper's Original Songs for the Campfire

Bandanna Song (Clementine)
Hiker's Song--Sierra Club
I Ain't Got Cleaned Up Yet
I've Got Grime on My Fingers
The Long, Long Nail (There's a Long, Long Trail)
Mountain Voices (Ole Black Joe)
Mule Song (When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain)
Mules (Auld Lang Syne)
Rocks In The Cradle Where I Sleep
The Sierra Club on Parade
Sweet Ivory Soap (Sweet Adeline)
Tieing The Knots In The Devil's Tail (The Packer's Song)
The Tuolumne Meadows (Wearin' of the Green)

The Sierra Club on Parade

Vern Owen,
Packer

With hob-nailed shoe, they go march-ing through-the Sier-ra Club on par-



ade. All in a bunch with their hard-tack lunch -the Sierra Club on par-ade. I'd



like to join their fun but they bar me; you can't ride a horse and join their ar-my.



How they sigh when I pass them by--the Sierra Club on parade.

Verse 2

Some stop for tea, get in at three--the Sierra Club on parade.
 And some arrive at half past five--the Sierra Club on parade.
 I'd let you ride my horse, but listen mister
 If I get off and walk I'll raise a blister.
 So those that like can always hike with the Sierra Club on parade.

Verse 3

Some clothes are scant--just shirt and pant--the Sierra Club on parade.
 Still there are those who wear more clothes--the Sierra Club on parade.
 They like to get in camp and act quite merry,
 And take a swim above the commissary.
 But that's no more--they heard Tap's roar--the Sierra Club on parade.

Verse 4

Their baths they take in Garnet Lake--the Sierra Club on parade.
 From head to toes; without any clothes--the Sierra Club on parade.
 And now to all the girls we give a warning,
 They must not to the men's camp come a-swarmling.
 For if they do they will surely view the Sierra Club on parade.

I Ain't Got Weary Yet



I ain't got wear-y yet, I ain't got wear-y yet.



Climb-ing the moun-tains all day long. All day long, a-singin' a song; I



ain't got wear-y yet and I nev-er will you bet. Ever-y moun-tain that I see



seems as eas-y as can be; it may be hard but it just suits me. I



ain't got wear-y yet; Boom, Boom .

Campfire Song



Gee but it's great to hike the live-long day and camp at the set-ting of the



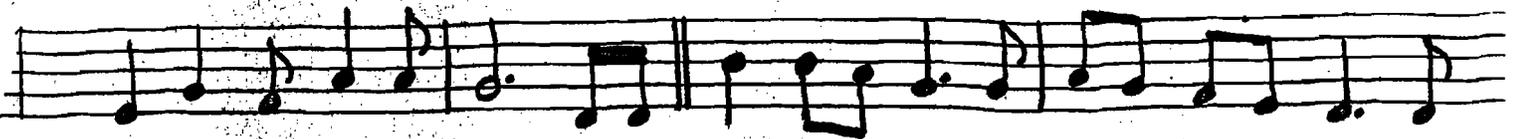
sun. But the thing that we love is the fire- that we build at night when the day is



done. Then it's pile the wood up high-er till the night's as bright as day. And we'll

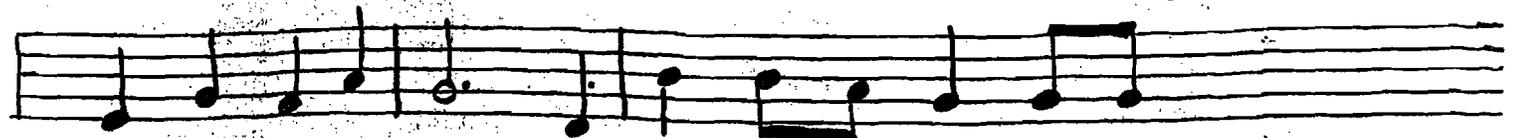


all gath-er round the same camp fire and sing our trou-bles a-way, a-way, a-way and



sing our trou-bles a- way. Then it's pile up the fir, the hem-lock and the pine, and

FINE



while they burn and glow. We'll swear friend-ship true 'gainst the



days of Auld Lang Syne where to-night shall be long a-go. Then it's

D.S. al Fine

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RICHARD SEARLE

GRASSROOTS SIERRA CLUB LEADER

An Interview Conducted by
Paul Clark
California State University, Fullerton
Oral History Program

Sierra Club
History Committee

1976

SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

Richard Searle has been involved with the Sierra Club on many organizational levels during its period of greatest growth and change. He joined the club in 1951 and participated in rock climbing activities and outings. In 1960 he became involved in the San Fernando Valley group, and during the next ten years he chaired the group and held the offices of vice-chairman (1965-1966), chairman (1967), and secretary (1968-1969) of the Angeles Chapter. In 1969 he was a club regional vice-president, and he has served on several national committees.

As southern California coordinator for the Concerned Members for Conservation (CMC), he was in a key position to observe the events surrounding the Brower controversy of the late 1960s. His sense of fairness, perspective, and reasoned approach is apparent in his comments on this and other controversial moments in Sierra Club history.

Dick is also a member of the Sierra Club History Committee and has completed five oral history interviews of club leaders. His own interview was conducted May 6, 1975 in Simi Valley, California, by Paul Clark, a student in the Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton. The interview tape recording is available at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Ann Lage, Editor
Sierra Club History
Committee
April, 1976

INTRODUCTION TO OUTINGS AND ORGANIZATION

Youthful Forays into the Out-of-Doors

Paul Clark: Now, Mr. Searle, could you please tell me a little bit of your early life and your family background?

Richard Searle: All right, I'll give some of those necessary statistics, I guess, to get started with. I was born in 1928, a native Californian. I was born in Oakland, California. My parents were also native Californians. My mother was born in Sacramento, and my father was born in San Francisco. Both of them are still living. I grew up in Oakland and lived there until 1953, when I moved to Southern California to the San Fernando Valley area. My own family and I have lived in several different homes in that period of time. We moved to Simi Valley, which is over towards Ventura County about fifteen years ago and have lived there since then.

PC: When you were a young fellow, were you ever involved in hiking or Sierra Club-like activities?

RS: Well, in a sense, yes I was. That is a good question. I didn't have any knowledge of the Sierra Club per se until I was in college. Perhaps I heard something about it. The club, it seems, was just some organization that you might hear about once in a while from somebody else.

Our family used to go on car camping vacations. We never did any backpacking or anything of that nature. We first got a car that could go a decent distance back in about 1935, when I was about seven years old. We used to go up to Yosemite, or to Crater Lake in Oregon, or in the redwoods. We used to take day hikes, and such as that. I know we all appreciated the outdoors, and that was actually our major form of recreation,

RS: as far as vacations were concerned. We weren't so well off that we could afford to go to an expensive spa, and I don't know if we would have if we had the choice.

I went to college at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1947, majoring eventually in chemical engineering. I got into the University of California Hiking Club about a year later. I got into it by virtue of knowing a fellow by the name of Larry Williams, who subsequently became a fairly well known mountaineer in the California area. He was known among some of the Sierra Club members. He introduced me to the outdoors in a more adventuresome sense.

In 1949 I remember going with him to Tuolumme Meadows in Yosemite. We bought a pack frame and an army surplus sleeping bag from Maxwell Hardware in Berkeley. You could get bags sixty percent down and forty percent feathers for about \$10.00. The pack frame was \$4.50. We were equipped with army surplus at that time, which was really a good buy under the circumstances. We went to Tuolumme Meadows, and I proceeded to go with Larry and climb my first mountains of significance. We hiked up to the end of the Lyell Fork of the Tuolumme. We climbed Mt. Lyell, and then Mt. Maclure the next day. We actually spent almost a month in the Sierra Nevada, hitchhiking from one place to another and then going in and climbing. I remember at one period we were rather enthusiastic, and it was sort of an ambition to climb all of the peaks in California that were over 14,000 feet.

Well, we didn't realize that ambition on that trip. We had a few dollars with us, but we didn't pick up any more. You know, you can live on almost nothing, but not totally nothing. So after a month we did run out of money, and we split from each other. I hitchhiked back to my folks who were staying near Sonora, at Twain Hart, and spent a few weeks with them. Larry went his way, and of course, we were still good friends and continued to associate with each other at the University of California.

The University of California Hiking Club

RS: I continued to be active in the University of California Hiking Club. In fact, I became president of the organization

RS: in 1951. That's also where I met my wife Jean. She was also interested in the outdoors. She used to come on the Hiking Club activities. In essence, we met each other on hikes and activities and became closer. We were married in 1953 when I was doing graduate work at the University of California. I received a master's degree in chemical engineering that year.

I remember Larry Williams wanted to have a trans-Sierra ski trip. We wanted to get the keys to the Sierra Club Lodge in Tuolumme Meadows. I remember going up to a meeting in the Berkeley hills. It was our objective to get to Lewis Clark,* who happened to be the person in charge of the lodges and lands of the Sierra Club at that time. Anyway, he had the key. We asked if we might have access to the facility up there. We didn't get the key. I don't think we had the proper credentials, and he didn't know us from Adam at that time. However, that didn't deter us from going on the trip, and it didn't deter us from subsequently becoming more active in the Sierra Club. Lewis was the first important member of the club I met.

PC: Were you a member of the Sierra Club when you made this attempt?

RS: Well, let's see. If I wasn't a member I was a member shortly thereafter, because I joined the club in 1951, which would be my senior year at the University of California. This ski trip was probably made in 1950 or thereabouts. My interest in the Sierra Club came initially by way of the outdoor activities, and an appreciation of the outdoor environment and associated recreation. I did join in 1951, and about five or ten years later I became a life member, when, incidentally, it was less expensive than it is today. Life membership was about \$115, and it's about \$400 or \$500 now. The best buy ever [laughter]. Anyway, I did not get active when I first joined. I was active in the University of California Hiking Club. I was not active in the Sierra Club when I lived in the Bay Area, even though I was a member.

PC: To get back to the U.C. Hiking Club, maybe you could elaborate a little bit on its structure, and if it had any relationship with the Sierra Club, what that relationship was?

* Interview with Lewis Clark, in process.

RS: Well, I guess the way to put it is that many of the members in the Hiking Club ended up as members of the Sierra Club. That's one relationship. In some other ways, we had our rock climbing activities; we had our social activities; we had our backpacking. In the area of rock climbing, I suspect that the rock climbers in the Sierra Club, in the Bay Area, may have tolerated us a little bit more. They didn't necessarily welcome us with open arms, but were more concerned about whether we were doing the thing safely.

I remember one time Larry, myself, and Mac Frazer took off during the summer and went up to Mount Waddington in British Columbia. It's north of Vancouver Island. It's one of the highest peaks in British Columbia--about 13,200 feet. We climbed in the area, and when we came back, we showed pictures to the Sierra Club's rock climbing section in the Bay Area. In thinking about it, we had some friends in that aspect of the activity. The UCHC, as we called the Hiking Club, didn't really have any affiliation with the Sierra Club per se. It was just by virtue of birds of a feather having similar interests.

As far as the UCHC is concerned, it was organized about 1949 by several people. Larry Williams was an active driver in the formation of the UCHC. It was very active during the period when I was in college, which was up to the spring of 1953. They had the usual organization, such as a chairman for outings and social activities, and a president and vice-president of the organization. It was sponsored by a faculty representative, who very seldom appeared at our activities. He was a sponsor in name more than anything else. I remember one gentleman by the name of J. Gordon Edwards, who was one of our early advisors. He really was a help to the organization. In fact, he was a fairly well-known mountaineer. He went to San Jose State later on as a professor.

It was a rather cohesive group when I was a member. Up until recently we've had annual reunions. These reunions have lasted over a period of twenty years. I can remember about eight years ago we finally reached the stage where there were more kids in the reunion than adults. I guess about ten or fifteen years after college must be the time when you have most of the kids at home, and when everybody has their families. Now, the number of kids is decreasing. It was a pretty cohesive group, structurally speaking.

Rock Climbing in the Southern California Sierra Club

RS: After I left college, I came to work down here at the North American Aviation Santa Susana field laboratory, as it was called then. That was in 1953. The first year I must have been too busy to get involved in Sierra Club affairs. I think it was in 1954 when I attended a meeting of the rock climbing section in the southern California area. Actually, it's the Rock Climbing and Ski Mountain Section. I became active in their activities in about 1954. My participation lasted through 1957. I remember I passed all the safety tests and went on climbs with them. I remember going hiking in the Mt. Whitney area, and climbing by candlelight. We went into Yosemite and did a number of climbs in that area also. I'd actually done a fair amount of climbing in Yosemite with the UCHC and with Larry Williams. I had climbed the upper Cathedral Spires, the lower Spires, the Church Tower, the Royal Arches, on Washington Column, the Brothers, and Pulpit Rock.

PC: You climbed to the top of them?

RS: Well, most of them, except in the case of the Washington Column, where you go up to something like the Lunch Ledge. That's where I went to. On the Brothers, of course, you can go all the way up. The Royal Arches, I should say, I'd just as well go up. You get half way up there, and it's not too much fun going down. There's a traverse with overhangs below. Of course, there was Mt. Starr King which is more of a fourth class climb. We climbed in that area also. Again, this is going back to my climbs with Larry Williams prior to doing climbs with the rock climbing section in southern California.

When I think about it, I did a lot of climbing with the UCHC. A lot of it was at the motivation of my friend Larry Williams, who, incidentally, died about ten years ago in an airplane crash. He, at that time, was running a guide service in the Palisades of the Sierra Nevada. He had his own plane to fly his customers and equipment over from the Bay Area. I lost a good friend and a good climbing partner. Also, I climbed the Arrowhead in Yosemite. Not the Lost Arrow, but the Arrowhead as they called it. That was probably the last significant climb I did in Yosemite. That was about five years ago with a friend, Frank DeSaussure.

RS: Since we're talking about rock climbing, about two or three years ago I did climb the East Buttress of Whitney. I went with another friend of mine, Howard Stevens.

PC: Is he a member of the Sierra Club?

RS: Yes, Howard is. Howard is sixty-five now. I mention that because I think he's achieved a lot for his age. He's achieved it by virtue of having the right attitude combined with being in good physical condition for his age. He is a very good companion for many types of activities. Howard and I and another gentleman made that climb in preparation for a climb of the Grand Teton, which, unfortunately, because of weather we've never gotten around to completing. My last rock climb was the East Buttress of Whitney, and I enjoyed it.

As far as rock climbing, my attitude towards it has always been that I very seldom enjoy in advance the thought of climbing; looking forward to it was more the social thing getting started. However, once you get on the rock climb, it becomes a challenge, and you really do enjoy it for itself. I think most of my rock climbing has been because my friends liked to do it, and it was a very enjoyable thing to do once you got started.

In the rock climbing section down here, I associated with such people as John and Ruth Mendenhall, Harvey Hickman, and lots of others whose name I don't recall right now. I think the Mendenhalls are still active, and they were around when the rock climbing section must have been formed back in 1938 or 1949.

PC: This is the Angeles Chapter?

RS: Right. Actually, the rock climbing section in southern California, if it wasn't contemporary with a lot of the initial rock climbing in northern California, it was formed shortly thereafter. There was a group in southern California who were getting into this sort of thing back in the early 1930s. A gentleman [Robert Underhill] came from the East Coast in 1931 and introduced some of the techniques of climbing with a rope that were quite new. He demonstrated some ideas like the dynamic belay, which up until recently has been quite popular.

I'm sure the information got back and forth between the Bay Area and here. I guess it was probably in the

RS: early forties, and certainly in the early fifties, when they did a lot of rock climbs in the Sierra Nevada and Yosemite which were not even thought of as being possible before that time. These climbs were accomplished primarily because of improvement in the techniques and increased interest. Well, I just mention that the section down here was one of the early-day modern rock climbing sections, if I can use that terminology. I was active and climbed with the section down here in the Mt. Whitney area, the Yosemite area, and out at Tahquitz, once or twice. I just sort of stepped up with them from local climbing to Yosemite.

By 1957 we had two young children, one two and the other four, so we took some time off from the Sierra Club. We had been mailers of the Mugelnoos, as they call it, which is the newsletter of the rock climbing section. It got to be a pretty long haul from Canoga Park all the way over to the meeting place in Pasadena. I remember the day we took the addressograph machine over after having told them for some time we wanted someone else to take the Mugel mailing over. We just dumped it in front of the meeting and said, "Okay, this is it. Find another Mugel mailer; we can't carry it on anymore." That was the last time we got to a meeting [laughter]. It's not that we haven't remained emotionally attached to the organization. However, when we dropped that job as head of the mailing outfit of their newsletter, we also became much less active in that organization in the Angeles Chapter.

PC: Did you go on any Sierra Club outings?

RS: Oh, we may have, although I think that for those three years it was very unlikely that we did more than one thing a year, if we did. I don't recall a particular one. We certainly had done so between 1954 and 1957, and then from 1960 on we became quite involved in chapter affairs.

A Leadership Role in the San Fernando Valley Group

RS: I think it was late 1959 when Erv Sheaffer and several others initiated the formation of the San Fernando Valley group in the Angeles Chapter. This was during a period of considerable growth in the history of the Angeles

Chapter. Basically, this period was the beginning of group organization within chapters. It was sort of a building up of a new level of organization. The San Fernando Valley group was probably the third or fourth group in the Angeles Chapter. I think today we have somewhere closer to eleven groups in the chapter. Anyway, the forming of a group provided a nucleus for people who were interested in the club, so that they could relate to other people with similar interests. I think that was part of why we got active.

I remember going to some of their meetings in 1960. If you show any initiative at all in volunteer organizations, you know what happens. I became schedule chairman in 1961. Somebody nominated me for chairman of the group. They hadn't bothered to consult me ahead of time. I don't know if I was too bold, or just too scared, because I accepted. I was a little bit surprised. At that time we reorganized the group's by-laws.

In 1963 I became what they call the senior representative. He is the past chairman, a person who supposedly has all the answers. They keep him around for another year or so, so they can find out how he would have done it. It's a great position to be in because you don't have the responsibility and you can say anything you want and usually they listen. It also serves a lot of good purposes.

My activities in the Sierra Club then, and to a great extent even to the present, have been oriented in two areas. One is the outings aspect of the organization, and the second is the organizational aspects. I do not consider myself a well-known conservationist. I prefer to think that what I have worked to do in the Sierra Club has been to provide an environment which is conducive to people who have the drive, interest, and concern to work in specific areas of conservation. My organizational interests have been in getting a functioning organization--one in which people can be more effective no matter what elements of the Sierra Club they are supporting, be it the outing activities, the conservation activities, or other related fields. I also, of course, enjoy outings and I have led many trips. That's the other aspect I'm interested in.

Anyway, I first rose in the Sierra Club in the San Fernando Valley group as chairman, and then as senior rep in 1963, and so forth. I was on the Basic Mountaineering

RS: Training Committee. I was on that just a few years after it was formed and was head of the section of the BMTC course in the San Fernando Valley. By that time it had grown to maybe 500 or 1,000 students a year.

PC: In the Angeles Chapter?

RS: Yes, this is the Angeles Chapter, and up until four or five years ago, I was a member of the Angeles Chapter. I am now a Los Padres Chapter member. I was the section chairman, as they call it, and I led many trips for the BMTC also. During the period that I was the chairman of the San Fernando Valley group, there was some dissatisfaction expressed by a number of people in the San Fernando Valley group that they were not receiving enough attention from the chapter. There was a lack of understanding or perhaps, shall we say, avoidance by the executive committee of the chapter relative to the groups, and more specifically, the San Fernando Valley group. There was a feeling in part of the San Fernando Valley group management committee that they were being ignored, or like I say, rejected somewhat by the executive committee of the Angeles Chapter. Anyway, there was tension that existed during that period. Some people made comments about seceding from the chapter and forming a separate chapter. In a way, we were big enough, because there were about 1,000 members of the Sierra Club in the San Fernando Valley. That was many more members than probably many of the chapters in the Sierra Club had at that time.

When I was chairman of the group, I advocated that we should try to establish more communication and better relations with the chapter executive committee. I wanted to arrange to have people attend their meetings and participate in discussions with the chapter's ex-committee. I became more known by the officers of the Angeles Chapter. Naturally, I gravitated to activities which associated with the chapter leadership, and so forth.

I picked up several committees when I was in that position. I was chairman of the camping committee. I was sitting in a chapter executive committee meeting one day, and they were holding up their hands and saying, "Our camping committee is going to pot in the chapter." They looked around at me and said, "Why don't you take it?" So that was my first committee for the chapter, and I subsequently got into several. Eventually, I was nominated and became an elected member of the executive committee of the Angeles Chapter. That was 1964.

RS: Then in 1965 and 1966 I became vice-chairman of the Angeles Chapter. I was under Bob Marshall, who was the chairman.

