

Regional Oral History Office  
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Source of Community Leaders Series

ROBERT GORDON SPROUL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Volume I

Interviews with:

Herman Phleger  
Donald H. McLaughlin  
Horace M. Albright  
Marion Sproul Goodin  
John A. Sproul  
Robert Gordon Sproul, Jr.  
Vernon L. Goodin  
Katherine Connick Bradley  
Kendric and Marian Morrish  
Carl W. Sharsmith  
Robert M. Underhill  
Garff B. Wilson  
Walter S. Frederick  
May Dornin  
Eleanor L. van Horn  
Robert S. Johnson

With an Introduction by Ruth Waldo Newhall

Interviews Conducted by Suzanne B. Riess in 1984-1985

Funded by the Endowment of the Class of '31, University of California, Berkeley

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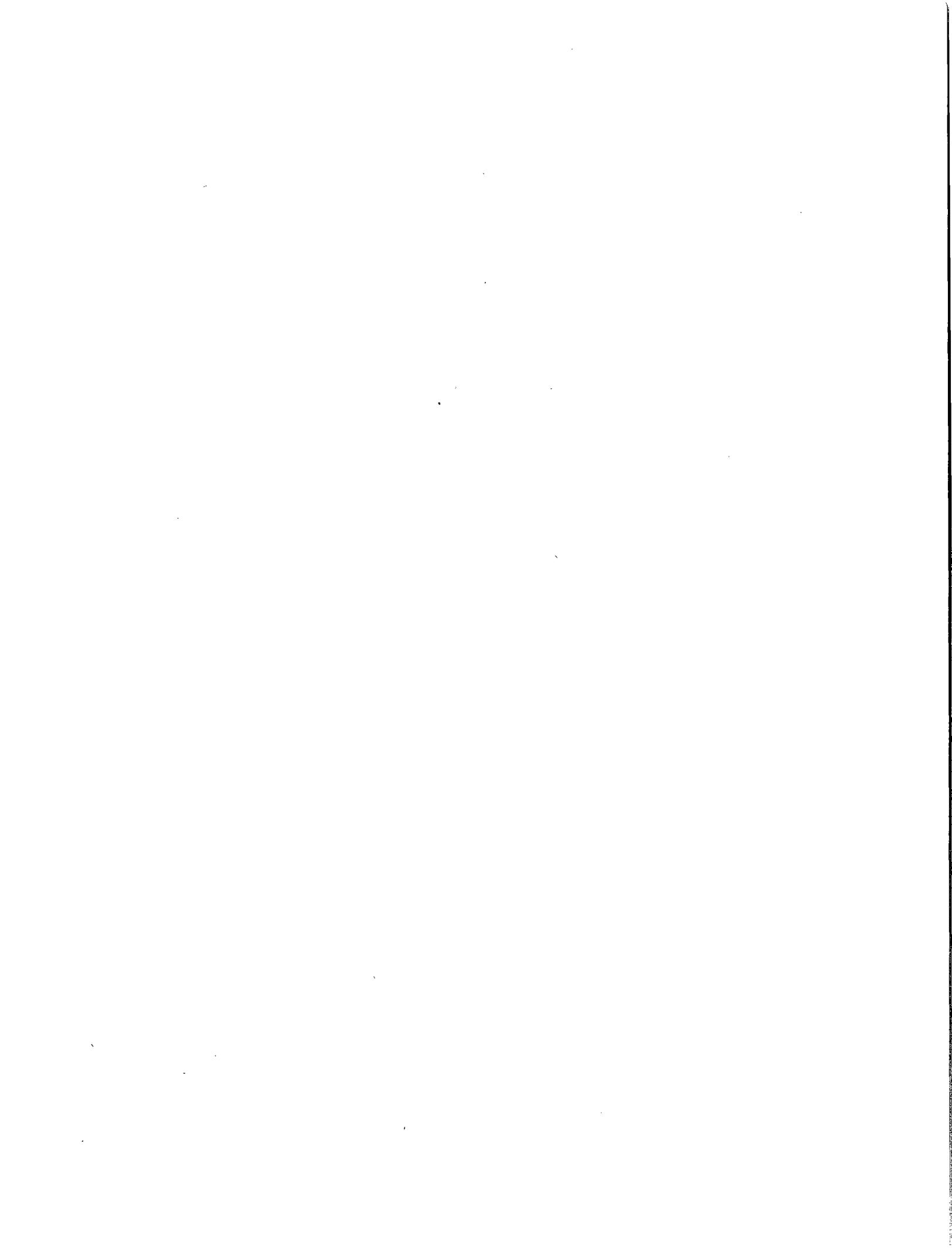


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## PREFACE

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of our graduation from the University of California, the Class of 1931 elected to present to the University an endowment for an oral history series. Titled "The University of California, Source of Community Leaders," the Class of 1931 Oral History Endowment provides an ongoing source of funding for oral histories by the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library. The commitment is to carry out interviews with persons related to the University who have made outstanding contributions to the community, by which is meant the state, the nation, or to a particular field of endeavor. The memoirists, selected by a committee set up by the class, will come from Cal alumni, faculty, and administrators. Those men and women chosen will comprise an historic honor list in the rolls of the University.

To have the ability to make a major educational endowment is a privilege enjoyed by only a few individuals. Where a group joins together in a spirit of gratitude and admiration for their alma mater, dedicating their gift to one cause, they can affect the history of that institution greatly.

The first fruit of the Class of 1931 Endowment is the history of our beloved president, Robert Gordon Sproul, which we present to the University of California in memory of that man and of our class.

Alan K. Browne, President  
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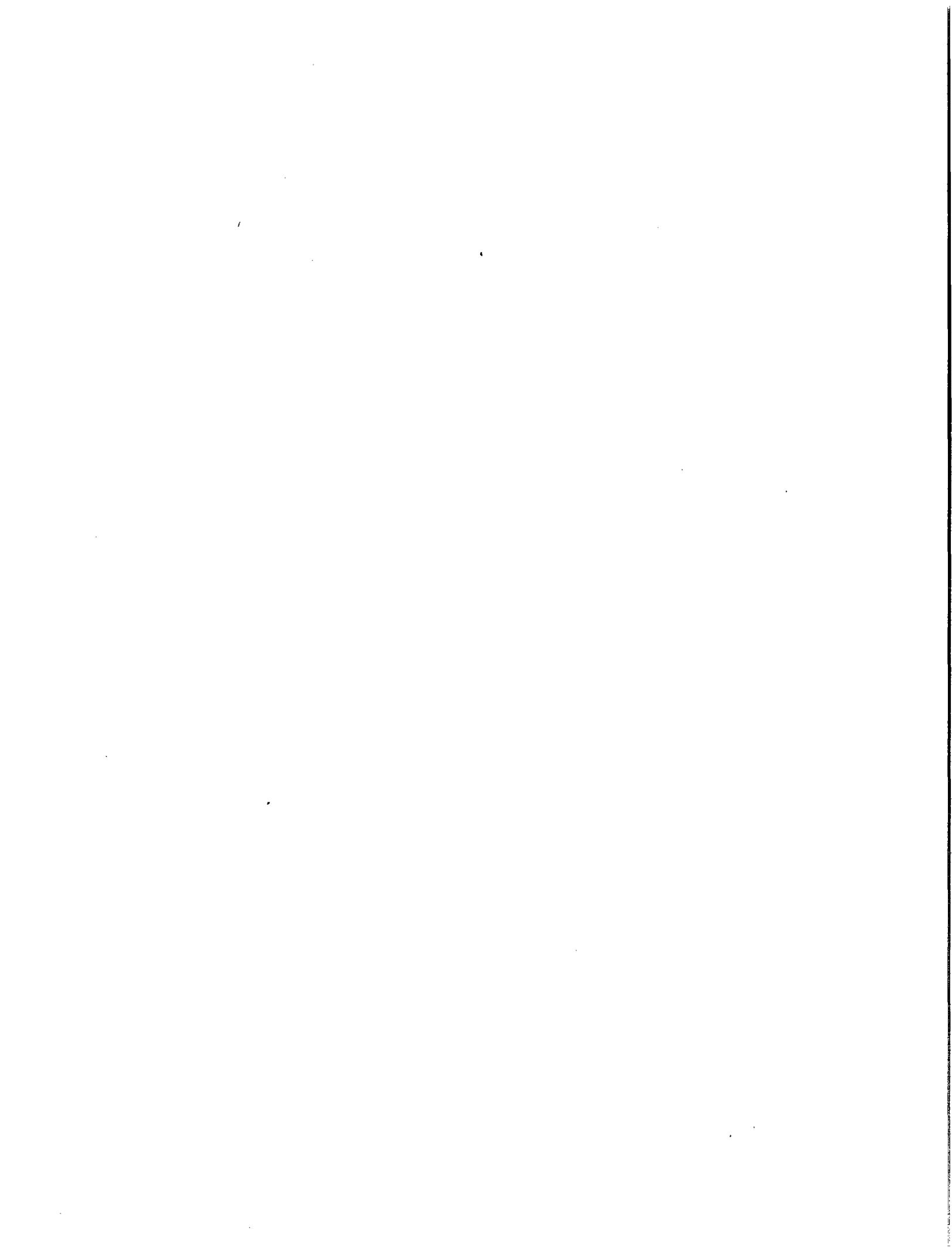
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## INTRODUCTION

Nearly eighteen hundred members of the Class of 1931 at the University of California's Berkeley campus wound their way up to the Memorial Stadium on Wednesday morning, May 13, 1931. They were the first class to receive their degrees from the University's charismatic new president, Robert Gordon Sproul.

Sproul — not yet Dr. Sproul— celebrated his fortieth birthday just ten days after that commencement ceremony. He was by far the youngest man ever to hold that distinguished position. This was the first of his twenty-eight years as the personification of an institution that grew, in those years, from “a good public university” into one that stood beside Harvard as one of the two highest-ranking in the nation.

The Class of 1931 furnished the seniors who assisted at the multiple events of that inaugural year. They were the first to stand at the forefront in this magical new era. Therefore, on their fiftieth anniversary, the class executive committee agreed that their most appropriate gift would be to finance the gathering of the story of Robert Gordon Sproul, a personal and professional portrait, in the form of interviews conducted by The Bancroft Library's Regional Oral History Office.

The class — and many of us remain — is now about to assemble for its fifty-fifth reunion. The interviewers and transcribers have put together the story of Robert Gordon Sproul from thirty-four people who saw him from their various points of view.

The entrancing thing about this particular oral history is the variety which those views represent. Sproul's three children, his office assistants, his successors, Berkeley friends and University associates would, of course, be called on for their recollections. But who would have expected the young man who took his ten-year old son John on nature hikes? Or Sproul's barber? Or a onetime girl cheerleader? Suzanne Riess, who interviewed these widely-differing people, elicited wide-ranging and charming accounts.

The picture that emerges from the series comes out bit by bit, like a slowly-assembled jigsaw puzzle. It comes out whole, and, as the saying goes, “warts and all”. When the portrait is assembled it is that of a remarkable man who grew into his responsibilities to play a dynamic role in the history of the University and the West.

This introduction will not describe that portrait or its subject. That is a discovery that is better made by reading the interviews and watching the pieces fit into place.

Let me here, then, set the stage for the action.

The University campus had its main approach through Sather Gate, a handsome bronze arch with granite pillars. It stood on the Telegraph Avenue shore of the campus, where restaurants and small stores dear to our hearts formed the beachhead. Today the waters have receded and the great gate is stranded inside an enlarged campus.

That is symbolic of the changes that have taken place since the Class of '31 and Robert Gordon Sproul came together in the fall of 1930.

The tremendous building activity on the campus belied the economic collapse that was engulfing the world. A new Agriculture Building at the west end of the campus bore the name of its donor, A.P. Giannini, founder of the Bank of America. The new Life Sciences Building, a huge dark grey-brown mass, rose on what was recently the ROTC drill field west of California Hall. At the other end of the campus stood Cowell Memorial Hospital, having just replaced the brown-shingle infirmary on College Avenue. Not far away was the newly-completed Hearst Gymnasium for Women.

The Berkeley enrollment was approaching the staggering figure of ten thousand, which was about half the total on all campuses. The other historic units of this scattered University of California were the medical school in San Francisco, the agricultural college at Davis, the citrus experiment station at Riverside, and the oceanographic institute at La Jolla. These were all distant and specialized cousins. Then, despite some opposition in the Board of Regents, the Legislature had two years earlier annexed a small teachers' college in downtown Los Angeles. It was known as the "southern branch" of the University. By the time Sproul took office in the summer of 1930, the Regents had selected a new site for the southern campus, on empty acres far west of the former teachers' college.

There were already between two and three thousand students at what would become UCLA, and a major problem confronting the new president was how to administer a widely-spread, fast-growing, and divided institution, and to resist pressures to create separate universities.

Stepping into the presidency of the University in 1930 was no easy prospect. The position had been molded into the shape of President Benjamin Ide Wheeler, who ruled with an iron hand for the two decades before 1919. Under Wheeler, the master design for the campus was developed, with imposing and expensive granite buildings to supplant the ancient brick Victorians and assorted wooden structures that then constituted the campus. He then sought out generous patrons to make the plan a reality. The Sather fortune built a Campanile as centerpiece, and the stunning bronze portals as entry; the Hearsts, led by William Randolph's mother Phoebe, donated an

imaginatively-designed Mining Building and Greek Theatre, with more to come. Pursuant to the grand design came California Hall (administration), Boalt Hall (law), the great Doe Library, and Wheeler Hall, named for the diligent president who mined the pockets of wealthy Californians to build all this.

While granite and bronze proliferated in imperial fashion, the faculty was growing restless. President Wheeler did not consult with nor give public recognition to his teaching staff. The Regents saw the campus only at annual Charter Day celebrations. The Academic Senate was formed, and ignored by the president. A faculty revolt was simmering when Wheeler announced that he would retire at the end of the academic year in June, 1919. Some of the more aggressive faculty members made sure that the news of discontent reached the ears of the Regents. The latter decided it would be wise to select the next president from inside the University, rather than follow an earlier plan to import someone from the East.

It was generally assumed that their choice would be Henry Morse Stephens, of the history department, who, to Regents and public, was The Faculty, as Wheeler was The University. But fate intervened. In April of 1919, with Wheeler's retirement only two months away, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, the University's largest benefactor, died. Professor Stephens took train, ferry, and cable car to her funeral in San Francisco. After the ceremony he got on the cable car, and on the way to the ferry building died of a sudden massive heart attack.

The Regents, unacquainted with the faculty and beset by conflicting information, opted to put administration in the hands of a three-man committee: two senior professors and Comptroller Ralph Merritt, to whom they had awarded an honorary degree at a recent Charter Day. Merritt, as business manager of the University, was well known to the Regents, since he attended all their meetings as an ex officio duty. Furthermore, the comptroller was the University's lobbyist (though no one used the term) in Sacramento. He knew the Legislature and its whims.

Five years earlier Merritt had hired as assistant comptroller a recent graduate, a member of the Class of 1913 and former track star named Bob Sproul. As Merritt stepped into the three-headed presidency, the twenty-eight-year-old Sproul was named vice-president and comptroller.

The triumvirate committee carried on for a year while the Regents considered a permanent appointment. They finally fixed on General David Prescott Barrows, of the political science department, a popular and imposing extrovert. Barrows was a colonel in World War I and now wore three stars in the National Guard. He took the presiden-

cy, assuming that it was principally an honorary position. He found himself overwhelmed. He hated the job, and in three years he resigned. The Regents, still pushed to appoint a faculty member, settled on one whom neither they nor most of the faculty had met. William Wallace Campbell was a fifty-nine-year-old astronomer, highly respected in scientific circles, who had spent most of his faculty time on a mountaintop at Lick Observatory, a two-hour journey from the Berkeley campus.

The most conspicuous thing about President Campbell to us students was his pair of eyebrows, for which the word "beetling" must have been coined. He was occasionally seen strolling across the campus, with hat and walking stick, or on ceremonial occasions wearing the strange pancake headdress and gown that represented his Cambridge doctorate. However, at University meetings and student affairs his place would be taken by a dean or vice-president.

Neither Regents nor faculty were enchanted with this shy, well-meaning man, who did nothing to enhance the University's image. The best image-enhancer was a man the Regents now knew well: vice-president and comptroller Bob Sproul, who, as lobbyist in Sacramento, beguiled the legislators into meeting the demands of the University's budget. So when W.W. Campbell turned sixty-five in 1929, though there was no mandatory retirement age for the president, the Regents unceremoniously dumped him, and offered the job to their comptroller. They chose to ignore the fact that Sproul was without that needed passport to academia: a doctorate. In one of the interviews in the Oral History Stanford's Wallace Sterling quotes Sproul: "I realize I come to this office untainted by academic legitimacy."

In a letter to the Regents he defined the conditions of his acceptance: "...Recognition that the President is the executive and administrative head of the University in all its departments; that he is the sole channel of communication between the faculty and students on the one hand and the members of the Board of Regents on the other; and most important of all that he has the confidence and support of the Board of Regents as a whole..."

In early speeches he set forth his goals: to have a statewide University under a central administration; to develop excellent libraries; to attract a distinguished faculty. History records how well he succeeded; the following interviews reveal his method.

Sproul returned from an extended tour of universities across the nation to assume his job in the summer of 1930.

When he was appointed, a year earlier, California and the nation were enjoying what was proclaimed as "lasting prosperity." But by 1930 the stock-market crash, the drought that turned the mid-continent into a dust bowl, and international financial col-

lapse had begun what was to be the Great Depression. The engineers of our Class of 1931 would seek jobs as truck drivers or ships' engine stokers; the liberal arts majors would find places on federal make-work projects. The University's growth would be slowed and warped, first by Depression and then by a second world war.

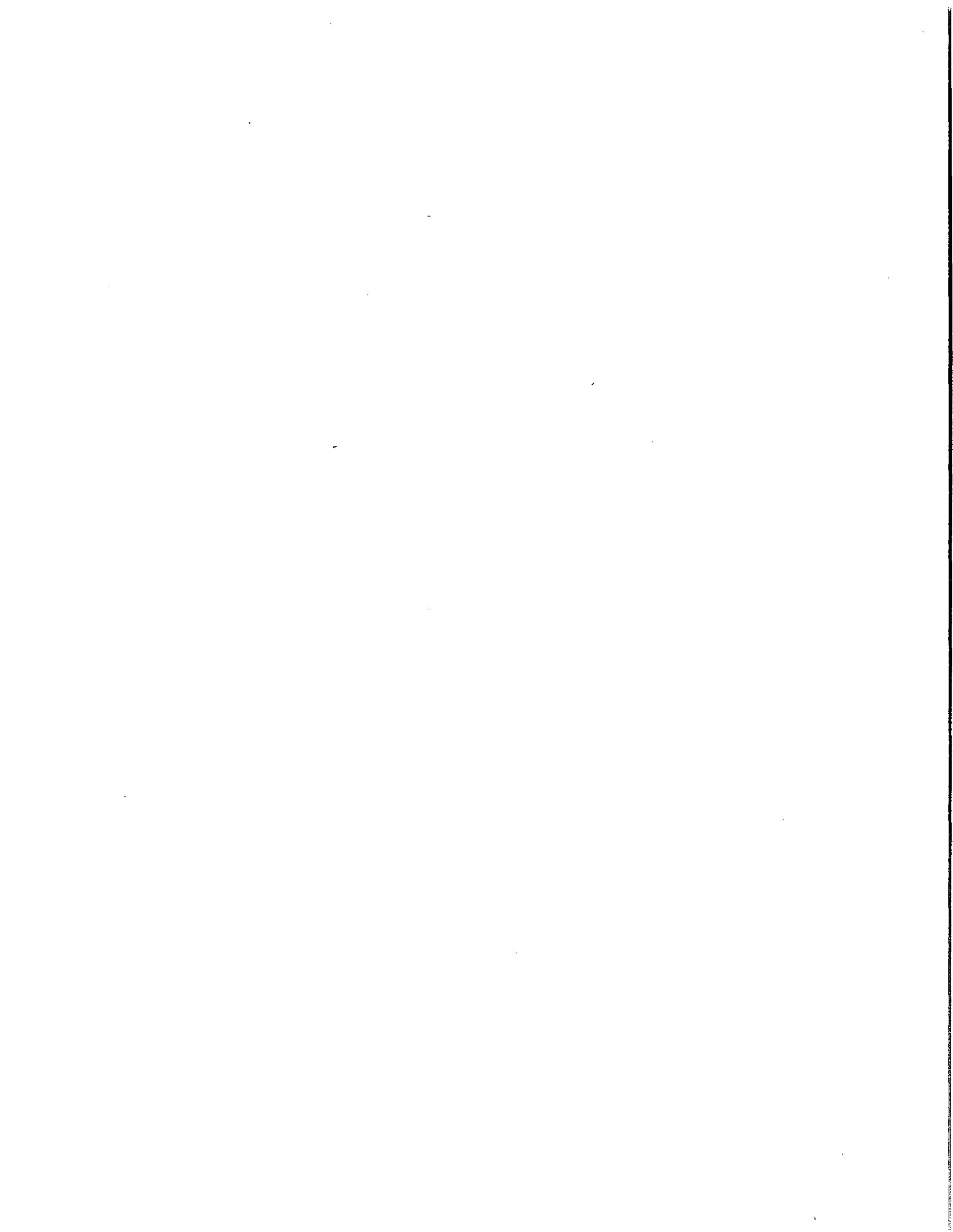
Nevertheless, that first year of Sproul's regime and our last year as undergraduates was a glorious one for the new president and the eager seniors. President Sproul was inaugurated October 22, 1930, in a two-day festival that included dedication of Gianini Hall and the new Cowell Memorial Hospital, plus a celebration on campus of the 2000th birthday of Virgil, starring the San Francisco symphony and ballet.

Bob and Ida Sproul cheered us through the dreadful football year. They cheerfully ate creamed chicken at every fraternity and sorority faculty dinner; they opened their home to students; they stood smiling and chatting for hours in receiving lines; they showed us how to shake hands with a thousand people without tiring. Bob Sproul's unforgettable booming laugh is part of the lives of all of us.

Each member of our Class of 1931 has his own fleeting memories of Robert Gordon Sproul, and we are grateful to those who, in the following interviews, have filled in the blank pages by sharing their more intimate experiences.

*Ruth Waldo Newhall '31*

*September 23, 1986  
Piru, California*



## INTERVIEW HISTORY

When the Class of 1931 determined that the 50th Anniversary Class Gift Endowment should come to the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library, they conceptualized a series titled, "The University of California, Source of Community Leaders." These two volumes, a Robert Gordon Sproul retrospective, are the first chapter of the class's gift of history to the university community.

Robert Gordon Sproul, 11th president of the University of California, was born in San Francisco, California, May 22, 1891, the first of two sons. His father was a native of Scotland and a graduate of Glasgow University; his mother came from New England. He was educated in the San Francisco public schools and at the University of California, Berkeley, where he received the degree of B.S. in civil engineering in 1913. As a student, he earned his letter in track and served as president of the University YMCA. He was a commencement speaker at graduation...

Sproul's outstanding contribution during his twenty-eight year administration was the multiple-campus expansion of the university to meet the demands for higher education in widely separated parts of the state, while maintaining one institution governed by one board of regents and one president.

Thus begins the biographical introduction of President Sproul in the Centennial Record. To the Class of 1931, he was "their" president. His inaugural year was their senior year. George Pettitt, a key member of President Sproul's administration, said about Sproul and the presidency, "His general attitude toward the job, perhaps vaguely comparable to that of one who had taken vows in a monastic order, was confirmed at intervals by his refusal of the presidency of a bank, his refusal to accept the presidency of Columbia University, and his discouraging of various suggestions that he run for governor of California or for the United States Senate." University students in the Sproul years felt that their president knew them and was dedicated to them.

The persons interviewed in these memoirs all comment on President Sproul's public addresses. A university meeting in August 1930 was his first opportunity to greet the incoming student body as its president. Sproul directed these felicitous phrases to the Class of 1931:

I hope in all sincerity that just as you started before me you may also finish before me, and that each of us may

come in proper time to his commencement...

I envy you young people not only your place in this great modern university, I envy you even more your stake in the world of today where intellectual curiosity, scientifically directed and intelligently applied, is ferreting out solutions to the problems of nature and of man, of the universe and of life...it is these things that cause me to envy you the world in which you are to play your parts.

With such words ringing in their ears, the Class of 1931 began their senior year, and 50 years later, harking back to 1930, tendered their response to their president with their generous class gift.

An oral history *about* Robert Gordon Sproul? Sproul's physical decline in his last years precluded his undertaking a long-sought memoir for this office. And where to start in designing a retrospective oral history of such a public figure? The interviewees in the Sproul project were selected to reflect the vastly different relationships and associations that Sproul had in his long and remarkable presidency. We wanted variety in form and content: some of the interviews would be brief, vignettes, and others lengthy considerations of complex issues. The range of persons chosen would in theory bring together a composite picture of the facets of Sproul's career--accounts factual, informative, and evocative of the years of the presidency, and before.

Forty persons were invited to be interviewees. Reception to the letter of invitation was quick and gratifying, and only a few felt unable to participate. To the one or two who were concerned that not everything they might say would be positive, we responded with the assurance that oral history is never conceived as a whitewash of reputations--indeed, what was negative might testify to Sproul's remarkable ability to stay on top of the enormous institution he fostered despite the occasional unsteady event along the way.

As the project neared completion and the edited interviews piled up for final typing after review by interviewee, it was necessary to choose a way of sequencing the material. Should it be alphabetical, chronological? The first would be easily determined, the second less simple. We chose a presentation by the kind of relationship of the interviewee to President Sproul within a chronological structure.

Herman Phleger, Horace M. Albright, and Donald H. McLaughlin, three very fine old grads, Bob Sproul's peers, talked about Bob, an *Up and Coming Young Man* when they were young and up and coming. Though what he might become was not so easily predicted. It was circumstances having to do with World War I that catapulted the lowly cashier Bob Sproul whom Pettitt describes as having "unlimited room for a future" to advisor on business affairs to the Board of Regents.

In 1918, Robert Gordon Sproul held the titles of comptroller, secretary of the regents, and land agent. He advanced rapidly in rank. In 1925 he was vice president in charge of finance and business. He was *The Boss*, and he was greatly admired and loved by his staff, represented herein in interviews with Robert M. Underhill, Garff B. Wilson, Walter S. Frederick, May Dornin, Robert S. Johnson, and Eleanor Lacy van Horn. Miss Agnes Robb, the president's secretary, shared her memories with the oral history office in 1976.

Bob Sproul, loyal alumnus, became the alumni association treasurer in 1915, two years after he graduated. In an address to the California Alumni Association in 1932 he refers to being "in the bosom of our great family." He and the alumni were "we." This firmly held feeling, and its importance in Sproul's successful presidency, was the subject of interviews with David P. Gardner, Stanley E. McCaffrey, Richard E. Erickson, Natalie Cohen, and Wakefield Taylor. Two college presidents, a judge, a development officer, and a yell leader, united under the *Blue and Gold* flag.

The Sproul family's loving recollections of father, a sort of "heart" of the series, join and supplement earlier Regional Oral History Office interviews with Ida Amelia Sproul, the president's wife. Interviewees Marion Sproul Goodin, John Allan Sproul, and Robert Gordon Sproul, Jr., were grateful to the Class of 1931 for this particular use of the class gift. Vernon L. Goodin, Katherine Connick Bradley, the Kendrick Morrishes, and Carl W. Sharsmith were in degrees and ways part of *The Family Scene*.

Clark Kerr, Wallace Sterling, Dean McHenry, Dyke Brown, Pete Yzaguirre, Louis H. Heilbron, William Penn Mott, Stuart LeRoy Anderson, and Ernest H. Burness are grouped together as *Observers*. For them Sproul was mentor, peer, friend, boss, sometimes defender. And Paul A. Dodd, Adrian A. Kragen, Mary Blumer Lawrence, and John B. deC. M. Saunders testify to President Sproul's effectiveness in *Building a Faculty*.

Each of the thirty-four interviews opens with an introduction that describes the meeting and fills in the relationship of the interviewee to Sproul. With a few exceptions, each memoirist completed a biographical outline. We had good cooperation in the many stages of doing the oral history, from the initial quick response to the invitation, to most agreeable arrangements for interviewing, to careful consideration of editing questions. Where because of the circumstances of the death of the interviewee alternative editing arrangements were made, such arrangements are described in the individual interview introductions.

J. R. K. Kantor, retired head of university archives, a man with an archivist's grasp of the university's past and a continuing delight in unearthing hitherto unknown connections between people and events, joined me for the Underhill, Dornin, Johnson, Gardner, Erickson, Cohen, and Lawrence interviews.

Scholars interested in the Sproul presidency should refer to the valuable material in the Centennial Record of the University (University of California, 1967), in University of California, 1868 to 1968 by Verne Stadtman (McGraw Hill,

1970), and in George Pettitt's Twenty-Eight Years in the Life of a University President (University of California, 1966). These works, and the materials in the university archives, including files kept over those years by Agnes Robb, and the memoranda of telephone calls, are a rich source for future research into the Sproul presidency.

It was President Sproul who started the Regional Oral History Office in 1954, with the special if not exclusive goal of documenting the university, its faculty, and alumni. Forty memoirs concerning university administrative and departmental history are indexed in the Catalogue of the Regional Oral History Office, 1954-1979 (The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1980). University history continues to be a major area of interest for the office, and by the end of the ten years since the catalogue was published another forty memoirs will be completed.

The oral history program of the University of California, Los Angeles, also continuously interviews about university history, and a group of memoirs have had particular bearing on the Sproul years: John E. Canaday, Hansena Frederickson, Andrew J. Hamilton, Vern O. Knudsen, Ralph Palmer Merritt, Franklin D. Murphy, George W. Robbins, and Frank P. Rolfe.

When President Sproul addressed the Berkeley graduates at the ninety-fifth commencement in 1958, his feelings were mixed. That day was also his day of graduation, to President Emeritus. "Farewell" is a word, he said,

that sticks in the throat. It does not prompt me to many other words...You who are being graduated this afternoon, and the one hundred and eighty-five thousand students upon whom I have conferred degrees in the past twenty-seven years...will be my spiritual if not my corporal companions ...I go laden with happy memories, inexhaustible I am sure, for as long as I may live. And so I go willingly, if not gladly, even though I go with half my heart left behind. Goodby and good luck to all of you.

We can say with satisfaction, and with gratitude to the Class of '31, that this Robert Gordon Sproul retrospective is finished. But rather than closing a door on the years of that great presidency, we hope it opens new windows on the history of a man and an era.

Suzanne B. Riess  
Senior Editor

August 1986  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

"In Memoriam, Robert Gordon Sproul"

from California Monthly,  
October and November 1975



# End of an era: Bob Sproul is dead at 84

By RAY COLVIG '53

"We're sons of California, a loyal company. . . ."

The photograph in the old *Blue and Gold* is faded, but there is no mistaking that the tall young man with the drum major's baton is Robert Gordon Sproul.

You can almost hear the band and see him striding across old California Field. You sense a person who is confident, jaunty, full of good humor. A practical dreamer already showing those rare qualities of leadership and tireless dedication.

Now Bob Sproul is gone. He died September 10 at his home on Tamalpais Road after a long illness. He was 84 years old. For 28 years, fully a third of that long lifetime, he had been president of the University of California.

The newspaper obituaries roll out the facts and figures of a remarkable career (for once "era" is not a banality) along with the anecdotes and the words of praise. But more important, because they are alive and real, are the memories that come flooding back in the minds of thousands of people who knew him, recognized his greatness, and could call him a friend.

At each year's welcoming meeting, he would remind new students that he was once a freshman himself and "the greenest pea of all," and the dread many felt in that strange new world would begin to subside.

"Anyone who met President Sproul and received his hearty handshake came away feeling that in some mysterious way he had started a friendship," wrote George A. Pettitt '25, Ph.D '40, his biographer and longtime assistant (and one-time *California Monthly* editor). "And if he chanced to meet him again the odds were high that he would be greeted by his first name and come away convinced that the friendship had, in an equally mysterious way, grown and matured."

He came from modest beginnings in San Francisco's Mission District. His father, once a schoolteacher in Scotland and later an accountant for the Santa Fe Railroad, gave him a middle name honoring General "Chinese" Gordon. "But being a Scot who missed being born in Scotland by about four years and honoring a British General whose head was carried through the streets of Khar-toum on a spear did not make young Robert dour or downcast," Pettitt observed, and he credits "Grandma" Sarah Sproul for passing on the sparkle of personality and the legendary artesian laugh to her son.

From his early years, Bob Sproul showed an immense capacity for hard and incessant work. He was a newspaperboy, lamplighter, timekeeper, and surveyor's chainman before he came to Berkeley. Much later, asked about the hard task of supervising and representing eight campuses, he said: "Sure it's tough, but I do it purposely. I do it with the intention of making my person the visible unity of the University."

As a student at Berkeley, he majored in civil engineering, joined the Abracadabra fraternity, and was, from the beginning, a "big man on campus." He was president of his class and of the University YMCA, a star two-miler on the track squad (he once won a race in the rain carrying an umbrella), and drum major in the same band where Earl Warren played the clarinet.

He graduated in 1913 and a year later began his University career as a cashier in the business office. In 1916, he married classmate Ida Wittschen '13, who was later to earn her own respect as the University's gracious "first lady."

Sproul's hard work and loyalty paid off as he rose first to comptroller, then in 1920 to secretary to the regents and land agent, and in 1925 to the additional post of vice president for business and finance. Serving under Presidents Wheeler, Barrows, and Campbell, he learned at first hand about the University and the state, became skilled in the intricate ways of politics, and achieved a major success in renewing University support from California's powerful agribusiness community. Although lacking

the usual credentials of teacher and scholar, he was well prepared by this toughening apprenticeship to become the University's youngest president (at 39) in 1930.

He was the right man at the right time. In words written much later by Verne A. Stadtman '50, another former *California Monthly* editor: "His ideas were products of his personal experience, progressive Republicanism, Presbyterian morality, and Rotarian ethics, which meshed completely with central themes of American life at the time, so that he had profound influence on citizens and students alike."

Right off there was an economic crisis, and Sproul carried pleas for help throughout the state by radio and at public meetings. One of his first decisions as president was to overrule faculty objections and grant a small raise to a young physicist, Ernest O. Lawrence, to keep him at Berkeley. (Less than ten years later, Lawrence was to win UC's first Nobel Prize.)

"By combining a tireless bonhomie with superb administrative talent, Mr. Sproul transformed the University of California from a merely large institution to the biggest in the Western world with a faculty sprinkled with Nobel Prize winners," the *New York Times* noted last month.

In 1930, the University had ranked tenth in the nation in the number of distinguished departments. Twelve years later it was second only to Harvard, and the growth in excellence nurtured under Sproul continued after his retirement until Berkeley twice (in 1965 and 1970) earned top national position in massive surveys conducted by the American Council on Education.

Other measures of the Sproul years are equally impressive. The University grew from three to six campuses (eight if you count La Jolla, which later became a full campus, and Mt. Hamilton, which had "campus" status for a while). Enrollments grew from 19,000 to 47,000, libraries from one million to nearly four million volumes, and faculty from 900 to 3,500 professors. With his ringing "by the authority vested in me" he conferred degrees on some 190,000 graduates during his presidency.

A towering achievement of the 1930s was the first big step in developing UC as a truly statewide institution, including the move of UCLA to Westwood and its major growth toward "great university" status on its own. With skill and patience, Sproul overcame the reluctance of loyal (and sometimes jealous) Berkeleyans, worked out the politics of alumni reorganization, and firmly established the concept of "one University" with several campuses that would make UC a model for the nation and the world. Later, he supervised UC's acquisition of Santa Barbara College along with major steps in transforming Davis and Riverside from agricultural stations into full-scale general campuses.

During most of his presidency, until the post of chancellor at Berkeley was established in 1952 (and in some ways until he retired), Sproul combined the role of systemwide chief executive with the job of running the flagship Berkeley campus. And he divided his time further between the "inside" and public duties, as the *New York Times* observed: "He had many of the attributes of a politician, glad-hander, and small-town booster. At one time he belonged to 268 organizations, ranging from Kiwanis to Tau Beta Pi, and he spent a great deal of his energy speaking to luncheon clubs and service groups about the University and its problems. These activities, which some thought unbecoming an educator, helped Mr. Sproul to obtain public understanding of the University and get money from sometimes reluctant legislators."

Sometimes criticized for maintaining too strong a grip through the central administration, Sproul nevertheless enhanced the faculty role in UC governance and helped the faculty gain further strength through rigorous standards of performance. At times, though, Sproul could become irked over faculty indecision and wrangling. "The only time I ever find the faculty knowing what they want to do is when I meet them in the men's room," he once said at a faculty meeting.

Most of the time, Sproul also championed student self-government and defended student editors against threats of censorship. But his deeply felt patriotism held the upper hand when some students rallied against selective service in 1940. "For those who prefer to fiddle while Rome burns or to accelerate the pace of destruction by building bonfires, I shall have very little sympathy," he said then. "Indeed, I may find it necessary to ask some of them to defer their enjoyment of an education at the state's expense until the life and prosperity of the state have been made secure again by their more patriotic fellows."

Sproul's darkest hours came during the "year of the oath." Later, when he retired, he told reporters of his presidency: "It has been a wonderful experience and a very happy life, with the exception of the loyalty oath period. That long hard seige is the most painful memory. But let me add that I'm thoroughly satisfied with the outcome, as is the faculty." Sproul suggested a special non-Communist oath in 1949 as a way to head off worse effects of the "McCarthyism" hysteria, but the tactic backfired into a fierce fight over academic freedom. Later, Sproul authored the resolution to rehire the professors who had failed to sign the oath and had been fired. Ironically, he was himself a frequent target of strident critics for being "soft" on Communism.

Sproul's support and appreciation for scientific research brought the University (and especially the Berkeley campus) its most widely heralded distinction in the 1940s and 50s. With Sproul's encouragement, Lawrence built the radiation laboratory into a world-famous scientific center that made Berkeley synonymous with the opening of an "atomic age." On a chance encounter when their plane was delayed by a snowstorm, Sproul talked virologist (and Nobel winner) Wendell Stanley into coming to Berkeley to found the

Virus Laboratory. When Sproul learned that Lick Observatory's telescopes had become outmoded, he took the matter to Governor Earl Warren '12, LL.B. '14 (who shared his pride in California and the University), and the legislature eventually appropriated nearly \$1.5 million for a new 120-inch reflector — built without a penny of federal funding.

Somehow, Sproul found time to be the number one booster of Cal (and UCLA) athletic teams — at the same time working to keep "professionalism" out of college sports. He took a strong interest in alumni affairs. He was a devoted family man, making the president's house a place of warmth and friendship and a symbol of the University's inner strength. He gave of himself in many kinds of public service, made the acquaintance of many of the world's great leaders, and always managed to share the honors he earned with the University. Sometimes mentioned for high political office, he was also offered much higher paying jobs on several occasions, including bank and university presidencies. But he turned them all down, buoyed by widespread public support and student rallies.

For many, Sproul will be best remembered for his old-time orator's voice. In one famous story, a visitor outside the building heard the voice from a second-story window and was told that "Sproul is talking to Sacramento." "Why doesn't

he use the telephone?" the visitor responded. On a much later occasion, six years after his retirement, Sproul was in his office in Sproul Hall when the first big student sit-in occurred. When it came time for him to go home, he found the hallway blocked with demonstrators. "You've got to let me through," he boomed. "I work here." Recognizing the voice of authority, the students parted and let the president pass through.

After Sproul retired in 1958 and moved into the Berkeley hills, he turned more attention toward his lifelong interests in conservation, including leadership in the Save the Redwoods League and the East Bay Regional Park District and service on the National Park Advisory Board. But he also continued his interest in education and the University and appeared at campus and alumni events as long as his health permitted.

His survivors, besides his wife, include his three children, Robert G. Jr. '42, Marion (Mrs. Vernon L. Goodin) '38, M.A. '40, and John A. '47, LL.B. '49; 11 grandchildren; and his brother, Allan '19, former president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

A fitting epitaph for Bob Sproul comes from the late Professor Dixon Wecter:

"God doubtless could have made a better president of the University of California, but doubtless God never did."

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**Remembering Bob Sprout**

# 'Today's University is his monument'

## Sharing a shoeshine: a student views RGS

By Wakefield Taylor '34, LL.B. '37

Robert Gordon Sproul entered upon his presidency at the University in 1930, the year I entered. We always considered him a member of the Class of '34, and he considered himself as such. At his first University meeting, he said: "A few days ago I welcomed the class of 1934 to the University and told them that they were unique in at least one way because they were starting with me, and that no other class would ever duplicate this peculiarity." I had come from the boondocks of Mendocino County that year where my mother was an elementary school teacher. Never having been out of the state, and only as far as the Bay Area perhaps a dozen times in my life, I could scarcely have been termed a sophisticate. The University looked mighty big and overpowering to me. I lived in a boarding house on College Avenue where I worked for a room in the attic. The ceiling didn't permit me to stand upright and did little to bolster my morale.

My first introduction to President Sproul was at the freshman reception in Hearst Gymnasium. There, in an interminable line of other freshmen, I waited my turn and finally shook hands with President and Mrs. Sproul. Their warm greeting, even though a momentary affair, made me feel quite important and thoroughly welcomed. Nevertheless, I had the impression that this was it, that probably never again in my years of attendance at the University (and I was dubious as to how long the stay would be) would I have the opportunity to shake hands and converse with the great man who had such far-reaching and heavy responsibilities. I would have to be content, with thousands of others, to watch him from afar as he presided over University meetings. We all recall those meetings. We remember the beautiful phrasing, the matchless humor and the magnificent voice of the president as he welcomed the freshmen at the first student meeting. We remember the pomp and ceremony of his inaugural when, at the age of 39, he received the University's Golden Key from Regent Chester Rowell. I repeat, I was an admirer from afar and assumed I always would be.

However, months of hard study and uncertain status passed, and along came the freshman dance. In those days, there was a shoeshine stand in Stephens Union. I was on the stand getting my yearly shine preparatory to attending the dance. I was reading the *Daily Cal*, but conscious of the fact that someone had joined me in the other chair. I looked up and, to my amazement, there sat Robert Gordon Sproul. As you can imagine, I felt quite uneasy and, of course, did not initiate any conversation. However, the president did. He could tell from my distinctive attire I was a freshman, and he asked me how I was getting along, where I was living, what I was majoring in, and so forth. It was a very satisfying visit and I came off the stand ten feet high and ready to

(Continued on Page 10)



## Presidential vision: skiing and cyclotrons

By Joel Mikkebrand, LL.D. '56

I am happy to speak about the man I loved and the president with whom I served. He ranks high among the eight University presidents with whom I have been acquainted.

I came to Berkeley in the year he graduated, 1913. We soon met and discovered a mutual interest in athletics, each of us having been a varsity athlete.

In the summer of 1925, we joined a group of congenial spirits who built the stone lodge of the "Sierra Ski Club" at Norden. The members were much less devoted to skiing than to good fellowship, and the telling of old chestnuts with ever more vim and vigor. I wrote limericks about members. On Bob I wrote:

We boast of a vice president  
Whose lungs have a marvelous vent.  
The sound of his smile  
Can be heard for a mile  
And his laugh shakes the whole  
firmament.

In 1931 I returned from Europe and greeted President R. G. Sproul. The Great Depression had arrived; appropriations had been sharply cut, and it was necessary to try to economize with least damage to what was most important. He appointed an administrative committee on educational policy with me as chairman. In our frequent conferences we had to discuss matters that were much more serious than skiing.

In 1939 he asked me to become Dean of the College of Letters and Science. I accepted from friendship and because I think a professor should be willing to help with housekeeping in limited tours of duty. Our pleasant relations continued. Once, when a high official wrote me a solemn note asking if I knew that on the previous Saturday morning no assistant dean was in our office, I answered, very politely, that we had arranged office hours in accord with traffic, that one of us was always on call, and that the president had left management of affairs solely to me. Next time I saw the president he asked, "What is this row you are having with X?" I said, "Did he complain to you about my letter to him?" Bob smiled and said, "Yes. It was a good letter."

Scottish forebears and tight money did not prevent Bob from seeing and grasping a great opportunity. Ernest Lawrence, with his right-hand man, Don Cooksey, came to me with a big problem: the University of Texas had tried to attract Ernest with money to build the great cyclotron that was his heart's desire. What should he do? I wrote to Bob urging him to make a heroic attempt to find the huge amount of money necessary for building a cyclotron here. The cyclotron, I said, would fertilize research in many fields, and it would be a scientific crime to let it be located elsewhere than in the great center of scientific research which is Berkeley.

Bob rose to the challenge and Ernest stayed here. Years later he again rose to a great opportunity when he attracted Nobelist Wendell Stanley by building

(Continued on page 11)

## Taylor/Sproul

(Continued from page 1)

conquer the world. I wrote my mother in about these words: "Dear Mother: I had my shoes shined today with Robert Gordon Sproul. He sure is a swell guy." I have felt that way about him ever since.

Indeed, it was President Sproul's practice to mix with the students frequently and to see and know as many as he could. He appeared to enjoy this relationship. His memory for names and faces and circumstances was simply phenomenal. It gave one a sense of real importance to meet the president on the campus of 13,000 students and be called by the first name. The students admired and respected the president. At Charter Day and University affairs, there were speakers of national and international repute, but, to the students, Dr. Sproul, with his wit, commanding appearance, and ability to turn a phrase, was always the dominant figure. Most notable was his conferral of honorary degrees.

It is important to the entering freshman to be given an inspired concept of the University, a definition of its goals and purposes that will encourage him to achieve a life of fulfillment. No one could equal President Sproul in the performance of this mission. In his initial charge to us in 1930, he said:

"There are thousands of men scattered throughout the United States whose value to the country is largely lost because in their youth they had no opportunity to see beyond their immediate surroundings, no chance to study the permanent satisfactions and durable values of life, and no inspiration to set as high a standard for themselves as they could attain to. A University such as this one can enlarge your knowledge, vision, and ambition so that what ability you have may be turned into fields a hundred times greater than it might otherwise enter. Despite the scoffers, the cynics, the wisecrackers and the minority of desiccated academicians, a University can do all these things better in an atmosphere from which sentiment has not been extracted and in which emotion is an element. For who shall reach his goal without a burning heart? The truly great University is not a thing of books and papers, test tubes and reports, grades and mechanisms. It is a creature of the spirit built out of the lives of men — faculty men, student men. It is founded on great loyalties as well as on great intellects."

As time passed, I was elected student body president for my senior year and had the rare opportunity of working closely with the president in University and student affairs. The president encouraged wide student participation in all of these activities. Disciplinary authority was delegated to the Student Affairs Committee and, with few exceptions, the president followed its recommendations. His philosophy was to give the students a maximum of responsibility in governing their own affairs. To him, this was part of the educational process. The University was not just an ivory tower. It was a microcosm of the world. Self-reliance and the ability to apply knowledge had to be taught, here and now, if we were to be prepared for the difficult tasks of the future.

In an address to the students, he said: "What I would like to see, and believe altogether possible, is a student body active in enlarging the boundaries of its knowledge and understanding of the world, and at the same time supporting a healthy extracurricular life secondary and supplementary to its main business. That kind of student body would become an alumni group capable of transforming the world. It would have the technical knowledge of subjects necessary to get on in business or in professions. It would have the advantage that comes with studious and orderly habits acquired early in life. It would have the capacity for intense, sustained, independent thought that marks the intelligent leader, and it would have added to all these keen-edged tools the haft to drive them home in the knowledge of human nature acquired through competition and other contacts with fellow students. This is an age of strain and steel, electricity, chemistry, and science; but, as always, the main element is *man*. Accordingly, as extracurricular activities give you any just estimate of human relations, they give you a start in the most intricate, complicated, and useful science of them all."

In the early 1930s, President Sproul presided over a statewide University with many campuses. Only a person with his unusual talents could have succeeded. However, there was never any question where his heart resided. It was in the Berkeley campus and the students knew it. 1933 was the first year the Bears played football with UCLA. This was a concession on the part of Big Brother that had to happen sooner or later. We went south and gave speeches at the UCLA rally, and the next day President Sproul and I sat together on the Bears' bench during the first half at the Coliseum. At the half, I escorted him to the center of the field, where he was met by the UCLA student leader to be seated on their bench during the second half. The occasion called for him to root for Cal in the first half and UCLA in the second. As we left for the exchange ceremony, the president said: "Wake, this is a mighty difficult thing for me to do, but I simply have to do it." The score at half time was nothing to nothing. I thought to myself, what a catastrophe if UCLA wins in the second half while the president is its principal rooter. Providence watched over us that day. The game was poorly played by both sides and ended in a scoreless tie. This made things just a little easier for President Sproul.

I would like to say a word to and about the president's family. Mrs. Sproul's association with the students was one we deeply cherished. Charming lady that she is, she brought dignity and grace to every occasion. It is difficult to see how a couple faced with the consuming public responsibilities of the presidency of the University could nevertheless have time to raise such a fine family. But Marion, Bob, and John are just like their parents — warm and understanding people. They, in turn, have become splendid citizens and have raised outstanding families. We extend our support to them all today, but also rejoice with them in their good fortune of such a rich heritage.

Robert Gordon Sproul's contributions to society are numerous and lasting. Today's University is his monument. He afforded the leadership that brought it from provincialism to worldwide recognition. He presided over its far-flung campuses with fairness and firmness. His affection for this institution was demonstrated time and again as he refused enacting positions in the political, financial, and educational life of the nation. As a splendidly articulate and forceful leader, he deeply enriched the lives of thousands of students who passed through the University portals over the years of his presidency. Those of us who had the rare privilege of being among his students shall be forever grateful. When President Sproul retired in 1958, he said to his last graduating class: "You, who are being graduated this afternoon, and the 185,000 students upon whom I have conferred degrees in the last 27 years, will be my spiritual if not my corporal companions." He continues today as our spiritual companion and our inspiration. □

## Hildebrand/Sproul

(Continued from page 1)

the Virus Laboratory.

The foregoing are only instances of his vision, and of his devotion to the University of California, which he served with all his might, spending himself so prodigally that he finally sacrificed years of active life.

I have been witness to all that I have reported; from now on I shall quote from his public addresses passages that reveal his convictions and wisdom. I wish to emphasize that he was his own speechwriter.

To the graduating class of 1933 he said: "The world that we have created is too much for us. The machinery that we have invented manufactures products which we did not foresee, which we do not want, and yet which we seem helpless to avoid. The industrial organization that has grown up around us is carrying us along, we know not whither, we know not why. We have more gold, more food, more things and power than at any other period in history. Yet we are poorer, hungrier, more helpless, more confused than mankind has ever been. The intelligence of the race has thus far failed before the problems that the race has raised. But with the lamp of knowledge in the hands of educated men and women, we can and we will light our way out of the dark labyrinth in which we wander. Insight, understanding, intelligence, discriminating appreciation of values, are now, as always, the hope of mankind — provided they are translated from matured thought into forceful action."

In 1936 he said: "Right now there is grave danger in this country, as in the University, that restless radicals will attempt to go too far and too fast. Bryce says: 'Revolutionists, intoxicated with their own aims, recoil from no means to secure their ascendancy, because they have not learnt, in Cromwell's famous phrase, to believe it possible "that they may be mistaken."' I do not fear that radicals will overthrow our government or our institutions, for the American people are too sensible to follow them. But I do feel that the overreaching enthusiasm of extremists will inevitably and properly invite reaction, and thus prevent the progress which might otherwise be made. If I know my country, the bombs of revolutionaries are not dangerous because they may start a conflagration, but because they will call out the fire department of reaction. And with the smoke of propaganda, the water of suppression, and the axe of terrorism, the damage will be done, and the building of civilization set back another generation."

Concerning teachers he said, addressing the Commonwealth Club of California in 1930: "The glory of a university is obviously the men who constitute its faculty. It cannot be too often repeated that it is men, and nothing but men, who make education. The reason why the University of California occupies the high position it does throughout the academic world is that there has never been a time when its faculty could not boast of men who were finding their way along rough trails, illuminated only by the spark of genius, to the heights of scholarship. Within a few years after the receipt of its charter from the state there were to be found in the University a goodly number of men whose reputation is even yet undimmed, such men as Daniel Coit Gilman, later president of Johns Hopkins University, Hilgard in agriculture, LeConte in geology, and many others. Nor is the present faculty

devoid of men who, in their respective fields hold high the lamp of learning — Campbell in astronomy, Kofoid in geology, and G. N. Lewis in chemistry, to pick out a few of the most obvious. In a very real sense, such men are the University of California, and similarly elsewhere. For material development is futile without brains to use and to direct it and personality to irradiate it. Students are getting a gold brick if they go for education to a school where there are no great teachers."

When Sproul had received a tempting invitation to become president of a major eastern university, our Academic Senate unanimously adopted the following resolution:

"You have abundantly earned our confidence. You have demonstrated over the years your appreciation of the high standards of both discovery and teaching upon which the greatness of a university must be built. You have devoted yourself with zeal and success to maintaining the unity, the dignity, the distinction of the University of California. We deeply appreciate the fact that your leadership has been effected by patient, persuasive wisdom rather than by recourse to the formal authority of your office. You have been receptive to constructive criticism. You have treated us as colleagues and have shared the sense of obligation to our common task which has become the genius of the institution. Such a combination of virtues, essential to the distinction of a university, is too rarely found in a university president."

I close now with a further word of my own. I have found that a significant criterion of the quality of a man is the quality of the woman who was willing to marry him. The rank of Bob Sproul by this test is that of near genius. □



I first saw Robert Gordon Sproul when I was a student at UCLA attending an "assembly" in Royce Hall in the fall of 1930. This was his inaugural visit to the UCLA campus in his role as president of the University of California. His dynamic manner of speaking, entirely new within my experience, made a tremendous impact on me.

I first met him three years later, while still a student at UCLA, under unforgettable circumstances. With the tacit backing of the UCLA chemistry faculty, I made a trip to Berkeley, convinced him through Miss Robb that he should allow an unknown student to break into his appointment schedule, and brashly asked him when he planned to introduce a graduate program in chemistry at UCLA. He received me cordially and was properly noncommittal. What makes the incident unforgettable is that months later we had a chance encounter on the UCLA campus at which he not only recognized me but greeted me by name!

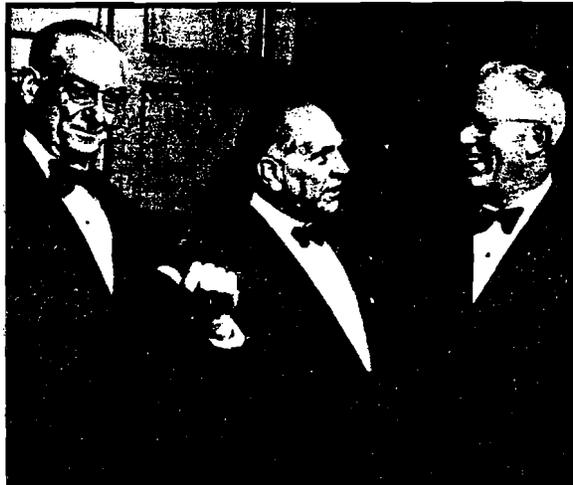
Notable also in my memory is the Alumni Tour early in 1952 in which I served as part of his entourage of faculty members. Together with President and the ever friendly and gracious Mrs. Sproul, we faculty members attended and spoke at breakfast, luncheon, and dinner meetings with Berkeley alumni held throughout the vast regions of California south of the Bay Area. His performance was flawless, repeating his speech verbatim at each meeting while we faculty, with poorer memories, of necessity varied our performance considerably from place to place.

GLENN T. SEABORG, Ph.D. '37

Looking back on 22 years of association with Robert Gordon Sproul during his record-setting career as president of the University of California my memory seems to concern itself as much with his many acts of friendly consideration for others as with the substantial achievements on which his reputation primarily rests. He was a remarkable man in so many ways that the wide respect he earned was broadly tinged by affection.

No administrator of an institution as large and complex as the multi-campus University of California could expect to find his task easy, but Bob Sproul found so much pleasure in it that his laugh shared symbolic fame with the bells of Sather Tower. Even though his appointment in 1930 was a kind of academic experiment — involving the first native-born Californian, the first alumnus, and the first leader lacking a background of scholarly teaching — he did so astonishingly well that numerous attempts were made to attract him elsewhere. He refused these offers because he was something more than a president at California. He was an "Old Blue" holding what he frankly considered to be the best and most challenging job in the world in the midst of a legion of friends.

## Remembering Bob Sproul



Robert Gordon Sproul with California Governors Goodwin Knight and Earl Warren

Bob Sproul believed firmly in certain basic principles: that there should always be one University of California which other public institutions of higher education should complement rather than duplicate; that California's university should be equal to the best anywhere, able to compete with the best in salary scales and facilities; that the primary goal of administration should be quality and freedom in teaching by a faculty dedicated to the same ends, for students who recognized their responsibilities as members of a privileged academic community.

There have been and will be other great presidents in the life of the University of California, but it is doubtful that any will reveal greatness through so many facets.

GEORGE A. PETTITT '24, Ph.D. '40  
*Assistant to the President and Lecturer in Anthropology (retired), biographer of Robert Gordon Sproul, author of Berkeley: the town and gown of it*

I could write a book in praise of Bob. He was a great man. Bob, as Controller and President of the University of California, loved the students, faculty, and regents, and worked cooperatively with them and they with him.

IRA B. CROSS  
*Professor Emeritus of Economics and Business Administration*

My first opportunity to become well acquainted with Robert Gordon Sproul was in 1934, just after his election to the presidency had been announced, when he was making the rounds of America's academic communities to size up his competition. He stayed with us for a few days in Cambridge and, as I remember, he exhibited even then a clear sense of what made a university great. He was impressed with Harvard's techniques in maintaining its high status, and he later used many of the same devices in lifting Berkeley to comparable rank. In later years, his visits were apt to arouse a bit of consternation — Jim Conant was reported to have warned deans and others to nail things down when Bob Sproul was reported to be on the prowl.

The greatest of his many services to the University, to my way of thinking, was the improvement in the quality of the faculty. Of course he turned to knowledgeable people for advice, but his own recognition of particular needs and his canny sense in judging men were also factors in reaching wise decisions. Excellence and ability to contribute effectively to the broad academic purposes of the University were the major criteria he used in judging candidates.