SPARKING THE ANGELES CHAPTER

The Angeles Chapter Council: Better Communications,
Wider Participation

Richard Searle: I think this was a very fortuitous time to be on the scene. It's always a good time to be around when things are about ready to blossom, and I think that's what happened to the Angeles Chapter, partly because of the time, and partly because of Bob Marshall. I don't know if you've heard anything about him, but back in the 1960s up to about 1968 or so, Bob Marshall was quite active in the Angeles Chapter. He was a very active conservationist. I feel he had a rare blend of being able to balance his beliefs. He may have had conservation as a religion, but he did not let it get his rational approach to problems mixed up. He thought of it very deeply, but he was rational about his approach. He was good in organization. I think he was the right man at that time to just sort of spark the Angeles Chapter and begin to get it going. I was very fortunate in being the vice-chairman under Bob. I think we both had similar ideas and ideals at that time. I think we sort of picked up the chapter, and got it going.

For one thing I know I, and I think Bob, advocated the formation of a chapter council when we were running for office. One of its objectives, among others, was to encourage the dissemination of information between the various groups, sections, and committees in the chapter. It was to provide sort of a forum for expression of new ideas and make recommendations to the chapter executive committee. The council provides, frankly, a place on occasion to adjudicate disputes. In essence, here is a place where all the groups and other functional elements in the chapter can relate to each other and

RS: resolve many of the problems, or come up with recommendations to the chapter executive committee, which is the elective governing body of the Angeles Chapter. I was the organizer of the Angeles Chapter Council. I should say, I was given a mandate to get it started. I advocated it, and they gave me the job. With Bob's help, we did establish a council within the chapter, and it's still functioning today. I think it's functioning effectively, taking on a number of jobs.

By doing that I think that we created enthusiasm in the various sections and existing groups within the chapter and brought many people into active participation in the Sierra Club. We began to get things done, not as a small group or club of people, but on a much broader basis of participation. For instance, by encouraging groups to form people could relate directly to something besides this huge organization where they sent their dues. In fact, there is a concept that I hold, that when a group or an organization gets to become more than 300 people, it is about as effective as it can be, without forming another level of organization. It is about as big as it can be where a person can relate to it, where he can know most of the people, and where there is something he can do. At that point, if it gets more people, they have to subdivide the organization in some way--create committees, or create sub-levels of organization to enable participation.

By creating more groups within the chapter, we created more opportunity for people to do their thing, be it conservation or social activities, or others. The group existed and provided an environment, or maybe an ecosystem, for people to function within the Sierra Club sphere. Of course, it provided a resource pool of talent for leadership, or for problems. This trend was started at that time. I didn't mean to say that we didn't have some organization before. However, the chapter had been the same organization and the same level of activity pretty much until about 1963 or 1964. The curve of growth had been very gradual. So anyway, I was involved in that.

I have this great bug for tape recording, so even then I recorded all of the meetings of that nature. I have typed notes and minutes of all of the early council meetings back at least to 1964. It's very interesting to hear the philosophy and thoughts that were expressed at that time. Just thinking of the

RS: people when you listen to the tapes makes you sort of happy that something was really being accomplished, and it still looks like it was worthwhile. It's not something that died.

I was the vice-chairman in 1965 and 1966 and then became chairman in 1967, when Bob Marshall stepped down. Then I became the secretary in 1968 and, I think it was, also in 1969. I could have been chairman for another year if willing, but I didn't want to keep the job much longer. Now that I think about it, I should have taken the opportunity, but as it was I accepted the job of secretary in 1968 and 1969. I remember in 1967, there happened to be a good man available for the chairman's position, Bob Van Allen. He followed me in the chapter as chairman. In fact, he had been one of the people on the first chapter council, and I advocated that he could be chairman. I think people recognized that he would do a good job. He became chairman in 1968, while I was secretary.

In 1966, my wife, at the request of Bob Marshall, became the Southern Sierran editor. This will be important a little bit later when I talk about the Brower controversy. It turned out that by my being secretary, and her being the head of the Southern Sierran, the chapter newspaper, whether we liked it or not we sort of controlled the communications in the chapter. It was an interesting situation as it subsequently developed in the Brower controversy.

A Shared Achievement--Bob Marshall's Contribution

RS: I remember in 1968, our chapter was being recognized as a very active chapter by the other sectors of the club at a national level and by the Sierra Club Council. I was very surprised and happy to receive an award from the national Sierra Club. It was an achievement award. They give several of these every year, or at least used to. They awarded me this for my contribution to organizing and getting the Angeles Chapter metabolism up. Maybe that's the way to put it. I really appreciated that award. I still think of it.

I'd also like to make the point that I think that my achievement at that time would have been far less

RS: if it hadn't been for Bob Marshall, who went before me and who had similar ideas. It's unfortunate that he hasn't received as much recognition as I have in that area. In a way, I think that Bob in subsequent developments in the Brower controversy hasn't fared as well as he should have in the eyes of history. He really did a lot of good things. We did not work for the sake of being recognized, or being famous, or anything like that. In fact, he did a few things that probably were foolish as far as his reputation was concerned, but perhaps he had good intentions.

PC: Was this while he was chairman?

RS: When he was chairman there was not too much of a problem. Later on in the Brower controversy he was one of the first persons to openly challenge Dave Brower. He stated his opinions of Brower's, I'll use the term, inadequacies or attitudes. He didn't feel they were in the best interest of the Sierra Club. When Bob did this, which was about 1967, Dave Brower brought a lot of criticism on Bob Marshall. Brower was sort of a hero of the club in the eyes of the general membership.

PC: You did mention that one of the reasons why you became a member of the executive committee was to help iron out the tensions that were going on between the San Fernando Valley group, and the executive committee. Could you elaborate on one or two of these tensions, or problems, and perhaps how they were resolved?

RS: Let me correct you a little bit in regard to my getting on the executive committee. I did not get on the executive committee necessarily with the intent of resolving the tension, because my executive committee membership came about a little bit later. I was chairman of the San Fernando Valley group about 1962. At that time I advocated that before we started trying to withdraw from the chapter we should get to know the executive committee of the chapter. I set up an arrangement where we would have a representative from the group attend each of the chapter executive committee monthly meetings. I expressed this feeling of concern to the chapter executive committee. I said at one of their meetings, "We want to get to know you better, and we hope you'll get to know us better, and if we have problems, we can resolve these problems."

As far as what the misunderstandings were, they seem a little bit diffuse in my memory at this time,

RS: but they concerned support for group activities by the chapter executive committee. It was a lack of encouragement when we wanted to sponsor certain types of activities. I don't remember specifics, but perhaps it was a feeling that the chapter ex-committee was not really thinking in terms of a functioning chapter. There was a feeling that the chapter ex-committee, at that time, was an in-group that had been perpetuating itself. There were people from the Pasadena Group, and from the downtown Friday Night Dinners Group, and such, and they were taking turns getting elected to the chapter ex-committee, so that the people in these newer groups in the outer areas like the San Fernando Valley group, were sort of the "outs," and the others were the "ins." I think also there was a little bit of leftover feeling from the loyalty oath controversy.

I think that when some people spoke about the possibility of becoming a separate chapter, they were thinking that they could become more effective as an organization for the Sierra Club, as an organization in the San Fernando Valley outside the chapter. Then they would have recognition with the national headquarters. They would receive dues allocations, and they would have some other advantages. They would have direct communication with the board of directors, at least more than they would have if they were a group within the chapter. I think those were the sort of things that were of concern to the people in the San Fernando Valley group.

The Loyalty Oath Controversy

RS: Now about the loyalty oath business which I mentioned. I will say that I was in southern California when the issue came up, but it probably occurred within those three years that I wasn't very active. Jean reminded me the other night that we received some literature about the subject from, I think, Barbara Lilley, who may have been one of the people who was active in the controversy. There was a Walt Henninger. Perhaps Stan Jones was involved, although I don't know if he was active in this also. What was the issue? The outward thing was something about requiring some kind of loyalty oath for new members. I guess that was during the McCarthy era. The people who advocated the so-called loyalty oath were very likely the same people who also

RS: had been practicing a certain amount of discrimination against minority groups, as far as membership in the club was concerned. The loyalty oath was one manifestation of an attitude of a certain group of people.

As far as the general membership in the Angeles Chapter was concerned, I think these people represented a very small percentage, but at a certain time they were also rather important people in the chapter government. They were the people who were in on the decisions made by the government. You can look up the records as to what the loyalty oath issue, per se, was. It came up, and there was some sort of an election on the issue. I think it was a national club election. It was soundly defeated. I don't know what the vote was, but it went its way and died out.

Racial Discrimination in the Angeles Chapter

RS: Going back one step, there was this matter of discrimination. It was somewhat before my time when we had our first Negro, or Japanese, or other minority group members in the chapter. I think that in 1950 or earlier, minority group membership upset some of the people. I guess this is the best way to put it. I'm sure that this was a small percentage of the membership. Maybe they thought, "Gee, what's the club coming to?" or "What's the chapter coming to?" "What are these people like?" I think it was a case of not knowing what these people are like.

I was told that when George Shinno, who has been very active and is still very active in the club, first tried to become active in the Angeles Chapter, there was a certain amount of resentment among some of the old-timers. This certainly doesn't include many of the old-timers, like Glen Dawson, the Mendenhalls, and many of the others, who certainly were very open-minded. They did not consider what color your skin was or what your background was. The important thing was that you had the right attitude or were able to relate socially. Well, that's all I know about the loyalty oath and about some of the discrimination. I do know that Dave Brower was involved a little bit in the discrimination matter. I recall it used to be that the membership

- RS: committees of the chapters would pass on applicants and would make recommendations to the national club as to whether some person should be accepted into the organization.
- PC: It was the membership committee, not the ex-committee?
- RS: It was not the ex-committee. It was a committee of the chapter which was appointed by the executive committee of the chapter. It was a separate committee. At that time, or shortly before, it had been the policy in the club that when you made an application for membership, your application would go to the chapter membership committee. They in turn would review your qualifications, and then make a recommendation to the national club that you be admitted. I believe part of this issue on discrimination came up when there was more than one case where they recommended a person not be admitted to the organization, and it appeared as if it was because of his race, color, or creed, or something like that.

Well, anyway, the net result was that the national membership committee--I do not know if the board was involved--and also Dave Brower said, "There are no second-class Sierra Club members." They then changed the arrangements and took away from all the chapter membership committees the right to pass on whether or not a person is qualified to be a member. That was one of the other outgrowths of that early period.

Changing Membership Policies and Patterns

- PC: At that time you had to have a sponsor, didn't you, to join the Sierra Club?
- RS: Yes, you did. To a great extent the matter of a sponsor was a procedural thing. In those days most of the people learned about the Sierra Club from other people who were members. Somebody introduced you to the Sierra Club and you participated, and if you wanted to be a member, the person who introduced you to the organization would gladly sign the other name on the application form. I think it was a very desirable thing in a way, in the sense that it brought people into the organization who tended to remain in the organization.

RS: You have to assess what the objectives are for the membership of the organization. In those days, I'm told, our renewal rate on members was ninety-five percent, and the turnover was only five percent per year, whereas corresponding organizations like the National Wildlife Federation and the Audubon Society and some of the others had forty percent turnover. Their average membership lasted two years, or maybe three years, whereas the Sierra Club was ninety-five percent renewal. At the same time the Sierra Club wasn't growing very fast. It was very stable.

Then, back in 1950, I think it was, the Sierra Club decided to go national. I heard this from Lewis Clark and some of the other people. They decided that if the Sierra Club was going to be more effective in national conservation, it would have to grow in membership. In order to do that, among other reasons, they would have to encourage people to join the organization. They, of course, retained the sponsor requirement for a long time thereafter, but they made it quite apparent that it wasn't hard to get somebody to sponsor you. In a couple of meetings, you were welcome. If you liked the organization, you could ask somebody to sign your application. About five years ago, they dropped the requirement for any sponsor at all.

On the other hand, I think it's nice to have a sponsor because it encourages people to join who are probably going to be more committed to the organization. As it turns out though, on second thought, those who are going to be committed will join. Those who aren't going to be committed will still donate their money anyway. Eventually, if they drop out, we haven't lost anything, and we may have gained some money.

PC: Maybe a little education also.

RS: That's right. Some osmosis may occur, like the case when we had Earth Day back in 1970. We had a tremendous spurt in Sierra Club membership. Then about two or three years ago we started losing a lot of those people, or maybe the next year we lost a lot of them. This was because there was the great emotional support for the Earth Day, and then those people developed other interests. Not everything came out the way they sort of hoped it would. Maybe they figured they'd made their donation and now that was it. Anyway, I'm sure some of these people absorbed a greater appreciation for the need for a better environment, or maintaining our environment.

THE SIERRA CLUB IN THE SIXTIES: PROBLEMS OF GROWTH

An Outline of Club Organization

Richard Searle: Because of my activities with the San Fernando Valley group and these concerns about the chapter and the relation between the group and the chapter, I wrote several letters of comment, and even a handbook for the group. This book went into considerable detail on how to make it a successful organization. I sent some of those to the national Sierra Club Council's committee on groups. I sent it to Dick Sill, who was chairman of that committee. They were very interested in what we were doing as a group at that time. As a result the committee on groups became aware of my presence down here. They felt some of the material I had produced was very useful to them and maybe to other groups. That is how I got to be noticed a little bit in the national club and in the Sierra Club Council. Are you acquainted with the Sierra Club organization in regards to the national organization to any extent?

Paul Clark: I am, but perhaps someone who reads this would not be.

RS: The club has the board of directors of fifteen members. We have a council which is, to an extent, an advisory to the board and has certain powers which are delegated to it by the Sierra Club board. Now this council is made up of representatives, one from each chapter in the club. I guess we have about forty-four chapters in the club now. This council also has certain specified national club committee representatives on it. As a part of the functioning of this council, the committees study things such as outings policy on a national level, and on a local level, conservation, education, and similar

RS: ideas. The council has a committee on chapters for the formation of new chapters, and an internal organization committee, which was the committee on groups when I initially got involved. There are several other committees whose names I don't recall right now, but anyway, that's the national club council.

The council provides a function similar to the Angeles Chapter Council which I previously mentioned. The council is a way of communication between the grass-roots organization and the national organization. Through the council they can make recommendations on internal functioning of the club to the national club executive committee and board of directors. The board of directors has an executive committee. That's the overall club organization in a nutshell.

New Structures for a Growing Club

RS: After I'd been on the chapter executive committee for this period of time and became the secretary, I also ended up being the representative for the chapter to the Sierra Club Council. Previous to that, because of my work with the San Fernando Valley group, I had been a member of the Sierra Club Council committee on groups. This internal organization committee, when I took it over, was doing various kinds of studies, and so forth, on how to make groups more effective. It gradually got into other areas. Dues allocation is an example.

When I was chairman of that committee, from about 1967 through about 1972, we made recommendations on the makeup of the council. We also made recommendations which were implemented for restructuring of dues allocations to the various chapters. This is important because dues allocations are a major source of revenue to the various chapters of the club. Up until the time that my committee had been studying this matter, they had a two hundred plus-one dues allocation formula. I don't know when they established that formula, but what it was was basically that every chapter would get \$200 a year plus \$1 per member. Then I think it was in about 1969 or so we had a dues increase for the club. My understanding was that there was an agreement that a certain amount of that increase in dues money would go to the chapters.

RS: Our dues allocation committee made a study of the allocation process. Our club organization had really begun to evolve to where the groups were being recognized as another level of organization in the Sierra Club as a whole. So, the dues allocation formula our committee developed recognized that there were really three things to consider in the allocation. The allocation still recognized the number of members in a chapter, but it also recognized the geographical size of the chapter and, therefore, the problems of communication within a chapter. It also recognized that you had groups, and they required some financial support within the chapter. The new allocation formula, in essence, split the available funds on a basis approximately seventy percent based on the number of members in the chapter; fifteen percent for the number of groups, and fifteen percent for the geographical size. So that type of allocation gave a great impetus, or a significant impetus, to the formation of more groups within the Sierra Club.

I think at the time in the Angeles Chapter we had three or four groups. We probably had half of the groups in the whole Sierra Club. I think today we've increased the number of groups within the Sierra Club to 200. The Angeles Chapter has eleven today. I think that we pushed the idea of groups because the club was growing. When I joined the club in 1951, I think, there were 15,000 members. Today we're almost 150,000. The Angeles Chapter was 9,038 when I was chairman, and today it's 19,000. So in seven years it's doubled its size. I guess the club increased ten times in size in about twenty years. We had to have another structure and the thought was to add the group structure. That was my opinion and that's what I've always pushed.

Since we are discussing the national club organization, in 1969 I was regional vice-president for the Sierra Club. At that particular period, I think it was Phil Berry who was president shortly after the Brower controversy. He conceived the idea of having personal representatives, called regional vice-presidents, who could represent the president of the club. This was to reduce some of the work load on the president himself, and allow him still to be a volunteer. I served in that capacity for about a year. In 1970 I was a candidate for the board of directors. I guess my claim to fame at that time was that I had the highest number of votes for a loser that they had in a long time. I lost to Martin Litton, who of course had a tremendous

RS: reputation. I guess there were as many incumbents running for the job as there were available. That was my potential moment of being a member of the board of directors.

Politics of Sierra Club Elections

PC: On this question of running for office, you've said that you ran for the chapter executive committee, and now you mention that you ran for the board of directors. What is it like to run for an office in the Sierra Club? How does it compare to, let's say, someone running for political office?

RS: Of course, not having run for political office, all I know is what I see in the newspapers. At the group level everybody knows everybody and you don't have to campaign. They think there's something wrong if you do. They think you have an axe to grind. You can get elected if you show the initiative, and you have the attitude that most of the people feel is desirable.

At the chapter level, as a matter of fact, I think the first time I was nominated I was not elected. In recalling that now it seems to me that that was the year they had some electioneering in the chapter by the old guard. I don't think they were out necessarily to keep me from getting elected. I think that, perhaps, they were just concerned that things were changing, and some of them wanted to retain the right kind of people in the chapter executive committee. In fact, I remember writing a letter at that time to Dave Brower, the executive director of the club, complaining about this electioneering. It seemed somewhat un-Sierra Club-like to have these mailers going out advocating people. At that time it was a club, and people should look at the fellows' qualifications on the ballot and what they hear from friends and vote, and not necessarily make it a political campaign.

The second time I ran, the next year, I won very handily, probably just by virtue of things changing and my being more well-known in the chapter. I guess I did campaign, because I know I made a point of trying to appear at as many group meetings as possible. Groups gave the opportunity for candidates to make a statement

RS: to their members about what their objectives were, why they were running, and what they hoped to accomplish. I recall now stating my belief in the desirability of such things as a chapter council, and what the objectives of the chapter should be.

Later on, maybe about two years later, one fellow came up to me and said, "You know the time you were advocating about doing this and doing that, I thought that was sort of a put-on, well, not a put-on but you were just saying it like a demagogue," I suppose that is what he had in mind. He said, "Now, I know you really meant it, and you really tried to do it." That sort of made me feel good because I really did try to accomplish something there. I think that we felt that it was successful. It wasn't all my idea, by any means. I think I just seized what I thought were good ideas at the time, and added a little bit of my own spice, and it worked out pretty well.

Once you're elected as an incumbent in the Angeles Chapter at the chapter level, and frankly, at the board of directors level, it's not very hard to get re-elected. First of all, people know of you because you're in the publications that come out. People tend to vote for a known quantity, just like a lot of people voted for Richard Nixon, because they really didn't know what they were getting into with the opposition. I think to a degree that's true in the Sierra Club elections or any club elections when you have enough members so they don't know the candidate personally. So with politicking at the chapter level, you had to do a little campaigning. You really didn't have to do a lot of campaigning if the people knew you. You could probably sit back and get elected if you had really been out in the limelight.

At the national level, I didn't do much campaigning at all. I should have, I suppose. There was a group in the San Francisco Bay Area, which had been part of the CMC, Concerned Members for Conservation, which was a carry-over from the Brower controversy. It represented the side to which I belonged and they put out a flyer for me. They had a sort of a slate; Leonard, Sill, Wendling, and I were on the slate. I got a fair amount of votes up in the San Francisco Bay Area but I got very little support down in southern California. Maybe I was a little bit embarrassed to ask people to form

RS: an organization to advocate my election. I don't know how well I did in southern California, but I certainly didn't go out and appear at a lot of meetings or anything.