And once an appointment had been recommended through appropriate channels, he always responded when called upon by using his personal powers of persuasion and, on occasion, to do his utmost to find special funds when such help was critical.

Of course, his predecessors — especially Benjamin Ide Wheeler — had supplied him with a good base on which to hold and keep success, and Clark Kerr carried the faculty to new heights, but Sproul's administration was truly a time of distinctive advance in academic stature that can hardly be equalled in any other institution.

All who are devoted to the University must be grateful to him.

DONALD H. MCLAUGHLIN '14  
*Professor of Mining, Emeritus  
Regent Emeritus*

President Sproul had great interest in athletics. As an undergraduate he was a two-mile runner in track, and often during his years as president he was one of the timers at California track meets. During football season he was a frequent visitor to the California locker room after games — seldom after a victory but generally after a bitter and hard-fought defeat. His broad smile and booming voice healed wounds and provided inspiration for a better tomorrow. His close relationship with the student body can probably never be duplicated. Robert Gordon Sproul was in every sense of the word a great man.

LYNN O. ("PAPPY") WALDORF

I first met Bob Sproul in his home, the President's House on the Berkeley campus, in the early 1930s. Subse-



quently, when I was on the faculty at Caltech, we were both members of a dinner club in Los Angeles and became better acquainted. This acquaintance developed into close friendship after I returned to Stanford as president in 1949. From then until Bob retired we worked happily together to advance the cause of higher education, to which he had already made major contributions.

Given the historic relationship between Berkeley and Stanford, it was inevitable, I suppose, that Bob and I should be pitted against each other on occasions when the mood was gay. One of these occurred at the Bohemian Grove. Bob was to introduce me as Stanford's new president. When he came on stage, the stage hands took away the microphone! When Bob had finished and my turn came, the stage hands brought out two microphones! When the two of us left the stage, the stage hands, like street sweepers, reappeared with brooms and dustpans to make the stage clean again!

I am fortunate to have had as a colleague a man of his experience, energy, and great good will. To work on serious matters with a man with whom one can also have fun is an experience to be treasured — and I deeply treasure the memory of the friendship, fun, and labors which Bob and I shared.

WALLACE STERLING

When World War II was over one of the most effective communication efforts between the Berkeley campus and its far-flung alumni in the state was resumed — the Presidential Tour.

Each year, concentrating one year in Northern California, one year in Southern California, the alumni office directed by my husband, Robert Sibley, would schedule a whistle-stop visit in as many cities and towns as could be reached in a week's visit, with the distinguished tour members giving talks and answering questions at breakfast, lunch, and dinner meetings — all in different locales. Each year the troop included President and Mrs. Sproul, a liberal arts professor and his wife, a scientist and his wife, my husband and me, a tour business manager, and a cheer leader. We traveled in two cars and had to stick to an extremely tight schedule.

These trips were a marvelous education for me, an Easterner and graduate of a woman's college, for they introduced me to the vitality and excellence of a great state university and to the loyalty, enthusiasm, and continual thirst for a close relationship with her alumni.

They also gave me a great appreciation of Bob Sproul. Until going on these tours, I thought of him as a great but rather overwhelming personality, a booming-voiced, aggressive, and dominant man. But I learned that though this might have been his public image it was far from the real man. For as we "of the troupe" traveled together, we learned to know him as he really was

— kind, thoughtful, never late, fun to be with, never demanding, never bombastic — a delightful human being, doing an incredibly good job.

A humorous incident occurred one night when we met for a dinner meeting in Grass Valley. The gathering was in a church parlor, and the food was cornish pastries and beautiful home-made, thickly frosted cakes. Somehow in the rush of clearing tables, someone left a large piece of chocolate cake on the chair from which President Sproul had risen to make his speech. Upon finishing he sat on the cake, but upon realizing his predicament, he passed it off lightly, as if nothing had happened.

Next morning, however, we were in Chico. The men dashed off to a stag meeting leaving together Lucille Hicks, wife of Professor John Hicks, expert on U.S. history; Vi Warren, wife of Dr. Stafford Warren of the Manhattan Project; Ida Sproul; and myself. A young lady reporter dashed up and asked if she could do a group interview. Rather reluctantly, we consented. Her question was "What do you ladies do to help your famous husbands?"

Lucille replied that she was active in the League of Women Voters and tried to keep abreast of current events because of her husband's deep interest in U.S. history; Vi Warren said she often stepped in and made speeches when his schedule became too tight to handle; I laughingly commented that I tried to keep my mouth shut; and Ida delighted us all by confessing that she had learned the night before why it was important for her to go along on these trips. It was to wash out Bob Sproul's pants when he sat on chocolate cakes.

We thought no more of this interview until quite a few weeks later, when the clipping service sent Bob Sproul a copy of the Chico newspaper which, to our amusement, gave a verbatim account of the incident. Upon reading it, Bob Sproul grabbed his phone and said, "God, Ida, why can't you keep quiet about something the way Carol says she does!"

Also on that trip the Sprouls and I were expecting grandchildren to be born at any minute. Bob delighted us by saying that as soon as his grandchild was born he would arrange to have Brahms' lullaby played on the Campanile. He had a real flair for communication.

CAROL SIBLEY

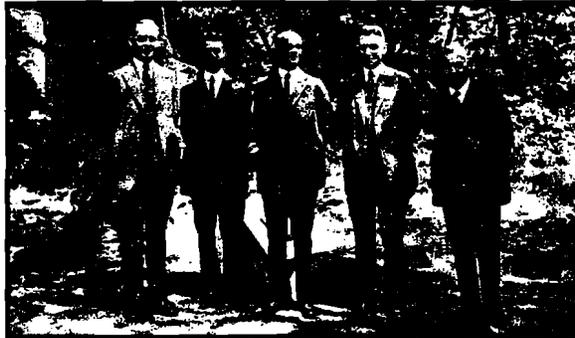
Mr. Sproul was a man of vision, aggression, and honesty. His contributions to state and nation were many, chief of which was to the University of California, where he saw his dream of building a statewide institution with outstanding libraries and a preeminent faculty fulfilled.

As one retiring professor wrote: "You have been a wonderful president and a wonderful man."

He will be missed.

AGNES R. ROBB '18  
Administrative Secretary  
to Robert Gordon Sproul

Robert Gordon Sproul's greatest trait was buoyancy, something he seems to have been born with in endless reserves. This was the quality that came through to me when I was a student and would look forward to University meetings in Harmon or Edwards Gymnasium, chiefly to see and hear him. Later, after I had become an instructor on the faculty in 1939, I felt that buoyancy at even closer quarters when I attended Academic Senate meetings in 312 Wheeler, a room that seated just under 200 and that was invariably close to filled whenever it was known in advance that President Sproul would be presiding. Even



Robert Gordon Sproul '13, then comptroller, with Monroe Deutsch '02, Edward Voorhies '13, Matthew Lynch '08, and Alexander Kidd '99, in 1923

after nearly four decades it is easy for me to remember the almost electric quality in the air in the Senate Room when he came striding in, every inch the commanding presence in the room but every inch also the soul of courtesy in manner and of elegance in his phrasing of a subject or his summing up of a discussion prior to senate action.

He was an extraordinarily intelligent and perceptive mind, but it was nevertheless the quality of buoyancy that gave such substance and also luster to his leadership of the University. He was also a man of great natural courage, a trait never more manifest than during the tragic days of the Loyalty Oath when, beleaguered and beset though he was, he never dodged or evaded confrontations which were bound to have been agonizing at times to someone who loved the University as he did. He was, finally, a very kind, generous, and thoughtful man. On several occasions he went out of his way to help or to intercede for me in difficult times, and I know there are many hundreds, even thousands, who could say the same. I do not see how any president could ever have been more loved and respected at the height of his powers than Bob Sproul.

ROBERT NISBET '36, M.A. '37, Ph.D. '39

His booming laugh was his trademark and produced endless stories. Yet in one instance when I expected to hear it, he was silent. I found myself on the elevator on the first floor of the Administration Building together with President Sproul and others. A girl student stood next to the control buttons and asked us for our floors. When Sproul asked for the second floor on which his offices were located she remarked, "Oh! You are slumming today!" The expected guffaw did not come from him, presumably because he realized that she did not recognize him and he did not wish to embarrass her.

Some time later I had an appointment to see the president in his new offices in the new Administration Building

Ida Sproul, President Harry S. Truman, and RGS at Commencement Luncheon, 1948



(now Sproul Hall). I complimented him on his lovely new office and added, "I notice there are no ceiling leaks." Somewhat startled, he asked me why I made this comment. I replied, "Well, you see, the women's rest room on the second floor of South Hall intermittently leaks on top of my desk in my private office." Several weeks later, while I was presiding over a faculty meeting, the intercom blasted out: "Dean Grether, President Sproul wishes to speak to you." Upon my return to the faculty meeting I announced that the president had just informed me that the regents had appropriated \$5,000 to renovate the second floor restroom.

Instead of adding from the kaleidoscope of my memories of the man, I shall make two observations about Robert Gordon Sproul that epitomize two of his basic characteristics, which, so far as I know, have not been noted by others. In teaching economics I have sometimes used him as an example of a perfect discriminating monopolist. He was an extraordinarily shrewd negotiator and bargainer — a Scotsman with exceptional trading acumen. If he had gone into business he would undoubtedly have built a large corporation around himself. The other characteristic was his violation, perhaps by design, of one of the basic maxims of traditional organization planning with respect to the span of control. In these terms he allowed far too many people to have direct access to him as president. Only a man of extraordinary physical and mental energy could have done this successfully. In a very real sense, however, this is why the University of California, statewide, was almost synonymous with Robert Gordon Sproul.

EWALD T. GREETHER  
Flood Professor of Economics, Emeritus  
Dean Emeritus of the School of  
Business Administration

Each of us will have his own recollections of President Sproul. My first one is of his inauguration as president during

my first semester at Berkeley (as a graduate student). To me, he and the distinguished institution he did so much to build were never again wholly separable in my mind. My second is of his presiding amiably over meetings of the Academic Senate or answering barbed questions at the early All-University Conferences. He could call every speaker by name and he could listen with good-natured patience even to attacks on his own policies. My third is of the grim Year of the Oath, when he found himself caught between an implacable faction of the regents, an indignant and increasingly embittered faculty, and an uncomprehending or unsympathetic public. He struggled gallantly and ultimately successfully to save the University. His lasting legacy is his inspired vision of what a great state university can become and what this one largely has become.

LINCOLN CONSTANCE, Ph.D. '34  
Professor of Botany

It is late at night as I pen these thoughts in the quiet of my study. They do not come easily; so many thoughts, so many recollections, so much sorrow at the passing of so great a man, a son of California, a friend.

By precept and example, Robert Gordon Sproul taught us the art of living, of loving, of giving. His was a life of committed service, of faith in the young, of confidence in their teachers, of love in the home, of respect for the distinguished University he served so well and so long.

It was my good fortune to have been born and raised in Berkeley and, thus, to have had not infrequent occasion to see Bob Sproul in action, to have made his acquaintance, and to have worked with him in his later years. Perhaps it would be worth recalling the assistance he gave me during my graduate years on the Berkeley campus, for it will illumine some of what made President Sproul the man he was.

I had chosen the California loyalty oath controversy (1949-56) as the subject of my dissertation. The history of that particular incident in the University's past was painful to recall even as late as 1964. President Sproul remembered the controversy with no less distress than other principals whose cooperation was essential to the research. But remember he did, with respect for all, with perspective on his own involvement, and with a thoroughness and honesty few men could muster under similar circumstances. No acrimony, no vindictiveness, no resentment or bitterness crept into our conversations, nor was any such found in his personal papers. Here was a man full of charity and good will toward all, capable of acknowledging his own shortcomings, while overlooking the frailties and weaknesses of others.

His generous and sensitive attitude toward my inexperience and halting efforts helped carry me through the research. How I shall miss him! How very lucky I have been to have known him.

DAVID PIERPONT GARDNER  
M.A. '59, Ph.D. '66  
President, University of Utah

It is not an easy task in brief compass to take the measure of such a man. His monument is the University and his accomplishments are in the minds of the thousands who learned here.

President Sproul had a deep sense of personal responsibility for the resolution of each problem the University faced; it may at times even have been excessive. Witness the following episode. On one occasion when he was confined to his home by an indisposition which did not

prove to be crucial, he called me over to his home and asked me to take over a difficult, albeit short-term assignment. He explained the matter to me and as I was about to leave he said — almost in one breath — "Frank, I am giving you this assignment because I have great confidence in you — although of course if I were not flat on my back I'd do it myself!"

Bob Sproul's conception of the University may be described in a close approximation to his own language. I will recall being present at a meeting of the Order of the Golden Bear when he was asked what he aspired to above all else for the University. His response was immediate and eloquent. "What I aspire to," he said, "is to have in this University the most able people there are in every field of knowledge in which the mind of man has exercised itself." No student, no member of the faculty — indeed, no one could ask for more.

FRANK L. KIDNER '36  
Vice President Educational Affairs  
Professor of Economics

Robert Gordon Sproul had a great influence on my life, and I consider it a blessing to have had the opportunity of knowing and being closely associated with him. That association began in 1934 when I entered Berkeley as a freshman, continued on during my undergraduate years, through the time when I was executive manager of the California Alumni Association and was climaxed when I served closely with him as vice president-executive assistant.

Bob Sproul personified the University of California. To students, he represented the University with his warm and friendly personality, his cheerful personal greetings on the campus, his booming voice and inspiring orations at University meetings and his ever-present sense of humor. To alumni, Bob Sproul personified the University of California in its ever-growing greatness. On the annual "Sproul Tour," his addresses not only brought up-to-date information on the University but by his inspirational message renewed our loyalty and dedication to Alma Mater. To the Legislature, he symbolized the University and was able to persuade successive legislators of the wisdom of giving the University strong support in their annual appropriations. To the University itself, he personified the one statewide University, and by the strength of his personality he welded the several parts of the University together. To the people of the state, he symbolized the University of California and by his public appearances and addresses he conveyed the message of the greatness of the University and inspired their pride and support.

Today, as a university president, when I am confronted by a problem, I often find myself asking, "What would President Sproul do in this situation?" And I gain untold help from what I believe Bob Sproul would do.

STANLEY E. MCCAFFREY '38  
President, University of the Pacific

Robert Gordon Sproul was the architect of the University of California as we know it. His design was followed and supported by many men and women devoted to the scheme, which was his heritage and theirs from those who preceded him, and who understood in a newer age that it would be our heritage from him.

I first came to know Bob Sproul through my late husband, who served for 18 years as a regent of the University. What I say now speaks to the heritage which the regents of this day cherish and preserve. Above all, Bob Sproul knew

that the quality of a great university depends on the quality of the men and women who constitute its faculty. This is where success or failure lies. He was "a fisher of men." And he knew how to fish. I have a more than passing memory of a day when I sat two or three seats from him in the stands of a football game. Leaning over me he nodded his head in the direction of a man I had not met and said — in a voice you could hear from afar — "I think I just hooked him. He is a Nobel Prize winner" — and he had!

He respected and, of course, consulted with the Academic Senate concerning faculty appointments. Nevertheless, he knew in his heart and mind that, if the people of California were to have the great university which he believed, as do I, they both wanted and deserved, his duty was to see that great scholars and scientists were brought here and supported in their endeavors. And he made it his personal business to see to it that this essential purpose was well served.

Because of his own dedication and personal magnetism, everyone who was exposed to him, even in a small way, did love the University.

One of the final things he told us was that our class would always be special to him (he had been made an honorary member of the class of 1958) and that we would all be his "spiritual partners."

All graduates feel that their Alma Mater will never be the same after they graduate. In our case we knew it would never be the same.

COLETTE SEIPLE '58  
Executive Director,  
California Alumni Association

Many were the facets of the brilliant career of Robert G. Sproul. Not the least of these was his interest in conservation. For 53 years he was treasurer of the Save-the-Redwoods League and, for the past four years, treasurer emeritus.

From the beginning of the League his interest in conservation never abated.

## President

When you met Robert Gordon Sproul somewhere near Wheeler Hall, He'd say, How are you? What are you working on? Next time, he'd say, How's Wordsworth? (that had been my answer) And why do we need to know more about him? And what can I do to help? What could students and faculty do but flourish in such directness of interest?

When three members of the English Department Were given Guggenheim fellowships, The Sprouls, expressing delight, invited them to dinner To celebrate. Red wine, with ham. Or white, with turkey? asked RGS. Red with turkey, please. You know, that's not proper, Sproul said. And I'll join you.

When, to bridge over the wide crevasses Of communication made by the oath controversy, Some faculty members started a faculty-citizen magazine Called *Idea and Experiment*, we asked for Sproul's support. It was an awkward request, politically, according to his secretary, And besides he was out of town. We wired him. He wired back assent.

He did not care for poetry very much, But coming down the hall one day He carried a book of mine in his hand. Look what I just went and bought on the avenue, he groaned. Though there were more than twenty thousand students on campus then, These are the kinds of ways in which many of us can remember, Young as we were and unlearned in the ways of administration, A President.

JOSEPHINE MILES, M.A. '34, Ph.D. '38

With a great poet he knew that "men ever had leave to coin new words" to suit the occasion. And he was a master of the spoken word. Many will remember him primarily for that excellent quality.

But his real bequest to this University, the presidency which he relinquished more than 17 years ago, is to be found in the men and women he "hooked" for this faculty and the quality of those who, in their turn, were brought to each of the University campuses in conformity with the standards which he and the Academic Senate established and to which he gave his strong support.

That is our bequest from Robert Gordon Sproul.

ELINOR R. HELLER  
Chairman, The Regents of the  
University of California

In June of 1958 I sat in Memorial Stadium with my fellow graduates and listened to Robert Gordon Sproul make his final Commencement address as president of the University. Sproul addressed us with his usual flamboyant enthusiasm, urging us to "love the University . . . for it will do your heart good."

His devotion to the League's affairs and his wise counsel and guidance contributed importantly to the success of the movement to save the redwoods. His prestige as president of the University attracted nationwide support for the League's program.

In 1959 a beautiful 40-acre grove of giant redwoods at Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park was named for Robert G. Sproul and Ida W. Sproul, through a contribution from the May Treat Morrison Foundation. In 1968, as a part of the University's Centennial Celebration, a redwood tree was planted on the Berkeley campus in honor of Dr. and Mrs. Sproul.

Dr. Sproul's interest in conservation extended beyond the redwoods. He was active on the Conservation Committee of the California State Chamber of Commerce and was a member of the Advisory Committee on National Parks. For many years he served as chairman of the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Parks System.

During his most active period as treasurer of the Save-the-Redwoods League, he wrote: "Saving the redwoods is not a provincial effort, but of significance to the entire nation."

"The glorious redwoods have survived down to the present time from a forgotten era. Ages ago they grew in many parts of the world; now only a remnant remains to 'connect us as by hand-touch with all the centuries they have known.' Still strong and vigorous, they may continue to stand in their awe-inspiring beauty for many centuries more. Yet giant redwoods may be cut down at almost any time. . . . If we act, we can save some of the finest remaining redwood forests from destruction. If we are passive, they will be destroyed also."

"In this significant program, to save primeval redwood forests, tremendous strides have been made, and I feel that with the aid of public-spirited and far-seeing Americans much more will be accomplished."

Dr. Sproul's prediction has materially been realized. In 30 state parks and the Redwood National Park some of the most beautiful groves of giant redwoods have been preserved, some 150,000 acres — valued at close to a billion dollars.

NEWTON B. DRURY '12  
Chairman, Board of Directors  
Save-the-Redwoods League

When in 1944 Robert Gordon Sproul appointed me in charge of UCLA's libraries, I was only in my thirties and with no experience as an administrator. If he had any doubts about my ability to direct and expand a large library system, as I was to do for the next 17 years, he never showed them.

I couldn't have had a better example to learn from. He was forceful, direct, perceptive, and remembering. "You're the librarian," he said when I asked his advice on a library matter. "Don't ask me. Tell me." I learned early never to come to him without documented reasons for the support I was requesting for anything that I could not justify with precise information and data.

I also learned to move fast in and out of his office. When he was serious that meant he was listening. When he laughed that meant it was time to leave. He was more than an administrator. He was humane and he was also bookish. I didn't have to tell him who Willa Cather was. She was one of the first recipients of an honorary degree after he became president in 1930 and was the house guest of the Sprouls.

When I retired from UCLA in 1966 he and Ida Sproul came from Berkeley to help pop the champagne corks. He was in great booming voice as he greeted me with, "Well Larry, have you read all those books you got me to pay for?" I don't think I was ever as proud as I was then. He was a great, creative, loving man, and I'll never forget that it was Bob Sproul who first reached a hand to me.

LAWRENCE CLARK POWELL  
Professor in Residence,  
University of Arizona

When I came to the University in 1922 to take charge of the Davis campus, Bob Sproul was assistant comptroller of the University. Our University relations which were to last so long began at that time.

Our intimate friendship began a few years later when a group of ten men — five from Berkeley and five from Davis — at the close of the academic year and immediately following commencement at Berkeley, would go up into the Sierra foothills for a week of fishing and other relaxation. This annual outing continued for nearly two decades. Today I am the sole survivor of the group.

My administrative association with President Sproul began in 1930 with his appointment to the presidency and mine

to the deanship of the statewide College of Agriculture. In those days the University was much smaller and far less complex than it is today. Life was much more simple too. We didn't have much money and had to make every dollar count. Thus the University had to build slowly, but under President Sproul's wise and inspiring leadership, I like to think it built soundly. There wasn't much time or money for academic experimentation. He had to cling to basic principals. But in so doing he laid the firm foundations of the great University of today which is his memorial.

Dr. Sproul's relations and contributions to the City of Berkeley in which he spent the major portion of his adult life were likewise outstanding. Over the years he interested himself and participated in the business, professional, and religious life of the community. A presi-

dent of the Rotary Club of Berkeley, a director of the Berkeley YMCA, a director of the Pacific School of Religion, a director of a financial institution are but a few of the many local activities through which he contributed to the development of the splendid town and gown relations his community enjoys today.

A great man has gone from our midst. We are grateful to the Almighty for his life. Truly we who knew and worked with him are the better for his having lived.

CLAUDE M. HUTCHINSON  
Vice President Emeritus, UC  
Dean, College of Agriculture, Emeritus  
Professor of Agriculture, Emeritus  
Former Mayor of Berkeley

The first time I was ever aware of Bob Sproul, he was only a voice. It was at

a track meet in the spring of 1914 and Bob was functioning as a loud-speaker, announcing the results of the events in his great stentorian way. In the following years I was to know him well enough to call him "Bob" and he knew me well enough to call me "Ernie," which is not my name. I remember standing with a friend at the corner of Post and Market and mentioning that President Sproul was approaching us. My friend asked if I knew him. I said I did. And as Bob passed us he said, "Hello, Ernie!" — and my friend said: "So you know him, do you?" It made no difference to me — if Bob wanted to call me "Ernie," let it be. At least he knew me. Which is more than one could have said of our other great University president, Benjamin Ide Wheeler, who was scholarly, dignified, and remote from most of the student body. I think of these two presi-

dents as our great builders, each in his own way. Dr. Wheeler was a great presence in his California Hall office. Bob Sproul was a great presence in every corner of the campus and every corner in California. Since he had never earned a doctorate or taught a class I am sure he was received with some condescension by some faculty members; but this changed as they realized that here was a man who was building a greater university and always kept abreast of the changing times.

One day he told me that he had just had a "little" problem with three students who had set up a *menage a quatre* in an apartment with a pliant young woman. I asked Bob how he had handled the situation and he said: "They would have been expelled if this had happened under Wheeler. But times have changed. Ernie, since you and I were in college, and we must change too. I just told them to break it up."

It hurts whenever I remember that that voice is stilled and Bob is no longer with us.

MARSHAL MASLIN '17  
Writer for the San Francisco  
Cal-Bulletin for 40 years

Robert Gordon Sproul led the University of California during some of its brightest times — its rise to preeminence in the world of science, the emergence of UCLA as a campus with national and international academic stature; and some of its darkest times — the Great Depression, the loyalty oath controversy of the Joe McCarthy days. It was a 28-year period of immense historic importance to the University.

His three greatest achievements were: (1) his contributions to the selection, recruitment, and retention of outstanding faculty members; (2) his effectiveness in making the value of the University felt in every city and county in the state; and (3) his personification of the spirit of the University to students and alumni.

He came to symbolize for Californians the unique combination of high academic quality, of great concern for service to the people of the state, and of loyalty to Alma Mater.

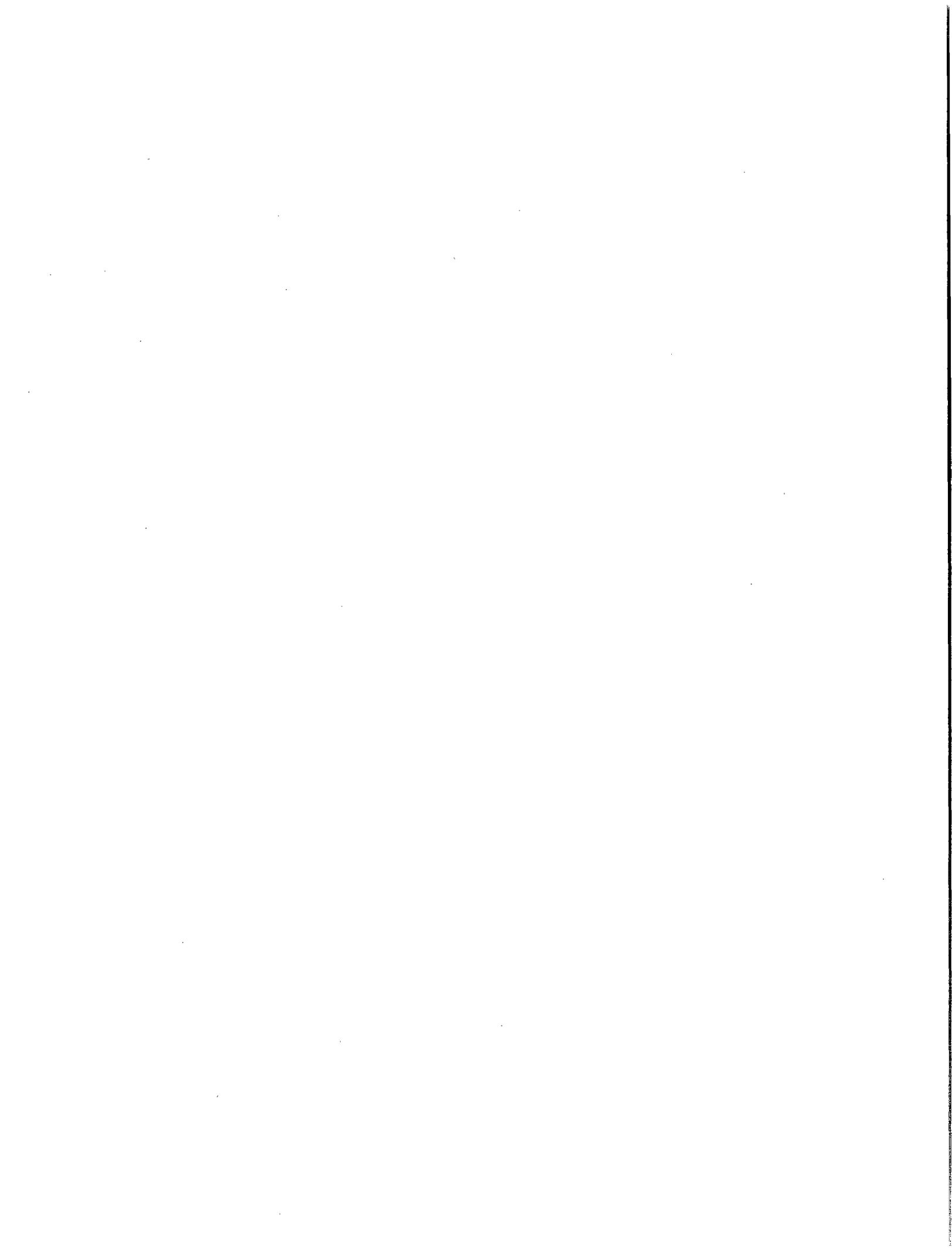
CLARK KERR Ph.D. '39  
President Emeritus, UC  
Chairman, Carnegie Council  
on Policy Studies in Higher Education

Robert Gordon Sproul was a legend within the University family and to the people of California for as long as most of us can remember. His great magnetism and forceful influence touched every corner of California. His insistence on quality scholarship was vital in making this institution the state's most valuable asset. His achievements were monumental and his life was a challenge to all of us who value the great institution he loved so well. He will be missed by all who knew him, but the University is his monument.

CHARLES HITCH  
President Emeritus, UC  
President, Resources for the Future, Inc.

Bob Sproul was more than a president of the University. To many people — legislators, governors, and the man in the street alike — he was the University. He was a towering figure in the history of the institution, and as one who understands well the dreams and accomplishments of his 28-year presidency, I stand in awe of his achievement. He was a great man and a great president, and he will be remembered by all with special affection.

DAVID SAXON  
President, University of California.



*Top left:* Robert Gordon Sproul, Sarah Elizabeth Sproul, and Ida Amelia Sproul with Secretary of State George C. Marshall, at University House, Berkeley, 1948.

*Top right:* Robert Gordon Sproul, 1930.

*Bottom left:* Robert Gordon Sproul, 1941 Arthur Cahill portrait in oil.

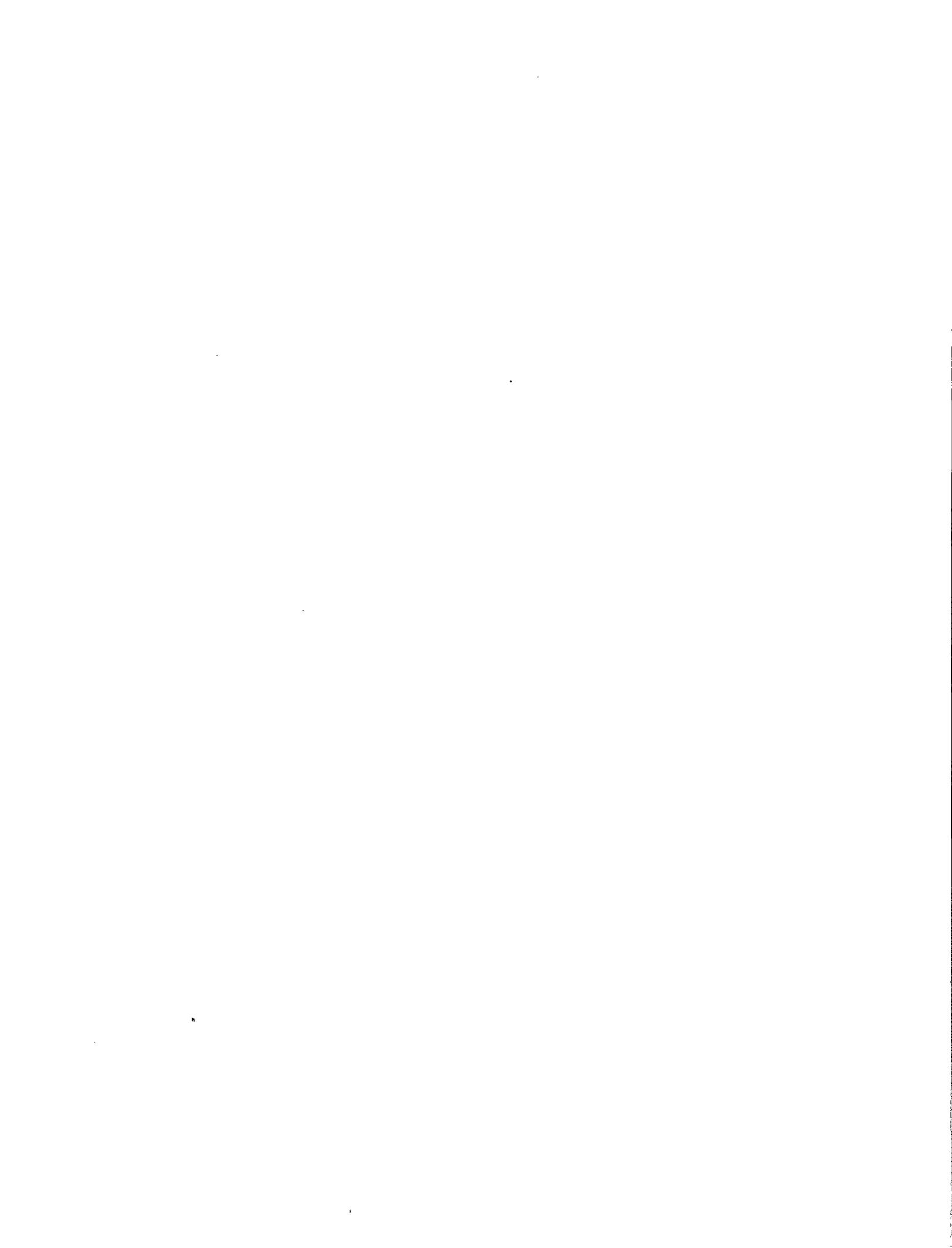
*Bottom right:* Robert Gordon and Ida Amelia Sproul with Roy Warner, President of Class of 1907, at reception for viewing of Gleb Ilyin portrait, University House, June 11, 1960.  
*photograph by ASUC Photography*



*Top:* Robert Gordon Sproul with graduating grandsons and grandnephew (*left to right*): Curtis Cutter Sproul, son of RGS, Jr.; John A. Sproul, Jr., son of JAS; Robert Gordon Sproul III, son of RGS, Jr.; and Thomas M. Eshleman. Commencement, Berkeley, 1968.

*Middle:* Robert Gordon Sproul with President Harry S. Truman and Lieutenant Governor Goodwin Knight. Commencement, Berkeley, 1948.

*Bottom:* President and Mrs. Sproul (seated) and Beth and Stan McCaffrey (standing), alumni tour, Vallejo, January 1950.



Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Herman Phleger

AN OLD SCHOOL FRIEND'S IMPRESSIONS OF SPROUL

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

The late Herman Phleger, counsellor-at-law to California corporations, international legal advisor and representative abroad for the United States, trustee of Stanford University, was a member of the University of California's illustrious Class of 1912, and a friend of President Robert Gordon Sproul.

Herman Phleger passed on before he was able to check over the text of this oral interview about his friend Bob Sproul. We sent the manuscript to his son Atherton Phleger, who had earlier said, in response to a sympathy note: "Dad got so much enjoyment out of working with you. It was a high point...We are so lucky to have his oral history [referring to two other oral history contributions made over the years by Mr. Phleger]. I can pick it up and feel him chuckling and his eyes twinkling."

I am fairly certain that Herman Phleger would not have made changes in the interview, had he had a chance to review it. Once he decided to participate in the project, the first and last decisions had been made. However, before he agreed to be interviewed there was a certain amount of scuffling on the question of whether the interviewer knew enough to undertake the interviews. I chose to rise to the bait--and it did seem like a game. I provided Mr. Phleger with a detailed outline of my intended areas of questioning and took to his San Francisco office, for delivery to him at home, the two primary histories of the university published at the time of the centennial, The University of California, 1868 to 1968, by Verne A. Stadtman (McGraw Hill, 1970) and the Centennial Record of the University of California (UC Painting Dept., 1967).

Mr. Phleger felt, correctly, that there was a need for a commitment by a good biographer to do a book about Robert Gordon Sproul. I am glad he finally saw fit to include his personal recollections in this series, and thus make them available for such a biographer.

The interview, in the very beautiful secluded Phleger home in Woodside, was held in Mr. Phleger's den on a day in June for which a crackling fire was just right. I was treated graciously, as an emissary from the university, and besides the interview and a walk in the cutting garden, I was given a tour of the family photographs and enjoyed a lunch with Mary Elena Macondray Phleger and Mr. Phleger. We sat by a window that delivered a view of green lawns and trees, and the meal concluded with the world's best strawberries and ice cream. Certainly few interviewees have three oral history encounters with our office, and I feel fortunate that I had reason to meet Herman Phleger, and to be his last interviewer.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

Regional Oral History Office  
Room 486 The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California 94720

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name Herman Phleger

Date of birth 9/5/1890 Place of birth Sacramento, California

Father's full name Charles W. Phleger

Birthplace Findlay, Ohio

Occupation Agriculturalist

Mother's full name Mary McCrory Phleger

Birthplace New Orleans, Louisiana

Occupation Teacher

Where did you grow up ? In Sacramento

Present community San Francisco Bay Area

Education U.C. Berkeley, B.S. 1912, LL.D. 1957, Mills College

LL.D. 1938; Legal Education U.C., Berkeley, and Harvard Law School.

Occupation(s) Associate Director Legal Division, U.S. Military Gov.

of Germany, 1945; Legal Adviser, Dept. of State, 1953-57; U.S.

Member Permanent Court of Arbitration under The Hague; Treaties,  
1957-1963; 1969-1975 (see attached)

Special interests or activities (See attached)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CURRICULUM VITAE

HERMAN PHLEGER

Born Sacramento, California, September 5, 1890.

University of California, Berkeley, B.S. 1912, LL.D. 1957.

Mills College, LL.D. 1938

Alumnus of the Year, University of California, 1958

Regent Professor, University of California, Berkeley, 1965

Boalt Hall Alumni Association Annual Citation Award, 1964

The Berkeley Citation, University of California, 1970

Legal Education: University of California, Berkeley, and  
Harvard Law School.

Lieutenant (J.G.) U. S. Navy, 1917-1918.

Associate Director Legal Division, U. S. Military Government  
of Germany, 1945.

President Pacific-Union Club, 1952-1953.

The Legal Adviser, Department of State, 1953-1957

U. S. Member Permanent Court of Arbitration under The Hague  
Treaties, 1957-1963, 1969-1975.

U. S. Representative, 13th General Assembly United Nations, 1958

Chairman of Antarctica Conference and U. S. Representative  
with Rank of Ambassador, 1959.

Member U. S. Arms Control and Disarmament Advisory Committee,  
1962-1970. Appointed by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

Member U. S. Delegations

Tenth Interamerican Conference, Caracas, 1954.

Indo-China and Korean Conferences, 1954

Seato Conference, Manila, 1954

Summit Conference and Foreign Ministers Conference,  
Geneva, 1955.

Suez Conferences, London, 1956

Bermuda Conference, 1957

Trustee Stanford University, 1945-1965, Emeritus 1965  
 Mills College, 1927-1939  
 Irwin Charity Foundation, San Francisco  
 Roth Charity Foundation, San Francisco  
 President, Board of Trustees, Children's Hospital  
 San Francisco, 1930-1950

Member Council on Foreign Relations

Links Club (N.Y.)  
 Metropolitan Club (Washington, D.C.)  
 Pacific-Union Club (President 1953)  
 Bohemian Club  
 Burlingame Country Club

1963 Committee to Strengthen The Free World (Clay Committee)  
 Appointed by President Kennedy to prepare 1963 Program  
 for Foreign Aid

1965 Regents Professor, University of California, Department  
 of Political Science

1966 Member American Bar Association Commission on  
 Electoral College Reform

Partner Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison, San Francisco, 1926-1976  
 Counsel 1977-

Member American Bar Association (Fellow); American Society  
 of International Law, International Law Association

Office One Market Plaza, Spear Street Tower  
 San Francisco, California 94105

Residence Mountain Meadow, Woodside, California

#### Sometime Corporate Directorships

Wells Fargo Bank - Wells Fargo & Co. (American Trust Company)  
 Fibreboard Corporation (Pabco Products)  
 Union Oil Company of California  
 United States Petroleum Company  
 The California-Oregon Power Company  
 Matson Navigation Company  
 Oceanic Steamship Company  
 Moore Dry Dock Company (Moore Shipbuilding Company)  
 Cypress Lawn Cemetery Association

The Newhall Land and Farming Company  
White Investment Company  
Gladding, McBean & Company  
Las Posas Orchard Company  
Crocker Hotel Company  
Tillman & Bendel Inc.  
Parkside Realty Company  
Dumbarton Bridge Company  
California-Arizona Bridge Company  
Italian Swiss Colony  
Holly Sugar Company  
Moore Investment Company  
Moore Securities Company  
Empire Company (Roy N. Bishop)  
Green Investment Company (C. E. Green)



Impressions of the Young Bob Sproul

[Date of Interview: June 6, 1984]

Phleger: The only contribution I could make that's worthwhile is something about Bob personally and in college and around, which these books [centennial history and history of the university, 1868-1968] don't deal with. They deal with his administration and his work.

I met Bob Sproul I guess immediately after I entered the university. In those days, there weren't many students in the university. When I graduated there were 4,000 students. There were only 2,500 men and 1,500 women. And by the time you'd spent four years in the university, you knew everybody.

Inasmuch as you didn't have, in those days, any automobiles-- I think maybe there were two or three automobiles on the campus during all the time I was there--you didn't have any radio, you didn't have any television, you didn't have any loudspeakers, you didn't have any recording instruments, the result was that it was an entirely different experience than it is now. The students had very little transportation, and very few people had any money, and so they entertained themselves. The college experience depended very largely upon the activities of the students themselves entertaining and amusing themselves, and taking care of themselves.

The costs were minimal. I think I lived at a fraternity, and my monthly payments for room and board were thirty-five dollars. I had a thousand dollars a year to spend for everything. I eked it out with doing some work, but a thousand dollars for a year was adequate to cover all of my college experience, including the balls, and flowers for the girls, and general activities.

There was a constant round, all the way from the freshmen, we were organized to death. Not to death, to our own joy. Everybody had an office. We had class meetings, and presidents, and vice-presidents, and secretaries and political contests.

Riess: It came out so that everybody had an office of importance, you're saying?

Phleger: I think everybody--I have a bone to pick with the people who are kicking fraternities around. I think one of the greatest assets of the university was the fraternity and the club system, and anybody that went to the University of California who was there, he wasn't excluded from anything. It depended on what he wanted to do. He could join a fraternity, or a club. Everybody had a connection.

The older men steered the younger fellows around and you had group living. You'd be surprised how much you learn from older students when you live with them. You don't go off half-cocked, and all that. We didn't have any nuts around there. If there were some idiosyncrasies, they were soon taken out of them by their elders. [chuckles]

Well, anyhow, physically Bob I think must have been at least six feet three. He was a tall man, he was a lean man. He had no excess weight. And as far as I can remember, he had white hair. He wasn't prematurely white, but he was a blond fellow, and he went gradually into gray, so that you remember him always with a shock of white hair.

The next thing that was most remarkable about him was his voice. If there ever was a stentor, it was Bob. He spoke, and when he spoke to you he spoke so loud that you had no doubt about what you were hearing. When he addressed a crowd, or anything else, you could hear him to the farthest reaches. I don't ever remember him using a microphone. It was utterly unnecessary. He was a superb presiding officer, always, because he was in command. His voice was a nice voice; it wasn't a tuneful voice, but it was a carrying voice, and you heard what he said.

He wasn't stumbling around looking for words, either. He was an amazing person in that respect, and I think a great deal of his power and authority came from his presence, his appearance.

Riess: Even as an undergraduate he had that presence?

Phleger: There's no question about it. I think his college experience will be in the Blue and Gold.

Riess: I have brought the Blue and Gold.

Phleger: Few men were as active as students as he was. He was the first president of the University of California who'd been a student there. [he pages through the Blue and Gold] Gosh, I knew all

Phleger: these fellows. You know, you knew everybody in college. There we are. He belonged to Abracadabra, which was one of the clubs, and one of the best clubs. His contemporary members were prominent in student work, good scholars, first rate fellows.

Riess: In an interview for Cal Monthly that Tim Pfaff did with you, he refers to Abracadabra as "the mysterious Abracadabra." Why mysterious?

Phleger: I don't know. Nobody knew much about it. I think it was a sort of prep school for the Masons.

Riess: Really?

Phleger: In those days, yes, I think there were people that--but that's just a guess. But nobody ever knew, as far as I know, how they got the name. He belonged to Golden Bear, Winged Helmet, Sigma so-and-so. He was class president in his third year. I saw that the other day. It says track team 2 and 3. It must have been also 4. He ran the mile. We didn't have a two-mile, so he ran the mile, and he was a good athlete, but he wasn't a record-breaker at all.

I remember on the old Edwards Field his running against Stanford--I guess it was against Stanford--in a track meet when it rained.\* Bob came round about the third or fourth round, and he had an umbrella, and he ran around in the track meet with an umbrella. He had a great sense of humor. Oh, the crowd just thought that was great.

Riess: [laughs] You know, Ida Sproul is so much of the Sproul legend, I've never heard about any other women in Bob Sproul's life. Did he have girlfriends?

Phleger: I don't think there ever were any.

She was a Miss Wittschen. Her brother was a prominent lawyer. [Ted Wittschen] She was a wonderful person, and she was a wonderful wife to him, and a wonderful assistant and aid. And I think she was only interested in him and his career.

Riess: And in college there wasn't an obvious girlfriend.

Phleger: No, he was not a social lion, but he was very active in all student affairs.

Riess: Would you have described him as very ambitious back in those days?

---

\*"Edwards" Field not created until 1930. This was an earlier track field.

Phleger: Listen, I was thinking of that. I don't think he ever displayed the unattractive qualities of ambition. I think he always wanted to do well, and be a person. But he was so attractive personally that I never knew of anybody that resented his actions as being ambitious. He never attempted to get anywhere by stepping on somebody else. He cooperated with everybody; he won them over. He never competed with them to the point where they didn't like him.

#### Sproul's Training for the Presidency

Phleger: As I told you once before, I never knew anybody who disliked Bob. Now, those are wonderful qualities, both for a student, but also for the president of an institution. For him to have gotten along with that tremendous faculty during these formative years was a triumph in personality and tactfulness, and decency, and lack of personal pushiness.

He was an unusual person, and I think he was the man for the place at the time. I don't know anybody else who could have filled a similar niche, or have performed a similar service. He was at the university at a most serious time, the formative years of working out the management and so forth.

Riess: As you describe him, it seems to me that, rather than feeling that he was in some way inferior because of his lack of academic background, he might have felt superior because of his very intimate connection with the university. More intimate than the faculty's connection.

Phleger: But I don't think he felt any such thing as that. He had a job to do, and a desire to do it perfectly, and that was his objective, and he worked toward it. And he didn't help the university because it enhanced his position.

I think he was a superb person for the time and for the job. He loved the university, and he knew its problems, and he knew that his happiness and success was to help the university.

Fortunately his perceptions about what it should be and become were very, very good, because at various junctures, back in the twenties and thirties, we faced situations where we might have had four or five different universities all competing and duplicating themselves, and fighting, and so forth. The university, during my time, and of course I lost contact with it, really, in later years,

Phleger: was very unpolitical. It was concentrated at Berkeley, and the Board of Regents were selected because they were really outstanding people who could help the university financially as well as with advice. And they worked together harmoniously, and gave to the university. Later on, it got to be so that the limit of the manifestation of politics is, you had to have a labor union fellow on it [Board of Regents], and you had to have a Catholic, and you had to have a Jew. But that was about the limit of it.

This is all jumping around, but one of the great figures of the university, who disappeared, really, was Ralph Merritt. Ralph Merritt came along as Bob's predecessor as comptroller. The president of the regents in those years was Guy C. Earl, and he really ran the Board of Regents and the university. I don't mean he ran it, but he presided over the management. He came from a very distinguished family. His brother founded the Los Angeles, I guess it was the Express, the paper down there that's now the Examiner. Guy C. Earl was a lawyer, but he was very responsible, and he spent a great part of his time running the university. He realized its financial problems, and he was the chief sponsor of Ralph Merritt. He brought Ralph in, and Ralph really was the fellow who built up Bob as his assistant and his successor.

Riess: Ralph, I think, was considered for the presidency.

Phleger: I think he could have had the presidency during Barrows's time.

Riess: I said in a letter to you that in the Ralph Merritt interview Merritt tells about how in a way he became a mentor for Bob Sproul, and helped him.\*

Phleger: I read your letter. Ralph was no intellectual himself, he wasn't reading Greek or some of these things he referred to. He was a well educated, and a very able, intelligent fellow. I thought he would go much farther in his career than he did. I think his last important job was running some of these war relocation camps, which he did beautifully. But that was far beneath his qualifications. He was an extremely able, fine fellow, and he sure trained Bob. But I don't think he trained him intellectually, telling him what to read, and all that.

Riess: He said in his interview that he suggested readings to Bob.

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\*Ralph Palmer Merritt, After Me Cometh a Builder: The Recollections of Ralph Palmer Merritt, an oral history conducted in 1956 by Corinne L. Gilb for the UCLA Oral History Program and the Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1962, pp. 213-215.

Phleger: I'm sure that Ralph might have said, "Now, if you're going to be around these professors, you better learn to be a little scholarly in your address, and in your talk, and in your background. And if you have a chance, why, read some of these things that they'll be talking about." Bob would do that. Bob must have had a wonderfully retentive memory. I don't think he ever forgot anything he read.

Riess: So, it just amounted to advice.

Phleger: Oh, I think it was more than advice, I think that Merritt recognized the financial and other requirements of the university, and he brought Bob along with the idea that Bob would be his successor.

Riess: What you're saying is that for a good twenty years before he was president Robert Gordon Sproul was already doing very important work for the university as comptroller, too.

Phleger: There's no question about it. No question about it. He was the fellow there that went up to the legislature, and he handled the finances, and he did all of these things.

#### The One University

Phleger: By the way, I told you the other day that I haven't found anything about the initiative we had to give the university an independent source of income, which I debated against [Clyde] Seavey in the San Francisco auditorium. We were defeated. I think the act would have provided one and two-tenths mills ad valorem tax, which went directly to the university. It would of course have been a great thing, but it would have been inadequate in the final analysis. We fought out the question of whether the legislature should have the ultimate control of the university, and we lost out on it.

Riess: What would have happened to the role of the regents in that event?

Phleger: The regents, of course, operated under the Organic Act. And I think from the very beginning it was realized that a university had to have an independent, non-political management. And they attempted to accomplish that by the long tenure, which I think was sixteen years, and the independence, and that continued for many, many years. I'm not familiar with it latterly, but it was very non-political.

Riess: The regents, when Campbell was president, and then going back to Barrows and Wheeler, was their power considerably more than it was when Sproul, who was a more powerful individual, was president?

Phleger: I think that the Barrows and Campbell years represent the struggle between the regents and the faculty as to who was going to run the university.

Riess: And then when Sproul came in?

Phleger: When Sproul came in the fight disappeared because he was so competent in recognizing their common purpose, and convincing them of it, that there were very few disputes. When Bob came in the university expanded at such a rate, and we started in having these campuses. Bob's great battle, which he won, was to have one state university, and not ten or twelve of them competing. And that was a tremendous battle, and he was successful in that.

I think it's impossible to have a real university with twelve campuses, because a university is a collection of scholars who live in one place, and are a body. But the University of California comes closer to accomplishing that, with eight or ten campuses, and thousands of students, than any other state institution that I know of, or any other educational institution.

Riess: But this all began when Sproul was comptroller, and he was dealing with the problems at Los Angeles even before, I guess in about 1927, or so.

Phleger: Oh, the problems at Los Angeles started before that. There was a regent in the university by the name of Ed Dickson, who was a graduate of Berkeley, and who was a very prominent Los Angeles resident, and very ambitious for the Los Angeles area. He was a fine man, and a good regent, and wanted to do the best job for the university. But the struggle over a southern university commenced way back in 1911, '12, and '13. The first thing was when they tried to make Throop a university. And we fought that. Then there were other attempts.

The group at Berkeley were always alert to try and see that there wasn't more than one University of California because they knew that that would result in lowering the prestige of Berkeley and the ideal of a single university, and would create competition for money, and other things. I think, considering all the problems of a state the size of California, and its diversity, they've done awfully well to have a single university with various campuses.

Riess: It's interesting that that was seen so clearly so early.

Phleger: I think that's one of the things you can credit Benjamin Ide Wheeler and the faculty of Berkeley with. They recognized it right at the beginning. And if it hadn't been handled with judgment and discretion and decision right from the beginning, we'd have had a multitude of universities.

Riess: As students you were very aware of this issue?

Phleger: Well, I was a friend of all these people. [laughs] And the students, in those days, were very much part of the university. They knew their problems, and I know that the students were very helpful at the time of Throop.

Riess: In rallying round?

Phleger: In defeating the attempt to have a southern university.

Riess: How could the students actually help? Go home and talk to their parents?

Phleger: They communicated with the legislature, they did politics, they did all sorts of things.

Riess: Students living in this very insulated situation that you were describing were political enough to communicate with the legislature?

Phleger: They were indeed. Bob was one of the early ones who realized that the student body had great political power because of their origins and connections locally. If you could reach back to the origin places of these students, and work on the legislators, then you had a powerful political body. And you do. I think probably the most powerful body in California today is the University of California.

#### Alumni Secretary; An Earlier Student Body

Riess: Well, you should know. You've been very involved with the alumni association.

Phleger: I used to be. I think I was one of the first secretaries of the alumni association, at the munificent salary of seventy-five dollars a month. [chuckles]

Riess: Maybe that wasn't bad.

Phleger: Well, it wasn't!

Riess: What did it mean to be an alumni councillor?

Phleger: That was a title given to the members of the council who ran the alumni association.

Riess: Did it mean that you were available to do job networking for students, or that kind of thing?

Phleger: No. You didn't counsel students at all, you ran the alumni association.

When I was a secretary of the alumni association, a job that I got really through Professor Henry Morse Stephens--I started in my senior year and I had it when I was in law school, which helped me very much to eke out a living while I was a student--I got seventy-five dollars a month. We published a weekly publication called the California Alumni Weekly. I wrote all of it, except a few things that I would get, class notes that would be sent in. I had the assistance of Farnham Griffiths, who was a wonderful fellow, and was secretary to President Wheeler and later on a professor in the university, and then went to Oxford and became a leading lawyer in San Francisco.

We used to cook up various things to make the Weekly readable, and he finally got to writing a profile of some prominent alumnus, or professor, and so forth, which we would publish. We invented a name for him, which would be anonymous, but would distinguish, for us at least, who the author was. We hit on the name, "Pogfar," which was Farnham P. Griffiths with a few letters left out. And if you go back to 1914, and '15, and '16, you'll find a lot of articles written by Pogfar.

Riess: [laughs] That's a fine name. Was the alumni association raising funds, or just good will in those days?

Phleger: The alumni association was gradually built up to the largest alumni association of any university, and one of the most powerful. We had a succession of very wonderful presidents. I remember particularly Wiggington Creed, who was a president of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and one of the founders of the East Bay Water Company, and a very, fine, able, powerful person. He was president for a couple of years. And then we had another one, Charles Merrill, who was a mining engineer. It was Merrill who realized that if you were going to have a first class alumni association, you had to have something better than a seventy-five dollar a month secretary.

Phleger: By the way, when I went on to Harvard Law School, John Simpson became my successor, and his salary became ninety dollars a month. But he realized that you had to have a paid secretary. I may have told this story elsewhere, but he knew that you couldn't get a good secretary--this is Merrill--without paying an adequate amount. So, I was on a committee that he appointed that would raise a fund that would pay ten thousand dollars a year to a permanent secretary of the alumni association. And in order to raise the money, we had to share an example of who would be a good secretary, and we hit upon Bob Sibley, who was then a professor of engineering. We got Bob to agree to become secretary at a salary of ten thousand dollars a year if he would raise enough money to guarantee that. He built up the association. I think the association is a monument, largely, to Bob Sibley.

Riess: But in the early days it was not a fund raising arm.

Phleger: Oh, listen, the university only had four thousand students, and the alumni association had not many more members than that. We tried to have a publication and build up an association, and we weren't raising money for anything except the association. We had a hard enough time paying the secretary a salary of seventy-five dollars a month.

Riess: I'm interested in the very different role of alumni associations then and now.

Phleger: I think in those days they were sort of an informal collection of former graduates that liked to keep in touch with each other, and to get a little information about the university. Their growth since then has been tremendous.

Riess: When you were secretary and writing the Weekly, were there times that you would be requesting of the alumni that they get in touch with their representatives?

Phleger: There sure were not. Our communications with the alumni principally were to get them to pay the dollar, or two dollar a year association fees, so that we could send them the Alumni Weekly. We weren't exercising anything except what you have to do to exist and survive.

Riess: Do you think the average student in your day needed to make money to get through school?

Phleger: The student body of California consisted of about 40 percent women, 60 percent men. Almost all came from families that had modest money. In those days, the richer families would send their children

Phleger: to Yale or Harvard, or Vassar, or someplace. There was no tuition. I think there was an annual fee of ten dollars, or something like that. It didn't cost you anything to go to the university, and considering what the professors made, I think the salary then was about thirty-five--.

Riess: I think they made half of what Sibley made.

Phleger: Yes. They made half of that. As a matter of fact, there was a terrible outcry when it was heard that Sibley was getting ten thousand. I think Professor Gayley was getting six thousand, and I think the standard salary for a professor was less than four thousand. And so to pay that sum, it caused a furor. But anyhow, it worked out very well indeed.

Now, we were talking about the student body. In those days, as I say, the living was very little. The dues to stay in a fraternity, sorority, or a club were about thirty-five dollars a month. A beer at Gus Brause's was five cents. Nobody drank to amount to anything, because they didn't have any money. Nobody had an automobile. The books were not supplied. You had to buy your books, but you bought second hand books from your predecessors so that it cost very little to go through college.

As I say, a thousand dollars a year was fully adequate. And most families could afford that, and those that couldn't, you could eke out by a summer job, or by working on the outside, sufficient to make good. And it was good discipline. People knew what a nickel or a dime was, they weren't throwing money around.

Riess: It's interesting to think of such a homogeneous population. At least financially, economically.

Phleger: That is correct. Well, I would say in those days that 90 percent of the students came right out of the state of California, a great many of them from farms and small towns.

I was born in Sacramento, which was a city of thirty thousand. I came down here and I knew very little about San Francisco, or anything. We hadn't traveled. And that's why the university was such an attractive place. A very substantial portion of the student body in those days came from Los Angeles and San Diego. There were no competing institutions down there. Some of the most prominent people in college were from Los Angeles.

[break for lunch]

Phleger: I think that both Merritt and Bob profited from the fact, the realization, that there had to come a change over there in the way the university was run, that they needed more business in the administration.

Riess: If you're saying that the way it was run was that it was run by the faculty, the faculty certainly didn't feel that way.