I think that when you get to the national level, people look more at your status and conservation record, whether or not it is a good indicator of your abilities or potential. They see if you've been active, if you've written books on conservation, if you've been some sort of a scientist in charge of some ecological study, or if you've been in some conservation campaign. For instance, if you've been the head of the campaign, say the Grand Canyon campaign, you automatically get a ten percent advantage over somebody else. Anyway, my activities have been more toward the making of the organization, providing the environment, and towards outings. As a result, I don't think I pulled as many votes as I could have. If I had been able to cite that I'd been the spearhead for the drive to save San Jacinto or something like that it would have been better. I suppose on the other hand, there's no use trying to create an illusion about that sort of thing. I wasn't going to try and make people think I was something I wasn't. Anyway, the result was that I pulled in 15,000 votes, which is pretty good for a runner-up, since a lot of people won on that number of votes in previous elections. Somebody else got 16,000 or 17,000, and that was it.

So as far as campaigning is concerned, even at the national level you don't get elected by having a concentrated campaign and going around for the last three or four months. You get elected by taking over certain committees, or by being the head of the Sierra Club council, or by getting articles in the Bulletin. You do this for a period of about a year or so. There are several people on the board today who are motivated to help the club, but they also do it because I think they have a personal drive just to have the recognition of being on the board of directors. They've put themselves out to be more visible before the membership's eyes so that they would be in a position to get the votes necessary to be elected. I think all of the people on the board certainly are qualified to be on the board. There's no question there, but they got there in some cases by literally planning a campaign that lasted over a year. It's sort of a low-key thing.

Towards an Informed Membership

PC: Do you think the present way of mailing out a little booklet, having each candidate's qualifications in it, is adequate, or do you think something would express the various candidates and their views a little bit better to the large membership that the Sierra Club has now?

RS: Well, it's the best thing I can think of. I don't think that there's anything that would come across that is adequate in order to have a really informed membership. We've tried having candidate forums, and they turned out to be duds, if they're like those in the Angeles Chapter. Unless you've got a big controversy going you're not going to drag the membership out. If you've got a membership where only about twenty percent go on the outings, you can't expect that other eighty percent that doesn't come on outings to go down to a meeting someplace. If you can't get them to go someplace to see the candidates, hear them, and ask questions, and you're not going to take time on the radio to get at them that way, then the only thing left is to send out this kind of information. Now, I suppose each candidate could finance his own little mailers, or something, but on the other hand that perhaps is somewhat undesirable because then your ability to pay would influence your likelihood of being elected. So I think this ballot information is the best thing we have.

I think they should improve the ballot information. It's good they have a picture of the person. Perhaps, it gives you a feeling of knowing the person, and it's good they provide a statement. I think they could improve the information on these statements, though I don't know how. The candidate is going to say what he wants the people to hear. It would be nice if some dispassionate individual could analyze the performance of this person and also provide that information.

PC: A legislative analyst.

RS: Yes, something like that. If you could come up with some means of defining how one fellow ranks with the other candidates. It would be like the conservation voters' index that they publish about people in Congress-- but that has its faults too. It would be interesting

RS: if you could say how this fellow stacks up in the various things which would make it likely for him to be a really good board of directors member.

Another factor, too, is that the board of directors ought to have a number of disciplines on it. What if it turned out to be all lawyers, or they all had been campaigning for conservation, but there was not really anybody who had much business sense, or sense of organization, assuming that the two don't go together, necessarily. So there is a question about getting a good selection and mix of candidates on the board. I think that is probably not too serious a problem because you only have about five per year in over a period of three years or so, so you're bound to come up with a number of candidates. The way we select our candidates for the board is probably of equal importance to how the election information is disseminated about these people.

PC: Are people nominated by the nominating committee or by petition?

RS: Most of them are by a nominating committee. The committee comes up with a list of candidates. I think it's usually something like two more than the number of offices, something like that. That's preferably in September or October, but no later I think than in December. Then there's a period of time for petitions for nominations. That's another thing that was sort of interesting. Up until about 1969 or so, twenty-five signatures was sufficient to put forth a candidate for the board of directors. They've increased it to one percent of the number of votes cast in the last election, which brings it up to a more reasonable number. Anyway, the two things that are important are the nominating committee and getting a good selection of candidates.

Another problem is there are many people who would be very excellent members of the board, but they just can not provide the time. They can not spend the time to be on the board, or if they're on the board, they could not assume a position of responsibility like the presidency. This has been a problem increasingly so from 1950, because the club is becoming such a large organization. That automatically excludes a number of people who would possibly be much better than the average president of the Sierra Club. They can not accept the positions because they have a demanding livelihood.

RS: However, again, the alternative is to pay a person to be the president, and then I think you run into other problems when you start paying people to be the officer of the organization. So I don't know a good answer to that. It's wrapped up in many factors.

The Club's Loss of Tax Deductible Status

PC: Perhaps now we could go more on to something else that you may have been involved in on a national level, like the Sierra Club Foundation and the problem with the Internal Revenue Service.

RS: The Sierra Club Foundation was related also to a degree to the Trustees for Conservation and the Internal Revenue Service. The interrelations are sort of an evolution of an increasingly aggressive posture on the part of the club over the past ten years. We lost our tax deductible status back in 1966. This was not a surprise. It came about as a result of an increasingly aggressive approach by the club and its policy, and to a certain extent as a result of Dave Brower driving it forward. As I recall, it was recognized a number of years before that because of our advocacy of conservation issues we could lose our tax deductible status. Of course, Dick Leonard* would remember much more of this than I. It's my impression that we formed something called Trustees for Conservation. At that time it was formed so that you could give money to that group and it would not be tax deductible but they could use it for lobbying type of activities.

Then later on I think they formed something that became the Sierra Club Foundation, which was a tax deductible organization. That was formed before the Sierra Club itself lost its tax deductible status. It was the idea that if the club itself lost its tax deductible status, you would have the foundation still for the big donors. So I think there was a certain amount of foresight in forming those organizations. By doing that they were available several years before 1966, and by being available, they could receive these donations. Then they, in turn, could allocate money to the Sierra Club itself for projects which would be tax deductible type projects. You know they could not

* Interview with Richard M. Leonard, conducted by Susan Schrepfer, Regional Oral History Office, 1976.

- RS: give the club money to go out and defeat senator so and so, but they could give the club money for things such as oral history projects, or for conservation education projects, things of that nature.
- PC: Were you involved in the formation of this in any way?
- RS: No, I really wasn't. What I'm telling you is what I've understood and heard.
- PC: Did this losing of tax deductible status influence the way in which the allocations of money in the Sierra Club was going to go?
- RS: It would be my feeling that it didn't have a tremendous effect. I suppose after we lost our tax deductible status we became a little bit less concerned about certain efforts associated with advocating legislation for conservation. If you talk to Lewis Clark or some of the other people who have been on the board for some time, they probably could come right up with the answer. It was my impression that we didn't see a sudden change in the club policy. We'd already assumed a posture which some people in the government interpreted as going too far, and we lost our status. That didn't turn us around. After we lost our status there was no turning back.
- PC: It certainly didn't affect you on the chapter level?
- RS: No, it didn't affect us on the chapter level, partly because the chapter did not and still does not receive that much in donations. The chapter's main income is from the dues allocation, from its publications, and from small donations. Small donations are not affected by tax deductible status particularly. The Angeles Chapter at least a few years ago had about a \$50,000 annual budget. Dues allocation might be \$8,000 to \$12,000. It's probably more than that now, like about \$20,000 a year, when you have an \$80,000 budget. No, it didn't affect the chapter level of activities except insofar as it might reflect upon the tax deductible status of the national club. We had to follow the board policy, naturally.

This matter of losing your tax deductible status is sort of a lead-in to the situations that did develop in the club. Starting at a slow rate in 1950 when Dave Brower was appointed executive director, and sort of

RS: growing in 1963, 1964, and 1965, we developed a situation say in 1966 and 1967, where Dave Brower became increasingly independent, as far as following policy of the board. He was a very militant individual, or a very aggressive individual in regards to accomplishing his objectives. In essence, when he felt that he knew how things should be accomplished, or what should be done, he had a great tendency to go ahead and do it. If he got around to telling people what he was doing, it was more by way of informing them what was going to happen. He would not ask for the board's advice and consent unless he wanted their additional support, for what it was worth. Now I'm expressing my own opinions here, and to some extent, the opinions that were expressed to me by other people.

This more aggressive posture in time, no doubt, gave the club more visibility to the national government, and to certain senators and congressmen. Eventually, when the Grand Canyon controversy came along, if I remember correctly, what sort of broke the camel's back was when we put an ad in the newspaper concerning the Grand Canyon. As the story goes, Morris Udall had breakfast with the director or somebody in the Internal Revenue Service the day after the ad came out. The next day they announced that they were going to investigate our tax deductible status. That's about it as far as the IRS business is concerned. We lost it. We never got it back. We considered various alternatives such as going to court and trying to make a case of it. I think the club two or three years later decided it wasn't worth going all the way to the Supreme Court. We would have spent a lot of money, and we didn't necessarily have good hopes of winning the case and getting our deductibility back.

THE DAVE BROWER CONTROVERSY: "CIVIL WAR" IN THE SIERRA CLUB

Some Points of Conflict

Paul Clark: Have you ever met Mr. Brower personally?

Richard Searle: Oh, yes. I certainly have met him a few times. Actually, I guess it was back in 1964, or 1965 or 1966, when he was appearing around the country and when I was chapter chairman. He would come down here and give talks. Being the chapter chairman I would be sure to be there and to assist in any way I could. I also used to record his talks. So I had occasion to meet him on those occasions and also while attending the board of directors' meetings.

I think that as far as this matter of the controversy goes, the development of the situation began when Dave first became executive director in 1950. He developed a greater independence from the board of directors as time went on. This independence resulted in his initiating programs on his own. Initially, perhaps, it was a scope far greater than the board of directors was led to expect. The publications program was his baby. He spent a great deal of time on that, perhaps to the disadvantage of some of the other club activities. In essence, he increasingly tended to go his own way. If he thought the project was worthwhile, he'd go ahead and do it, even if he didn't really know how we were going to get the money to accomplish it.

There were several episodes that occurred over a period of time which brought this problem to a head. I will mention the sorts of things like the Galapagos books, which were a part of the publications program. I think there was also another period of time in the

RS: publications program where ostensibly he arranged to have members of his family receive a certain percentage fee for books which were published. This included at least one case where he was to receive ten percent of the royalties on a book published by the club. That was part of the contract that he offered. This was not felt to be quite appropriate since he was a paid employee of the club heading the publications program. The books that were being published were not necessarily his books. Then there was another issue which brought the problem to the attention of the public. This was the Diablo Canyon issue. That happened over the period of 1967 and 1968. At that time Dave took a viewpoint which was in opposition to the majority of the board of directors. He did not remain neutral on the issue, and this resulted in considerable controversy. He actively supported the minority in the board and, as it developed, encouraged the election to the board of members who supported his viewpoint.

PC: How did he influence the elections to the board of directors?

RS: There were a certain number of members on the board who supported his viewpoint in regard to Diablo Canyon, and he encouraged their disruptive activities. That would maybe be the central thing that sort of brought this controversy to a head. I might mention here the background to the Diablo Canyon issue. Sometime in the earlier 1960s, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company was looking for a location for a nuclear power plant along the south central coast of California, north of Santa Barbara. More specifically, P.G.&E. was trying to find an area which was remote enough so that it did not constitute a hazard to a local population. Also, they wanted to find something which would be acceptable to the conservationists or environmentalists. P.G.&E. had been working with a couple of the members of the board of directors. Among these was Will Siri,* who was president of the club at the time they were in contact.

One of the options was Diablo Canyon, south of Point Buchon, which I think is south of Montana de Oro State Park and a little bit north of San Luis Obispo. I believe Will Siri had stated, partly on the basis of information from Kathy Jackson, who is a member of the Sierra Club in that area, that Diablo Canyon was

* Interview with Will Siri in process.

RS: not that great an area as far as the environmental aspects were concerned and that it would be a location that the Sierra Club could live with. That attitude was partially a result of a feeling that by allowing P.G.&E. to build their power plant in that area some of the pressure on the Nipomo Dunes would be relieved. These dunes are a little bit farther south where, I think, another power plant was being proposed for construction. Apparently there was some understanding between Siri and P.G.&E. that the Sierra Club would find Diablo Canyon acceptable.

The issue came before the board of directors in 1966, and at that time Diablo Canyon was approved by the board as an acceptable alternative site for a nuclear power plant. Then Martin Litton--as far as I know, he was not at that meeting, though I think he was aware of what the agenda was going to be--took exception to that decision of the board and actively tried to get it reconsidered. In fact, it was brought up for discussion a number of times.

In any event Dave Brower took the position that the Sierra Club should not go along with letting P.G.&E. go forth with this development. As far as I know, he encouraged people like Martin Litton and Fred Eissler and some of the others on the board to oppose the board's direction. There was a group of people that formed the ABC committee, which basically represented Aggressive Brower Conservation. This committee then became increasingly active and put ads in publications of the Sierra Club supporting candidates for the board of directors.

PC: This is a pro-Brower group?

RS: Yes. This sort of thing developed in 1966 and 1967. As I say, Brower supported and encouraged it in various ways. There were some people on the staff who also supported the ABC people. In essence they were giving it support in opposition to the board when there was already established board policy on this matter. The issue was brought up a number of times.

The Diablo Canyon Referendum and the Half-Bulletin

RS: In 1967 the club had a referendum on the Diablo Canyon issue. The campaigning for that particular referendum

RS: was that we should reverse the policy of the board in regards to Diablo Canyon. There were a number of things which were done which were not ethical. Among these was the so-called half-Bulletin issue. Part of the Sierra Club Bulletin was to have an explanation of the pros and cons of the matter of the Diablo Canyon. Hugh Nash was the editor of the Sierra Club Bulletin. Well, for whatever his reasons, Hugh was anxious to get the Bulletin out before the elections, and Will Siri, who was to write the argument in favor of the board's position, was somewhat slow in getting his write-up in. So what happened was that Hugh Nash, with Dave Brower's acquiescence if not encouragement, proceeded to start the publication of the Bulletin with just the one side against the board's position. They left another part of this Bulletin with essentially a blank page saying, "This is not a complete issue, since we did not get the argument from the other side, but we wanted to bring you the facts so that you'd have something in time for the election." Well, this was some time in February or so and the election is usually on April 12.

I remember being at the board meeting when the fact that there was a Bulletin being issued with this one side of the debate in it created quite a sensation. Brower implied that they wouldn't do that sort of thing, but the next thing somebody held up an issue of the Bulletin and said, "I have it here." What was found was that they had several hundred copies already printed in the club office. Here then was a situation where the president had to get up and essentially order the printing to stop. I think some of those issues did get mailed out. In fact, I think Ansel Adams* may have received a phone call from home when his wife or somebody received an issue and observed what had been done. So anyway, the president had to personally intervene and almost take over the publication of the Bulletin to insure that the full Bulletin did go out to all members with both sides of the issue. George Marshall was president at this time.

PC: You remember this board meeting when this happened?

RS: Yes, I do. There had been a lot of controversy or argument leading up to that. The board had studies commissioned by Alan Carlin and Larry Moss, not the current conservation director, Larry Moss, in the Sierra Club, but another Larry Moss who later on became a

* Interview with Ansel Adams in process.

RS: member of the board and president. We had had rather spirited if not acrimonious arguments at several board sessions previously on Diablo Canyon. It finally came to this issue of having the club vote. I do remember, as I say, people like Ansel Adams being quite incensed at this unethical conduct by the staff. I guess his feeling was way beyond that. Ansel Adams in a number of letters I have said, in essence, "Fire the son of a gun!" This was some time before the Diablo Canyon issue.

Diablo Canyon was the thing that got all the publicity. It wasn't the final thing that resulted in Brower having to resign. There was a problem of fiscal responsibility. Dave a number of times had committed the club to publications programs which resulted in the club being more and more in the hole. There was quite a hue and cry about this. The club had certain permanent funds which were not supposed to be encumbered, and yet, the loans we had to take out had indeed encumbered these permanent funds. So we got into a very serious financial situation.

Finally, in January 1969 Dave put another ad in the New York Times announcing a new publications program: an international series of books. There had been, however, a number of problems leading up to that. By that time Ed Wayburn was president of the club, and Ed suspended Dave Brower. He felt that he could not control the gentleman any more. Dave decided at that point to take a leave, so to speak, and run for the board.

Slate Politics: CMC vs. ABC

RS: In the previous July of that year, we evolved the CMC, the Concerned Members for Conservation. This was because of the ABC committee and its tactics of trying to get people elected to the board. I guess the ABC's activities were in 1966 and then 1967. I want to be sure, but I think that in the 1968 elections, a number of supporters of Brower had been elected to the board. As a result, he had a majority of supporters on the board. One of the things that increased the concern of many of the members, or shall we say the chapters, was in September 1968 Dave and some of his people actively supported the formation of the Santa Lucia

RS: chapter. It appeared that this was so they could gain support of another chapter in the political arena, and give Dave Brower more support.

PC: Where is the Santa Lucia Chapter?

RS: It is north of the Santa Barbara Chapter. It was originally part of the Santa Barbara Chapter. What happened was that a group up in that area had taken a position on Diablo Canyon different from the Los Padres Chapter. Perhaps they had even been promised by some people that someday they would be a chapter. In any event these people were very pro-Brower and they said they would have to be a chapter. They did not have good relations with the Los Padres Chapter executive committee. As a result, they were supported for chapterhood by the Brower faction. Essentially, the entire Sierra Club Council recommended against the formation of another chapter in that area for several reasons, including that it was too small a group to have sufficient leadership. It was not a very large area. We had about twelve California chapters already, and there were about twelve others all over the nation at that time. However, the majority of the board overruled the recommendation of the Sierra Club Council on this matter.

I think this greatly incensed many of the chapter leaders. All of a sudden it was apparent that the majority of the board was no longer responding to or sensitive to the concerns of the chapters. They were perhaps doing something more for, I'll use the term, political gain to support Dave Brower and put him forward. Frankly, he could conceivably have been the paid president of the Sierra Club someday. There was a real concern that they might push through some sort of a change which would ultimately put him in a permanent position as paid president of the Sierra Club. Perhaps the club, like some of the other conservation organizations, would become less of a membership controlled organization. That certainly turned a lot of people against what was happening and generated a lot of concern and support for this CMC organization. Things went from that.

The CMC began to get a number of donations. From that point quite a campaign was waged for the 1969 elections in the club. Maybe I can get to this a little bit later, but the net result was that it was probably

RS: the closest thing we've had in the club before or since to a real all-out political ding-dang battle because I am sure the funds that were spent on campaigning were somewhere in the range of \$20,000. Mailings went out to all the club's members, and we were up around 50,000 or 80,000 members.

The CMC, which was the side I was involved in, had tremendous support from most of the club leadership, certainly the large majority of it. We organized such things as mailers where we had every past president of the Sierra Club advocate the slate which the CMC was sponsoring. This slate was essentially to restore responsible control to the board of directors. Anyway, to put it very briefly, in the 1969 election we wiped them out. That is, the CMC defeated the ABC slate. Even Dave Brower failed in his bid for election to the board of directors. Of course, that brought quite a turn in the direction of things as far as the club was concerned.

Although I was aware of these general problems which I have sketched, the Diablo Canyon issue in late 1966 was probably the first thing that really gave me serious concern. I think my early inputs, as far as this problem was concerned, were from Bob Marshall, who was active in the Sierra Club council and was much closer to some of these problems that I was in the early days. It was Bob's opinion Brower was a meglomaniac. I think the next thing that got me quite concerned was the half-Bulletin issue that I mentioned in the Diablo Canyon controversy. Then after the elections in 1968 when the ABC people put a number of their people on the board, it was yet even more of a serious concern.

Earlier in 1967, perhaps late in 1966, I started to distribute information to chapter leaders in the southern California area, primarily in the Angeles Chapter. This information was about what was going on. I initially started by doing this in my position as secretary. I would include various documents, letters or memorandums and so forth, of what was going on in San Francisco documenting these problems involving fiscal irresponsibility and the Diablo Canyon issue, the London office, and the Brower ten percent royalties issue. This information included a good deal of material from Dick Leonard who had a very great mind for detail and also happened to be secretary of the Sierra Club at

RS: various times. I distributed this information to all the leaders in the Angeles Chapter, starting early in 1967, and to a degree I think it sort of shaped the attitudes in the Angeles Chapter.

As far as public statements about what was going on, Bob Marshall was the first one to come out on that. I think it was in December 1966 that he wrote a letter in essence accusing Dave Brower of being irresponsible. It happened to be that Bob Marshall was also a candidate for the board in the election which would come up in 1967. It was a courageous thing for Bob to do, as I mentioned before, because Dave at that time was still sort of a hero in the eyes of many people, and he had been magnificent in the conservation battles, like the Grand Canyon battle. So, Bob came out dismally in the election, partly because they remembered him as the fellow who dared to say that Dave Brower was not almost next to Jesus Christ as far as being a great man.