Phleger: The fact is that the president ran the university. When Benjamin Ide Wheeler was there, he ran the university. And when he left, then there was a pulling and hauling, Barrows and Campbell and so forth, and then the move of the south to get in on it, and the realization that it was going to grow, and that it had financial problems. And then the quarrel about who was going to run the university.

That's the great contribution, I think, that Bob Sproul made. He worked out an organization which permitted the university to grow, had a centralized management or direction, but local autonomy.

Riess: In the twenties, about the time of the Barrows regime, there was a faculty revolution. The faculty gained more powers for themselves in terms of budget and finance and tenure review.

Phleger: There's no question about it. I think Wheeler ran the university, Wheeler and the regents. The faculty wanted more power and direction, and during the Barrows years there was a struggle over it, followed by a sort of armistice during Campbell's regime, and then more or less the kind of an organization they have now.

#### Sproul's Presence, and Ambitions

Riess: You described the university as a place where the rough edges got worn off people; people became "finished" by the university, particularly the farm boys. The fraternity system tended to bring people up in the right direction. You described Robert Gordon Sproul as someone who stood out because he had an exceptional voice and presence and so on. How do you think that the university experience affected him in four years? Do you think it changed him?

Phleger: Oh, I think very much so, indeed. Bob progressed as he did all his life. There's an old saying that nobody gets any brains after he's forty. That isn't true with Sproul. Sproul grew all his life. He improved himself all his life.

Phleger: Now, when he came to college he was like the rest of us, he was pretty naive. [laughs] I remember very well the biggest job he had there. It isn't even mentioned in here, but he was drum major of the band, and that was a high position. He was very active in student affairs, but he loved people, he loved to be around them. His educational process was that he learned how to deal with people, and be liked, and so forth. He was an unusual fellow in that nobody disliked him ever. And he wasn't pushy.

Riess: Even with that great booming voice, he was not a kind of presence that would rub people the wrong way?

Phleger: Well, not at all, because he wasn't demanding to speak. They all wanted him to lead yells and participate. He was in demand. He didn't have to push forward. I think he took every job he was offered. As you note, he was treasurer of the Save-the-Redwoods League, and everything that came along that needed a treasurer, Bob became the treasurer.

Riess: Do you think he was a kind of "political animal?"

Phleger: I don't think that Bob was ever a political animal.

Riess: All that handshaking, of course, is the hallmark of a political animal now.

Phleger: Bob was not a political animal. Bob was a participant, popular, had a job to do and did it, but he wasn't a political animal. When he dealt with the legislature, he wasn't a political animal. He went up there, and he knew everybody, and he knew his job, and he knew the figures. He knew what he wanted, and how to do it.

Riess: Because a political animal is someone who sort of wheels and deals, and he didn't do that?

Phleger: No. He was just the opposite. He was never a wheeler and dealer. He didn't have to be. He had certain, definite objectives, and he tried to attain them, and he always was looking for support in doing it. The support he got was by inducement, and not by push. And I don't think he ever asked for anything up there that he didn't feel was good for the university, and good for the state, and that was justified. And he would have the material at his fingertips to prove it.

Riess: When Sproul graduated he worked for the city of Oakland for a couple of years, and then he came back to the university. Do you think he always knew he was coming back?

Phleger: I don't think that when he went through the university he felt that he was going to spend the rest of his life with the university. He took engineering, and I think that he figured that he would go into some engineering job.

Riess: But he never actually even went into an engineering job.

Phleger: No, he didn't. Lots of other people didn't, either.

Riess: Did you ever talk to him about what he wanted to be, or do, in life?

Phleger: No. I never did.

Riess: Who do you think his very closest friends were in those days?

Phleger: I think that Ralph Merritt was.

Riess: Of course, he was more like an older brother, though.

Phleger: Well, shoot, there wasn't, what, more than a couple of years difference in their ages.

Riess: I thought it was greater than that.

Phleger: Oh, no, I think maybe three or four years. And all the other group that he had been in college with were all good friends of his. I think he was always a very good friend of Earl Warren.

Riess: I'm interested in who you think of as Sproul's very good friends and close advisors.

Phleger: I think that when he first went with the university he was very close to a number of the regents, including Guy Earl and Ralph Merritt. I think during that period, and in fact I think probably during his entire connection with the university, he always had very close friends among the regents, and probably also among the faculty.

Riess: There are no lines that a president is not supposed to cross in those relationships?

Phleger: I don't think so.

Riess: When I was making this outline, I was thinking of the teens as the years that you knew each other best. Did you keep in touch with him in the twenties and thirties?

Phleger: I was always in touch with the university, and with him, but I was a very active practitioner. I traveled a great deal and I had many cases, and so I didn't have a very close contact. Then later on I became interested in Stanford, and I devoted a great deal of time to Stanford University, so that with respect to my educational activity it was largely devoted to Stanford, although I always maintained a very lively interest in the University of California.

Phleger's Thoughts on the Loyalty Oath

Riess: Were there any times Sproul came to you for legal advice?

Phleger: No. I was asked at the time of the oath controversy to represent the university. They were sued, and I forget who it was, whether it was Neylan or somebody else, somebody for the regents asked me to represent them. But I declined because at that time I was very active in Stanford and I didn't think it was smart to get involved.

Riess: How about the issue itself?

Phleger: I was thoroughly sympathetic with the loyalty oath attitude. I don't see why the professors declined and made a big battle out of the oath. I think that was simply a diversion, or a ploy of carrying on their fight with the management. A great many of the most distinguished faculty members signed the oath and never said anything about it. Ernest Orlando Lawrence, and a lot of those fellows, there was no great bones about saying that you weren't a Communist. I think that that was a ploy used to rally around a certain element in the faculty.

I think also that Bob was one of the leading activists at the time that the loyalty oath was proposed, but he changed his point of view and later opposed it. I think that Jack Neylan, whom I represented in later years, and who was one of the leaders in the Board of Regents at the time of that, didn't like that very much. But Bob, with his skill, and I use that in the proper term, escaped unscathed from this--I don't think anybody ever knew that he was one of the originators of the loyalty oath.

Riess: I can see many reasons why you would wish to stay out of the whole thing, but your friend Jack Neylan got very into it.

Phleger: Neylan was a very active regent. He was Hearst's attorney, he did great things for the university, he was one of the leading regents. When this came along, well, he was a very straightforward, loyal

Phleger: fellow, and he didn't abandon the thing the moment the fight showed up. I think the loyalty oath thing was blown far beyond any dimensions it should have had.

Riess: If it were blown far beyond any dimensions, then it makes it even more obvious a failure on Sproul's part, because he was such a good manager of situations.

Phleger: I think it got beyond his control. I think that it was beyond handling.

Riess: Did you talk to him about it during that period?

Phleger: Oh, I may have, but I doubt it, I didn't get involved in it at all. Except I would have had no objection to taking the loyalty oath. What's wrong with saying you'll swear that you're not party to anything to overthrow the government of the United States? But some of them used it to assert their independence. The regents couldn't make them do it, whether they wanted to do it or not.

Riess: What if there hadn't been all of the prior preparation of the McCarthy era?

Phleger: I don't think that had anything to do with it. I think McCarthy has been blown far beyond any influence he had over anything. I think it was used by the press and the left wingers, and blown far beyond its--I was in the State Department during those times, and handled the McCarthy thing. He was a wild Irishman, and we got along all right. [chuckles] You know, the press blows these things up; it sells newspapers and raises hell; the more controversy you create, the more newspapers you sell.

McCarthy said that the State Department was full of Communists. He said he had 248. Well, he retired from that position, and finally we got along in great shape. McCarthy was as much the victim of McCarthyism as he made other people the victim of some of his outrageous statements.

You know, people don't realize that the first attorney for McCarthy, when he was a senator in the McCarthy episode, was Bob Kennedy, who later became attorney general. And he effaced his trail as effectively as Bob Sproul did in the loyalty oath. I represented the State Department in meetings with McCarthy and Bob Kennedy at the time that McCarthy said that there were 248 [sic] Communists in the State Department. In later years, if you said that to anybody, they'd say I was crazy.

Riess: That was effaced, also.

Phleger: Some people are remarkably lucky, or able, in destroying the record of former connections they've repudiated or grown beyond.

Riess: In David Gardner's book about the loyalty oath, he indicates that some years before the oath, Jack Neylan and Robert Gordon Sproul were really no longer as close as they had been in earlier years.

Phleger: I never understood that there was any difference between them before that time. Neylan was a very impulsive, genuine fellow, who didn't dissimulate on anything. He usually spoke out, and the result is that he had a great many very close friends, and a great many active opponents. It wasn't hard to have a difference with Neylan. But also, it wasn't hard to have him as a friend. I had many controversies with him, and he ended up by making me his attorney for his estate. As his attorney I was the attorney for the American Trust Company in one of the famous cases that made Neylan's reputation. You don't have to become a mortal enemy because you differed with him.

Riess: I think that people in the legal profession know that better than other people.

Phleger: They do, because if you got into personal dislike of everybody that you opposed, why, you wouldn't have much of a law practice.

Riess: We're talking about three wholly different kinds of people, then, it seems to me. Faculty people are one kind of animal, and legal people another, and then maybe university presidents operate very differently from either of them.

Phleger: I think that the job of a university president is one of the very difficult jobs. He's got to reconcile the top control with a faculty that is very individualistic, and with a legislature who puts up the money, which means that he's got to have a good relationship with the public. It's an extremely difficult job. I think there're a great many educators who don't want to be president for that reason. It requires a particular quality.

Riess: Of course Sproul would never have used that adjective about himself, anyway. He never would call himself an educator.

Phleger: No. Bob never made any pretense about who he was, and what he was, and what he could do. But the jobs he had to do, he was superbly equipped. He did his homework.

Boards, Stanford and Berkeley, and Clubs

Riess: How is it that you weren't a regent?

Phleger: I would have been interested, at one time, in being a regent, and Kerr has frequently referred to the fact that he wanted me to be a regent. The fact was that my partner, Maurice Harrison, was one of the most active regents of the university, and I didn't think it was possible for two partners in a law firm to be regents of the university. And then I became interested in Stanford on account of Dr. Tressider.

I succeeded Dr. Tressider as a trustee of Stanford, and remained a trustee of Stanford for forty years. That occupied all my time because, unlike most universities, Stanford during those days was run by the Board of Trustees. They owned the property. They had all the power and authority. They selected the president. In those days, the president of Stanford was not even a trustee. The job of the trustees was to select the president and let him run the university, and if you didn't run it the way they liked, they'd throw him out.

That's changed around at Stanford. That's how I became a trustee originally; when Tressider became president, he had to resign as a trustee, and I took his place. Years later they elected Wally Sterling, after he became president--when he became president, he wasn't a trustee--and elected him a trustee. So, the concept at Stanford, even, that the president runs the university, and the Board of Trustees runs the president, isn't as clear as it used to be.

Riess: Does that go as far back as the beginning of Stanford's history, or is that something Stanford learned from Berkeley?

Phleger: I don't think they learned anything from Berkeley. I think their problem was their own problem. It was a very different problem; they didn't have to deal with the legislature.

Riess: Yesterday I was talking to someone who was involved with I House at the university. I was interested that the I House Board of Directors was regental in quality, a really fine group of people. The president of their board was the president of the university.

Phleger: Rockefeller made the gift of International House to the university three or four years after I graduated. [John D. Rockefeller, Jr. donated \$1,800,000 in 1928, sixteen years after Mr. Phleger graduated.]

Phleger: One of our great ambitions, when I was a student, was to have dormitories. During the entire time I was at the university, we never had a dormitory. Over two or three years I was president of what was known as the dormitory committee, whose job was to get money for a dormitory, or to get a dormitory. We were never successful in getting one. It was three or four years after I graduated that Philip Bowles, who was a regent of the university, gave the money for Bowles Hall, and as I remember it it was shortly after that that Rockefeller gave the money for International House. [The money for Bowles Hall was given in 1929.]

Rockefeller's chief objective in that was to have a place where foreign students could mingle with local students and feel at home. I never heard that the board of International House had any particular position, except running the institution. I think that the idea of International House was that it would be independent of the university, that it wouldn't be a university dormitory, but an international organization. I never heard that it wielded any particular influence in anything, and I never knew anybody who was on any board connected with it, but that doesn't mean it wasn't important.

Riess: Were there any boards or organizations that you and Robert Gordon Sproul had in common?

Phleger: When I was in college, the most important student organization was the Order of the Golden Bear, which really did an awful fine job of student government, or student direction, which it did in a very modest, quiet way, and it was a great contact with the faculty, because members of the faculty and members of the Golden Bear attended all the meetings and all of the important university problems involving students were discussed, and probably settled there. I think the Order of the Golden Bear has lost a great deal of its authority and power and interest in the intervening years, as the university has grown. I haven't been in very close touch with it in recent years, but I was very active in it when I was there.

Riess: And so was Robert Gordon Sproul.

Phleger: Yes, sure.

Riess: In a group like that, was he automatically the leader because of these qualities?

Phleger: There were no real leaders in the Order of the Golden Bear; they were all equals.

Riess: But the power of that personality and the voice?

Phleger: I don't think that Bob attained any authority like that until several years after he got out of college.

Riess: Are there other boards, in the last years? I know you were both Bohemian Club, but he was in a different camp.

Phleger: Yes. Bob was never very active in the Bohemian Club, or any other club that I know of. He concentrated on the university, which was the wise thing to do. It was a full enough job to occupy all of his attention. People who've got too many irons in the fire have to diffuse some of their influence among all the things they belong to. Bob's certainly primary interest was the university. And that's been a source of his strength.

Riess: When he went to the southern campus he joined various clubs down there to give him a base, a way of meeting people he wouldn't automatically meet.

Phleger: I don't think that they amount to very much. I belong to two or three Los Angeles clubs, and have for years, but I don't think you get your influence that way.

Riess: I had rather thought that men got a lot out of the "old boy," networking, club thing.

Phleger: I don't think so. I think the university connection, as a personal connection, persists and lasts. Perhaps a business connection might, but I don't think clubs wield any great influence. And I belong to enough of them, Lord knows. [laughs]

Riess: When he was president, the university didn't need the kind of outside funding that it really seriously needs now. But he managed to get money for E.O. Lawrence. That's the case that's always cited. I wondered if you knew about his fund-raising skills.

Phleger: The university has always suffered in getting money because of the fact that it's a state institution, the basic obligation being that the state shall support it. For many years people didn't give money to the University of California because they felt that that was the obligation of the public, and that has always hindered the university.

Now, I've given money to the university, I've given very substantial amounts for Mary Phleger Scholarships, and for various other things, but it's different to give money to Stanford, or some

Phleger: private institution that has to have that money, than it is to give to the University of California, because you always have the feeling that the University of California's going to get the money it needs, in the last resort, from the state. It's only been in recent years, as the university has gone into research and other private matters that depend on private funds and are out of the realm of ordinary education, that it's gotten private contributions. Right now it's a recipient of very substantial private contributions, which are usually identified with some particular research project that the donor was either originally interested in and started, or which he was interested in giving money to.

The university always had benefited from private benefaction, like W.H. Crocker gave funds, the Sathers, the Morrisons. But the money demands of the university are so enormous that they couldn't be covered by private contribution. I think that in recent years the public, and the alumni particularly, have become impressed with the idea that it's a good thing to give to the University of California for those things which the state doesn't feel that it's obligated to provide the money for, which means certain kinds of research, and certain other activities.

Riess: It certainly has meant a lot of re-educating about all of that.

Phleger: I think it's essentially right to feel that the private institutions come before the public institutions when it comes to giving money. When you give privately, the university gets twice from you; you have to pay through your taxes, and then you give them the money. They can always get sufficient; they may not get adequate amounts, but the university's not going to fail for lack of money.

Riess: It's interesting to think that Sproul had friendly relations with the regents outside. For some reason, it never occurred to me that they could be both friends and regents. I thought that he was working for them.

Phleger: Oh, I don't think that at all. I think that from early on his relations with people like Guy Earl and James K. Moffitt and all that were extremely friendly. They liked each other, and they had a common objective in helping the university. Most human relationships are friendly relationships, they're not antagonistic.

Riess: You keep reminding me of that.

Phleger: There are a lot of very ambitious people in various situations, and they're promoting their own interests. That's why I think it's ultimately illogical to have a faculty run a university. There's a conflict of interest.

Friendly Advice to Sproul, and Thoughts on Cooperation

Riess: On another tack, you mentioned on the phone advising Robert Gordon Sproul against taking on an arbitration role in the Argonaut Mine dispute.

Phleger: I remember very well it was shortly, oh, within two or three years after Sproul became president, they had this dispute at the Argonaut Mine. There was a big disaster there, and a dispute over who was responsible for it. There were lawsuits filed and great public furor and publicity and so forth. Finally, to settle some of the phases of it, somebody thought of appointing a sort of board of arbitration, with Sproul as the head of it.

I remember very well asking him to come over to lunch at the Bohemian Club, which he did, with me. He said, "What do you want to talk about?" I said, "I don't think it's wise for you to be taking on controversial matters. Your job is at the university, and you involve the university in a controversy, no matter how well you decide a matter, if you get involved in it. I don't think you're smart to go out of your realm just to accommodate people." Well, he thanked me, and I think it may have helped some.

He was extremely much in demand. Hell, if you've got a problem you can't solve, the great thing to do is to appoint a commission, or a committee, or somebody, and the bigger the figure that you get to head it, the more you relieve yourself of responsibility, and throw it on them. But why should the person take on that responsibility when he has a lot of other responsibilities?

Riess: The danger is that it's very flattering?

Phleger: Of course, it is.

Riess: On your own initiative you counselled him.

Phleger: I did. I was very fond of Bob, and he'd just been president for maybe a year or so, and I saw him getting involved in all these outside activities, and I thought it was a mistake.

Riess: What other kinds of things was he getting into?

Phleger: I don't remember any other incident.

Riess: But there was this demand on him in his presidency?

Phleger: Oh, yes. There still is a demand. "Oh, let's get the president of the university to head a committee to solve this."

Riess: When he was asked to be president of the bank, and later president of Columbia, did you have anything to do with his decision-making?

Phleger: No, he never asked me about it. I would have advised him against all of those things.

Riess: Do you think that he was honestly tempted?

Phleger: Yes. Wouldn't you be tempted if you were asked to be president of Columbia? I think for Bob a thing like that was doubly attractive because he was not an academician. For him to have been invited to be president of Columbia was sort of a recognition of his eminence as a scholar.

Riess: But the actual prospect of doing it, though, might not have been so attractive to him.

Phleger: I would think it was. I think they had, as they still have, and all universities have, a financial problem, and they thought if they had gotten Bob as president then he'd have been spending 90 percent of his time raising money.

Riess: That's right, and it wouldn't have been a matter of going up to Albany, because they were a private university.

Phleger: They have great demands. The time of a president is largely devoted to raising money.

Riess: It is now. Is that how you would also assess the time of Sproul's presidency?

Phleger: No, I think not, because the demands of the university were so much less. During Wheeler's presidency, I don't think he spent any time raising money. Maybe once in a while, some small item.

Riess: And the other opportunities, bank presidency, political office, do you think he would have been tempted by them?

Phleger: If he had, he would have been foolish.

Riess: Okay, I have a couple of sort of summary questions. I know, in a way, you've been answering them throughout, but I wonder if you would just say something about what you think Sproul's greatest strengths were, and weaknesses.

Phleger: I think I've covered that. I think his greatest strength was that he had a fine intellect, he was honest, he was open, he was approachable. He had all of the human qualities that people admire. And he was not controversial. While he had his objectives, he was not unduly ambitious, at least to the extent of being pushy. He was a thoroughly attractive, nice person. He knew his limitations, and he didn't try to go beyond them, and he didn't try to advance at the expense of other people.

Riess: Very decent.

Phleger: Very decent, approachable. I never heard anybody sit down and criticize him just because they didn't like him, or didn't think he was doing a good job. I think that if you knew him your tendency would be to say, "I think that might be a mistake, I'll go and tell him that." There are very few people that you do that to.

Riess: And you did that once.

Phleger: I did, and I may have done it on other occasions. I'm awful free with my advice, if it isn't legal advice.

Riess: Can you think of any other occasions?

Phleger: I don't recall. But, you know, you wanted to help him. There are certain people in life that people want to help, and he was one of them. There are other people that you want to beat their brains out.

Riess: You want to see them fail, some people.

Phleger: You don't give a damn.

Riess: That's interesting kind of praise.

Phleger: It is, and I think that was one of his great appeals. I think everybody thought that his projects were in the public interest, and they wanted to help him accomplish. I don't think he ever went to anybody that would say, "Well, I don't want to do this." They all certainly gave it a good look, and would try and help him. And that's a great quality. In fact, they're discovering that in corporate management. Instead of beating people's brains out, and being an executive, you get their cooperation.

Riess: That is a new idea?

Phleger: It isn't a new idea, but it sure is not very pervasive in practice.

Riess: It's the issue of whether you are going to be a team player, or a loner.

Phleger: It's a realization that most things in life require cooperation to be accomplished, and that you ought to work with the people you're doing business with, instead of against them.

To digress, that's what's wrong, I think, with the way that labor unions have developed. The labor union, the way it is developed, becomes interested in getting as much as they can out of a common enterprise, even to the extent of busting their employer. And, on the other hand, the executives have been very often anxious to take advantage of the people that work so that the corporation can make more money. They're both wrong.

When people work together, it's a common enterprise. Everybody has legitimate objectives, and they ought to help each other to obtain them. I don't see how a labor union can get money beyond what the corporation can earn, and yet some of them try and do that. Or that executives ought to be running it to their own personal advantage, with enormous salaries that are gotten at the expense of stockholders or other people.

Riess: You're right, but there's little sense of cooperation in our educational experience, it's all competitive.

Phleger: Competition is great. It ought to be competitive between people who are working toward an objective that depends upon their own advancement, as compared to other people. But when it's a common enterprise, when if you don't achieve the objective nobody is successful, it's stupid to be fighting the person that you ought to be cooperating with.

I think I said in my oral history that when I was in school I got the idea that I couldn't memorize things, [laughs] and one of my nice teachers said, "I want you to learn to recite Thanatopsis."\* I said, "Well, I can't do it. It's a mental block." She said, "You stay after school an hour a day until you learn it." So I did. I finally learned it, all right. I think I can still recite it. But it was years before I realized that she had to stay after school for an hour to look after me, and I thought that was tremendous cooperation. Just think of it. [laughs] She spent an hour--she ought to have beat my brains out.

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\*Herman Phleger, Sixty Years in Law, Public Service, and International Affairs, an oral history interview conducted in 1977 by Miriam Stein, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1979.

Phleger: I think that, in all of these fields, cooperation is a much better tool, and a much more profitable enterprise, than trying to divide up the pie. It's better to work toward having a bigger pie, if you want a bigger piece, than it is to get a bigger piece of the same size pie. Then you're much more apt to get it.

Riess: Another story in your oral history was of Bob Sproul in Berlin in 1945. Tell us that again. \*

Phleger: I was over there as legal advisor to Generals Clay and Eisenhower in Berlin, and I learned that the U.S. Reparations Commission was coming through. I asked for the particulars, and I think that Pauley was chairman, and on it was Loyall McLaren, and Bob Sproul was there, either a member of it or an advisor. So, I took them to dinner at the officer's club in Berlin, which happened to be the faculty club of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, and we had a good dinner, and they went on their way to Moscow.

They came back in about two weeks and again had dinner with me, and I asked them what they had accomplished. [laughs] Bob said, "Absolutely nothing. We were there, and they didn't even communicate with us, we had no arrangements about anything, and after we'd stayed there two weeks, we decided to come home, and we're on our way home." And I said, "Did you have a good time there?" And he said, "They put us up in a hotel in Moscow," he said, "which was about what a second grade hotel in Modesto would be."

Riess: [laughs] Oh, dear!

Phleger: There's unlimited material about him. I was very much impressed with all of the material that's available, and somebody who's really competent ought to write a good biography. He was a remarkable person, and it isn't often that the right person comes along for the right job.

We might have ended up with a fragmented higher educational system in California, with ten or twelve third-rate competing universities, and all the rest. He managed to hold the whole thing together, and we have a great university system, and he certainly is one of the architects.

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\* The article following, Alumni Honor President Sproul '13, also deals with Sproul's work on the U.S. Reparations Commission.

# Alumni Honor President Sproul '13

THE Palm Court of the Palace Hotel in San Francisco was full of people, and outside, clustered around the doors, were curious lunchers who scarcely could remember being denied admission to the famous dining room in the daytime. Indeed, it was said that only for the King of Belgium, years ago, had the Palm Court been turned over to a private party at noon.

But on September 14, 1945, tradition was broken, for the California Alumni Association on that day welcomed its own Bob Sproul back after a three months' visit to Europe. The President of the University had gone at the request of the President of the United States, Harry S. Truman, to be Head of the Advisory Committee for the United States Reparations Commission. United States member of the Commission was Regent Edwin S. Pauley '23. Now the President was back, and over a thousand alumni, eager to welcome him, eager to hear him discuss his trip, and just eager to throw a pre-war type of celebration for their most beloved alumnus, were gathered together.

Physically there could hardly have been squeezed another place at table, so crowded was the room. Waiters darted about, giving admirable service, and there were photographers, and a long head table at which sat Regents of the University and Councilors of the Alumni Association. At the very head of this center table sat the President and Mrs. Sproul, President of the Alumni Association Jean C. Witter '16 and Mrs. Witter, and new head coach L. T. "Buck" Shaw and Mrs. Shaw.

Throughout the crowd were many other famous alumni, young and old, many in service uniform, many un- easily absent from work, but determined to hear President Sproul through. Many who could conveniently steal a couple of hours from work and never be missed.

And the President told them what they wanted to hear.

President Jean C. Witter opened the program with a gracious word of greeting to all those present and appreciation that alumni had turned out in such gratifying numbers to honor President Sproul. He read a telegram from the Honorable Earl Warren '12, Governor of the State of California as follows:

"I am exceedingly sorry that I cannot attend California Alumni Association luncheon in San Francisco this Friday honoring Bob Sproul on his return from Moscow. Please explain to him and my fellow alumni that commitments here in Los Angeles prevent my coming North on that day."

He asked Frank Denman of Petaluma to rise as the oldest living alumnus present at the luncheon, and Mr. Denman, a member of the Class of 1877, complied. President Witter then introduced George Briggs '46 and Pat Hendrickson '46, President and Vice-President respectively of the Associated Students.

"Now," President Witter continued, "I would like to introduce someone you all will want to see, since it's about that time of year. Our new football coach, L. T. 'Buck' Shaw."

Coach Shaw responded with a few words, saying he was very pleased to be associated with the University of California.

"And now," said President Witter, "our own Bob Sproul!"

Amid a standing ovation, President Sproul got to his feet and waited for the several minutes it took to quiet the crowd. Then he proceeded to give an entertaining "travelogue" of his three months in Europe during which he spent 39 days in Russia, dividing the rest of his time between London, Paris, Berlin and way points.

He revealed many humorous aspects of his trip, including a plane flight from which he thought he might not return. He said that Russian aviators take off and land at amazing speeds, 165 miles an hour, and that at one point they skimmed a power line by "a safe couple of yards."

Turning to the more serious side of his discussion, he said that "Russia is governed by a regime of unparalleled authority and ruthlessness. The Russian people are ready and eager to like and trust Americans—I only wish their government would let them do so." A congenial relationship is prevented by the Soviet Government's arbitrary determination to "obviate the least possibility of the effect of foreign thinking on its people."

PRESIDENT Robert Gordon Sproul '13, Head of Advisory Committee to the United States Reparations Commission.





HEAD table at the Alumni Luncheon honoring President Robert Gordon Sproul '13, from left to right, first row, included President Sproul, George Briggs '46, President of the ASUC, Mrs. Sproul, William M. Hale '14, James K. Lohead '15, Mrs. Lawrence T. Shaw, James Corley '26, Comptroller of the University and Treasurer of California Alumni Association, Mrs. Clinton Evans, Judge Albert Ross '16, Mrs. Robert Sibley,

Fred Stripp '32, Mrs. James Corley, Robert Sibley '03, R. L. Harter '20, Mrs. Frank Denman.

In the second row, from left to right, are Jean C. Witter '16 (standing), President of California Alumni Association, L. T. "Buck" Shaw, Head Football Coach, Pat Hendrickson '46, Vice President of ASUC, Clinton

W. Evans '12, ASUC General Manager, Mrs. Jean C. Witter, William P. Cavalier '06, Mrs. Richard Cramer (Alison Swartz '44), Burton A. Swartz '11, Mrs. Burton A. Swartz '11, Mrs. Hattie Lengfeld, Mrs. Harry Geballe '11, Harry Geballe '10, Dr. William C. Deamer '23, Dr. James Hopper, member of the Medical School faculty, George G. Montgomery '16, Frank Denman '77, oldest living alumnus of the University.

He stated that his duties on the Commission were to advise on the human aspects of reparations for Germany. These aspects included the use of slave labor in reparations which had previously been sanctioned by Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill. This problem, however, did not come up for discussion at the meeting, but, according to President Sproul, the United States delegation went on record as declaring that this country would not accept slave labor, nor would it approve of its use by other nations.