Anyway, getting back to myself, I did start distributing information. I know that I, as chapter chairman in the "Chairman's Column" of the Southern Sierran, put out some expressions of my concerns--not so much about Dave, but about the Diablo Canyon issue and taking a position that the board of directors is vested with a certain amount of responsibility in making these decisions. I felt that the board minority had gone way beyond the appropriate means in supporting their case. The same points had been brought forth many times over and yet they were unwilling to drop the issue, and they had not brought up any new information. In essence, it was just turning into a battle to get Dave Brower into a position of greater power. I guess this was in March of 1967 when I took that position.

The ABC had publicity also and in 1968 they elected more people to the board, including Larry Moss, Luna Leopold, and Phil Berry. Later, when he realized what was going on, Phil Berry turned around and opposed Brower.

The Campaign for Concerned Members for Conservation, 1969

RS: CMC had a slate including Ansel Adams, August Frugé, Maynard Munger, and Ray Sherwin. Later on, in addition, we had Ed Wayburn. This is the slate we ran in the

RS: 1969 election. I mentioned that in the fall of 1968 things really warmed up. I think we had two mailings, and this is a typical piece of literature that was put out. We had a number of other supporters, some anonymous. Ansel Adams, however, was never anonymous in his position about what was going on [laughter]. In fact, he had a number of radio and TV interviews about the issue. We got press and TV coverage in the Bay Area, in particular, concerning this controversy.

PC: Could you describe this sample piece of literature?*

RS: One part of this brochure is "Anatomy of Crisis--Documented Facts." Some of the headings include "Financial Problems", "Book Publication Losses", "Conservation Budget Slashed", "Focus on Dave Brower", "Profligate Spending", and "Brower's Libel Threats". Dave did threaten some of us. He had his lawyer or somebody send us "If you don't cease and desist from saying these things I'm likely to sue you" sorts of letters.

PC: Did you receive one yourself?

RS: My wife received one. She was the editor of the Southern Sierran. We didn't worry too much. One of the supporters of the CMC, Bestor Robinson, offered to defend free anybody who might be sued by Brower. He was a lawyer, but he wasn't a member of the CMC. He felt that there was no substantive case for Brower and part of his donation for the cause was free legal service if it was ever needed.

To continue with this brochure, "The Sierra Club's greatest resource: Membership," was an advocacy for the need for membership participation. It sort of emphasized the fact that it's a volunteer organization and the role of the volunteer has to be maintained. We were getting to the position where it could well be that the club would be run by a paid staff and the volunteers in essence would be directed, rather than directing, in making the basic decisions. This was part of our platform.

This piece of literature had a list of endorsements, and it included every previous Sierra Club past president except for one we'd forgotten about. His name was Francis Tappaan. After the mailer went out somebody realized or looked up someplace and discovered his

* See Appendix, p. 60.

RS: name was missing, so we called him up and asked if he objected [laughter]. Of course, we got to him before the ABC did, not that I suppose it would have mattered anyway. He would have supported us. It was a very impressive thing. I think that this particular document and another one that came out later like this influenced the membership considerably. It appeared to be and was from very responsible people who had been solid citizens of the Sierra Club.

Of course, there were mailings by the ABC also. Perhaps what happened is a lot of people said, "I don't know who's telling the truth." They saw all of this stuff coming out and they were confused. "Who am I to believe?" I think this was the thing as far as the bulk of the Sierra Club membership was concerned. Those who had not been receiving all the details were influenced by the fact that we could say that every living past president and all of these leaders of the various chapters endorsed the CMC position. There was a much smaller list of people on the other side of the chapter supporting the ABC. It probably tipped the scales very predominantly. The membership probably thought, "I don't know what all the details are, but it's obvious to me that these are responsible people." So I think the endorsement served to a great extent in influencing the membership. In fact, we had people like Ansel Adams and others like that who were well-known conservationists from way back.

My wife started reporting in the Southern Sierran what was going on in the board of directors meetings. We put in rather lengthy reports, a couple of pages worth, describing and even quoting sections of the meetings where the various statements about what was going on were made.

PC: Were you personally at these meetings?

RS: Yes. I was at these meetings. In fact, I have tape recordings of most of the meetings.

PC: Were these meetings acrimonious sometimes?

RS: Oh, sometimes they were. Nobody got around to shouting epithets or anything like that, but they were pretty forceful. They were not always very gentlemanly, and I think there was some very stretched out logic used by people depending on whose side you were on. Incidentally,

RS: there was a beautiful parody written about Dave Brower's behavior. It was called "Prometheus Unboundaried". It was written by Phil Berry. Look it up sometime. It was a good description of Dave's behavior.

I was sort of the head of the southern Californian activities for the CMC. It was in 1968 that we got the Southern California CMC going. I remember after an executive committee meeting in the Angeles Chapter that there were three or four people, besides myself, who were on the executive committee who were quite concerned about this problem. I was getting quite concerned that nothing would be done unless somebody got something started. As I recall, when we adjourned the meeting I asked these people to stay. I said, "We've got to do something about the situation in San Francisco." One of the people there was Alan Carlin. I said, "Alan, I want you to be treasurer of our organization." Then there was a fellow there named Ed Ostrenga who was a chapter member. I think he was on our executive committee at that time. Of course, Ed had been coming up with all sorts of advice. I said, "Okay, Ed. You go ahead and get a mailing out on the chapter level. Put up or shut up." He put up. He got it out. I worked with the organization up in northern California. They had a fellow named Jim McCracken that put this brochure together. There were a number of other people. I think Claire Dedrick was quite involved in the CMC. Ann Van Tyme in southern California was also involved in the organization. I spent most of my time in liaison work, feeding information down here. We got information in the Southern Sierran.

Presenting the Campaign Issues: Some Misgivings

RS: Before the 1969 election there was one episode which I don't feel real good about as far as my participation. That was a matter of the publication of the Southern Sierran. Up until about a month or so before the 1969 election, we had thought about the possibility of mailing to all of the members who were in the Angeles Chapter an edition of the Southern Sierran. I think it was the February meeting of the ex-committee. At that time I didn't think it was necessary to spend the additional money and I think my feeling was let's not do it. Alan Carlin was in the ex-committee at that time

RS: and advocated very strongly that we put out one edition of our Southern Sierran to all members and explain what the situation was and what was going on in advance of the election. We discussed the issue, and a motion to distribute the newspaper to everybody in the chapter failed.

Subsequently we had another meeting of the board of directors when things got very bad. Possibly at the time Brower was suspended, or at least when we were in pretty dire straits, and it turned me around. It probably was appropriate to spend the chapter money to support the newspaper's going out. We reversed our position and voted to approve the distribution of the Southern Sierran to all of the chapter members. I think the unfortunate thing is that we did not publicize this to the ABC people. It wasn't hidden or anything like that, but it did not literally have inputs from the ABC people.

Of course, it had quite an impact on the chapter membership. A lot of them had seen some mailings but they also got the Southern Sierran. Even though I think the presentation of what the situation was was a pretty good presentation and relatively factual, it probably would have been a little bit more fair to give the ABC people an opportunity. I think there might have been a little Machiavellian intent in not actively pointing out to them that the next issue would be sent to everybody. It sort of dropped on the ABC people like a bomb. I know they looked in the minutes of our previous meeting, and it said something like "no action was taken".

Gil Deane and some of the other ABC people took exception with our minutes and said we tried to purposely hide the publication of the Southern Sierran, and that we had decided with malice and forethought to put this edition out in such a way as to hide the issue; that we had purposely changed the minutes so that they did not properly represent the situation. There was some noise about a recall election, but the recall attempt was a fizzle. In retrospect I think I would have preferred that we would have gone out and made a point of asking these people or telling them that this edition was going to everyone. It really would not have made much difference in the upcoming election.

I have been tape recording all the chapter executive committee meetings, and I had all the tapes of the

RS: meetings where we had discussed these matters. Both when we thought about sending out the chapter newspaper and subsequently when we reversed our position. That is, the first time when we voted and it failed, and the second time when it passed. I've wondered since that time why the people who were complaining did not ask to hear what the tapes were like because they could have heard the substance of the discussion. I still have those tapes today. Of course, time has passed so the issue is no longer that significant. I don't know if it's worth ever listening to. It probably would confirm the general scope of what went on.

In this issue of truths and mistruths, as far as the CMC was concerned, we tried to keep our information pretty factual and I think we succeeded overall. There was nothing that the Brower supporters could challenge for not being truthful, except for one thing I'll mention. There was nothing they could really challenge because there were witnesses to most of the statements that were made and all they could argue about was not the fact as a fact, but the interpretation of the fact. For instance, in the matter of the Galapagos episode, the ten percent issue, we had copies of the proposed contract.

There was another issue where Brower had signed a petition which would have put on the ballot an issue which would essentially eliminate the Sierra Club Council by breaking it into little regions. In effect this indicated that he was anti-volunteer organization. We had all of those papers, and I've got these books here full of that stuff, which someday I'll give to the library when they are ready for them, and when I'm finished with them.

However, there was one item on one of our brochures. We made some claim to the effect that Dave Brower spent club funds on a Christmas party. As it turned out, it wasn't clear whether it was for a Christmas party or whether it was for legitimate expenses for entertaining a publisher or something like that. Anyway, that is one piece of information I don't think we were ever able to substantiate. At least, I never saw the substantiation for it. Dick Leonard said he had seen the check. The Christmas check was publicized and the ABC people asked "What about that? That isn't true. Show me."

RS: Well, it never went very far. I think that was one piece of information that was ill-advised and perhaps not well substantiated. It could have been a real problem if there had been many of those sort of things. Fortunately, it wasn't a very important incident, but you like to think your campaign was pure and everything you said was pure truth, when in fact, there were a few distortions here and there. I think overall, though, the CMC was pretty darn honest in presenting the facts, even though they probably were as heated in their opposition to the other side as anybody. They probably thought pretty dire thoughts about the opposition at various times.

PC: You said that you were head of the CMC in southern California. What was going on in the other chapters?

RS: As far as organizing activities in the other chapters, except for the Bay Area, there wasn't anything like we had in the Angeles Chapter. I had communication with the chairmen and chapter representatives for the council from these other chapters. There were a number of supporters from these various areas. I'm sure they were doing things. There were a couple of mailers. For instance, newsletters in some of the other southern California chapters went out. I did not really direct their activities. They did a lot of those things on their own initiative. I think a lot that they did was based on information that I supplied from the CMC and other sources.

I received a lot of my information on this from Dick Leonard. He was a prolific supplier of information. Ansel Adams provided a fair amount of information. You could pick up information from a number of other sources. August Frugé provided inputs also. August had been the head of the club publications committee. I think he was the director, or maybe is still the director, of the University of California Press. That's partly the reason he was so involved in the Sierra Club publications program, by virtue of his expertise. He had first hand knowledge of many of the problems in the publications program. He felt many were a result of Dave Brower's actions.

The other people in the ABC down here, like Les Reid and Gil Deane, did become active after the CMC became active. They did arrange an ABC-CMC debate. As a matter of fact, we had Phil Berry and Will Siri

RS: for CMC. Dave Brower and Larry Moss represented the ABC. Those were the main people who came down for the debate. We had two or three public meetings also. We had another presentation where we had our candidates come down and present their positions. The ABC had a separate public meeting where Dave Brower appeared, presented his position, and answered questions.

PC: Were these candidate nights well attended?

RS: Yes, as a matter of fact they were. Like I say, we generated a lot of heat. When I say well attended, maybe 300 people showed up, which means most of the chapter leadership and a number of curious members of the chapter. There were other debates held. At least one debate was held up in the Los Padres Chapter in Santa Barbara, which I attended. I've given recordings of that to the Bancroft Library through the Sierra Club Oral History Committee already. At that time I recorded all of the debates that went on and most of the board meetings.

Considering the 1969 Election Results

RS: I guess the thing that I might mention is when the vote came in 1969, the vote in southern California was eighty percent against Dave Brower. It was five to one, so we really got him smashed down here. It was about sixty or seventy percent or something like that in the Bay Area, where the ABC was a lot stronger.

There was a lot of energy that went into that campaign, and to a degree it's a pity we spent so much energy on that issue. It probably would have won us three or four conservation campaigns, but it had to be done under the circumstances because the club would be greatly different in character.

In fact, one might consider what would have happened if the CMC had not succeeded in turning the election. What if Dave Brower had indeed won the election, and he had been elected president of the club and his supporters had been elected as well? When I think about it, the chances are that maybe they would have done well for awhile, but Dave, I understand, is not a great organizer in spite of his reputation. I think that organization

RS: would have fallen apart, and the people who could run it would have taken over eventually. Dave Brower was slated for a fall one way or another, anyway, and it would have taken two or three years more if had won this election. He would not have fallen the same way. The club would have been in a difficult financial situation because of the policies he would have tried to promote and somebody would have had to step in. Somebody or a group would have had to step in and pick up the pieces. We probably would not be where we are today, but we probably would be in the path of the direction that we are going today. Dave, after the election, resigned from the club. He stated that he would resign if he lost the election. He's now with FOE--Friends of the Earth.

PC: He's president of it, isn't he?

RS: Yes. The organization is, I guess, doing okay. They have had their financial difficulties, and it hasn't blazed across the sky as the shining light of conservation, which shows that the organization depends upon people. One man can help it an awful lot, but he can not make it go by himself. Dave has a lot of charisma and he inspires people, but he is not necessarily a person to organize an organization and keep it going. You've got to have other people to do that.

Post-Election Changes: Binding the Wounds

PC: Now that there have been five years since this civil war, as one may say, in the Sierra Club, has the Sierra Club bound its wounds as you have seen it?

RS: First of all, I'd say things are going very well as far as binding the wounds. I think that when Dave Brower resigned and left, the ABC people felt that that was the end of it. It was a foolish thing to think that they could do something next year to bring him back. He was all set up to go into his own organization. They decided to form Friends of the Earth, as I mentioned, so he sort of had his little thing to do. He really was getting what he wanted in a way. He had his own organization and he probably had much greater power. That took the heat off.

RS: The second thing is that there was really no philosophical difference in regards to conservation, except maybe for the Diablo Canyon issue. Maybe the board made the wrong decision there; maybe they didn't. But even during the campaign for the most part there was no philosophical difference in the general club attitude towards conservation. I think that was stated by a number of people. Brower many times tried to foster the attitude that we were companions on the trail, that the people behind the CMC were a bunch of socializers on the outings, and that he was the true gospel of conservation. I don't think that really sold and I don't think even the ABC people really felt that.

As soon as Dave left, all except the most rabid individuals pulled together and started working on the problems at hand. Even the ones who had been the most vehemently opposed to the CMC or supportive of Brower after a year or two became more active in the club. For instance, Les Reid, who was with the ABC, eventually became chairman of the Angeles Chapter. It took a while. He is somewhat of a "holier than thou" individual on conservation issues. That's the way he impressed me. He is really a fine individual. However, he sometimes makes pronouncements as if they're the gospel, and I think there's another point of view. The point is that we didn't lose our ability to work with each other.

I remember after the elections that there were some people who had been rather personal friends and had taken the opposite viewpoint. Some of them came over and said, "Well, now that the election is over we'd like to restore our friendship, or at least let bygones be bygones." I think initially we worked together and tried to avoid those topics which had been the cause of the problem. We worked on the things we could work on together and eventually the old issues just disappeared because there was no philosophical difference in conservation. There never had been any problems in regards to outings policy. By that time the questions, like eliminating the Sierra Club Council, had long ago been buried. In many ways I don't think the club really has been set back by it. I think, in a way, it grew a little bit. I think there was a greater awareness of chapter level input. I think there was some resurgence of volunteer officer participation in making decisions.

We got Mike McCloskey who replaced Dave Brower. He is very aware of the position of the members of the

RS: club and working together with them. He is not an individual who is aggressive for personal gain and he has a personality that made it quite possible for the membership to work with him. He has certainly made his recommendations. He strongly proposes some approach, but once the board has made a decision, as a paid executive director, he is ready to do his best to implement the policy. He also recognizes the value of support at the grassroots level. You just don't have enough money to pay everybody to do your work. So I think he's worked well with the volunteer officers--the members at large. I think that helped a lot to restore working relations.

We have had our problems since that time. One was a national reorganization committee recommendation in 1970 or so. Mike McCloskey was the executive director of the national club when I was a member on this reorganization committee. In essence, I guess they thought that McCloskey was not aggressive enough, or that good of an administrator. They wanted to improve the ability of a volunteer president to really run the organization. What they did was come up with a recommendation for a paid president. A volunteer president, among other things, would receive some pay for his work. They also recommended having a chief administrative officer who would be over McCloskey. In essence, this would have been a demotion for McCloskey. McCloskey responded by saying, "I'm not going to continue as the executive director if I have to work under those conditions." The whole issue sort of flopped because McCloskey had been doing a pretty good job.

I was on the committee that came up with that recommendation. In retrospect, we really didn't have very many meetings and, frankly, I don't think the work was done very well. In retrospect, I feel as though it was almost a railroad job in regards with coming up with these recommendations. We had a few meetings and something came out. I don't think we did our homework very well, and when I look at it, I think that I was taken in a little bit. The recommendations the committee had would never have flown anyway. They may not have been the best recommendation. It looked like it was a vehicle to get Phil Berry in, perhaps, as a paid president. This really would not have been too much of an improvement over Dave Brower, except that Phil Berry would have worked out a little bit better as far as being president of the organization. So, anyway,

RS: that one flopped, and I guess that's been about the only thing that came up subsequently; that was maybe five years ago.

Since that time we have been a pretty stable organization as far as the organizational structure. We've instituted other programs which have an effect on board membership. We've instituted a program where you can not serve consecutively more than three terms. Then you have to take a term off. The point is that it caused more rotation of membership on the board of directors. I think this was probably good because it brought more people to the board of directors, and yet it provided ample time for somebody to get used to the organization.

There was a concern that they would lose a lot of the experience from the board, with the loss of people like Ed Wayburn. But when Wayburn had been off the board for a year, then he was re-elected. If a person is really good he can get re-elected if he really wants to be nutty enough to be on the board of directors for that long. On the other hand, if he gets on the board and doesn't perform very well in some way, he may lose a subsequent election, but at least it brought new people up. There are plenty of qualified people for the board of directors. So that's one of the other sort of changes in the general functioning of the club. It's not an organizational change, it's just another somewhat subtle change to improve the organization.

So here we are today. I guess the little things are the same. We're still playing our little games in the Sierra Club Council, and people are still advocating various kinds of changes. I think somebody is again advocating now that they take the Sierra Club Council and break it into regional sections. This is not a popular idea because it is going to further isolate the board from the grassroots. At least what's good about it is that they are experimenting with ideas, and I think that's going to continue to be the name of the game for the Sierra Club as far as how long it really exists as an active organization.

VARIETIES OF SIERRA CLUB SERVICE

Oral History Interviewer

Paul Clark: You seemed to have been involved in the Sierra Club History Committee. Could you tell us about that aspect? Were you involved in the organization of that committee?

Richard Searle: No, I was not in the organization of it. I do not know how long the history committee has existed. I think it's been a number of years. The oral history aspect, maybe, is more recent. My participation started with Phil Bernays.* I'd known Phil Bernays for a period of time partly because of the Brower controversy. He had written me a letter indicating, I think, how much he appreciated what I was doing in regards to the club. We developed a friendship from a few meetings, and I was really concerned about Phil getting his story on record because he was a very lucid individual. He is the longest member of record in the Sierra Club. He joined in 1905, and he knew tremendous amounts of history. He had a very sharp mind. I had an interest in history, so I asked him if I could interview him. This was back in 1967 or so. It was right in the middle of that Brower controversy. It was an excellent interview. I figured someday I'd probably give the tape to a library or something like that, but I wanted to get his story on record.

After about two years I noticed in the Sierra Club Bulletin that they had this oral history group forming, or they were looking for people to support it. I sent Phil's recording and I said I would be happy to help in southern California if any help was needed. I think they sent that recording to Francis Farquhar, who listened

* Interview with Phil S. Bernays, conducted by Richard Searle, Sierra Club History Committee, 1975.

RS: to it and said it had historical significance. They had never heard of me in the history committee, but I guess they really liked the recording. It had a lot of value. They wrote me and asked me to make some more interviews. I've interviewed Glen Dawson, Harold Crowe,* and George Marshall,** in addition to Phil Bernays. I'm slated to do Nathan Clark,** who is another past president here and I expect I'll probably be doing some more as time goes on. Oral history is a very interesting thing. When you have talked to somebody who has been around for a long time you sort of get a perspective on what's going on. It's a lot better than reading a book as far as I'm concerned, and you meet some very nice people.

Misfortune on El Picacho del Diablo

PC: Before we came in here we were talking about El Picacho del Diablo and your trip down there. Why don't we just talk about that whole experience there, and maybe even give the reader a taste of the experience?

RS: El Picacho del Diablo, at 10,000 feet, is the highest peak in the mountains of Baja California. Airline-wise, maybe it's about seventy miles south of the border and about ninety miles by road. I've gone on many different trips and different places, and one of those trips I went on was with a private group including Howard Stevens and a couple of other people. El Picacho del Diablo is also a peak that the Angeles Chapter Desert Peak Section climbs on. On this trip, in 1966 or 1967, we had a few adventures that made it a little bit different than usual.

First, you have to go about sixty miles on paved road and about thirty miles on a dirt road. Then you go into Diablo Canyon. You hike about fourteen miles up this canyon, and you start going up at maybe about 15,000 feet and end up at about 8,000 feet in this canyon. Now, that isn't the end of the climb. You can do it in a four day weekend. If you're a real iron man

* Interviews with Glen Dawson and Harold Crowe, conducted by Richard Searle, Sierra Club History Committee, 1975.

** Interviews with George Marshall and Nathan Clark in process.

RS: you can do it in three days, but four days is more appropriate. The first night you usually drive down there. The second day you go up the canyon. It's a boulder strewn canyon, by the way. We calculated we stepped over 40,000 boulders. It gives you an idea of what we were going through.

Anyway, on that particular trip I was in a private party, but the Desert Peak Section was also going. They had a party of maybe forty or fifty people. It was a big group. Both parties wanted to climb El Picacho del Diablo the same day, which would be the second day of our trip. That was on the Thanksgiving weekend.

At that particular occasion the main party, the Desert Peaks Group, had one fellow who came down with what was apparently a heart attack or a stroke. They were up around 8,000 or 9,500 feet. The peak is about 10,000 feet, so they were maybe about 500 or 1000 feet from the summit. However, they were also about 1,000 or 1,500 feet above their camp. The situation was of course somewhat demoralizing to the group. They gave the individual artificial respiration, and everything they could do, but there was no revival after an hour, so they decided that he was dead. The leaders decided to go ahead to the top of the peak and take a few of the other active members with them. They left the rest of the group there, which I don't think was really a very good thing to do in view of the state of the group's morale. Some of the leaders should have stayed back, even if some of them could have climbed to the top.

The party that I was in was nearby, and the remaining group members called and asked me to lead them down. This was because I did have some reputation for being a leader and mountaineer. Also, being chairman of the chapter at the time, I guess they figured I was the authority around there. By that time the weather was deteriorating very much. It was drizzling. In fact, higher up it was sort of sleet. Even though this was Thanksgiving, in Baja California at 10,000 feet, you can still get snow. Anyway, we had an interesting time coming back down there because there were clouds, then sunshine, then rain, and then fog, and everything else all the way. However, we did manage to get the whole group all the way back down to camp at about 8,000 feet. All our spirits improved some as we got closer to camp.

RS: It was, shall we say, an interesting expression of faith in my leadership having them ask me to do this for them. I guess that is part of life. The next day we hiked on out to where the cars were. About three-quarters of the day we were going through the rain. We were very fortunate that nobody slipped or had any kind of an accident on the way out. Indirectly, this fellow who had died, if he was going to have a stroke it was well that he died right away, because if we'd been up on the mountain there, and if he had just been incapacitated, it would have been a very difficult situation to evacuate him. I'm not sure if his chance of survival would have been any greater if he had been gravely ill because we were up in an area where a helicopter could hardly land, and where it would be very difficult to bring the man down on a stretcher. We would have had to build something up.

When we started to drive out that night, we found out we could not get out because it had rained quite a little down in the Laguna Salada, the dry lake. This lake that had been hard ground had suddenly become quite muddy. We had to wait another day until it had hardened up enough and then drive on out from there.

Incidentally, getting out we proved the efficacy of using chewing gum to stop leaks in gas tanks. The car I was in was rather low-slung and a rock which was in the mud knocked a hole in the gas tank. So we all started chewing gum like mad and stuffed it in the hole, and would you believe, it got us all the way across the border?

The only other other follow-up after that is that we didn't climb the mountain that trip so we went back there again in the spring; I think it was Easter. At that time it was excellent weather. We did make the summit. It was a small private party in this case that went. On the way we did establish that the body of the individual who had died was still there. However, the time before he had been covered with a tarp. Subsequent to that time when we were going out on the first trip, we had met a party of some Mexicans. They had created sort of a grave by piling up boulders and putting a cross over his body. We observed that. A few months later I had to send a letter to the insurance company to assure them that indeed the person had died there and a body was there. Apparently they needed proof of death. That, incidentally, is probably the only

RS: outing or trip I've ever been on where anybody has suffered a fatal injury, or any significant injury at all.

Well, that's my experience as far as the Baja trip is concerned. It's a fairly rugged trip. It seems to me that a few years later they had another trip, and somebody broke his leg and somebody else broke his ankle, and there were all sorts of problems getting out of there. That trip can be hazardous to the participants. You are out in an area where if you get into trouble it's quite an operation to get evacuated. People have been evacuated. It has been done a number of times, but it is figured to be pretty expensive if you have to pay for the cost. So that's Baja as far as my experience is concerned.

PC: My experience in climbing this peak is that just before you reach the summit there is a chute which you have to go up. Is this grave below this chute?

RS: Yes, the grave is below the chute called Wallstreet and a little bit to the south. You go up from Componche.

PC: Componche is the camp?

RS: Right. You go up from Componche and then you cross over this semi-open area heading north east. Then there are several chutes that go up to the summit ridge. The one on the left is the one that you eventually go up. The gentleman's grave is somewhat over, maybe a little bit more towards the center of this area, going into several chutes. He had been near the base of the next chute over from Wallstreet on a little platform. I think they hoped that they might be able to evacuate the body and that was a good place to leave him if that was decided.

I had the duty of notifying the widow that her husband had died, which I did when I got back. That wasn't pleasant, but she took it with considerable fortitude, which made it a little bit easier all the way around.

Well, we've covered BMT. The Sierra is a very large category. I don't think there are very many places in the Sierra Nevada I haven't seen, at least from a distance, leading trips both with the Sierra Club and private trips.

PC: Are there any memorable experiences on these trips that you would like to relate? How about wildlife?

RS: Well, I've never had a confrontation with a bear. That's another thing I have been lucky about. I don't think that I have ever had a bear make off with my pack. That's happened to plenty of people I've known. We've had some interesting experiences, like up in the Little Yosemite area where we were camping once. We always used to string up our food if there was any hazard at all. I remember being up there near Merced Lake and seeing this bear go by one day. Then I saw him turn around and go back to Camp Merced. We went over to this area where he had a little storage depot. Those bears in Yosemite are pretty smart because the bear was bringing in all sorts of food there. He had jars of honey and everything else. Some he had chewed into. We could tell that he liked Rich-Moor food better than Dri-Lite food because he was eating most of the Rich-Moor and the Dri-Lite was still there [laughter]. I guess that's my experience with wildlife--the bear type. I'm not an expert on animals. I mean, I can tell a deer and a bear, and some of the birds and so forth.

As far as Alaska is concerned, I went to Alaska on a family trip. It was very enjoyable but there's nothing notable about that. I've gone down to Cabo San Lucas on the road a little bit before they paved the last 200 miles and I recommend the trip. I've hiked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. I can not say I've had any notable experiences other than that it was very enjoyable. I have got to admit I don't think I've done anything on trail maintenance other than always try to leave just footprints.

PC: Have you had any experiences with the Sierra Club lodges like Harwood Lodge here in southern California?

RS: I do not really recall if I've helped with the maintenance, but I have stayed in the lodges. I've never been responsible for the committees as such other than from the standpoint when I was chapter chairman.

PC: What does the chapter chairman do in conjunction with these committees?

RS: Well, he's the chairman of the executive committee and he appoints, with the executive committee's approval, the chairman of the various other committees. In the

RS: Angeles Chapter the lodge committee is pretty much self-sustaining. They usually reappoint the chairman and that's probably the extent of it. The committee here in southern California runs the Harwood Lodge and also the other lodge out there towards Big Bear in Keller.

A Personal View of Some Sierra Club Leaders

PC: You had the opportunity last weekend to go to the Sierra Club banquet.

RS: Oh yes.

PC: At these banquets, is there anything that has impressed you in any way?

RS: One banquet I enjoyed was the seventy-fifth jubilee in 1967. That was one of the most interesting ones because we had quite a commentary. Phil Bernays, among others, recited his experiences in the club. That's also when Norman Clyde talked. I remember, at that banquet, he started talking and they had a hard time stopping him. I would not say there is anything too special about the banquets. It's always nice to see all the people who you have not seen for at least a year. It brings a lot of people out of the woodwork.

PC: Since we are talking about some people, perhaps have you had the opportunity of meeting Mr. Farquhar?*

RS: Yes, I have.

PC: I was wondering if you could give us an assessment of what you think he has done for the Sierra Club, and how you think he will be remembered?

RS: Well, I am really not qualified to give an assessment because I have met him only a couple of times. I have been in his home for a period of time for a meeting. What I know about him is from some of the books he has published and the fine thoughts that others have expressed. I think certainly from what I have heard

* Interview with Francis P. Farquhar, conducted by Ann and Ray Lage, Sierra Club History Committee, 1974.

- RS: and from his books, that he is going to leave a legacy to the club--a great legacy in terms of his publications and his dedicated service. There is no question about that. It has been more well documented by other people who knew him much better. I think he falls in the same category as Will Colby, dedicating much of his life to the club. Both of them are great people.
- PC: How do you assess a person who has just become the honorary president, Harold Bradley.* Have you ever met Mr. Bradley?
- RS: I've met him and I know Ruth Bradley also. I really had much more contact with his wife, Ruth Bradley. That is really the extent of my meeting him. I've met a lot of Sierra Club leaders. I've worked closely with a few of them. At the board meetings and at the council meetings you sort of circulate. You talk to all of these people about problems, and then there is maybe five or six people that you work with very closely by virtue of being involved in these issues. That's when you get to know these people like Ruth Bradley, who was quite concerned with the Brower controversy. That's where I had several occasions to meet her. She was also the head of the Awards Committee. She may still be. I had some occasions to talk with her on that.
- PC: Are there any individuals on the local chapter level that you feel have done exemplary things that should be mentioned.
- RS: Bob Marshall has done a wonderful job. I think we've generally had good chairmen for the chapter since myself. They've all had their attributes. There have been some people who have consistently worked within the chapter. We have what they call the Phil Bernays Award for continuous long term service. Irene Charnak has been with the chapter many more years than I have. She has been a dedicated person for the chapter for many years. She's never been a chairman or anything like that, as far as I know, but she has put in a lot of work in at the headquarters. I think we've had so much talent that I would not really want to pick any one person out and say that he was a shining light. I think we have a good chairman in Robin Ives. He's had a lot of experience and he's a very good conservationist. He's been around a long time and finally arrived as far as

* Interview with Harold Bradley, conducted by Judy Snyder, Sierra Club History Committee, 1975.

RS: chairman. He was sort of a contemporary of Bob Marshall in many ways, living fairly close to him. He was much aware of what was going on in the chapter. We certainly have in the last ten years in the chapter a new group of people doing things. The change was occurring about the time of Bob Marshall and myself. You might say that was certainly a turning point. It's just like plowing the earth and turning it over and finding a whole new field of plants.

Prospects for Continued Involvement

PC: Is there anything else that perhaps we haven't gone over that you would like to mention before we close for the evening?

RS: I suppose it's appropriate to close with some sort of an expression about what the future might be like. My feeling about the Sierra Club and its structure is that as long as it retains a strong element of volunteer support, and as long as the club maintains a policy of, shall we say, being a leader in the field of conservation, but not being so far ahead of everybody else that they are lost sight of, the club is going to be a very important influence in the environmental movement in the United States and to a certain extent internationally.

When I talk about being a leader, what I'm trying to say is that the club will be very effective in conservation in this country if it maintains a posture which is in advance of the present state of environmental protection, but not so far in advance that the mass of the thinking people are left way behind. I think if the club follows that sort of policy and leads the nation, but isn't considered a radical organization in the eyes of the thinking people, we are going to continue to be quite a leader.

As far as the Sierra Club in international conservation is concerned, there was a period of time when people were thinking of us going international. I don't think we hold allusions of being a conservation organization like a United Nations of conservation. However, I think we do have an opportunity, as in the case of the Sierra Club of Canada, to encourage the formation of similar organizations in other countries and perhaps

RS: develop some spinoff. I hope this is recognized by a good number of leaders in the Sierra Club as the direction we should go. That is, to foster similar organizations in other countries and not necessarily have a board of directors that tries to run the world.

I look forward to the Sierra Club continuing to be an effective organization. I don't consider, by virtue of having this interview, that hereby I'm not going to be active in the future. In fact, with the kids in college and when they get out of college and I've got a little more time, maybe I'll get back into the Sierra Club swim a little bit more than I have in the past. At least, I always like to think I can. In which case maybe the upper echelons will start hearing from me again. That is as much of a prognosis as I care to make at this time.

PC: Well, I'd certainly like to thank you for taking your time to have this interview for the Sierra Club and also for the Oral History Program at Cal-State Fullerton. I certainly hope that I do hear more of you in the future.

RS: I'm flattered that somebody thought to ask me for an interview at this ripe young age of forty-six years [laughter]. Maybe I'll have another interview in twenty more. Thanks a lot, Paul.

PC: Thank you, sir.

APPENDIX

All living Past Presidents of the **SIERRA CLUB**⁶⁰

Join with these Dedicated Members—

Angeles Chapter

Robert Van Allen
Robert T. Ives
Mr. and Mrs. John Mendenhall
Richard Searle
Bruce Collier
Kent Lovelady
George Shinno
Howard Stephens
Dick Jali
Alan Carlin
Evelyn Gayman
Dick Worsfold
Edward P. Ostrenga
John Thornton
Chas. Wilts
Robt. Dailey
Ruth Schrader
Jack Oliphant
Dr. Louis Wheeler
Jean Sanders
Dick Tooley
Murray Rosenthal
Dr. Robt. Funk
Irene Charnock
Kay Thomas
Fadil Mehmed
Gordon MacLeod

Santa Lucia Chapter

Kathleen Jackson

Los Padres Chapter

Peter Hearst
Ann Van Tyne
Dorothy Otto
Gene Marshall
Marshal Bond
Shelton Hicock

Riverside Chapter

George Shipway
Forrest Keck
Carl Cable
Bob Bear
Dr. David Cubberley
Richard Fleming

Loma Prieta Chapter

Walter Ward
Robert Geisler
Melvin and Eleanor Johnson
Albert Draper
Frank Duveneck
Morris Feinleib
Dave Geddes
Walter E. Hays
Herman Horn
Claude A. Look
Earl Roberts
Chas. and Helen Scull
Melvin Wright
Kent and Claire Dedrick
Gene Waller
Dorothy Marquard Kincade
Del Dow
Philippa Pfeiffer
Helen Gobar Berchtold
James Wheeler
Bill and Louise Freedman
Beth Harper
Elizabeth Rempel
Eleanor Wilkins
Leigh Ortenberger
Phil Flint
Pat Barrentine
Lois C. Hogle
Dorothy Varian

Redwood Chapter

Ben Cummings
Milton Hoehn
Maurice Wood
Sergei Spiridonoff
Charlotte Stevens
Reginald Rood
Bob Whiting
Isabel Parkinson
Albion Whitney
Noel and Mary Stevenson
Clark and Josephine Nattkemper
Ray McDuffee

Kern-Kaweah Chapter

Lanphere Graff
Wesley Sanderson

Beverly Steveson

Glenn Beerline
Joe Fontaine
Wylie L. Jones
James W. Clark

Tehiplte Chapter

Bob Board
Floyd Lobree
Norman Poitvin
Charles Sehrs
Edwin Daubs
Anton Nelson

Tolyabe Chapter

Howard Booth
Fred Montmorency
"Smoke" Blanchard
Richard Sill
Harold Klieforth
Thomas Hoffer
Samuel Houghton
James Planakis
Phil Bettler
John Houghton

Mother Lode Chapter

La Verne Ireland
Milton Hildebrand
Homer Ibser
Gary Pichon
Virginia Newman
Lloyd Fergus
Bill Bethell
Wes Dempsey
Rudy dePolo
Fred Holmes
Jim Lague
Chuck Miller
Bob Ross
Bruce Kennedy

S.F. Bay Chapter

Tom Jukes
Dick Monges
Dave Michener
Jim Watters
Harold Sharp
Ramona Wascher
Raffi Bedayan

Scott Fleming

Nina Eloesser
Hazel Egget
Francis Walcott
Ted and Mary Abeel
Larry and Jeanne Maders
Maryann Danielson
James Dodds
James McCracken
Carl Weisner
Harold Sharp
Gordon Peterson
Elizabeth McClintock
Ned Robinson

John Muir Chapter

P. J. Whipperman
Bill Beverly
Emily Earley
Norman O'Neill
J. J. "Doc" Werner
Dan Roark
Bob W. Smith

Lone Star Chapter

Orrin H. Bonney
Paul Hull

Rio Grande Chapter

Col. Henry Zeller
Bob Watt

Rocky Mountain Chapter

Andrew N. Smith
Roger Morrison
Bernice Esty Hicks
James E. Bryant
Dr. W. V. Kittleman
Laney Hicks
Mr. John L. Harper
John P. Barker

San Diego Chapter

Howard and Harriet Allen
Loris and Ivy Foster
Karl and Mary Swedelus
Henry I. Mandolf
Nicholas Keough
Aubrey Wendling
Bill and Ellen Phillips

Atlantic Chapter

Murray Chism
Edward Little
Robert Shull
Roger Marshall
Alfred Dole
Leonard Rothfeld
Richard Williams
George Lotgren
Mrs. M. W. Dendy
Lawrence Coveney
Mrs. G. C. Young
S. H. Babcock, Jr.

Southeast Chapter

Irving Delappe
Theodore Sanford
Nicholas Clinch
Adolph Amster

Hawaii Chapter

Oliver Emerson

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E. Stanley Jones
Richard Sill
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H. Stewart Kimball

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Harold C. Bradley
Lewis F. Clark
Nathan C. Clark
Harold E. Crowe
Francis P. Farquhar
Alexander Hildebrand
Joel H. Hildebrand
Richard M. Leonard
George Marshall
Bestor Robinson
William E. Siri

to recommend that you vote for—

Ansel Adams August Frugé Maynard Munger Raymond Sherwin

—in addition to
Edgar Wayburn

for the
SIERRA CLUB
Board of Directors

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Active in Redwoods Nat'l Park
and Wild Rivers Legislation.
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Judge, Superior Court. Led
brilliant Minaret Summit
highway battle. Expert in
conservation through law.
Climber.

*—in addition to
Edgar Wayburn*

for the

SIERRA CLUB

Board of Directors



Anatomy of Crisis — documented facts⁶²

The worsening crisis in Sierra Club affairs demands close attention by members voting in the coming Board of Directors election. Internal rifts have been growing for years, but in 1968, when David Brower first had a sympathetic majority on the Board, problems became much more severe. Pro-Brower candidates in 1968 campaigned with mailings and advertisements in violation of existing policy. Several sound candidates were defeated by these means.

The confusion attending the present Sierra Club crisis clearly shows that members have been kept in the dark too long — hence this report.

Financial Problems

The Sierra Club's finances are in genuine difficulties. This was apparent last Spring when Pres. Wayburn appealed to all members for special donations to keep the Club and its programs alive. In the first ten months of 1968, the Club spent \$274,000 more than income, and worse yet, the net worth of the Club was down to \$390,000 on Oct. 31. Even the Sierra Club Permanent Fund of \$427,000 (for the protection of Life Memberships and support of long-range conservation work) is sadly impaired by \$300,000 in bank loans and insufficient net worth.

Book Publication Losses

During this same ten months of 1968, the publications program alone lost \$129,000. In the previous five years, publications have lost a total of \$230,000 according to the audits by Farquhar & Heimbucher and by Price Waterhouse & Co.

The great value of books as one of many tools in planned and concerted conservation battles remains unquestioned. But during the last five years, publications have tied up over \$1 million in funds, with most of that (\$631,000) in book inventory and thus unavailable for conservation and other purposes. Clearly, books should be published only when they can be justified on conservation and economic grounds.

Nevertheless, it has been Mr. Brower's practice in recent years to proceed with production of an unapproved or disapproved book and to later present the Board with a *fait accompli*. The Board must then either approve the book (after the fact), or risk direct confrontation. Brower has usually won the showdown.

Conservation Budget Slashed

The Sierra Club conservation budget last year was originally set at \$402,000 but was slashed so that only $\frac{3}{4}$ of this figure was actually available for critical conservation tasks such as the **North Cascades, Grand Canyon, Redwood National Park, and the Wilderness Act.**

The effect of such cuts can be tragic, as for example in the case of funds to support important wilderness land classification studies. Of the \$18,000 originally budgeted for 1968, only \$3,900 was actually available. Mountain and forest lands that might have been secured forever under the Wilderness Act of 1964 may instead feel the bite of the logger's saw; the shovels, scoops, and crushers of modern mining technology.