Alumni laughed heartily when he reported that his colleagues on the Reparations Commission were inclined to view him with suspicion when one of them produced a clipping of an account of a speech by Representative Clare Booth Luce denouncing him as a "Red and unfit to be trusted with negotiations with the Russians."

The President said he overcame this suspicion by exhibiting clippings of editorials from the *Daily Californian* which pictured him as being something "just a little to the right of Hoover."

Believing that the fate of the world lies in the policy of the Russian Government, President Sproul said that the Russian people have no voice in the course of their government.

"The government is the sole course of generous bounty to the faithful and righteous wrath to the uncooperative. However, Russia must have peace for many years to come in order

to rebuild its war-shattered land. Stalin is a realist and knows that this is the safest and most practical road. If he chooses the road to peace, his credit will be greater than that of any dictator in history. I do not believe he will miss the opportunity."

Dr. Sproul expressed the opinion that unless America adopts an immediate and constructive policy toward the occupation and reparation of Germany, its people, stricken by hunger, disease, and famine and destruction, will turn to Bolshevism. Furthermore, Bolshevism will sweep the whole continent of Europe unless the United States makes a positive declaration of what kind of Germany it wishes, besides a peaceful Germany.

"Any nation that sets out to conquer Russia is completely mad," he said.

He described the "tortured rubble and fire-blackened walls" which are all that remain of every large city in Germany and of the similar destruction in France, England and parts of Russia.

He reported a reunion with twenty alumni of the University of California in Berlin, and remarked that the non-fraternization rule in Berlin was "honored by the G.I.'s more by its breach than its observance."

In paying high tribute to the American G.I., President Sproul said, "The United States Army is a quality organization. American soldiers handle themselves superbly well in war and in peace. They are brave, ingeni-

ous, neat, clean, uniformly kind, and reasonably well disciplined. Perhaps their greatest weakness is that they find it hard to enforce a harsh peace upon an unarmed people."

Applause rocked the Palm Court for minutes after the President had finished, and many an old friend pushed into the crowd to greet him personally. Sighted among the crowd were such alumni as Julean Arnold '02, former Attache in China; Judge Everett J. Brown '07; Judge Ezra W. Decoto '00; Regent Sidney M. Ehrman '96; Mrs. John Eshleman '01; Regent A. P. Giannini; R. L. Harter '20, and William M. Hale '14, Alumni Councilors; Regent James K. Moffitt '86; R. L. Oliver '00; Frank Schwabacher '03; Paul A. Sinsheimer '01; Allen Chickering '98; Regent Chester Rowell; Mr. and Mrs. Stephen D. Bechtel '23; Aubrey Drury '14; Dr. Aurelia Henry Reinhardt '98; Dr. Thomas N. Barrows '22, son of the former President of the University, General David P. Barrows '95; Arthur Brown, Jr. '96; Walter Haas '10; E. C. Lipman '14; Dr. Romilda Paroni Meads '03; Mr. and Mrs. Burton Swartz '11; Mr. and Mrs. Duncan McDuffie, and many many more.

Alumni agreed that probably never in the history of the California Alumni Association had there been such a remarkably spontaneous and brilliant gathering. But then, as many remarked affectionately, "Our Bob doesn't return from making history every day!"





Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Donald H. McLaughlin

REMINISCENCES OF A DEAN, A REGENT, AND A FRIEND

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Donald Hamilton McLaughlin's University of California connections bracketed a long and far-flung life. He received a B.S. in 1914 and an LL.D. in 1966 from the university, in 1941-1943 was professor and dean of the Colleges of Mining and then Engineering, and was a member, and for some years chairman, of the Board of Regents, from 1951-1966. Donald McLaughlin was the subject of a major oral history memoir done by this office in 1975. Careers in Mining, Geology, and Management, University Governance and Teaching tells the full story from Phoebe Apperson Hearst and George Hearst through copper mining in Peru, gold and the monetary system, uranium and atomic energy, Harvard study and teaching, the Homestake Mine, and the University of California.

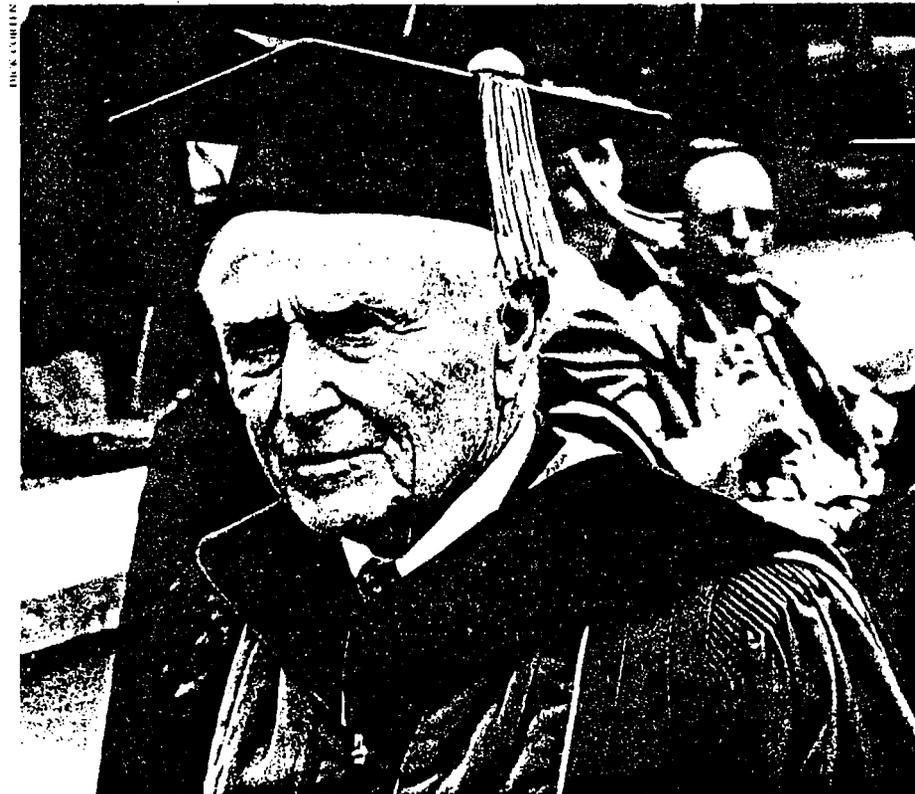
In that earlier oral history memoir Donald McLaughlin referred several times to Robert Gordon Sproul: "...the development of the university measured by the distinction of its faculty attained its great momentum under Bob Sproul..." "...in those days Bob Sproul really ran the entire show." [Bob Sproul could] take command of an unruly situation in [a] dramatic way." We wanted, for the Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History, to go back to Mr. McLaughlin and gather more working and personal impressions of the president who was his contemporary.

Mr. McLaughlin was ninety-three years old when we interviewed in July 1984. We met in the afternoon in the study of his home north of campus. Sylvia McLaughlin was on hand to help her husband, frequently corroborating a memory. It was she who checked the final transcript.

Donald McLaughlin died on December 31, 1984. His life was remarkably synchronous with the periods of growth experienced in his vocation, mining, and his avocation, education--especially the latter as viewed through the governance of the University of California. We are pleased that timing allowed us this brief assessment and appreciation of "Bob Sproul" by Donald McLaughlin.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley



After meeting with Donald H. McLaughlin, a University official recalled, "you always left a believer—if not in his point of view, at least in Donald McLaughlin." A man whose twinkling eyes and ramrod-straight bearing commanded both affection and respect, McLaughlin died at his home in Berkeley on the last day of 1984—93 years after his birth in San Francisco and following a rich and rewarding series of careers that found him at home not only in the classrooms of Harvard and Berkeley but also in the shafts of gold mines and in the corridors of power of several major corporations.

McLaughlin was a runner-up for the University Medal when he graduated from the Berkeley campus in 1914. Following the advice of family friend Phoebe Apperson Hearst, he did graduate work at Harvard, earning the master's in 1915 and the doctorate in 1917. After serving in the Army until 1919, he became chief geologist for the Cerro de Pasco Copper Corporation and remained with that South

American company until 1925.

McLaughlin then returned to Harvard as its youngest professor and later was chairman of the Department of Geology and Geography and of the Division of Geological Sciences. In 1941, Robert Gordon Sproul persuaded him to return to Berkeley, where he served one year as professor of mining engineering and as dean of the College of Mining; in 1942-43, he was the first dean of the College of Engineering at Berkeley.

In addition to his academic duties from 1926 to 1941, McLaughlin was a consulting geologist for Homestake Mining Company, the country's largest gold mining concern. Colleagues at Homestake have credited him with "rediscovering" the company's mine in South Dakota after mining engineers had declared the facility panned out. (About three million ounces of gold were extracted after McLaughlin's rediscovery.)

He was elected a director of Homestake in 1943 and subsequently served as the com-

pany's president, chief executive officer, and chairman of the board. From 1970 until his retirement in 1981 he was honorary chairman of the board and chairman of the executive committee.

The largest gold find of the 20th century in California—a 1980 discovery by Homestake at the juncture of Napa, Lake, and Yolo counties—was named the McLaughlin Deposit in his honor. The open-pit mine is expected to produce its first gold this spring and is estimated to contain some three million ounces.

McLaughlin's association with the University included his membership on the Board of Regents from 1951 to 1967 (he was chairman of the board from 1958 to 1960). His tenure reached from the Loyalty Oath controversy to the Free Speech Movement, both of which he opposed. In the 1960s, when he was in his 70s, McLaughlin sought out and listened patiently to student protesters—and then forcefully presented an opposite point of view.

In addition to his many civic, social, and educational activities, McLaughlin held 10 corporate directorships and served on the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and on the U.S. Geological Survey. His many awards from the University include Centennial Year Honors from both the Berkeley and the Santa Cruz campuses (in 1968) and his selection as the Alumni Association's Alumnus of the Year for 1977.

McLaughlin's critical view of campus architecture since John Galen Howard was legendary. He once observed: "Since I wasn't an architect, I couldn't speak with any authority. All I could do was to say harsh things. I think my worst crack was that I thought the campus rule was, 'A building doesn't have to be cheap, it simply must look cheap!'"

One building on campus he smiled upon was the old Engineering Building, which in 1966 was renamed in his honor. And, in December 1984, just before his death, Professor Emeritus McLaughlin was informed by Dean Karl Pister of the College of Engineering that the Donald H. McLaughlin Chair in Mineral Engineering would be established in the College. Homestake Mining pledged initial funds of \$150,000 to secure the honor, and has since announced plans to match 50 percent of the next \$100,000 raised for the chair.

Donald McLaughlin is survived by his second wife, Sylvia, of Berkeley; by four children, Donald H. Jr., of Cape Cod; Charles C. of Washington, D.C.; and Jean Shaterian and George C., of Berkeley; and by six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Reminiscences of a Dean, a Regent, and a Friend

[Date of Interview: July 19, 1984]

McLaughlin: Bob Sproul came to visit Harvard when he had been nominated for the presidency. I invited him to stay with us, and so he was with us for about a week.

Riess: After his election he went on a six month tour of colleges.  
[Sproul was president-elect from June 1929-July 1930.]

McLaughlin: Yes, that was during that tour. I was on the faculty at Harvard then. We had a very nice time together. He was very much interested in Harvard, which of course is very different from anything we have in Berkeley or could do in Berkeley. He stayed with us about a week, I think, and we had a series of dinner parties, had a very nice time, some of the more interesting, provocative people, and I think he was very much impressed. For Harvard is rather an impressive place.

Riess: Was that his first visit there?

McLaughlin: I think it was. I didn't get any impression that he had any background at Harvard whatever. So it was all new to him.

Riess: Who was president then?

McLaughlin: Lowell.

Riess: Did you introduce him to Conant? There was a close association, I believe, between those two presidents. [Conant elected president, 1933.]

McLaughlin: Yes. I think that was rather unusual.

Riess: In your oral history interview you refer to Bob Sproul as an "old friend."\* Was that from college days?

McLaughlin: Yes, though in the college days I scarcely knew him. But then I was sort of a loner then. I was down at Pleasanton a great deal, at Phoebe Hearst's, and didn't get acquainted with my class very well. He was a year or two older. I really didn't know him much in college at all. It would be better to call him an old acquaintance. In later years I got to know him so well I regarded him as a friend, and it's hard to think of him as anything else.

Riess: From your acquaintance with him, would you have predicted that he would make the success of the presidency that he did?

McLaughlin: Oh, I had all the best wishes for him, because I liked him very much. I don't think I ever would have selected him for the succession to the presidency of the University of California. But it was a very good thing to get somebody quite out of line, I think. It turned out very well. He had great skill in getting the right advice. I knew Jim Conant once said, "Button down your pockets. Bob Sproul's coming to town." [laughs] He was out to lure away some of the faculty.

Riess: When you entertained him at Harvard in 1930 did he meet people he later recruited to California?

McLaughlin: He may have. He was pretty active while he was in Cambridge. But I wasn't following him around.

Riess: How did he fit in in 1930? Did he look "western?"

McLaughlin: Yes, rather. Something of a surprise to Harvard Bostonians.

Riess: It was a transition that you had made.

McLaughlin: Yes, but I also had a Ph.D. from Harvard and I did graduate work at Harvard and I was very much at home there before I was ever appointed to the faculty.

Riess: Did Sproul try to modify his style, his booming, hearty laugh, etc., when he was at Harvard?

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\*D. H. McLaughlin, Careers in Mining, Geology and Management, University Governance and Teaching, an oral history conducted 1970, 1971 by Harriet Nathan for the Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1975, p. 318.

McLaughlin: Oh, yes, he did. I don't know whether he deliberately tried to, but I think he was impressed enough with the surroundings not to overdo. He was a wise person; he understood his situation and he understood the peculiarities of Harvard, Cambridge, and so on. And he realized of course they were very different places from Berkeley. I think he found his visit with me a very helpful one, because I knew both institutions so well.

That trip introduced him a good deal around the country, as president-elect of the University of California. And he was naturally received with great honors. Berkeley was very seriously taken then, in the East.

Riess: Even before they started accumulating Nobel prizes.

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

Riess: You were dean of the College of Mining here from 1941 to 1942, and then you were dean of the College of Engineering from 1942 to 1943.

McLaughlin: Yes, my career here was very short. But I was very glad to have an opportunity to leave Cambridge when I did. I was getting a divorce, and it was a very difficult time for me.

Riess: In those couple of years, 1941 to 1943, did you work closely with Sproul? How did you work together?

McLaughlin: We happened to want the same thing. I thought mining, the old mining college, was rather fading, and it was going to go by the wayside unless it combined with engineering. Well, the old mining graduates just couldn't hear of it, but when Sproul appointed me to the position of dean of engineering as well as mining, they were all very pleased, and accepted that. So it was sort of a device to put that over. I didn't intend to stay very long, and I didn't.

Riess: When you were back here, you were part of the Berkeley social life. Dinners with Bob and Ida Sproul?

McLaughlin: Yes. Ida was a person who had that lovely quality of graciousness. She was so nice to people, without overdoing at all. She always maintained dignity, but she was really a very, very well-liked person. She really had a lot to do with creating Bob.

Riess: Which side of him?

McLaughlin: [laughing] The good side. Smoothing the rough edges.

Riess: Did Sproul know Hearst through you?

McLaughlin: No. I saw him every now and then at San Simeon, but I don't think that his knowing me had much to do with it.

Riess: For what kind of occasions would you both be at San Simeon?

McLaughlin: Well, semi-social. He was down in connection with some university affairs he was trying to interest Hearst in--without much success.

Riess: I don't remember hearing from Ida about going to San Simeon.

McLaughlin: She didn't go. She took great offense--well, not offense, but Marion Davies didn't--Ida was a very strict person, and a man living with his mistress didn't appeal to her. Without going out of her way, or making some strong statement of "No" and so on, she handled it very astutely, but she did not see Marion Davies. I would doubt it.

Riess: And you say Sproul was not successful with Hearst?

McLaughlin: Well, I think he expected a lot more than he got. But Hearst was having financial difficulties at that time if I remember correctly. Anyhow, I don't think Bob ever got much help out of W.R. Hearst, some help, but not like the help Phoebe gave.

Riess: Did you and Bob Sproul have social clubs in common? The Bohemian Club?

McLaughlin: Oh, yes, we belonged to the same camp at the Grove, the Isle of Aves. We were really quite close in the Bohemian Club. Not so much the Pacific Union. Bob very seldom went there. Of course he was a member, I suppose honorary.

Riess: Was Bob the star, the entertainer, in your camp at the Grove?

McLaughlin: He was just a very good companion. He was Bob Sproul, not the president of the university. And very well liked. It was just a small camp. How many do you think it is? Twenty, Sylvia?

Sylvia: Maybe a few more now. But in those days it seemed to be a very close-knit group.

McLaughlin: After I came to Berkeley, and also before I came to Berkeley, there was a Berkeley group in the Bohemian Club, men like Billy [William G.] Donald, and Farnham Griffiths, and I became closely associated with them.

- McLaughlin: Also in that group was John Simpson. He had been in New York a long time, but when the two of us came out to California why both of us took a more active part in the Bohemian Club. That was quite a wonderful membership in that little camp. Now you never seem to see or hear of the Isle of Aves camp.
- Riess: Your years as a regent must have represented a quite different relationship with Bob Sproul. Did it formalize your relations?
- McLaughlin: It would have been in very bad taste in meetings to take advantage of one's old friendship, or to do things behind the scenes, which Bob never, never did. Bob was a very good administrator that way.
- Riess: For instance?
- McLaughlin: Well, none of the regents are devoting their entire time to being regents, that's just a side job for busy men and women. An ambitious and not very discerning person might try to cultivate a personal friendship in one way or the other with the people on the Board of Regents, which I don't think would have been taken very well.
- Riess: What is your view of the end of Bob's friendship with John Francis Neylan?
- McLaughlin: I really don't know the inside of that. They were very close friends and then certainly anything but. Neylan thought Bob double-crossed him in some way, which I'm sure he didn't. At any rate, they changed from being friends to very hostile acquaintances.
- Riess: That was before the oath.
- McLaughlin: Yes, I think it was. And then Neylan took advantage of the oath. Neylan could take advantage of anything.

Bob Sproul and I were pretty close, and I know there was no objection on his part when I said I thought the Board of Regents ought to have a committee on educational policy. He quite approved, more or less as long as I was chairman. [laughter]

That committee was quite informal. You didn't really sit down and say, "We're going to talk about this subject--or that subject." But it was a very effective committee for discussion, and the discussion ranged over everything. It was a very important committee, or became so, but it was always conducted in a very informal way. I was the first chairman of it, and chairman until I left the regents.

Riess: Do you recall conversations there with Sproul about his long range objectives?

McLaughlin: No. He was tremendously proud of the university, and I think he was very, very much impressed with the deficiencies of the university. I think the differences between Harvard and Berkeley became very apparent to him on that trip in 1930. When you are out here, why, there is a feeling that Berkeley is the Harvard of the Pacific Coast. Well, it is in many ways, but there are also subtleties that are not easy to get, or easy to express.

Riess: Did you observe the transition between President Sproul and his successor, President Kerr? I understand it was difficult.

McLaughlin: Well, yes. They were so different. Sproul understood people far better than Clark ever did or does. Oh, there are lots of subtleties in this. Bob had a following that Clark Kerr could never get, which is very important in running a big university such as Berkeley. They each had their own individual styles.

Riess: With the alumni?

McLaughlin: Yes, and the people of California. He'd make the rounds in California, go to meetings in Bakersfield. He really did quite a job getting around and introducing the university, and introducing himself. I should say he was a very successful president.

Riess: What would you say his weaknesses were, as a president?

McLaughlin: Oh, I don't think I can comment on that. He didn't have an academic background and I don't think he was ever able to completely overcome the opposition of the faculty and the academic world, as an outsider.

Riess: What more would he have achieved if he had had that insider's view?

McLaughlin: I don't think he would have achieved anything more. But I think he had somewhat of a bigger job than necessary in doing it. Sproul had a good deal of wisdom, much more so than you'd expect from his background. I mean of knowledge of academic affairs.

Riess: Maybe that's what's called common sense.

McLaughlin: I think so, yes, that's a very good way to put it.

Riess: When Sproul was invited to be president of Columbia, were you in on his decision there?

McLaughlin: No, I really was not. That was a very interesting decision, at least from Columbia's standpoint. It was very wise. I think Sproul would have been an outstanding president of Columbia, and they needed one.

Riess: He had learned a transferrable skill as president of Berkeley?

McLaughlin: Oh, I think so. Managing an academic group, no one has a monopoly on that. The academics weren't enthusiastic about him--they never were--but he was loyal and certainly I think his first interest was in building up a great faculty, which he did.

Riess: Well, I could take that as your concluding words.

Sylvia: I'd like to put in an addendum. Ida was mentioned as a very gracious hostess. I recall a number of sort of state occasions when we were over there, Charter Day lunches, dinners in honor of some visitor--and they always had a stream of distinguished visitors from all over the world, and we were often included--and Bob complimented her very much as being a gracious host. She was the gracious hostess, but so was he, the gracious host.



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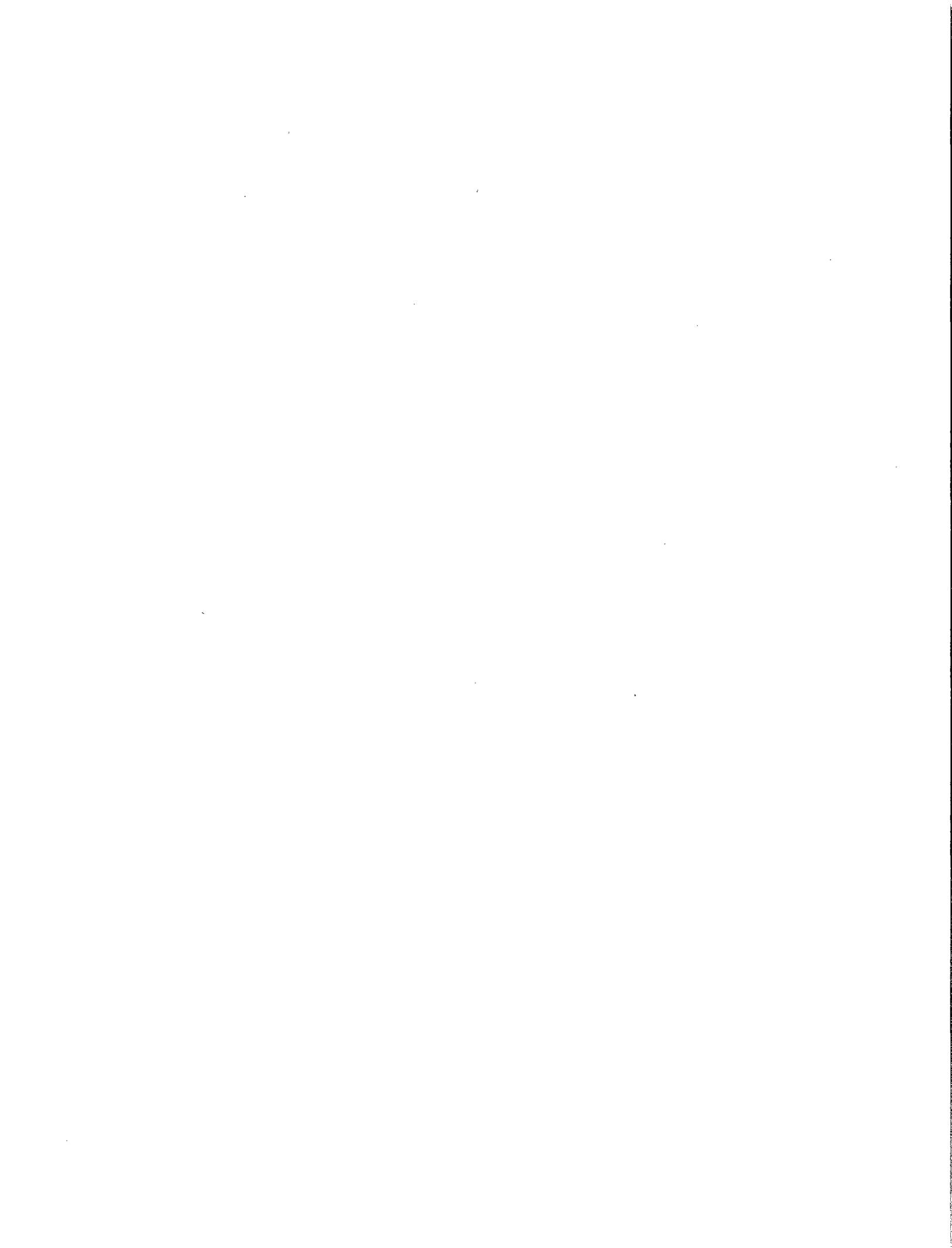
University of California  
Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Horace M. Albright

"CLASSMATE" AND NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DIRECTOR REMINISCES

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Mr. Albright's "preface" to this interview is an introduction to his University of California days, and his career as a conservationist and corporation executive. Along with Herman Phleger, '12, Donald McLaughlin, '14, and Robert Underhill, '15, Horace Albright, '12, is a Robert Gordon Sproul contemporary, and views Sproul as a classmate--than which there could be no higher honor. We were as pleased as Mr. Albright was that there would be a chance, while the interviewer was in Los Angeles, to do another Albright oral history recording.

Mr. Albright was introduced by his classmate Newton Drury to the Regional Oral History Office in 1961, at the time of his receiving an LL.D. from Berkeley. From that day forward he became ROHO's staunch (and by 1985 longest-lived) supporter, advisor, and informant on conservation matters. For our office he has written introductions to two oral histories, done a joint interview on conservation with Mr. Drury, been interviewed on his classmate Earl Warren, and is the biographical subject of a major interview by Columbia University. Possibly the most oral history-interviewed man in America, because of the major events in which he has played a role, his information and his work on our behalf have been invariably first-rate.

This interview was held early in December 1984, a short time after a painful fall that had Mr. Albright confined to his chair. Doing the interview brought back good memories. His account of Sproul's recognition in East Coast corridors of power was a surprising and important revelation. However, in Mr. Albright's judgment the transcript was not up to his standards. We disagreed, but we could easily accommodate Mr. Albright's wish to have more time, and so he tackled it, typing over most of the material. The result, greatly disparaged by Mr. Albright, is in fact a splendidly edited and reordered version of the original, an excellent contribution to the Robert Gordon Sproul story, and proof that years of practice in oral history-doing stood the interviewee in good stead.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name Horace Marden AlbrightDate of birth January 6, 1890 Place of birth Bishop, Inyo County, Calif.Father's full name George Lankin AlbrightBirthplace St. Andrews East, Province Quebec, CanadaOccupation Contractor & Builder, Millwright, Cabinet maker, (Undertaker )  
(Not a mortician)\*Mother's full name Mary Clemens MardenBirthplace Mokelumne Hill, Cal. (1849 mining town)Occupation School and college girl; housewife and motherWhere did you grow up ? Until 18, in Bishop, CalPresent community At age 95, reside in Chandler Convalescent Hospital/  
North Hollywood, Cal.Education Chandler is (for me) resident home for crippled aged. Not far  
from daughter's home, 12045 Viewcrest, Studio City, CaElementary school; Bishop; Bishop Union High School, Class of 1908  
Univ. of Cal. Berkeley. Class 1912; Law school (Boalt) 1912-13  
Georgetown Univ. Washington, D.C. LL.B. June 1914.Occupation(s) Confidential Clerk to Secretary of Interior 1913-part 1914; Asst.  
Attorney, Dep't Interior part 1914-1916; Asst. Director & Acting Director  
National Park Service 1917-June 1919. Superintendent Yellowstone Nat'l  
Park June, 1919-Jan. 12, 1929; Director, Nat'l Park Service Jan. 12, 1929  
August 9, 1933; Executive vice president & general manager, United  
States Potash Company August 9, 1933-April, 1946; President U.S. Potash,  
1946- Sept. 1956; A director U.S. Borax & Chem. Corp. Sept. 1956-1962. RetiredSpecial interests or activities Legal affairs & public relations Dept. of Interior  
until organization National Park Service; administrator in that bureau  
until resignation in August 1933; chief executive officer U.S. Potash  
until 1956; was active in resource conservation in various organizations-  
American Forestry Assn.; Nat'l Parks & Conservation Assn.; Nat'l Audubon  
Society; Nature Conservancy; Nat'l Trust for Historic Preservation,  
Campfire Club of America. Boone-Crockett Club; Theo. Roosevelt Association;  
Resources For The Future, Inc.; Colonial Williamsburg, Inc.; Sierra Club;  
Pacific Tropical Botanical Garden, Kauai, Hawaii; American Mining Congress.\* In early mining towns and towns and villages everywhere, the "undertaker"  
was a furniture dealer or made and repaired furniture, or was builder

Mr. Albright's Background Introduction\*

[Date of Interview: December 7, 1984]

Albright: I knew Robert Gordon Sproul from college days, and they were a long time ago! I wonder if we might save space and time in this interview if I first sketch for you the locations of our meeting places and approximately the times of our meetings. You can use this chronology, or whatever it should be called, as you please.

We were in the University of California together from August, 1909, when Sproul's Class of 1913 entered until May, 1913, when it graduated. I was in the Class of 1912, but was still in the university in the college year 1912-13, in the second year of the three-year School of Jurisprudence in the Class of 1914 when, if my courses of study had been passed successfully, I would receive the degree Juris Doctor (J.D.). During this graduate year, I had served as a reader in economics, assigned to the office of the chairman of the economics department, Mr. Adolph Miller.