Funds for the 1969 conservation budget will be even smaller; the budget draft figure for the year

being \$271,000. The amount actually available could be much less, and conservation's cause greatly weakened as a result.

By contrast, publicity for books quickly ate up the 1968 budgeted \$240,000 and then gobbled up \$60,000 more. Conservation has clearly suffered at the expense of producing and selling books.

Focus on David Brower

For more than ten years, Brower, as Executive Director, has supplied the chief motive power for the Sierra Club. His energy, ambition, and will to succeed have led the club to many victories. But increasingly over the past few years, those qualities have turned into arrogant self-will, and to an obvious desire to have total control of the Sierra Club.

It is disagreeable to report that the present crises and problems of the Sierra Club mainly revolve around Mr. Brower. Without his support, the Sierra Club's embarrassing Diablo Canyon "gyrations" would not likely have come before the public to spoil the Club's prestige and image of responsibility. Without his practice of spending vast sums for unapproved projects, the Club would not be in such serious financial difficulties. And without the latter, the Sierra Club could have been much more effective in important conservation efforts.

Profligate Spending

The best known of Brower's recent unauthorized expenditures is for a $1\frac{1}{2}$ page ad in the New York Times (1/14/69) advertising an international book program that had not been approved by the Board of Directors. The price of the ad was first set at \$10,500, but other preparation costs raise this figure to over \$16,000. The ad was prepared by a San Francisco public relations firm. The same firm's office was used as the site of Brower's press conference and Board election campaign kick-off on Feb. 7, 1969. The firm has been on retainer to the Sierra Club for \$20,000 per year.

Recently it was discovered that Mr. Brower had apparently contracted for the making of a movie film about a wildlife sanctuary in the Indian Ocean. Such a project had not been approved by the Board; neither the President nor the Controller knew anything about it. The issue came to light only when the film maker's attorney in England filed a demand to the Sierra Club for payment of his client's claims.

It was also recently learned that Mr. Brower has spent Club funds for bills at a San Francisco restaurant in Nov. Dec. 1968 averaging over \$500 per month, and over \$1,800 in conservation funds for a Christmas party.

Brower's Libel Threats

When some local Chapter newsletters began printing facts (such as the above) about Brower's irresponsible actions, Brower's personal attorney in Dec. 1968 wrote letters threatening editors of newsletters with libel suits unless they withdraw from efforts to inform the Club's members. These threats were rejected by those who received them. No suits were filed — a clear indication that the threats had the sole purpose of intimidation.

The Sierra Club's greatest resource — The Membership

With thousands of dedicated supporting members and a cadre of active volunteers, the Sierra Club conveys its message with strength far exceeding the voices of its 70,000 members. Our brilliant successes in conservation—such as the Redwood and North Cascades National Parks— are the results of the Sierra Club's unique structure and tradition, which strongly emphasize membership participation.

Volunteers form the Club's legal staff, the Outings and Publications Committees, and local and regional conservation groups. Volunteers hold office at all levels of govt. from local Chapter posts to the Board of Directors and its President. All give dedicated service— without pay.

The paid professional staff is employed to advise and assist in all areas of the Club's endeavors. Our successes are not the work of one man alone, however charismatic, but derive instead from spirited but orderly staff-volunteer cooperation— and the flood of letters from thousands of members.

Control of the Sierra Club must never be taken from the membership. Growth of the Club can best be accommodated by strengthening the periphery—the Chapters—and not through massive centralized control at a single location. Only with membership control can the Sierra Club continue to attract vital membership volunteer forces in conservation and outings.

A Platform for Action Concerned Members for Conservation

—abridged text

- Vigorous conservation program with strong membership participation.
- Sound financial management with full protection of restricted funds.
- Balanced publications program closely tied to conservation and outings goals.
- Increased support of member activities in conservation and outings.
- Balanced and productive relationship between Board of Directors, Staff, and membership.

BALLOT PROPOSALS

CMC recommends

1. **Against** reversing prior membership decision on Diablo Canyon.
2. **In Favor** of protecting the Sierra Club's permanent fund.
3. **In Favor** of dues increase with Chapter allocation.*

* CMC endorses the Dues Increase provided that responsible men are elected to the Board of Directors and in control of Sierra Club finances.

CHAPTERS ENDORSE CANDIDATES

Many Chapter Executive Committees have now officially endorsed Ansel Adams, August Frugé, Maynard Munger, Raymond Sherwin, and Edgar Wayburn.

Chapters endorsing are:

John Muir, Los Padres, Riverside, Lone Star, Mother-Lode, Kern-Kaweah, Tehipite, Toiyabe, San Diego, Angeles, and S.F. Bay Chapter.

Loma Prieta Chapter endorsed these as well except that Nicholas Clinch was endorsed in place of August Frugé. Clinch has now withdrawn from the race.



Sierra Club volunteer conservationists in action— shown here discussing Calif. water quality problems with representative of the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration (1/69).

The SIERRA CLUB *must be preserved!*

Seventy-six years of struggles & victories in creation of Parks, and preservation of mountain wilderness — is only half the SIERRA CLUB story.



—by Carol Dienger



—by Ansel Adams

Rich and vigorous outdoor experience gives life-long meaning to a dedicated membership.

SIERRA CLUB Conservation must be increased —

— and not further diminished — as it was in 1968, and will be again this year because of profligate spending on unauthorized books and newspaper ads, a film, excessive restaurant bills, etc. (see — Anatomy of Crisis).

Parks wilderness and wildlife, air and water pollution, land use planning and conservation's role in restoring beauty to the nation's urban scene are among the mammoth tasks we face; all demanding more than we can give.

The Sierra Club's basic conservation efforts—to preserve the vanishing natural scene in the United States—must never again be diluted by irresponsible actions. Lofty aims, such as Mr. Brower's proposed 100 volume Exhibit Format series of books on international subjects, are nice to dream about but fail to recognize the hard realities of Club finances and our urgent domestic conservation needs.

WE NEED BOOKS — the right ones

We need good hard-hitting books on conservation subjects of immediate concern. In 1968, we needed books on the **Oregon Cascades, Storm King, the Everglades, the Allagash, Lake Tahoe, San Francisco Bay**, and a new book on the **Redwoods**—more books than we can afford. Instead, we got books on Central Park and the Galapagos Islands; while this year, we're told we'll get books on the Scottish Highlands and the Swiss Alps—a long way from the seat of our problems.

CONSERVATION RATES HIGHEST

A vigorous conservation program for the Sierra Club rates highest among the goals of Concerned Members for Conservation (see Platform). But first, as Ansel Adams said recently, **"Our greatest conservation goal today, is the conservation of the Sierra Club itself."**

Responsible men on the Sierra Club Board of Directors are the vital means to guide the Club from crisis to leadership in conservation.

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J. GORDON CHELEW

REFLECTIONS OF AN ANGELES CHAPTER MEMBER, 1921-1975

An Interview Conducted by
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California State University, Fullerton
Oral History Program

Sierra Club
History Committee

1976

SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

J. Gordon Chelew was born in 1890 in Ontario, Canada, and was a member of the Canadian Alpine Club before his move to Los Angeles in 1921. Joining the Sierra Club shortly after his arrival in southern California, he has since been on many club outings and has been active in Angeles chapter activities and hikes. Now retired, Mr. Chelew was in the retail lumber business for most of his working life.

His fifty-five years in the Sierra Club have brought Mr. Chelew into contact with more than one generation of club leaders, including Will Colby, Clair and Francis Tappaan, Phil Bernays, Francis Farquhar, and Dick Leonard, and have given him an opportunity to view the vast changes in the club during these years.

Mr. Chelew's Reflections were selected from an interview conducted on April 6, 1975, at Mr. Chelew's home in Los Angeles. The interviewer was Francis Leysack, a student in the Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton. The complete interview transcript and tape are deposited in the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley.

Ann Lage, Editor
Sierra Club History
Committee
April, 1976

REFLECTIONS OF AN ANGELES CHAPTER MEMBER, 1921-1975

Laying the Groundwork

J. Gordon Chelew: My father's father came from Marazion, which is a well-known port on the south coast of Cornwall. He emigrated to Canada sometime during the nineteenth century, and he settled in a place near St. Catharines, Ontario, which is halfway between Toronto and Buffalo, near Niagara Falls. They were farmers and on retirement built in St. Catharines, Ontario. For some reason my father moved up to a little town called Collingwood, on Georgian Bay, an arm of Lake Huron. It was a ship-building town at that time and that may have influenced him. He never was a farmer except when he was at home before he got married; then he became a carpenter. All nine children were born in the one house in Collingwood. I can remember details clear back to the time I was four years of age. The home is still there.

We had many happy memories as children. The winters in that area are very long and cold. We had stove heat, only. We just had a big round stove in the living room with pipes running up to the different parts of the house and a stove in the kitchen where mother did the cooking. The dining room was as big as the kitchen, so in the wintertime we moved the kitchen into the dining room to avoid the cold north winds that blew in off the lake. As a rule the winters started the first of November and lasted until the first of April. So there was a tendency in those days to live indoors and shut the windows and doors, including storm windows.

I spent some time in what we call the Muskoka Lake District, which is a great summer resort area in Ontario. Americans go up there by the thousands, because there

JGC: are five big lakes all joined together, and they go from one lake to another, canoeing, sailing and having a grand time. The air is pure. No mosquitos either, because of the area and the fact that there is so much water there and the wind, of course, blows them away. In February the temperature went down to fifty below zero. When I look back on it now, I think things like that must have laid the groundwork for my present health, which is good.

When I was ten, we moved to Toronto. When I was fourteen I went to work. I worked for a stockbroker, and then Dad got in the lumber business and he took me into the office with him. The rest of my working days were mostly spent in the lumber business.

We had heard of the glorious weather in southern California, warm sunshine, orange groves, lemon groves, walnut groves, and so on, and it sounded heavenly. During the fall of 1920, it rained for three weeks without stopping in Toronto, and that fixed it for both my brother and myself. I left Canada New Year's Day, and I've lived here ever since, with the exception of the trips I've taken.

In getting into the lumber business here in Los Angeles, I happened to get in on something that was just beginning to boom. There was a huge building boom starting in Los Angeles in the early twenties. There were no power tools in those days. Most everything was done by manual labor. I was in that until the stock market crashed in 1929. Then we had five years of depression; a bad time for most.

How I got interested in the Sierra Club may interest you. I read about the Canadian Alpine Club and I wrote to join them and they accepted me with the condition that I climb a mountain over 10,000 feet covered with a real glacier. The headquarters for the Alpine Club in Canada were in Banff. They had a camp there and I went out and stayed with the club on one particular outing we had up the Yoho Valley.

There are two waterfalls in the Yoho Valley: Yoho Falls and the Twin Falls. I came to the top of the Yoho, and there was a snow bridge across the river which was running at full flood. I was just about to jump on that and get on the other side when I stopped and thought, "This is July. Maybe the sun has melted that snow bridge

JGC: to the point where it just wouldn't hold me up." It probably saved my life because it was right on the brink of the falls. I graduated on the Vice-President, a peak in the Canadian Rockies that ran over 10,000 feet and had a large glacier on it. It was exciting for me.

When I came to California and applied for a job, I talked to the Hayward Lumber Company. Sam Hayward, by the way, is still alive and living in Pasadena and still a club member. That was in 1921, and he said, "Do you belong to any clubs or organizations?" "Well," I said, "I belong to the Canadian Alpine Club." He said, "Is that anything like our Sierra Club?" I'd never heard of the Sierra Club, so I made inquiries and found out they met Friday nights at Boos Brothers on Hill Street. That following Friday I went down. There was a large crowd of people and they had pictures and speakers. It was very entertaining, so I applied for a membership. At that time you had to be recommended by two members and passed by the membership committee. I became a member and from then on I was very active all through the twenties with the club.

Remembering Tappaan and Farquhar

Frances Leysack: Would you tell us about your trip with Tappaan?

JGC: Clair Tappaan was the leader of the outings during the twenties. Anyone who was there at that time and in the vicinity would agree that he was about the funniest man around. During the campfires, he would keep us entertained for an hour, hour and a half, just saying funny things. He was a big stout man, a judge at the time, and he went on all the High Trips until about 1929 when he passed away. At first he walked on the High Trips and then he had to ride a horse. He and Colby both later rode horses. He was a fine man, and so was Colby, as well as the others.

Tappaan took the club up to the Glacier National Park one summer. I didn't go on that trip but people who did said he was at his peak on that trip. I believe that was the 1928 trip. Anybody who's been around the club as long as I have knows about Clair Tappaan. He

JGC: was president of the club for two sessions, I believe, and he and Colby were great friends, and after he died, we all felt a sense of loss quite heavily.

Francis Farquhar I knew from the 1923, 1924 trips. One thing I remember about him, we were hiking over the High Sierra and we came to a river. The river was shallow enough to walk over and I was taking off my boots and he came along and said, "Ah, forget it. Jump on my back." So he put me on his back and darned if he didn't walk over that river with me and all my junk on his back. He was a big powerful fellow at the time. Farquhar climbed every 14,000 foot peak on the coast. He was club president twice.

High Trip Adventures

FL: Do you remember some of your high hikes, some of your experiences you had on them? Some of the mountains you have climbed?

JGC: Well, I believe, during the High Trip of 1927, Lewellyn Bixby and his son and another man and myself left the party with packs on our backs, and we climbed up to the top of Muir Pass and spent the night under a little tree. It rained all night, so we had to burrow down pretty deep to keep dry. The next day it was still pouring down rain and we headed out toward Goddard which is above Muir Pass, and went straight up from there. The rocks were huge. A heavy thunderstorm raged all day. They were more experienced hikers than I was at the time, and I was outdistanced, but made the top just as Norman Clyde came up from the other side of the mountain with a group of people, mostly women.

I had left my bag at the top of Muir Pass with instructions to the packer to pick it up. Of course, they walked right by, so I had nothing to eat from the bite of breakfast we had at daybreak until I got into camp at Shaver Lake. It was still pouring rain; I was drenched. That particular hike, I believe, was about twenty miles, including climbing Goddard from the pass and down again. I got into camp and everything was put away. Dinner was all over with and my bag was up on top of Muir Pass and I was just a lone waif, or so I thought of myself.

JGC: One of the packers heard about it, and he invited me to crawl under his tarp. I was very grateful to have a blanket and take shelter. But I'll never forget the smell of those blankets as long as I live! They were on the horses next to the skin during the packing and they had absorbed all the horse smell for weeks and apparently had never been washed. To this day, I can smell those blankets. However, any port in a storm. The next day the packers brought my bag down so I was able to get some dry clothes. I was wet to the skin for a good twenty hours.

* * *

I believe the most thrilling trip I was on was the first trip because the experience was new to me and the crowd was large and quite jolly. We had lots of fun. We used to pick out our own spot to make our overnight sleeping arrangements. There were a great number of sleeping places in some camps, but in others there were only a few. I remember camping one night under a big tree when a rain storm came up. I had some protection, but the lightning started flying. I got up in the middle of the night and dragged my sleeping bag away from that tree. High trees attract lightning and I didn't want to see it slipping down that tree and hitting me. Of course, when I crawled in, I was all wet, but you experience things like that.

On the 1923 trip, I think it was, we went into Giant Forest and down to the river. I'd have to look at a map to refresh my memory. We made our camp for the first night at the river. I heard one of the men say this end of the camp was for the men and the other end of camp was for the women and the married were in between. I always had a camera with me, so I thought to myself, "I'll get a picture or two."

I crossed over the river and walked around to make a big circuit around the camp, and, thinking I was walking towards the river, I entered a very densely thicketed spot to work my way back up to the river. I happened to look down and I was completely surrounded by rattlesnakes and every snake had his head up and was rattling. I froze. There were little snakes and big snakes; they were all ages. I had apparently run into a bed. I looked behind me and the place where I came in was the only clear spot. I edged backwards very carefully and got out of there and forgot all about the picture.

JGC: Up at the Chagoopa Plateau, I think it was on the 1923 trip, we were hiking along coming into camp. I was alone at the time, but about a quarter of a mile behind me there were several people. I stepped over what I thought was a rock and went on my way. I didn't know until later when the people coming behind told me that they had killed a four foot rattlesnake, that I had stepped right over it thinking it was a rock. Well, the areas up there in the High Sierra were prolific with rattlesnakes where there wasn't any traffic to amount of anything all year. So the wonderful thing you learned by experience was that you knew enough to look out for these things.

FL: What was the longest trip you ever took alone, the longest hike?

JGC: The longest hike on a trip of that type? Oh, I can't recall. Probably it must have been on one of the High Trips in which I'd wander off by myself and be gone half a day or something of that type. On the thirty day High Trip there were a hundred and fifty people. We had many packers and many mules, but they don't allow it anymore. In those days there wasn't the old cry about destroying the environment like there is today. But many years ago the club quit taking large groups of a hundred and fifty or two hundred people for that reason. There was too much foraging of the animals and destroying of the top soil and so on. A lot of other people used the mountains besides the Sierra Club and objected to very large parties of people all in one group and, when I look back on it now, I can't blame them. Our trips today are much smaller.

Stalwart Women of the Sierra Club

JGC: One thing that I remember very distinctly happened right out here on Mt. San Jacinto in southern California. The club had a weekend party near Idyllwild. We were to camp out overnight and when we got our camp set up, most of us went for a hike. There were several girls, four of them, I think, who were off by themselves and one of them let out a scream. The others ran to where she was standing. There was a five foot rattlesnake half in its hole in the ground and half sticking out of the hole.

JGC: The natural tendency is to hurl a rock and get the heck out of there. But these girls . . . one of them grabbed the rattlesnake by the tail and the others ran up to give her a hand. They yanked on the snake and the snake yanked back to get into the hole. They yanked and finally pulled it up. The fourth girl picked up a sharp rock and cut its head off.

That night we skinned that rattlesnake--I helped skin it--and then the others cut it up, cleaned it, and had it for dinner. There were about thirty people in that group at that time and I was the only one who didn't eat that rattlesnake or a chunk of it. I couldn't bring myself to eat it because I didn't think rattlesnakes were food. Apparently it tastes like chicken, so some people say. Now can you imagine that sort of thing? They were brave girls in the Sierra Club in those days.

Local Trips with the Southern California Chapter

JGC: In the early twenties about all we ever did was take a Sunday hike. We met down at Dawson's Book Store on Olive Street. There was a bus that used to take us on our trip . . . rattle all the way there and shake all the way back and sometimes boil over. But we'd pile into that bus and we'd sing all the way back. On every Sunday morning hike it was standard to meet at Dawson's Book Store and then go on the bus. Nobody ever thought of taking his car.

I remember one trip. I didn't know what I was getting into. It happened to be late in the season and the days were short. We hiked near the Mount Baldy area, over the top of the divide and down the other side. We came to where there was a road and the bus was supposed to be waiting for us. I had no flashlight. Also, I loafed a little bit on the top of the mountain and the others had all gone on ahead. There were fifty or sixty people on this hike. There were two young girls who had never been on a hike before and I could see these girls were having trouble. They didn't even have boots on. They wore shoes and the trails were very rocky. You get a lot of stones in your feet.

I picked up some of their load and carried it along. Darkness came on and we were still up on top of the ridge

JGC: somewhere. I had no idea where, except that I thought we were farther ahead than we were. It got so bad and so dangerous that I put my foot out before every step I'd take to see if there was a trail or just thin air. I thought, "I'll never be able to follow the trail down below in the canyon." So, when we came to the river, the three of us waded up that river to the point where the others were. You might say that was a rough hike compared to the way that they hike today. I believe that hike was about twenty miles. About four o'clock in the morning, we got to the spot where the bus was supposed to meet us. He brought us back and we got home just about in time to get washed up and go to work. That was a tough night.

About that time the word went out that the Sierra Club was a bunch of sissies, that they took little two-bit hikes. So a group of members got together and decided that they would kill that talk for good. They invited anyone who wanted to to go on a three day hike of sixty miles. There would be no stopping except to eat. They had three of these hikes over the San Gabriels, all sixty mile hikes. Tough hikes. Our best hiker--I have a picture of her here--led everybody, including the men, and later she had a heart attack. It made a lot of us feel badly because she was a wonderful person, a schoolteacher, and she was a marvelous hiker.

Now they had this experience to show that the hikes could be extremely strenuous. She made a tent for herself, a one person tent. People in those days were quite adaptable. They didn't go to a store every time they wanted something. Most of them made the things themselves. I remember a cape for a heavy rainstorm that could be carried in a small pouch. I still have it today. It's a cape that fits over your shoulders, has a hood and is waterproof. It will keep you dry in any kind of weather. So you might say that conditions are different today from what they were fifty years ago. It's hard for young people today to realize what it was like, but I must say, whether it was because I was a lot younger then or not, I looked forward to the hikes.

Building Harwood Lodge

FL: I wanted to ask if you would tell us a little about Harwood Lodge. I understand you had something to do with building it.

JGC: As far as Harwood was concerned, we used to meet in the Santa Anita Canyon area. We had a little lodge there, but the 1928 flood washed half of it away and the 1933 flood finished it. There had been some talk about building a good-sized lodge in a different area, further away and in a higher altitude. So in 1928 some of us got together. One of the men was a dynamiter and a builder. We took dynamite up to the top of the ridge to the divide, where the top of the ski tow is now. We blasted with dynamite looking for water all day. We never found any. Can you imagine doing that today with all the restrictions they have all through those mountains? Nobody even gave this a second thought. So we gave it up. Then they got thinking that it'd be better to build down lower.

By a fortunate circumstance, they made a deal with the Forest Service to build the lodge on its present site, high enough above the water, but much closer for everybody than it would have been up top of the divide. We do have the San Antonio hut at 9,000 feet if you want to get up that high. The present lodge at 6,000 feet is quite a happy occurrence and at the proper altitude for a large party to meet.

In 1930, after all the plans congealed, a group started going up weekends to build the basement. A few of the men who were active in the building of the lodge were Peter Van Oosting, Captain Kidd, Byron Graff, Art Johnson, Fred Schrader and others. Kidd was in charge of the foundation group. Everybody knew him, and they called him Captain Kidd. They added the Captain just for fun. He was a stonemason and had willing workers to go up there and gather all the rocks which you now see in the gigantic rock wall foundation and first story of the lodge. So we got the walls up. Peter Van Oosting, who worked for a lumber company, was instrumental in having those timbers in the living room brought up to the lodge, as well as the lumber.

We didn't have the present road in those days. It was a very narrow, twisting and steep low gear road. How they ever got those timbers up, I'll never know. There were not the many activities in the Southern California Chapter, as it was known at that time--now the Angeles Chapter--as there are today. There always seemed to be a good-sized party to go up to work on the lodge. The men did the work; the women did the cooking and the cleaning. Nobody minded working hard. We'd go up Friday night and stay until Sunday night. Others

JGC: would come up Saturday morning. Everybody pitched in.

I saw one party of two hundred people at that lodge. We were eating out on the front porch, in the main room and in the dining room and in the kitchen, anywhere we could sit or find a place. We decided that two hundred people was just too big a crowd. Then the Forest Service heard about it and told us that we couldn't have that large a party unless we built a dormitory. We decided to build it on the back end. This dormitory is actually the women's section with the dorms upstairs. It took seven years to build. It has a roof that will withstand an avalanche. At the time they thought sometime one might tumble down off the mountain which is right above us. So it is built staunchly.

The lodge has been a perfectly wonderful meeting place for club members over the years. It's forty-five years now since we started it. There's a committee in charge that meets every couple of months or so and decides on what has to be done. They appoint someone to do it and usually it's done correctly and properly.

We try to maintain the lodge and have occasional work parties, but the most fun of all are the regular parties. We have a number of them during the year, because the parties nearly always make money. The open weekends in which a few people might show up don't do so well. Usually, there's an overseer who stays there over Saturday night and then closes the place up on Sunday afternoon. You might say that the parties that start Friday night and end Sunday night are the most enjoyable feature about running the lodge.

A Senior Member Looks at the Sierra Club Today

FL: Are you active in the Sierra Club now?

JGC: Well, not too active. I go to the Sierra Singles that meets at the Westchester Women's Club. Sometimes I go to Harwood Lodge and I'm going to start going to the Department of Water and Power building for dinner every other Friday. We meet down there now. For years we met at Clifton's. The Friday night dinners always have entertainment and you get acquainted and it's very nice.

JGC: I was looking in the schedule this morning and I think I will take a few more trips this year than I took last year.

FL: What is your opinion of the current course of the Sierra Club and their activities today?

JGC: Well, they have so many activities that if you were to try to keep up with more than one group, you'd be spending a seven day week at it. I'm going to the meetings they have now, but they had nothing in the old days like they have today. You look in your schedule now and you see two or three or four pages of things to do on every weekend with all different groups. There's so many groups today that there are a great many strangers. You pick out what appeals to you.

It's a very large organization today. There were only four thousand members altogether when I first joined. There's a hundred and forty thousand today. They are all over, not only in California. They are in other states and also in Canada. So it's a conservation club or group today that's widespread compared to what it was in the twenties. In those days everybody, almost everybody, knew each other. We'd meet at Dawson's, maybe forty or forty-five people. Before you were through with the hike, some way or other you knew almost everybody there.

It has become a conservation organization primarily and the social activities are actually secondary. We're fighting the off-shore drilling and we fought the Alaska pipeline until the finish and we're fighting the Mineral King to a finish. We know it will destroy that beautiful canyon if they put in skiing there. It's not suitable for it. There's not enough room there for parking. I've been there.

The club has a lot of very fine objectives. But right at the present time, I don't think I could go up to northern California in the timber area and let anybody know I was a Sierra Club member, that I'd bid to keep them from cutting down all the beautiful big redwood trees. The lumber industry are very bitter about it up there. They claim those men are starving to death because they're not allowed to cut down the trees. A big article about it was in the Los Angeles Times the other day.

JGC: There are signs up in Alaska saying 'Sierra, go home!' These were over the pipeline fight, but that's been settled now. They're building the pipeline and I guess they'll forget about the Sierra Club.

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E. STANLEY JONES

SIERRA CLUB OFFICER AND ANGELES CHAPTER LEADER
1931-1975

An Interview Conducted by
Virginia M. Bennett
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Oral History Program

Sierra Club
History Committee

1976

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INTRODUCTION

E. Stanley Jones has been closely involved with Sierra Club activities since 1931, when he joined the club to participate in the summer High Trip. Always an active member of the Angeles Chapter--formerly the Southern California Chapter--and the Pasadena group, Mr. Jones has also represented the southern California members on the Sierra Club Board of Directors. He served as club director from 1940 to 1941 and as club vice president and director from 1943 to 1946. He is a native of Los Angeles, born in 1897, and is presently a retired school administrator.

Involved in some internal club controversies in the past, Mr. Jones preferred in this interview to focus on the themes of conservation campaigns, environmental issues, and club outings. The following selections are taken from an interview conducted on April 7, 1975, in his home in Los Angeles. The interviewer was Virginia Bennett, a student in the Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton. The complete interview transcript and tape are deposited in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Ann Lage, Editor
Sierra Club History
Committee
April, 1976

SIERRA CLUB OFFICER AND ANGELES CHAPTER LEADER

Kings Canyon National Park

Virginia Bennett: Mr. Jones, I know that you were instrumental in the creation of King's Canyon National Park and instead of it becoming a monument, it did become a national park. Your sister related this to me. She also tells me that you were acquainted with the man who was leading the Sierra Club at the time and involved in this battle. Could you start at the beginning and tell me how the battle came about, your involvement in it and the end result?

E. Stanley Jones: Well, King's Canyon National Park was established, as I recall, in 1938. National parks are established by Congress, by legislation, and it's quite a story to get a national park established. Frank Kittredge, at that time, was the superintendent of the Yosemite National Park and he was instrumental in the establishment of it. He later became a Regional Director of the National Park Service. At that time, I was the chairman of the Southern California Chapter, as it was known at that time, of the Sierra Club and the Southern California Chapter took a very active interest in the creation and the establishment of King's Canyon National Park.

I can well remember a High Trip being led into King's Canyon National Park at that time and Mr. Kittredge was along. We started at Kanawyer's at Cedar Grove and on the way we passed Zumwalt Meadows, which is a portion of land owned by the Sierra Club. We went up Bubb's Creek, past Copper Canyon and on up into Wood's Creek and the Sixty Lakes Basin and Bullfrog Lake. We were right close to the approach to King's Canyon National Park from the east side, which would be Kearsarge Pass.

ESJ: We spent a month in this country at that time, making a circle loop of the area to get better acquainted with this wonderful country.

One thing that I prized very highly was a letter that I received from Mr. Ickes. At that time, Mr. Ickes was the secretary of the Interior under President Roosevelt, and after this park was established, I received a letter from Mr. Ickes congratulating the Sierra Club on their efforts to create the park. But the bulk of the hard work was done by men like Will E. Colby, who at that time and for many years was the secretary of the Sierra Club in San Francisco. Through Mr. Colby's efforts in getting other people interested and getting them to work, a great deal of interest was generated in the creation of the part.

Meeting Death Valley Scotty

VB: In talking to your sister I asked her if there had been any trips that you had led. She mentioned a trip that both she and you led to Death Valley. She said there were about thirty cars that went. She mentioned a castle and somebody named Mr. Scotty. Could you tell about that trip.

ESJ: Oh, yes, in the spring vacation we used to have many, many fine Sierra Club trips. In fact, they're still being conducted. I remember one spring vacation in particular, we had a trip to Death Valley. This was before we had the fine roads we have today. We entered Death Valley by way of Wild Rose Canyon, past the old Coke Ovens that were built probably a hundred years ago when there was mining there, and then entered by way of Townes Pass, into Stove Pipe Wells and then on to Furnace Creek. We spent the week in Death Valley, and one of the highlights of that week was a visit to Death Valley Scotty. Death Valley Scotty was living in what is known today as Scotty's Castle; a two-million-dollar castle built in Grapevine Canyon, at the north end of Death Valley, by a very fine man from Chicago, a Mr. Johnson. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson used to come out and spend part of their winters in Death Valley, but Death Valley Scotty was the character that was always featured. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson always stayed in the background.

ESJ: Death Valley Scotty was supposed to have great wealth, and he would come to Los Angeles in the early days and go into the saloons on Spring Street and scatter out five dollar gold pieces just to see the people scramble for the coins. Then he would put up at the best hotels when he came here. He always wore a ten gallon hat and a red neckerchief. When he would leave, he would get on a train that would take him out as far as Barstow, and then he would usually leave with burros for Death Valley. Sometimes the newspaper people would attempt to follow him out into Death Valley to find out where his gold mine was, but he would soon lose them on the desert because he knew where to get water and they didn't. So they would turn back. But Death Valley Scotty took great delight in keeping this legend going, of this gold mine that he had. The gold mine was really Mr. Johnson's from Chicago.

Death Valley Scotty lived out his life there and finally died. He's buried in Death Valley. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson are both gone, but the castle has passed on to good hands and is still open to the public. You can go through and see this very fine, two-million-dollar castle in the desert. Death Valley Scotty is still a great legend.

One time he hired a Santa Fe train to go to Chicago. It was composed of a locomotive, a baggage car, a diner, and a sleeper, and that train went through to Chicago in thirty-nine hours, which was a record held for approximately thirty years. Every switch was spiked, so that nothing would interfere with that train going through. All other trains were parked on sidings when it came through and it had the right-of-way without making any stops. So Death Valley Scotty got a great deal of publicity out of that train to Chicago and he took great delight one night in the living room in the castle telling us about this train. When I got home, I went to the library, looked it up and found that the facts as he told them were true. The record was made and did stand for many, many years. Many people think that Mr. Johnson was interested in the railroad and that putting this train through helped secure the mail contract for the Santa Fe for carrying mail at that time.

Controversies in the Sierra Club

- VB: In my reading about the Sierra Club, I learned that there was quite a controversy in the late 1940s over the club's loyalty oath. Can you tell me about the controversy that went on at that time?
- ESJ: Well, like in any organization, as you look back at it, there was a little unpleasantness between the north and south in the early 1940s. Some of the people around the Bay Chapter area had the idea that some of the people in southern California were getting a little too aggressive and felt they had plans to take over the management or the direction of the Sierra Club. There was some disharmony at that time but that was soon forgotten and I think that we felt the best interests of the Sierra Club came ahead of any sectional feeling. We always prided ourselves on the excellent management that the Sierra Club enjoyed, and we felt that the management should be in the hands of the people best qualified to administer it. So now that's just a matter of yesterday that we seldom think about.

The Sierra Club High Trips

- ESJ: My first trip was in 1931. At that time we met in Tuolumne Meadows in the Yosemite National Park, and went down the Tuolumne River. We saw the phenomenon of the giant water wheel, where the Tuolumne comes down a long granite chute. When it hits the bottom, it makes a complete circle, probably fifty feet in diameter at flood stages as you approach Glen Aulin. On down, it takes its course through the valley. This was a wonderful experience to see the back country and these trips were always well-managed and very well thought out.

The pack train usually came from the east side of the Sierra range. For many years a man by the name of Robinson was the head packer and he would get the pack train assembled and hire the packers. The pack train would be with us for a month. Some horses were also available for people who wished to ride. But most of the packing was done on mules. These High Trips got to be a great institution themselves.

ESJ: I think anybody who has been on a High Trip realizes just what they do for you in the course of a month, being with a group day and night, and being around the campfire. There were always a great many people of exceptional talent on these trips. I can remember one night on the Washburn Plateau, a young lady singing at the campfire the "Indian Love Call". That's a scene I've never forgotten. I think some of the finest people I have ever met in my life have been people in the Sierra Club. They come from all walks of life. It's been a great inspiration to meet these people and see them and associate with them.

Threats to the Southern California Desert

VB: Mr. Jones, why don't you go ahead and tell me about the deserts and some of the trips you've made?

ESJ: Years ago, maybe thirty years, when the desert was the desert, this was a wonderful place to go. We used to go out to Palm Springs. At that time, Palm Springs was just a small community in the desert, and we'd camp in the canyons that are to be found there. Canyons like Magnesium, Eagle, Tom Murphy, San Andreas and other canyons. Many of these canyons have beautiful palm trees and water. I remember one time camping in San Andreas Canyon, which is owned by the Indians, and looking down on the floor of the valley where Palm Springs is located. It's a wonderful experience to camp on the desert at night; to see a sunset and to wake up in the morning and see a sunrise, and to get your breakfast on the desert over a fire and to have a campfire at night out in the desert.

These are things you can't do going to the desert and living in a swank motel or hotel. Many of these people can't begin to appreciate what the desert is or what the life on the desert is like, the wildlife, the animals, the flowers and the plants. Many people look at the desert as a place of desolation--but it's a great place of life and beauty. The sad part today is that we find people going out to the desert on weekends in their campers and on the back of a camper is a dune buggy and strapped to the back of the camper is a motor-cycle. Then they go out to the desert and with these vehicles, they tear up the desert, doing tremendous

ESJ: damage to the plant life of the desert. They do damage that can never be restored.

For example, General Patton trained the Third Armored Division at Desert Center, which is between Blythe and Indio. And here, some thirty years later, after the Second World War, one can still see the tracks of the mechanized equipment that broke what we call the pavement of the desert. So damage done today is by motorcycles and dune buggies and campers. Now one of the big problems is how to control this vast horde that starts out to the desert every weekend and then gets off the paved highway and in their four wheels just runs through the plant life of the desert. It's a sad commentary on our civilization.

Pioneer Environmentalists

VB: Now I know you were the vice president of the Sierra Club from 1943 to 1946. What all did that entail? What kinds of things were you called on to do and what kinds of battles did you fight while you were vice president?

ESJ: Well, the Sierra Club has always been interested in getting legislation to protect wilderness areas. Oftentimes, these legislative programs would entail a program that would extend over, in some cases, many years. You don't create a national park in one session of a legislature. The wilderness areas were always a source of concern, as well as controlling the development along rivers, and bays, and estuaries.

In the last several years, the American public has become very conscious of words like ecology. They didn't even know the word. Now it's a household word: ecology and environment. It has been brought home to the American people now that these wonders of nature are not unlimited. They have a limitation. When we destroy an estuary and destroy the wildlife there, it's a sad commentary. We now have programs to hold what we have in places like Bodega Bay, around San Francisco, for example, or Newport Beach around southern California, where there's an abundance of wildlife, and marinelifelife, in the estuaries, and protect it against growth and development. With this we try to point out why it is so necessary to conserve these wonderful things that have been given to

ESJ: us. Once they're destroyed, they're gone forever, like the redwood tree; when it's cut, it cannot be replaced. It's gone forever. When we destroy any part of our desert or our mountains, we've destroyed something that we cannot replace at any cost.

Now in the last few years, the battle cry has been taken up and ecology and environment are common household words. But it was men like John Muir, Francis Farquhar, Horace Albright, Will Colby, Phil Bernays, Dick Leonard, and hosts and hundreds of other people who pointed out long ago the way to save and conserve these wonderful resources for the people forever. The motto of the Sierra Club used to be to enjoy and preserve the primitive areas, and not try to improve on them. We can't improve on them. It's impossible. If we save and keep them just like nature gave them to us, we will be going a very worthwhile service.

VB: Does that mean that you were closer to some of these battles that were going on at the time you were vice president?

ESJ: Well, at that time, that would be in the early 1940s, the main interest of the people was the Second World War, and everything else was secondary to the winning of that war. So there was no great legislative programs on just at that time.

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MARION JONES

REMINISCENCES OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SIERRA CLUB
1927-1975

An Interview Conducted by
Sherry Patterson
California State University, Fullerton
Oral History Program

Sierra Club
History Committee

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SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

Marion Jones, a retired school teacher and a Los Angeles resident for all but four months of her eighty years, was interviewed at her home on April 5 and April 7, 1975. Miss Jones joined the Sierra Club in 1927, attracted by the gatherings at Dawson's Book Store and the prospects of the chapter's local hikes and club High Trips. Closely identified with the Southern California Chapter--now the Angeles Chapter--Miss Jones has been active in numerous committees, Harwood Lodge affairs, and the Pasadena group. During the Second World War, she served as the first woman chairman of the Angeles Chapter.

The following Reminiscences were selected from the two interviews conducted by Sherry Patterson, a California State University, Fullerton, student in the Oral History Program. The complete transcript and tapes are deposited in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Ann Lage, Editor
Sierra Club History
Committee
April, 1976

REMINISCENCES OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SIERRA CLUB

Acquiring the Hiking Habit in Los Angeles

Sherry Patterson: Miss Jones, would you think back to the community where you grew up, your family life, and your educational background, and talk at length about the aspects of your early life that contributed to your later interest in the Sierra Club?

Marion Jones: I was born in Victoria, British Columbia, and my folks brought me down to Los Angeles when I was four months old. We lived in Los Angeles the rest of our lives. Los Angeles was a very small place then. We went to grammar school at the Ninth Street School. Our parents were Welsh, and we went to a Welsh Presbyterian church. The Welsh church was at Fifth and Crocker Streets, where Skid Row is now, and we saw Los Angeles grow up. Then we went to an English Church at Ninth and Central Avenues.

When we were about thirteen or fourteen years old we started to hike. Our Sunday school had hikes and climbed mountains on holidays. We would go up to Mount Wilson and hike all night. We would go to Sixth and Main to the Pacific Electric and leave at twelve o'clock at night to get the last train out as far as we could go to the mountains. Then we would get off at the end of the line and start on the Mount Wilson trail. There were no flashlights, so everybody going up carried a candle. It was very pretty at night with everyone going up with a candle. We would arrive up there about four o'clock in the morning and sleep some place where we could find a comfortable rock to sit on. About four o'clock it began to get light.

This was on Memorial Day when we took our first big hike up there. It was cold but we would stay there

MJ: and try to sleep a little bit. We would come down in the morning and arrive at the railway station in Los Angeles at about four o'clock. We'd get home about five o'clock. We didn't get a full night's sleep but we had a lot of fun. That was the way we first got interested in the mountains.

There would be thirty or forty of us going on hikes together then and we used to walk in Griffith Park. It was quite wild at that time. We knew Mr. Griffith. He was a Welshman who gave that park to the city of Los Angeles. We'd take hayrides from our church to Griffith Park because we had no other transportation. We'd hike all day on holidays like the Fourth of July and Labor Day. So that was how we got into hiking. We hiked every place we went.

Southern Sierra Club Gatherings

MJ: I knew people in the Sierra Club then and I wanted to join. One member, Mr. Ernest Dawson, owned the Dawson Bookstore. It's one of the most famous bookstores in the world now and his sons have the business. Mr. Dawson used to have a little schedule about thirty pages long about the Sierra Club trips so I would go to his store and ask him for a schedule. I also knew some people from school that went to his store. Then I started to meet with the Sierra Club. I wasn't in the Sierra Club when they hired buses to go out because people didn't have cars. I joined after that.

We met at several cafeterias in downtown Los Angeles. One was at Seventh and Broadway where we met on Friday nights for about thirty years. All the people would be there. It started out with about fifty to one-hundred people coming to the Friday night dinners. They would have a schedule of activities and people who didn't have cars would arrange their transportation with other people.