Honorable Franklin K. Lane had been a student in the University of California in the 1880s, but had not graduated--he was claimed by the Class of 1886. A close friend of his from college days was Professor Adolph C. Miller of the university's economics department, rated in academic and business circles as a financial expert. Franklin K. Lane had been appointed to the Interstate Commerce Commission as a Democratic party member. In March, 1913, a short time after his inauguration, President Wilson had appointed the secretary of the interior, and soon thereafter Secretary Lane called Professor Miller to Washington and offered him the position of assistant to the secretary. The offer was accepted, but Professor Miller asked if he could bring me to Washington with him. The secretary promised that he could do this, but Mr. Miller did not ask what I would do in the department, nor what compensation I would receive.

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\*Written by Horace Albright after the interview, as a preface to the interview. The interview has also been considerably rewritten by Mr. Albright, and left in his style.

Albright: On returning to Berkeley, Professor Miller asked me to go to Washington. I did not accept at once, hoping to know more about the position and its compensation, but even more worried about missing my final year in the Law School and my J.D. degree. Finally, on the advice of many friends, I accepted the place and preceded Mr. Miller to Washington, arriving May 31, 1913.

June 1, 1913, was Sunday, but on Monday, June 2, 1913, I entered the Department of the Interior, and was there for more than twenty years, resigning August 9, 1933. The above covers two periods of my adult life, the college years, 1908-1913, and the Interior Department years, 1913-1933.

In August, 1933, I accepted the position of executive vice-president and general manager of the United States Potash Company, a new industrial enterprise engaged in the mining and refining of potassium ores, with mine and refineries in New Mexico, but with executive offices in New York. I was the chief executive officer with the above title until the inactive president died in 1946, when I became the president and chief executive officer. My company merged in 1956 with the Pacific Coast Borax Company to become the United States Borax and Chemical Corporation. I retired when the merger became effective, but for the next five years I was a consultant to the new company and a director of it. I was sixty-six years of age on retirement as president of the Potash Company, and on final retirement from business was seventy-one.

This last retirement at seventy-one I ended both official and business careers, but continued to be active in work of organizations to which I belonged as a director or committeeman, especially in organizations interested in resource conservation. I attended dinners of Berkeley Fellows and Robert Gordon Sproul Associates (scholarship group of university) and served on a committee to develop research reserves for the university. I have been much interested in the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library.

#### Early Impressions of Robert Gordon Sproul

Riess: I assume you knew Robert Gordon Sproul when both of you were undergraduates?

Albright: Yes, but I do not recall when or where our first meeting occurred, probably not until we were upper classmen.

Albright: Let us call him Bob Sproul, by which name he was known from college days, and which I am sure was the name he liked best. We were not close friends. He was in the 1913 class and I was in the 1912 class. His home was in San Francisco. Mine was in a small town in Inyo County, east of the Sierra Nevada mountains. He could reach Berkeley from his home in less than an hour. My travel from home to Berkeley required three days. Bob Sproul was registered in an engineering college, I think civil engineering. I was in the College of Commerce, but in my junior year I transferred to the College of Social Science when I decided to take the three year course in jurisprudence, beginning with my senior year and requiring two years of graduate studies for the degree of Doctor of Jurisprudence.

I mention these items to illustrate the improbability [of friendship] of two college boys, with no pre-college acquaintance, registered in widely different university colleges and in different college years. Furthermore, we lived in widely separated clubs which were really local fraternities. Bob Sproul belong to Abracadabra, located north of the campus, while I belonged to Del Rey, south of the campus.

Riess: What kind of people were in Abracadabra?

Albright: It's hard to describe a group of college people, because there were all kinds in every house. I remember that I thought Abracadabra had an unusual membership of versatile young men. [I am amending here my use of the word "intellectuals" which I said in the interview.] They were regarded as good students, and at the same time participated in college life of one kind or another. I don't know how old that resident club was or whether it is still there.

Riess: I think it became eventually a Greek.

Albright: Many of them did. My Del Rey eventually became inactive, sold the clubhouse, and with the proceeds of the sale established a fund for scholarships. I think there were two good reasons for the clubs-- the boys who organized them and others who came later joined them first because they could not afford to join the Greeks, or they were not invited! And of course there were girls' clubs, I think as many as there were boys. I have been told that both the clubs and many fraternities had difficulty in recruiting members when the university built dormitories with provision for occupancy by students of both sexes!

Riess: Can you tell me more about why you called the Abracadabras especially versatile [intellectual]?

Albright: I don't remember how they rated in scholarship, but they were active in university student body and class politics, in athletics, in writing, etc. Bob Sproul was indeed versatile. He was even a winner in athletics; I think he won his "C" in the two mile race.

You've heard the remark of his own son about anybody that would run the two mile?

Riess: What's that?

Albright: Bob liked to tell the story. Years after his college activities he took his son to a track meet, and especially directed his attention to the two mile race. It was the first two mile race he had seen, but he knew his father had been a two-miler. The boy was horrified by the appearance of the winner and others as they approached the end, and he wondered how people became crazy enough to go in for that event. He regarded it as a great show, but something nobody but somebody without any sense would do!

I have a recollection that Bob Sproul was out a year before he went to college. He often said he came near being in our class. He attended our reunions.

Riess: He actually laid some claim to being Class of 1912, because he should have been there?

Albright: Perhaps so. There might have been some of his high school classmates in our 1912 university class.

Riess: Moving ahead after you and Bob Sproul met, do you recall anything about further meetings?

Albright: No, our meetings were just fellow students passing on the campus walks, waving at each other if we happen to see each other. We had no reason to seek a meeting. We really had nothing in common. Bob had many friends, many from high school days, and soon he attained prominence in college affairs, and his name appeared in the college newspaper. Mine never did and there was no reason why it should have appeared. Bob was elected to honor societies, and was active in athletics and 1913 class affairs. In his junior year, he was class president.

Riess: Let us assume we are in May, 1913; Sproul was graduating, and you were completing your first graduate year, the second year in the courses of the School of Jurisprudence. Was commencement in May, 1913, the end of University of California attendance for both of you?

Albright: It was. I had been offered a position in the Department of the Interior, a place Professor Adolph Miller arranged for me, and which I had reluctantly accepted, because I would have finished the law course and received the J.D. degree; also I had been appointed assistant in economics which would have made it possible to spend another year in the university law school (financially). I had been a reader in economics assigned to Professor Miller's office in the year 1912-1913, my first graduate year. At the time I had no idea what was to become of Bob Sproul. I do not recall seeing him in Washington.

Riess: What was the nature of your Washington place? Were you to be with Professor Miller?

Albright: Yes. With the title of confidential clerk to the secretary of the interior, but assigned to Professor Miller who as assistant to the secretary was expected to devote himself, among other things, to secure from Congress legislation for the establishing of a National Park Service, a bureau of the Interior Department to administer the national parks which had been authorized from time to time since 1872, and placed under the secretary's jurisdiction.

Riess: It is interesting that the heads of the Department of the Interior were former University of California men, Franklin K. Lane [Class of 1886], as well as Adolph C. Miller, Class of 1887, and Horace Albright, Class of 1912.

Albright: Oh, there were many other alumni of our university in the interior. Dr. Elwood Mead of the university faculty was to become head of the Bureau of Reclamation. Morris Bien, '79 was in the Office of Reclamation; another distinguished U.C. alumnus was high in the Bureau of Mines, and later its director; still another was a highly placed officer in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. There were others in other departments, especially the Department of Agriculture.

Riess: I suppose you were on the lookout for University of California people?

Albright: Yes.

Albright: In December 1915, I married Grace Noble, a member of the Class of 1912, and both of us joined the University of California alumni group which held several meetings a year in Washington. In 1918, my bride was elected the president, and she had the responsibility of working with a strong committee, appointed by her, to plan the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the university on Charter Day. Grace Albright and her committee secured access to all the military establishments in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, and 150 U.C. alumni and former students, including wives, made the splendidly organized dinner a great success. Congressman Elston of Berkeley, I think Class of 1901, was chairman, and may have represented the university, or it might have been Mr. John A. Britton of San Francisco, a noted regent of the university, who attended the dinner.

I'm sure this 50th anniversary statement has no place in this interview, but it is suggested to emphasize the fact that there were U.C. people in and around Washington during the war years, and my wife and I were active in alumni affairs there. Bob Sproul was an active university officer at the time, but I don't think he spent much time in Washington, if any, though he could have had university business affairs needing attention. We were deferred from military service, Bob for health reasons, I think, and I was deferred to organize the newly authorized National Park Service.

Department of the Interior, Hoover Dam

Riess: How long were you in Washington?

Albright: I was in the Department of the Interior two months over twenty years from June 1, 1913, to August 9, 1933. I was on duty in Washington a little over six years, then transferred to the field with headquarters at Yellowstone National Park, where I was the superintendent in charge of the park, and assistant director of the National Park Service until January 12, 1929, when I became the second director of the National Park Service, succeeding Mr. Mather, the first director, after he suffered a crippling illness from which he died in January 1930.

Riess: Do you recall being with Bob Sproul while on duty in Washington or in the West?

Albright: While on occasional official business trips to California I may have called on him at his university office, and probably did. I have no clear recollection of when such visits occurred or exactly

Albright: when. When I was director of the park service, President Coolidge was near the end of his term, and on March 4, 1929, he was succeeded by President Hoover, and his secretary of the interior was his old friend of college days, Ray Lyman Wilbur, president of Stanford University, who in turn became my official chief.

An extremely important project before the Interior Department was the so-called "Boulder Canyon project," the construction of a dam to control the flow of the Colorado River, store its annual "flooded waters," produce electric power, etc. Boulder Canyon had been chosen as the site of the dam, but it had been found inadequate, or otherwise not feasible, and Black Canyon had been substituted for it. The Union Pacific Railroad had promptly constructed a branch rail line to the new dam site.

In September 1930, Secretary Wilbur made a trip to dedicate the new rail line, and he took several of his Interior Department executive officers with him. I was one of these. In the course of the dedication ceremony, Dr. Wilbur named the great project "Hoover Dam," which he had a right to do. Work on the building of the dam began at once. During the winter, the important activity was in the preparation of the site for the dam, which involved the diversion of the Colorado River through two tunnels, one in each side of Black Canyon.

In the early months of 1931, this was completed. It was time for the construction of the foundation. Apparently it was also the time for another assembly of people interested in the construction of an enormous river control edifice, for Secretary Wilbur invited twenty or thirty such friends to join him in viewing the foundation site, the diversion tunnels, etc., and Bob Sproul and I were in the group that morning in April 1931. I don't remember what Bob and I talked about in our brief time together, but it was easy to see that Bob was tremendously interested in the Hoover Dam project. Of course, he was an engineer and a university executive concerned with every enterprise of importance to California. I had a picture of Bob and me standing together in the dry Colorado River bed on the side of the Hoover Dam foundation.

Riess: Did you see Bob Sproul out here in those years?

Albright: I probably called to see him in his office while on some stop-over in Berkeley, but I remember that the Sprouls asked the Albrights to a delightful dinner at their home, and other guests were resource conservationists, probably faculty members. I assume that

Albright: you know that Bob Sproul was the treasurer of the Save-the-Redwoods League for many years. A phone call to the league's San Francisco office can get you full information regarding his league connections.

Riess: After you resigned as the director of the National Park Service, did you live in the New York region?

Albright: We lived in New Rochelle, New York, about twenty miles north of New York City, for twenty-eight years, but my offices were in New York, for two years in the Canadian Pacific Building, near the Grand Central Terminal, and afterwards, 1936 until we completely retired to California in 1961, we moved to new offices in the R.C.A. Building of the newly-opened Rockefeller Center, and were there for twenty-five years.

#### Sproul Considered for Presidential Candidacy

Albright: I mention this New York connection because my business interest being in the West, and my deep interest in California affairs, including, of course, those of the university, made me a source of information, and often otherwise a bit conspicuous, as we shall see.

In New Rochelle there were two University of California alumni, Fred Searls, '09, a well-known mining engineer and lawyer, president of NewMont Mining Company which had mining interests in many foreign countries, and his younger brother, Carroll Searls, '15, an attorney for NewMont, who was as active an alumnus as I ever knew in New York. He knew or was in touch with many alumni and knew of former students. We became close friends, and I soon knew about all there was to know about University of California people in and around New York City and environs, eastern New Jersey and southern Connecticut.

There was no University of California alumni organization, but Carroll Searls knew many of the university graduates and former students, and seemed to be involved in planning and carrying out plans for an occasional luncheon or dinner like a Big Game affair. He belonged to a downtown lawyers club, and it seemed that he could be depended on to arrange to hold some of these U.C. affairs there.

Albright: Probably Carroll Searls and my prominent midtown office location earned me some standing as a University of California alumnus who was in touch with western affairs, and especially those of the university. Anyway, early in 1935 Carroll Searls brought to my office one morning two New York citizens who were far from pleased with the F.D. Roosevelt administration, and belonged to a local group already engaged in hoping President Roosevelt could not be elected, or re-elected, in 1936.

University President Robert Gordon Sproul, because of his success in solving some very difficult and severely dangerous problems confronting the university, had received extensive favorable publicity, and the new items had said that he had been offered attractive business offers, including one or two important bank presidencies. These men told me that they and others would like to meet him, and wondered if I could arrange for them to meet him when he next visited New York. They had been told that I knew Dr. Sproul and was the man to try to arrange for them and others to meet him. They thought he was a man to have under consideration for the Republican party nominee in 1936.

These men were Mr. Lowell Wadmond, a member of the prominent Wall Street legal firm of White & Case, and Mr. Walter H. Aldridge, president of Texas Gulf Sulphur. I had never met these men, although I knew all about Mr. Aldridge, who had been head of a mining operation north of Yellowstone Park long before I was the superintendent of the park, and a town, then in ruins, has been named for him.

These men I was glad to meet, but I promptly explained that I was not a politician, that I was not interested in politics and under no circumstances would I take any part in the 1936 election. I also told them I had no idea what Dr. Sproul's interest in politics was, if any, but I agreed to try to secure Bob Sproul's consent to enjoy a luncheon with them and some of their friends, the luncheon to be arranged by Carroll Searls at the Lawyers Club. We agreed that Dr. Sproul was not to be told of the thoughts about the possibility of his being thought of as a political candidate.

Well, I arranged for Bob Sproul to give me a date some time when he would be in New York, which he did, and a luncheon for about twenty very interesting men was held. The only real politicians invited were the already famous New York district attorney, Tom Dewey, later to be governor of New York, and twice the Republican nominee for president. A political adviser of Dewey's was there, but not as a guest. He just "came along." There was no mention of politics, and I don't know that Bob Sproul ever knew why these men wanted to meet him. I reluctantly accepted an invitation, as did Carroll Searls, of course.

Albright: Of course, everybody liked Bob Sproul and were delighted with his brief speech and his remarkable voice.

Riess: Were there any more efforts to interview President Sproul?

Albright: Not that I ever heard of.

#### 1911-1915 Alumni on the East Coast Band Together

Albright: Of course, some of us University of California alumni saw him from time to time on his business and official trips to Washington. I think you know of the group of alumni of about the 1911 to 1915 or 1916 classes vintage. It was not organized, had no official membership, no officers, no by-laws. Except in summer, we would meet for luncheon and talks at our clubs, taking turns at entertaining. I was told that the group meetings were started by a 1911 man, whose name escapes me, but I think he was an editor of the Daily Cal. By the time I came to New York, I think he had moved to Chicago.

I'll give you some of the names of this group: Paul Pennoyer, ex '12, and myself, '12, and Ray Gidney, '12 (in Eisenhower's presidency, Ray was U.S. Comptroller General), Clare Torrey, '13, John Simpson, '13, Fred Mills, professor of economics at Columbia, '14, Henry Breck, '14. Allan Sproul often joined us, as did Bob Sproul when in New York on a meeting date. Don McLaughlin, '14, came down from Boston, and later lived in New York. DeWitt Wallace, founder of the Reader's Digest, ex '14, came in from time to time. Another from California was Loyall McLaren. Once he brought in Herbert Hoover, then ex-president, and I remember how we hooted McLaren and demanded that he take out this Stanford man!

As members of our little group moved away or died, the luncheons ended, but years later I was invited to the Pacific Union Club in San Francisco where the "remnants" were still meeting occasionally--All n Sproul, Don McLaughlin, John Simpson, etc., and some newer alumni I did not know. I mention this group because Bob Sproul liked it, and joined whenever possible.

Riess: Wasn't that small group called "The Disputers?"

Albright: I think that was one of the names it was called. There were several, given to it by ourselves!

Riess: Have you recollections of meetings of the larger University of California alumni and former students of the New York region?

Albright: There were several, but Bob Sproul was not involved, except one soon after the end of World War II and the Japanese War. Both Presidents Sproul and Ray Lyman Wilbur of Stanford were in New York, and Carroll Searls and I arranged with the Stanford New York group to hold a joint dinner, have both presidents present, and listen to the playing of the annual "Big Game"--which could be reported by us almost play by play! This was a very successful and much enjoyed dinner. Stanford won!

I was the first to speak after the end of the game. Of course I deplored my university's defeat, but expressed our appreciation of the cooperative effort in arranging the dinner, and hoped there could be more such affairs, and I introduced President Sproul, taking advantage of the opportunity to praise his administration of our university. He stood up and congratulated President Wilbur on the win. Then he said, "You realized, of course, that Stanford has won many times, but the University of California is an educational institution, it concentrates on teaching," and so forth. He put some emphasis on this point, so everybody laughed, everybody had a little fun out of this observation.

Then the Stanford leader introduced Dr. Wilbur. He was a very witty fellow too, you know. He said, "I didn't overlook what my colleague, President Sproul, had to say about education at Berkeley. But," he said, "I'm just wondering about that, because the University of California leader here who just spoke to us tonight thought so much of the University of California being an educational institution that he sent both of his children to Stanford." He got a big laugh out of that!

Riess: Sproul and Ray Lyman Wilbur got along swimmingly?

Albright: Indeed they did, always, I think.

Honors to Horace Albright: Regents' Lectureship

Riess: Have you any more New York experiences to relate?

Albright: I think Bob Sproul and I reached our highest positions of leadership and responsibility about the same time, and being near the same age reached the normal retirement again in our sixties. I was sixty-six in January 1956, and in August of that year my United States Potash

Albright: Company merged with the Pacific Coast Borax Company to form the U.S. Borax & Chemical Corporation, with headquarters in Los Angeles, but retaining a branch in New York. I retired, but I became a director of the new company and accepted a place as an advisor remaining in New York for a period of five years. In November 1961, we Albrights took up residence in Los Angeles, finally severing all business connections in 1962.

While we still lived in New York, a very important event in my life occurred which involved Bob Sproul, who was no longer president of the university. Dr. Clark Kerr had taken his place. The director of the National Park Service, Conrad L. Wirth, who had been one of my assistant directors in my Washington days, had most of his national park superintendents and other field executives and his chief Washington associates meet in Williamsburg, Virginia, by invitation of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., whose great historic restoration of the old city of Williamsburg, colonial capital of Virginia, was a part of the national park system. The important conference continued for several days. I was invited to attend, but had another commitment that prevented acceptance of the invitation.

Many of the park service officials in attendance had been associates of mine, and I learned afterwards that at the conference there was considerable discussion of my career and of the fact that very soon I would reach age seventy years. I do not know who suggested a dinner in Washington in tribute to me, but plans for a dinner after the Williamsburg conference were made and a committee organized to include representatives of most of my lifetime activities in public life, as a business executive, in retirement, in conservation organizations, etc. My wife was informed of the plans and she was active in all arrangements. Under no circumstances was I to be told until a day or two before the dinner. It was to be held in the Wardman Park Hotel, one of the best in Washington at the time (now rebuilt and renamed), on December 4, 1959.

Most of the Williamsburg conferees remained in the East for the dinner, and old friends came from all parts of the country for it. I was told that over 900 diners enjoyed the affair. The secretary of the interior, Honorable Fred Seaton, and his wife were there, and former secretary Oscar Chapman and his wife too. Robert Gordon Sproul was at the head table and a program speaker. Whether he was on the dinner committee or came as a representative of the university, I never knew. In fact, I don't remember ever having seen the list of dinner committee.

Albright: Bob Sproul was one of the speakers. His speech was brief, witty, and more complimentary to me than I deserved. In this speech he announced that I had been appointed a regents lecturer in resource conservation as soon as I could be fitted into a semester schedule. Of course, everything was a surprise to me that night, but I think the announcement that I was to be a regents lecturer for all or part of a semester was quite overwhelming. I was not a speaker, certainly not a lecturer, although I had given many in my National Park Service years.

I was one of the last speakers at the dinner. I thanked Bob Sproul for the action of the regents, and briefly reviewed what the University of California had meant to me, including the action of the alumni association in 1952 in naming me Alumnus of the Year. [Also a chair in conservation was established at Berkeley, an annual lecture, etc., being paid for by gifts connected with this dinner.]

In the spring semester of 1961 I gave six or eight lectures on resource conservation and historic preservation, and was the leader of two seminars in which both faculty and students participated. Of course, the dinner and the experience as a regents lecturer were exciting, and I have long regarded them as among the great events of my life.

Another superlative event that gave me and all my friends and family immense pleasure and appreciation was when President Kerr asked me to join him on the platform of the Greek Theatre for the annual Charter Day ceremonies. He said he was going to honor me, but didn't say how. I was up there on the stage, and enjoying the Charter Day program, when President Kerr came to the item of degrees, and who should stand up and propose me for the honorary degree of LL.D. but Bob Sproul? I can still remember that booming voice of his echoing back and forth through the woods, proposing Horace M. Albright for the degree of LL.D. I was immensely proud of the degree and that Bob Sproul had been chosen to make the presentation.

In 1968 the Berkeley chancellor established the "honorific society" he called it, the Berkeley Fellows, composed of one hundred alumni and others who had been outstanding supporters of the university. I was included in this group. Each year, there was an annual dinner of the fellows. At two or three of these dinners I had my last brief visits with Ida and Bob Sproul.

Transcriber: Michelle Anderson  
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University of California  
Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Marion Sproul Goodin

LIFE WITH FATHER

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Marion Sproul Goodin is the eldest child of Robert Gordon Sproul and Ida Amelia Wittschen Sproul, recognizably the offspring of those two very distinctive people. She is gracious and forthright and funny and intelligent and she gets things done. She labels herself "dilettante everywhere, expert nowhere." She calls her occupation housewife--as in her biographical sheet she calls her mother "housewife" also.

When we arranged to interview it meant for Marion an appointed time in which to say what life with her father had been like for her, and to enter her observations about the presidential Robert Gordon Sproul into permanent record. She was well prepared for the interview; she had read back over letters, reacquainting herself with facts and feelings. The resulting memoir is full of energy which Marion--and all the Sprouls--brings to any undertaking.

When Marion was born, her father was twenty-six years old, a cashier in the comptroller's office. A year later he became assistant comptroller, assistant secretary of the regents, and assistant land agent. A year later he shed the "assistant" title. So it went, up through the ranks, and when Marion was thirteen years old her father was president of the University of California.

In the interview that follows, Marion lays to rest any suspicion that being the president's daughter might have been an onerous title, or that the responsibilities were too weighty. On the contrary, she was an insider at a party of her father's making and it was fun to be there. His achievements did not diminish those around him, and he gave time to his family.

In a letter saved from long ago, and given by Marion Sproul to the archives of the university, Robert Gordon Sproul said to his wife, on the occasion of the birth of Marion's brother Bob, Jr., that the baby would "soon be her buddy and eligible to be ordered around in the sandbox." He recognized his three-year-old daughter's capabilities, which he encouraged and validated throughout her life.

It was a pleasure to work with Marion on this oral history about her father. She was also vital in the successful completion of the oral history with her mother, The President's Wife (1981), and wrote an elegant and candid introduction to the oral history completed in 1974 with another president's daughter, Ella Barrows Hagar. Our interview was held in the Goodin home on Tamalpais Road, just north of the garden-encircled home to which Marion's parents retired in 1958.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name MARION ELIZABETH SPROUL GOODIN

Date of birth 7/15/17 Place of birth BERKELEY, CA.

Father's full name ROBERT GORDON SPROUL

Birthplace San Francisco, CA

Occupation President, University of Calif. 1930-58

Mother's full name IDA AMELIA WITTSCHEM SPROUL

Birthplace NEW YORK, N.Y.

Occupation Housewife

Where did you grow up? BERKELEY

Present community BERKELEY

Education AB University of Calif. (Berkeley) 1938

MA " " " " 1940-3

think work completed Fall of 1940 - degree granted either Dec. 1940 or May 1941

Occupation(s) Housewife (worked briefly for IBM  
(1940-42) Dept of State 1942 (Washington D.C.) Foreign Service 1942-45 (Lima,  
Peru)

Special interests or activities Suzanne, I absolutely never  
know how to answer such a question - dilettante  
everywhere, expert nowhere.

Family History, Family Memories

[Date of Interview: June 13, 1984]

M. Goodin: The principal thing I remember from my childhood was that if my father was at a party or in a group, everything was more fun. He added a dimension that nobody else did. He had a lot of imagination. He was always doing a lot of things.

He made everything an event, somehow. He himself quoted somebody about Teddy Roosevelt, who said he had to be the bride at every wedding and the corpse at every funeral. There was that in it too. He focused on being something that people would remember. There is no question about that. He was not a man without his own ego. [laughter] But, it made it more fun for everybody else.

He never made anybody else feel small. He had to be big, but you could be life-size. You didn't have to be small in order for him to be big. If you want an overall impression, that's it.

Riess: What are your first memories of him? Can you think back to Grant Street, and your mother and father?

M. Goodin: I can't really say. I remember things about Grant Street, but I don't remember my father. I think my father was really not at ease with babies. He wasn't at ease with children until they reacted and responded to him. A baby may have been frightened of him. I don't know that but I suspect it might be true. Even with his grandchildren until they got to be three and four and five, I don't think he was terribly interested. They cried, they were noisy, they were smelly, the whole bit, and not much fun. They had to be fun. They had to respond before he was interested. I think I was four when we moved from Grant Street.

The person I remember from Grant Street, apart from my mother, is my grandfather. My grandfather came and pushed me in my buggy, every single solitary day. That may be an exaggeration,

M. Goodin: but that's what I remember. He had never had a girl, he'd had two boys, and he had always wanted a girl, and I was sent from heaven. My grandfather thought I was great. He was a very dignified man. But he didn't care that I kicked the blankets off and waved my feet in the air or anything. He didn't care.

The other thing I remember that has nothing to do with my father is that I was out watering the lawn, heavily, and I turned the hose on my grandfather by mistake. That was a terrible trauma. I was very upset about this. I don't think he was angry with me but I do remember it.

Riess: Where were your grandparents living at that time?

M. Goodin: When we first lived on Grant Street they lived right around the corner on Rose. When there was the flu epidemic in 1918, my mother and father both got flu, and I stayed with my grandparents. I'll tell you what I remember about that. You'll laugh. That was that the washcloths smelled. [laughter]

Riess: Oh dear, those memories.

M. Goodin: They never smelled in my mother's house, but they smelled in my grandmother's house.

Their house on Rose Street and ours on Grant are still there.

I remember my father first probably when we went to Phillips. I suppose this is around the time that I am four. We may even be still living on Grant Street.

Riess: What's Phillips?

M. Goodin: Phillips was a resort on Highway 50, close to Echo Lake but on the highway. An old fashioned resort, it's called--.

Riess: Glen Alpine, your mother refers to.

M. Goodin: No, we went there later. The first place we went in the mountains was Phillips. It had bungalows. What's it called now? Pow Wow! Terrible name. They've torn down all the bungalows. There was a gas station there that has burned down now, and for some reason they call it Pow Wow. It's on Highway 50, close to the river and back of Cup Lake.

M. Goodin: Anyway, I do remember that my father put me in a box. (I may remember this because I've seen a picture.) He put me in a box, because there was lots of snow. Around the top of the box he put a little thing like a meringue of snow. It was all decorated. I'm sitting there in a mob cap. (I'm sure this has to be a picture.) He slid me down the hill.

He was very pleased with me because I was a little girl who wasn't afraid of things like that. I didn't cry and I didn't protest, and I willingly did this sort of thing. I walked, when I was four years old, to Cup Lake. That's quite a walk. Perhaps I was carried a lot of the way but I did it. I remember that he really did like the mountains and he was more relaxed in the mountains at all times of his life.

Riess: When I was asking your mother about your father and women in general, she replied that he hadn't had girl friends in college, she didn't think, and that he was actually shy, quiet, and a home-body.

M. Goodin: I think all that is probably fundamentally true. But I think he noticed pretty girls. He was just probably a little afraid to approach them. He did participate in social activities at the United Presbyterian Church and I think at the YMCA. I think they had dances and things. He did take out, I think, Jim Arnott's sister, Mary Arnott, at one point. I think he also took out Deborah Dyer Calkins--she married John Calkins. And he certainly admired Barbara Nachtrieb Armstrong, who was in his class. I think my mother's fundamentally right, but I don't think he was uninterested. Maybe just scared. Certainly, long after, when Clare Boothe Luce appeared on the scene, he noticed her.

Riess: I was thinking maybe it was something like the same reaction he had to you until you were four and could talk, that he would need someone who was responsive.