We used to go to the Santa Anita Canyon and we finally built a log cabin there. It was built by the time I joined the club. A lot of men helped build the cabin, which was called Muir Lodge, after John Muir. Everybody would go there on Friday and Saturday. They'd have parties there on Saturday nights and dance. There was all kinds of hiking in that canyon, too.

MJ: A really big storm came up once when a few men had just finished building the cabin's fireplace. They had paid one hundred dollars for the bricks. The storm washed half of that cabin away. That was before the war. Had we known that transportation would be so bad during the war, we would have kept that place but we didn't. There was a lady named Miss Aurelia Harwood from Claremont who gave the Sierra Club money which was used to build the beautiful Harwood Lodge above Baldy. It has been rebuilt many times. We've had wonderful times at Harwood.

One of the teachers from my high school was married to Phil Bernays. He owned the Bernays Art Store right next to Mr. Dawson's store. Many Sierra Club members became acquainted either with the Dawson Bookstore or Mr. Bernays' art shop. We would hear stories there about the founder of our club.

Serving the Angeles Chapter

SP: Miss Jones, I understand you were the first woman chairman of the Angeles Chapter. Could you tell me what it was like to be the first woman chairman and if you had any particular problems for that reason?

MJ: No, I did not. It was during the war. My brother had been chairman several years before and some other people had been in charge. I was chairman in 1943 and 1944. The men had gone to war, so I took over and had no problems. Everything went along okay. Everything was real nice. People cooperated. We kept thing going.

We had a big banquet in 1943 and 1944 at the Breakfast Club in Hollywood. We ended up with a big dance each time. We had a real full house. Everything went along all right.

SP: You talked about the Harwood Lodge earlier and you said you had many memorable experiences there. Could you tell me about them?

MJ: Yes. They had big parties there. A committee would plan Halloween parties, Thanksgiving dinners and Christmas and New Year's parties. From Harwood you could walk two miles up a steep trail and go to our ski hut. It accommodated about thirty people. I never skied, but anybody could

MJ: go up there. That was on the way to Mount Baldy and I would climb Mount Baldy at that time.

A hundred people can be served at Harwood Lodge. They have a nice big living room, dining room, and bunks upstairs. We have had many work parties there. That place was really built by Sierra Club members. One family stayed up there for practically a whole year and worked on the lodge. On weekends they would have the work all laid out for people who would come to help. It's a very lovely place.

There was a man named Sam Merrill who was Clerk of the Superior Court in Los Angeles. He took it upon himself to work on a trail, the Sam Merrill Trail. Every Sunday he would go and work on the trail. He had a few other men in the club who would help him. They would take shovels and go up to Pasadena and work on the trail. But they haven't done that since Sam died. The trail is in need of work now, but the rangers haven't the time to work on it. It is a beautiful trail up there, but the rains have washed quite a lot of gravel on it so it needs a lot of work. They need another Sam Merrill. He worked very hard. Every Sunday morning he would go out with his tools and work on that road.

I saw a lady about three years ago who went out with her own shovel. She was trying to do her part on that trail. It is a good hike up to it, but people are just not spending the time that Sam Merrill spent on it.

We used to have dances, too. In the city we would have a dance about once a month. Sam Merrill was quite a dancer. We had a real good time, socially.

The Spirit of the High Trips

MJ: My first trip was to go to Huntington Lake by train from Glendale. We met the rest of the party from up north at Huntington Lake. There were over one hundred of us and we went all through the back country of Yosemite. We spent one month there. We would hike ten and fifteen miles a day. We had about one hundred pack animals. We had to bring our sleeping bags and sleep on the good earth.

MJ: There was one man, Mr. Lewellyn Bixby, on the trip who was a millionaire from Long Beach. He was a very wealthy man so his wife wanted to dress up and wear high heels and go to the hotel and sit on the veranda. That was her idea of a vacation. But every other year he made a bargain with her that he would go on a mountain trip and she would go and do what she wanted to do. So during the first High Trip I went on to Huntington Lake with a girl I met on the train, we hiked with him.

He'd say, "Now I'll be your red cap." Then he would carry our dunnage bags. When you finished a day's hike, they'd dump all the dunnage bags in a big pile. Then you had to go and get your dunnage bag. They always had the women walk across a log that had fallen down and go to their camping ground while the men went out and explored the wilderness. So this man carried our bags every day of the whole trip at night and in the morning. At home he was used to having servants, but on Sierra Club trips you had to eat outside and serve yourself.

We'd make a big circle during meals and you had your knife, fork, plate and spoon. A cup also is a very good thing on a trip because you ate everything out of the cup. You had your main dish in that cup. We'd take a plate and a cup, but before the trip was over you were eating everything out of the Sierra Club cup. Do you know the original Sierra Club cup? It was built in such a way that after you would eat you could turn the cup upside down and put your head pack on that round part and use it as a pillow.

* * *

I would say the Sierra Club is a wonderful way to make friends. The people are very wholesome and are a nice group of people to be with, and an interesting group. We want the finest people we can get in the Sierra Club. It's a wonderful way to bring up children. A lot of parents carry their children like packs on their back during trips, and they turn out to be good Sierra Club people when they grow up.

I saw a woman bring five children under five years old on one trip and those kids got along fine. On High Trips, after you get through eating you have to get in line to wash your dishes. Then you put everything where it belongs so that everything is all ready for the next meal. Those children were out there washing their dishes

MJ: and they came from a wealthy home. They just had the time of their life doing that. No matter what the condition of your life is, you can fit in with the Sierra Club.

Attractions of the Base Camp

MJ: The High Trips became more and more popular, and more people and more people were going. Then a newspaperman, Oliver Kehrlein, from San Francisco decided to have a base camp. You would stay two weeks at a base camp and people could go out and climb peaks around the camp. You went to real high peaks or anything you wanted on those trips. And they were so popular. First a lot of families came. There was a place where people could leave their children to be taken care of while they went hiking for the day.

A very fine naturalist from San Francisco came to a base camp, and he had what was called "Grandmother Crawls." He would take you out for one hour and you would just crawl along the ground. It was the most interesting trip because you saw all the tiny little flowers that you didn't even know grew there and just all kinds of things. We always gave each flower a nickname so everyone would learn the name of that flower. He had the highest flower show in the world up in the base camp. It was a wonderful way to learn the names of flowers. Anybody, a child or an older person of any age, could go on a "Grandmother Crawl."

Then there was the "Great Aunts" trip, and that wasn't quite so hard. You hiked, but not too much. Then the other people who wanted to climb the mountains and get the most of it would do what they wanted to do. So everybody was happy and there was always a group for you to be with.

* * *

SP: You mentioned earlier that you like the base camps better than the high camps. Could you explain why?

MJ: Well, in the high camp you had to hike at least ten or twelve miles every day, depending on where the animals could graze. They can't stay too long in one place because

MJ: the grass may all be gone and the rangers don't like that. The Sierra Club has been criticized for taking too many animals in to carry the dunnage and the food.

The base camp is a permanent camp for about two weeks. You can leave camp every day on a trip. Or if you don't want to go out, you can have a day to rest. You can swim or you can go on a "Grandmother Crawl" or something like that. You can go to the high mountains and come back the same day or stay for two or three nights. Say we want to go off to Mount Whitney for three days and then come back. You can do that at a base camp. You don't have to take all your things with you.

Others want to stay at base camp because you miss something if you aren't at the camp. There are just so many things going on. If you are an artist you can paint up there. If you are a photographer you can take pictures. There are plenty of things to do around camp without hiking very far. If a person doesn't feel well he doesn't have to leave camp. But if a person wants to go on long hikes, or climb a peak and it is too much to do in one day, he can stay over night and just take food along for that length of time. When he comes back to camp, he can have a nice, big dinner. When you went off for a night and cooked your own dinner, you did not want to carry too much, so you would not have the nice big roast beef dinner you might have had at the base camp.

Dean Curtis was the base camp cook. He had learned to cook on the Astor Yacht in the U.S. Navy during the First World War, so he was a marvelous cook. He was a regular chef, and he enjoyed cooking. We always had really very good food, better food than if we had stayed at home. He had to carry in half of a beef and we would be there two weeks or a month. He would just go to his refrigerator in the ice when we needed meat.

They had snow hikes too. We went up to the Minarets so everybody could learn to hike in snow. Oliver Kehrlein, who was an editor from San Francisco and who was a wonderful mountaineer, and his friends would take their sticks and come to a mountain slope. They would dig holes and make footprints for us to walk on. There were people who would never hike on snow who would put their feet in those footprints. That's a real thrill.

I remember when I was at the Minarets up above Iceberg Lake and there would be those footprints. You went along

MJ: and there were men who stood there with a rope tied around the stick so there were no casualties. Everybody had the experience of learning to walk on snow.

High Country Emergencies

SP: Were there any other memorable experiences from these trips that you can think of?

MJ: Sometimes when you're going up as high as 10,500 feet, some people overestimate what they can do. A man who went along with a friend and me on one hike got sick. He had insisted on carrying us across streams during the day. In the middle of the night, he got sick. They generally take about five doctors along. The doctors give their time free in order to go on the trip. One doctor had been hiking for five days and had not slept at all. It isn't fair to go in the mountains unless you are really well because somebody has to take care of you.

We were up at the 10,000 foot elevation. There were two hundred people on that trip. Then they said they would take everybody that didn't feel up to snuff down 2,000 feet. They took thirty men and one woman down to the 8,000 foot level. As soon as they got to 8,000 feet they were better.

There was one place on the trail where there were a lot of rocks and you had to be careful. They made a stretcher and carried down three sick men. They took turns carrying the stretchers four, maybe five minutes at a time. One man on a stretcher sat up and asked for cookies. They were so provoked with him because it was a hard job carrying him down.

Well, he got down there and he is careful now when he goes in the mountains. But the thing is, when he came into camp the evening before he got sick, he and his wife jumped into the cool icewater lake. If you're going to bathe in mountain water you have to do it in the middle of the day. You can't just hike all day and jump into a pool of icewater and come out. Then they slept on the grass. When you sleep, you should put your sleeping bags on a dry spot, not on grass because dew falls on the grass. That is what brought his illness on, taking such chances as that. He knows how to act in the mountains now because

MJ: of the trouble he had on that trip. It's a pretty bad thing to have to carry people out on a sleeping bag over a horse and take them down to the mortuary in Visalia. It's terrible.

The Legendary Norman Clyde

MJ: Norman Clyde was such a wonderful hiker. He came from a Pennsylvania family of bankers, and he had a doctor's degree. He saw the mountains for the first time in California, and he became interested in climbing. He taught high school. I hiked with Norman Clyde. When he asked if I would hike with him I said, "I don't know if I can keep up with you." He said, "You don't go fast, you just go slow. Put one foot down, slow. You go, and the first thing you know you will be the first one there." So he would go slow and he would not drink any water at all. He always came in first and he didn't get tired. Other people would go real fast and then they got tired and they would have to rest. It takes them longer.

Well, Norman was teaching at the high school, but one Friday he went up to the top of the mountain near Palisades Glacier. He didn't come down to school Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, and the school board members sat on the porch at the school waiting for him. When he came back and saw them he said to me, "The darn old school board was sitting on the porch." That's the way he would talk. Then he took a shotgun and shot it in the air two or three times. The school board dismissed him.

Norman could write anything for magazines if he would get his articles in on time. He knew everything about nature. He was a wonderful fisherman. But he didn't get his articles in on time because he just lived a casual life in the mountains. He would get up late and have bacon and ham and eggs for breakfast. He ate well. Then after he had his lunch he would always sleep on his Sierra Club cup. Then he took out his book of Greek, or French or Spanish or something and studied the language. That is how he would spend his day.

He lived in the mountains for twenty or thirty years. Somebody would have a mountain cabin and let him live in it and he would watch over it and write. He had all these papers, and people were afraid he would have a fire. He

MJ: sometimes stayed at the Palisades Glacier Hotel. It was a big hotel, and it was busy in the summer time. The woman there was afraid that he would have a fire, he had so many papers all over. It was too dangerous to have him there. But he thought the world owed him a living.

When people would lose their lives in the mountains they would always send him out to find them. He would always come in with a body. He knew the mountains so well. He would ask where the missing person was seen last. They would describe where it was and he would go right to the spot. He was hired by insurance companies to go out and find a body. If there was a plane down, they would pay him to go out.

He would often stay in Yosemite and other public parks. You are only supposed to stay for thirty days. Norman would always overstay his thirty days and the rangers were continually fighting with him, telling him he ought to be out. Well, he had just been having a big fight with the rangers when somebody said that some young fellow had lost his life and asked Norman to find the body. Norman went right to the spot and found the fellow. So the rangers took a collection among themselves and they collected about \$7.50 and gave it to him. He said, "That was just a personal insult." He was not going to find bodies for \$7.50. He said, "You have to consider what a human body is worth."

He was a very interesting person, a very noble person. He knew more about the mountains than anybody. He was wonderful to be with because he knew every flower, and he could tell you everything about red butterflies and all the different flies. He also was a wonderful fisherman. He'd say, "You invite twelve people for lunch and then I will bring you fish." So he always caught twelve fish and he knew just how to catch them. Then we would let him cook them. After we let him cook, we said, "You cooked the fish and we'll wash the dishes." So we cleaned up everything. You have to put your age on your license when you are a fisherman. He always had his license turned upside down on the cap that he wore so you could never read it. But he was in his eighties when he died.

Feud Within the Sierra Club: North vs. South

SP: Could you tell me about some of the Sierra Club battles you have participated in as a member all these years?

MJ: Well, we have not had any real, real battles down here. There has always been some sort of a feud between the north and south. Although the people that come down and go on our trips like southern California people, there has always been that feeling between the north and south chapters. One reason, I think, is because we grew so big. I understand that for years, some man from up north would come down and sit at the back of our dining area. My brother was the chairman. The man would come down one night a month and would say, "I don't see how you get all these people in Los Angeles." They would have thirty people at that time at their meetings and we would have two hundred.

SP: By battles, I mean the ones to preserve conservation areas like the San Jacinto Tramway.

MJ: We were strongly against having the incline put up there. My brother and other directors were told to meet some of the men from San Jacinto, so they came to our Sierra Club office. On our table was a copy of the Southern Sierran, our newspaper which comes out every two months. It had an article about how we felt about the tramway. My brother saw the head lawyer reading it and slip it under his hand and take it away with him. It was a big piece we had about saving the San Jacinto Mountains.

But the north did not support us very much in that. They should have. It seems the things that originated up north would get through when we supported them. But when things originated in the south it was a little different. If it had originated in the north I think it would have gone through. So we lost out on that. We should have had help from the north because we were all against having the tramway built.

Of course, in Europe all the mountains have tramways, or something like that. They do not feel the same way we did about it. I have never been on the top of that San Jacinto Tramway. I tried to walk up. I walked up as far as I could but I could not get by. We did not have time to wait until the tram would go so we thought we would just walk up there, but we could not

- MJ: get by . Anyway, it is here now. They had a lot of money in Palm Springs to fight for that, and we had a minority of people who had money to fight it. But it's done.
- SP: Why is it that the Southern California Chapter does not get the support of the north in its efforts?
- MJ: Just because we grew so fast I think. They were the big power and all the directors were from up there. We could hardly get a director up there. They do not stay very long. My brother was vice president for two years. Those people stayed on and on and on. Now it is different. But they stayed on for years and held their place on the board. There was only a chance for one or two people from here to be on the board. They tried, but people got tired of trying.

Now they have it broken down a little bit. Mr. Laurence Moss, I see, has been up there, and they are taking other people from the south. They were a smaller group in San Francisco. The club was not so large, and they could control it. They all had offices in the same building. People from here would go up and they would become lone wolves when they got up there.

When you were chairman, like I was, of our group, then it was real interesting to hear the work they were doing up there. Now different people are in power up there. Our honorary members are now too old to be in power. The Sierra Club is so big it is all over the United States now. That makes it very difficult. When they have meetings, it is expensive because directors have their expenses paid and people come from New York. Then, too, in the East they do not have the same problems that we do here. Of course, the electric problem is all over.

We have always been cooperative. There were so many in power up north and they had the majority vote. We went on anyway with all of our trips. I don't like the club to be like a political football. They wanted it big so that they had a powerful vote.

Creation of Kings Canyon National Park

- SP: I understand you also were involved in the Kings Canyon controversy.

MJ: Yes. Frank Kittredge was Superintendent of Yosemite National Park. He stimulated interest in the creation of Kings Canyon as a national park rather than as a Forest Service area. By act of Congress in 1938, it was changed. He advised Sierra Club members to promote the change by talking to friends and writing to Washington, D.C. The Southern California Sierra Club Chapter was very active in this project. Kings Canyon is very scenic. We had been on a trip all through the park for a month. We saw the problems there and wanted it made a national park. My brother worked real hard on that. He was chairman of our chapter then. He coached us and told us the problems involved. We had gone into those parks and knew the problems pretty well. We would always go to see the rangers. Then if there was a chance we would always try and get a ranger to come and speak to the people on the trip and explain what they needed and why.

SP: What exactly did your chapter do to preserve Kings Canyon?

MJ: We wrote back to Congress, which had to pass the act, and we talked to Sierra Club members. People who do not go to the mountains do not know the problems and we had to persuade them to support our position. If the park is under the rangers, the grazing of the animals is limited because they don't want to destroy the land. A park is administered under the ranger service. They wanted Kings Canyon preserved as a park rather than under the Forest Service. We needed national parks.

A "Fun-Loving Organization": A Personal View of the
Sierra Club

SP: How has being in the Sierra Club for all these years affected your life?

MJ: Oh, it has made my life much fuller. I think everybody should be a Sierra Club member. The friendships are so genuine. It is just a nice group of people, it really is. We have many, many friends in the Sierra Club.

Of course, lately, the Sierra Club has sort of gotten a black eye in the paper. A lot of people are down on us here. I really think the club is taking on too much. They are working too much on the energy problem.

MJ: I do not think we ought to solve problems of people in the East because their problems are so far away. We have enough to do here to take care of our own problems, let alone taking on theirs--we don't have that much money. If you are going to fight and take on all these lawsuits about other people's problems about power and light you need a lot of money. That part spoils it for the Sierra Club.

One of our couples went up to live on the coast of California, and they are strong conservationists. Of course, the lumbermen are up there and they look down on the Sierra Club. The club is just like poison to them. In cutting the trees, though, they should cut them so they do not waste them. Have you been up to the redwoods to see how they cut some of them? Well, they are wasting an awful lot of lumber. There are people that have to be lumbermen, and they should be paid for it. But just to waste things, to cut down too many trees, I think is bad. So that is why a lot of people do not want to hear about the Sierra Club. It used to be wonderful to be a Sierra Club member, but not since the papers have written a lot of things about the club.

I think we jump into things too easy, like the coast issue. If you or I had lived on the coast and you had a farm right there near the beach you would not want somebody to come there. That was your home. You would not want somebody to come and take it away from you if you had lived there all your life. And a lot of people have. When you drive up to San Francisco you see those farms and ranches. Of course, I want to save the beaches, too. But I don't think it is right for you to take somebody's home because it is on the beach.

They passed Proposition 20 so quickly. We do not realize how many problems there are with that. The Sierra Club was powerful enough to get that passed, not realizing all the problems that would come up. It will take years to solve those problems. I like to go down to the beach and the water. I would like a house down there where you could have the water at your front yard. But I would not want somebody to come along if I had it and take it away from me.

I think long ago they should have saved the beach. It is kind of late to start to save parts of nature now. The only thing we can do now is save what we can. We've wasted so much already. But we cannot solve all the problems.

MJ: We're not that kind of an organization. We are more of a fun-loving organization. We want to protect nature but we should have started a long, long time ago. It is hoped that the American public will have a better appreciation of their wilderness areas, and the role of the Sierra Club is to point out the value of such areas and preserve them for future generations.

SP: Has your interest in the environment and conservation influenced your political positions and philosophy over the years?

MJ: No. I don't want to have a political part in the club. I don't want people to join the Sierra Club just to fight for conservation. I want them to join the Sierra Club because they enjoy it. That is one problem. When the club gets too big, it's like a political football, and I don't want to see that. Some of it has crept in now and the Sierra Club is quite unpopular with a lot of people. It's a naughty word. I don't want that to happen, but it exists.

The money part comes up and it's too bad they can't look at nature without fighting it politically. At one time everybody looked up to somebody who was in Sierra Club. You can't say that now. When members move up to Oregon or northern California, the lumber people up there say, "You're from the Sierra Club? We don't want to have anything to do with you." I don't like that part of it at all. I don't think anybody does.

I think if people went into the mountains and saw for themselves what they are like, they'd understand the problem. Of course, when you are in a situation like the lumbermen where you are making your living in the mountains, then you don't get much time to play there. People in the Sierra Club would like to go play. Some people are very drastic about the situation, but I don't like to be that way.

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