M. Goodin: Do you mean someone who would go more than half way? Maybe, but he certainly didn't need that when he met my mother. I think she did have her eye on him from the beginning, but she would never have let on. Or do you mean respond intellectually? I don't think he was an intellectual in college. I really don't think so.

I think he was in absolutely the wrong field--one that didn't speak to his real intellectual gifts. He was quick enough to do creditably, but mostly he enjoyed extracurricular college life.

Riess: The civil engineering?

M. Goodin: He never should have been an engineer. He had no sense about how things worked at all. I don't think I have much (and certainly I don't think my brothers do), but I have a sort of modicum of common sense about it.

I can remember at Echo Lake at the old cabin we had heavy wooden shutters that had weights that were supposed to make it easier for them to go up and down. Pa never could figure out how to put those weights up. I learned how to do it when I was ten or twelve years old. For him it was always backwards.

I know how he got into engineering, but it was the wrong place for him to be. All his gifts were verbal and interpersonal and not mechanical.

Riess: How did he get into it?

M. Goodin: This is something interesting that if you want to do some research--. I always thought I would if I had some time, but I never seem to have any time. You probably have less. He graduated from Mission High School at Christmas time. Therefore, since in those days the university did not take students, or at any event since he did not want to enter the university in January, he spent six months working. (I think he had also worked for this man in high school.) The man's name was Charles McEnerney. He had set himself up to survey San Francisco after the earthquake. There was a great deal of surveying that needed to be done to establish who owned what in the rubble, He was not a surveyor. I don't think he had much, if any, training. He was a con man. But a very nice con man.

He hired bright kids who could teach themselves the rudiments of surveying, and they surveyed a good part of San Francisco. He was a man who must have had a lot of political connections. In the first place he got this job, I think, without credentials. In the second place, when they started the Portola Parade, he was somehow involved in the Portola Parade, and he got my father involved in the Portola Parade, and my father rode a white horse in the first Portola Parade. My father did not ride horses happily either. So it was not something he would have gone out of his way to do. We believe he was Portola, but that may be a family legend.

But somebody ought to be able to find this out, and somebody ought to be able to trace this man, I think. I am told, and my father believed, that in the end he went to prison, to San Quentin. Somehow he got involved with something that was felonious in some

M. Goodin: way. He must have signed these surveying things so somebody should be able to find out who he was and where he went. The Bancroft may have surveys of San Francisco after the earthquake.

Anyway, Charlie McEnerney often didn't pay the kids. When he didn't pay the kids, they would take the transit or the level, or whatever else you survey with, and go home with it; until he paid them they wouldn't bring it back. But they loved him dearly. They liked him so much that my Uncle Allan, who was six years younger than my father, used to come and spend his whole Saturday in that office. He wasn't employed, he wasn't working, but he just thought the whole thing was marvelous.

McEnerney took them all out to the California Market, to Swan's Oyster House. They ate oysters. They ate things my father had never even heard of. He got them involved in the Portola Parade, and heaven knows what else he did. It was sort of the good life and Presbyterians didn't move in those circles at all. My father came out of that, I think, believing that civil engineering was the greatest career a man could have. This was the way you lived as a civil engineer!

In spite of the fact that his whole high school training had been classical--he had Greek and Latin from Monroe Deutsch at Mission High School--he suddenly decided to be an engineer. It was a great disappointment for my grandmother who had her hopes for him pinned on the ministry--though it's not anything I would have thought he was suited to by nature. I believe he had had basic mathematics, but in order to get into civil engineering in the university he had to spend a summer learning trigonometry and calculus. So he definitely shifted gears at this point. I'd love to find out what happened to Charles McEnerney and who he really was.

Riess: But you know this story from your father.

M. Goodin: Oh yes, and from my uncle, too. And I always was cross with both of them because they didn't write about this.

That's why I had trepidations about doing this oral history, because there is so much that I've forgotten. There were lots and lots of stories about what Mr. McEnerney did and where they went, and all I can remember is a sort of overall aura: that it involved eating things that my father never ate and going places my father never went, and would have been very unlikely to go. In the first place, I think money was tight, not with Mr. McEnerney, but with my grandmother and grandfather, and my grandfather would

M. Goodin: have had no interest in it at all. He was really a very simple and solitary man. He liked to read and he liked his family. He really didn't care if he never saw another person. And the only food I can remember him speaking of fondly was oatmeal. I think he liked scotch, but United Presbyterians were temperance so that was rarely indulged and never encouraged.

Riess: But your grandparents didn't clamp down hard.

M. Goodin: Oh no. I think that my father and uncle were held to very high standards. They were supposed to work hard and they were supposed to succeed, and indeed they did. I don't think my grandfather wanted to impose the kind of life he wanted to live on them.

My grandmother was totally the opposite. She was extremely gregarious. She was very young when she got married, and she really treated her sons on the level of an older sister. They spoke of her in a sense disrespectfully and they were constantly playing tricks on her. They'd lock her in the pantry and she'd have to climb out a window. I think she was angry at the time, but I don't think she was basically angry. I think she liked it.

They did not treat my grandfather that way. I think they were very in awe of him. If there was ever anyone who wasn't, it was me. I was a pet.

Riess: What was your father's relationship to his father?

M. Goodin: I think he respected his father a great deal. Grandfather died so young. He was only sixty when he died. He died when I was a sophomore in high school [some calculating], so that would have been '32, just after my father was made president.

I just thought he was super, my grandfather. But I think for people on the outside he didn't have much time or interest. I think he was very shy and probably just sort of retreated from them. Very likely they thought he was dour, but really he was a lovely, lovely man.

He had a disappointing life. He was very much more than anything he did. He was a kind of a clerk at the Southern Pacific. He had wanted to go to medical school, and had started medical school. My grandfather was an oldest son and he didn't get along with his father very well. His father had eight children and was a stone mason and had a family business that he wanted my grandfather to go into. My grandfather had no interest in being a stone mason.

M. Goodin: So I think he actually left Scotland to avoid being swept into the thing. He came out here and he worked for the Southern Pacific.

Then after my father was born, when he was about three years old, they went to live in Scotland for two years because my grandfather's mother who was sympathetic to her son--he probably was her favorite son--told him that she had inherited a little money. She told him that she would pay for his medical education. He did, in fact, enter the University of Edinburgh Medical School. He went there one year and she died. There was no more money forthcoming and he had a wife and a child. The Southern Pacific said they'd take him back and they came back.

I actually have--I may have given it to Bob, but anyway I found it--the letter of acceptance to the University of Edinburgh Medical School.

Riess: So your father and uncle's achievements--.

M. Goodin: Would have been for my grandfather in a sense. And there may have been more pressure than I would realize because I wasn't on the ground. My grandmother, I think, was ambitious too, but not quite so intellectually ambitious. She was a person of strong religious principles, and she probably first wanted them to be good men, strong in the faith. After that, she certainly wanted them to be successful!

Riess: Your father's set of values and morals and religion and general things, do you think that came down through his father? Did he quote his father?

M. Goodin: No, not in that sense, though both Uncle Allan and my father left no doubt in our minds that grandfather was a strict man of extremely high principles and integrity. The things that my father told you about my grandfather were the fact that they had oatmeal every morning, and that it was steel-cut oatmeal, and that he got up at five o'clock to make it.

Riess: The grandfather did?

M. Goodin: Oh yes, nobody else made it properly. There were more stories about my great-grandfather than about my grandfather, who really was a very dour old gentleman. I don't remember my father quoting my grandfather. I feel badly. I feel I ought to remember something like this but I don't. I'd only be inventing it.

Riess: When you say that they were very disrespectful--

M. Goodin: Mischievous--

Riess: Was that all the way through the years in the President's House?

M. Goodin: Oh yes. They were always teasing her in some way. They were always trying to involve her in a situation where she was going to go to a show where there were naked women, or operate (with no prior instructions) a motor boat. I don't know that they ever did the first, but it was the kind of thing that they did. They wanted to get her unsuspectingly into unsuitable situations because she would react so strongly to the whole thing.

For a long time she didn't drink. She thoroughly disapproved of anybody else doing it. Then the doctor said it would be good for her. They made a great deal of it that now she was drinking, oh, something such as a glass of sherry before dinner, something mild. In any event they teased her all the time, continuously and throughout their lives. Uncle Allan perhaps less than my father, but I may say that because of course she lived with us, and I saw it more often in my father. My Uncle Allan visited regularly. Maybe he was on his best behavior when he came, who knows? But I think they both did it when they were growing up.

#### The Family at Dinner, at School, and Beyond

Riess: How about teasing Ida. Did she get teased in the same way?

M. Goodin: Oh yes.

Riess: How about you?

M. Goodin: Oh yes. Everybody got teased in varying degrees. You were supposed not to let it bother you. I don't know that it ever really bothered my mother, though she didn't always like it or find it amusing. It bothered me, and I think it probably bothered Bob. You'll have to ask Bob about that.

I think my father really was absolutely devoted to my mother, so fundamentally my mother was very secure. She wasn't always secure about people outside. I think she was a little insecure with the faculty when my father first became president. She was very conscious of the fact that she hadn't had a college education.

M. Goodin: She hadn't grown up in a fancy house with servants and all that kind of thing. She was suddenly thrown into this world. I think she was insecure about that. But she wasn't insecure about my father.

My father was taken with some people. He was taken with Clare Boothe Luce. I remember that. He was taken with some of the stars that they met in Hollywood. My mother would report this with a little bit of edge, I think. But not much. She never really saw any of these ladies as any kind of a threat.

Riess: That must have been quite wonderful to live with.

M. Goodin: It was. It was a very happy family. My father was a wonderful father. In the first place he made everything more exciting. Children like that. In the second place he was really concerned with us. Even after he got to be so terribly busy he almost always had time to listen to what must have been often idiotic things. Things that we were worried about, things like that. He was not remote in any sense at any point. He was sometimes gone for long periods. When they lived half the time in Los Angeles, he'd be gone for long periods. He traveled a great deal for various things. He was not physically there, or they were out, social things. But he would make time for any of the children. Certainly for me. He always made time, and he was very patient.

The only thing I did to prepare for you--I save things in such a haphazard way--I went through all the letters that I had saved, for whatever reason, and some of them I can't imagine why I saved, and I don't think I have all of them yet because I'm missing some things that I remember. What I got out of those letters was that some of the things that I was worried about were just so absurd that I would have said, "Go away! Ridiculous!" But he took them rather seriously, and discussed them. It was very nice.

Riess: Letters when he was away, or when you were in Peru or somewhere else?

M. Goodin: The letters start about 1937. This means that it's when I'm away. I'm not at home.

The first time I really went away for any length of time was between my junior and senior year in college. I went to Middlebury in the summer with another girl to the language school. I was exceedingly unhappy. I think I was very homesick. In any event,

M. Goodin: I was gone for about three months. I didn't know the girl terribly well, though she has turned out to be a friend of mine now. The school was difficult, and I was very homesick.

I have a series of five letters from him written in the space of a couple of weeks which treat very seriously with my--well, it seems to me now--just female complaints of no consequence whatsoever. I ought to have been dismissed out of hand.

Riess: How did he deal with them?

M. Goodin: He was very nice. He told me I could do whatever I wanted. I could come home if I didn't like it, he was very good about it. I thought I was going to fail all these courses, that was one of the things I thought. He said it didn't matter if I did, that he didn't have any expectations. (I don't think that was true, but it was kindly meant.)

I was always measuring up. Sometimes I say that there was no pressure in being the president's daughter at the university. In a sense that's true. The way that people put the question is: "Did you feel the professors were particularly hard on you? Did you feel they were particularly easy on you? Did you think you got special favors?" Okay. The answer to all those questions is, "No, I didn't. I didn't at all. I didn't think that they cared."

But in the sense that because I was my father's daughter and I wanted to do well for him, there was pressure on me. I didn't want to let him down. I didn't want anybody to say that he had a daughter who was not doing very well, who was getting by on her name. I was always very conscious of the fact that I must do at least as much as anybody else, and probably more. In that sense I think there was some pressure on me. I thought about that last night, too. I think it was pressure that I put on myself really. Although I think that my father always wanted us to succeed. He wanted us all to succeed, without any question.

Riess: I should think absolutely. Besides which, you were the first child and you've internalized more of that than any succeeding child.

M. Goodin: Probably. I think we all felt it. I don't think the boys escaped. I think that people react in different ways. I certainly didn't rebel. I wasn't rebellious. I think Bob was a little. He was going to live his life the way he wanted to live

M. Goodin: it. If it didn't turn out that he did terribly well, why that was too bad. He was out to have a good time, and he did, in college. That may have been partly a reaction too. I don't know.

Riess: So, it was your father you would write to at these moments?

M. Goodin: Oh no! In general I think I probably wrote to my mother and my mother told my father to write me. I think I'd have been much more likely to write to my mother. Absolutely. I would have felt then what I feel even more strongly now, that these were faintly ridiculous things to be complaining about. I did not wish to appear ridiculous to my father. I would most certainly have written to my mother. She would have decided that this important problem should be handled by her husband and she would turn it over to him.

Riess: Was this part of the big plan for you? The languages?

M. Goodin: Yes. I don't know that there was a really big plan. You mean that I was supposed to be the president of a university? That plan? Well, you know, if in fact my mother says my father didn't go out a whole lot in college, she'd have to say the same thing about me. I bet she didn't. I went out, but I was not the big popularity girl in college. I think my father felt that I might not get married.

I think that this whole university president bit was a second choice. I think he always hoped that I would get married, and certainly my mother did. But he thought that I might not. He thought that if I wasn't going to, I ought to have an interesting career. I ought not to be doing something mundane. I think he thought that I lacked confidence in myself, and I think he was probably right. I think he thought that I should be encouraged to do these things and equipped to do these things (languages were a part of this) so that when the time came I could take advantage of any opportunities. But I think it was a second choice.

Riess: When did you have discussions like that with him?

M. Goodin: I don't know that we had discussions like that.

Riess: How do you know this?

M. Goodin: How do I know anything? I know it by the way my nerve ends feel.

Riess: Does a person aim to be the president of a university? The thing is kind of funny, except insofar as one says, "I want my daughter to do just what I'm doing," or the other way around, "I want to do just what my father is doing."

M. Goodin: I think it was more that he thought he had the most fascinating job in the world, and he thought I was enough like him that it would be equally interesting to me. I didn't ever say anything about being a president, and I don't think I thought that. I really didn't take it seriously. If I thought anything about what I was going to do, I was going to teach. I was going to get a Ph.D. and I was going to teach. I never paid any attention to this business about my being the president of Mills College--and he even had picked out the college unbeknownst to them. I expect this was because he thought it would have to be a woman's college and that was a good one, close to home. I think it could have been any other woman's college, but my father would have liked us all to be here, so therefore that was a handy woman's college for me to be president of.

I was interested in my father's job. There is no question but that I was interested in it. He used to bring home masses of papers. He worked extraordinarily hard. I don't remember getting up for breakfast any morning that he wasn't already at his desk at home going through his papers.

Riess: He spent the mornings at home?

M. Goodin: He did this all before eight o'clock. I don't know what time he got up. Then he had breakfast and then he went to work. He didn't work at home except before breakfast and sometimes after dinner, but more before breakfast. All these masses of papers sat on that desk, and I used to read them. Now they must have been extraordinarily dull to anybody else, but I found them fascinating. I would sit and read through all these papers.

Riess: Recommendations, and budgets, and so on?

M. Goodin: Questions that had come up and all kinds of things, even personnel questions, which probably I shouldn't have ever read. I was a snoopy little girl.

In any event, sometimes I would say to my father, "I don't see why that's a big problem." He would be somewhat surprised that I had read about that, but I think that he got the idea that I wasn't disinterested in what you might call administration. I guess maybe I wasn't. What would I have read them for? They

M. Goodin: didn't contain secrets. I wasn't learning about people's lives or scandal or anything. Mostly they were just ordinary routine dull papers. But I didn't find them dull.

Riess: After a while then did he actually ask your opinion on anything?

M. Goodin: Sometimes. But it wasn't a big thing.

Riess: Was he playing with you?

M. Goodin: I think he was interested and curious but I don't think it had any particular effect on what he did.

Riess: How about testing the student body wind and opinion through his children?

M. Goodin: Well, yes, I think he did.

I think I may have worked on the Daily Cal as a freshman. I have sort of forgotten because it didn't last very long. In any event, I knew the Daily Cal editor and others on the paper. I think I wanted to distance myself a little bit from my father's views on politics and student affairs so I didn't seem to be defending the establishment. I would get from these people, such as Bill Murrish and Charlie Rosenthal--these names will mean nothing to you but they were somewhat radical students in those days--a viewpoint on something, on some question. Celeste Strack was one that that came up when I was in college. She actually went to UCLA. She was supposed to be a Communist. She came up and spoke up here.

As a family, we argued a whole lot. We argued at the table, and I think I represented a somewhat liberal point of view. I don't know that I really believed it. I think I fundamentally was on my father's side, but I felt morally bound to telling that this was the way that other people thought.

He would get quite angry about these kinds of things. He didn't argue passively, it was not a cool calm argument.

Riess: Was there satisfaction for you kids in these arguments?

M. Goodin: Well, they weren't hurtful. We were so used to them. We all argued, even, or perhaps especially, my grandmother. But not my mother. Once the thing was over, nobody was mad at anybody. In the midst of the argument the voices went up, and I think we were a little hot under the collar, and sometimes we thought that people weren't listening.

Riess: When do you think it started? How old were you? In other words, was he training you?

M. Goodin: All my friends commented on it. But no, I don't think it was conscious training. I think, maybe, because of his own relationship with his mother, that he permitted a great deal of freedom in the way we expressed ourselves to him. Because he treated her almost as a contemporary, we were allowed to treat him as almost a contemporary. I think it may have come more from that than from anything.

In any event, we were always allowed to say most everything. But we were not allowed to complain. We were not allowed to say if the car was too hot that it was too hot, or that we didn't like what we were having for dinner, or any of those things. We were not allowed to complain. Complaining was absolutely forbidden. We didn't have to like it, all we had to do was eat it.

Riess: Did the three children represent a unit? Was it three against Papa?

M. Goodin: No, we didn't represent a unit at all. Never. Bob and John were very close but not a unit, and I was much less close to Bob, and John was too young. There is a certain rivalry between me and Bob and always has been.

Riess: For what?

M. Goodin: It's hard for me to say. Maybe for my father's attention, I don't know. It may be temperamental. I don't know. John and I are now very close. Closer than Bob and I are still. There is a kind of wariness in the relationship I have with Bob. I admire many, many things about Bob. I think he is a first rate human being, and I think he has a marvelous sense of humor. But I protect myself from him a little. I am not unguarded ever.

Riess: Of course he's the one--and I'm sure I've said this to you--that not knowing your father, I've thought must be like your father.

M. Goodin: You've said that to me before. In a great many ways, I think you are right. He looks most like him, and his voice is uncannily like his. Where Bob is, it's more fun too. He has a marvelous ability to make a simple thing an event. He has a wonderful breadth of interests, and a marvelously quick wit. All these things are very like. But the two are not carbon copies.

Riess: Well, it sounds like some dinner table! But you have good memories of it.

M. Goodin: Oh yes! I have very good memories of my whole growing up. From start to finish. My mother didn't initiate things. My mother was a haven. She was where you went. That's the reason why I'm sure that I wrote her first about any troubles that I had, or anything that was worrying me. I would be most unlikely to tell my father. We were brought up knowing that my father was a very busy man, and he worked very hard, and he shouldn't be bothered with things. If my father was sleeping, we were all to be quiet. If my father was troubled, we were all to be cheerful. [laughter] Whereas we didn't have to be that way with my mother. If she was sleeping, we could wake her up.

Riess: So you did work around your father's moods then.

M. Goodin: Yes, we certainly did. He was not without moods either. I don't know if it's in my mother's oral history or not, but he was very concerned with not setting up a competition between the UCLA campus and the Berkeley campus. He was very concerned with doing all sorts of things to make it one university. One of the ideas he had was that we should go down--and we did one summer, and for I don't know how many Thanksgivings--and make friends with children of faculty down there.

Riess: Gosh, what an assignment!

M. Goodin: Well, he didn't say that, but that's what we were expected to do. I don't know that any of us were particularly good at it or that any of us made very many friends.

One time, when we came down for Thanksgiving, Bob had something else to do. He was the president of the Hi-Y, I think, and he had to make a speech somewhere. I'm not exactly sure what he had to do, but it was something that was important to him, and it was taking place over the Thanksgiving vacation, not on Thanksgiving Day itself. I was writing a term paper, and for some reason John didn't want, particularly, to stay down there. So, we went down for Thanksgiving, probably at my mother's behest. I think all of us were a little reluctant to go, even. The day after Thanksgiving we announced that we were going home. And we went. I tell you, my father didn't speak to my mother or to any of us for a very long time. He was furious. He was just wild about that.

He said that UCLA had a perfectly good library, and I could equally well write my term paper there. I don't know what he said about Bob, but in any event, he said there was no reason for me to go home. John, I think, just wasn't feeling very well,

M. Goodin: because my recollection of that is that he had the mumps and that I got the mumps from him driving home in the car. There were no excuses, and we had sort of spoiled his plan by going home. He was very, very angry.

Riess: He hung on to that mood for more than a day?

M. Goodin: He really did hang on to it for a long time. He couldn't be jollied out of it at all. I'm sure my mother tried; I'm sure all of us tried ultimately. He simply wouldn't speak to us. Oh, he'd speak to us if it was a matter of, "Please pass the salt," but he wouldn't discuss anything with us.

Riess: Was it so awful that you would have avoided like mad ever doing that again?

M. Goodin: No, no. However mad he was, we thought we were in the right, and we were stubborn. Anyway we knew it wasn't in him to stay mad forever. And Mom wasn't mad.

Riess: Did he have a kind of quiet voice when he talked to you?

M. Goodin: No. It was always that voice. Indeed, and in fact, to make himself heard he probably had to. We all have a variation of that voice. My voice carries very well, and certainly Bob's is very like my father's. It sounds more like his than mine does, or John's does.

All of us when we speak, or when we argue, raise our voices. None of us speak quietly. My mother didn't participate in these arguments either. I'm sure you understand that. They didn't distress her usually, although they may have sometimes.

Riess: And did your grandmother enter into it?

M. Goodin: Oh absolutely! My grandmother was right there fighting every moment. [laughter]

Riess: With a voice like that, you could address each other from any point in the house, just loudly.

M. Goodin: Well, this was not a genteel household. I have a feeling we probably bellowed at each other. But whether we could be heard all over the house, I'm not so sure. That was a very big house.

Riess: Your father could be heard apparently across the campus when he was making a speech on the steps of the house.

- M. Goodin: You know, I think that has to be apocryphal. They say he could be heard in the Greek Theatre without a microphone. I don't remember that, but then he would have been really projecting. And at the Greek Theatre where he had a straight shot at the audience, I think it's possible. He didn't converse in the house at quite that level.
- Riess: Going back earlier into your mother's oral history, she recalls the Riebers. You were out being pushed in your carriage by your father and Professor Rieber was shaking his fist about the stadium location.
- M. Goodin: I don't know much about that.
- Riess: Were you aware of fist-shakers at your father, or were you quite isolated from that.
- M. Goodin: I knew that radical students regarded my father very warily. They thought he was terribly conservative, but not the easy mark they considered most conservatives to be. I certainly knew that.
- Riess: Did you feel protective of him when you were in college?
- M. Goodin: Yes, very. If I presented their point of view at the dinner table and argued with my father, I never presented anything to them but my father's point of view. I certainly would not have said word one against him. I would have defended him. There is no question about that.

#### Faculty Influences and Advisors

- M. Goodin: I was very much aware, and my father and mother talked about this in front of us, of the fact that Walter Morris Hart had expected to be president, and that he was gravely disappointed by the fact that he wasn't. I notice in my mother's oral history that she says they were good friends before. Now this I don't remember, but this doesn't mean it wasn't so, because I wasn't aware of who was a friend of my mother and father in every instance. But certainly afterwards, I think that they were not good friends, though not, I think, enemies.

I took a course from Walter Morris Hart when I was in college. I was an English major. I took his course on the ballad. He was a very acerbic man and very hard on some students.

M. Goodin: I think my father was worried about that. A fist shaker he wasn't; Walter Morris Hart was a gentleman and a scholar. But that doesn't mean that he wasn't bitter or, at the very least, sorely disappointed. However, he liked me. I was a good student. He never was hard on me. He was very hard on other people in the class. He was a man who had the reputation of being caustic with his students. My father was pleased about that. I think he felt that there wasn't such an antagonism to himself as would be taken out on me.

Riess: That made a kind of peace.

M. Goodin: A little peace was made by that.

He almost told me not to take the course. He told me I might have great difficulty. It was a very well-known course and an excellent course. Professor Hart was an excellent teacher. I wanted to take it and I didn't think I would have any trouble. I always thought if I had any trouble I could batten down in my seat and weather it.

Riess: Well, that's interesting that there was that tightrope for your father to walk down all the time that Walter Morris Hart continued to teach there.

M. Goodin: I think that my father's appointment as president was a terrible shock to a lot of people on the faculty, not just Walter Morris Hart. He happened to be the one who thought he might be president; my father's credentials in an intellectual sense were not very impressive to the faculty. I feel very sure that there were many, many people who thought that my father was not the calibre of person that should be the president of the University of California. He was too young and had nothing but a bachelor's degree--in engineering at that!--and so forth.

Riess: Herman Phleger says, "I never met a person who disliked Bob Sproul." Is it possible that that's true, and yet people had a kind of reserved opinion about his ability to do this job?

M. Goodin: I don't think they disliked him. I think Herman Phleger's right. I think that people always liked him. Therefore when my mother says that the Walter Morris Harts were friends of theirs, that's probably true. It was simply that Walter Morris Hart thought that he was better qualified to be president. He was in line for the job. He was also a vice-president at that time. I don't think he disliked my father, I think he just was mad about the situation and disappointed.

Riess: Do you think they were waiting for him to trip up all of those years? Not towards the end, but at the first?

M. Goodin: Probably, some. Waiting for it sounds more malicious than I think it was. But they would not have been too surprised. I don't know enough about the process of choosing a president to know how much say the Academic Senate has. Their advice may have been asked. That I don't know about. So there might be some that would feel vindicated if they had advised against it. I don't know that they did advise against it.

I didn't have the feeling that the faculty in general opposed his being named president. My father became president when I was in high school. My friends didn't come from faculty families, so I wouldn't have been privy to any kind of sentiment in the faculty. Faculty children tended to go to University High School where I didn't go. Because we weren't academic people, I knew people on the faculty but their children were not in school with me and were not close friends. My close friends were the people I went to school with. I don't know that I would have known how the faculty felt, but I don't think they were waiting for him to slip up. Had he, they might have said it wasn't too surprising because he was over his head from the beginning. I don't think there was anything malicious. Even Walter Morris Hart I don't think was malicious. He simply was maybe angry with fate, and therefore he didn't feel very friendly toward my father any more.

Riess: How about Ralph Palmer Merritt? Did you know him?

M. Goodin: Yes. Yes, I did.

Riess: Do you think he was a tremendous influence on your father?

M. Goodin: My father liked him and thought he was very able.

No. I don't think he was a tremendous influence. He probably taught my father a lot because he was the president of the Raisin Growers Council, and as such had a great deal of political experience in Sacramento where my father represented the university.

Riess: And before your father, he was comptroller. It went from Merritt to your father.

M. Goodin: That I didn't remember.

Riess: And in Merritt's oral history it's as if your father was a protégé of Merritt's. Merritt suggests that he gave your father books to read, and that he educated him. He suggested that he work more on his classical and literary and general education.\*

M. Goodin: If it's so, Suzanne, I don't know it. I don't have any feeling of this. He was president of the Raisin Growers Council, and I think he was rather a political person, had political savvy-- and my father of course was the representative for the university in Sacramento. Whether that was when he was comptroller or not, I don't know, but he went up there and worked on the budget and was very successful at it. I think Merritt might have been helpful in that kind of thing because certainly that was something that my father didn't have a lot of experience with. He had a lot of talent for it though.

The fact that everybody liked him and the fact that he didn't come on as an intellectual was certainly a big plus in Sacramento. Here was someone representing the university who was the kind of human being they could relate to.

Riess: A lot of talent for the politics of it?

M. Goodin: Oh yes, I think so, and a lot of ability to persuade people that what he was doing was important: that the university was important, that it was vital to the state of California, and to the state of the economy in California, and all that. I think Corley was terrific too, who came after. But my father was the first really top-notch person they had up there. He did a terrific job for the university.

He liked Ralph Merritt a lot. But I am really surprised that Ralph Merritt says that he educated him. I suppose it's possible, but I certainly think my father would say that Monroe Deutsch did that if anybody. Monroe Deutsch had been his teacher in high school and was his friend all through his university career. He was an obvious scholar and an obvious intellectual. I think that if anybody had an effect that way, as some sort of a role model, on my father, it would have been he, and not Ralph Merritt, who I never thought was a tremendous scholar anyhow. That's not my impression of Ralph Merritt. I think once again, as

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\*Ralph P. Merritt, U.C. and Rice and Raisin Marketing, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1962, p. 212 passim.

- M. Goodin: with Charles McEnerney, he may have perceived the Merritts as living the "good" life and that was something my father wanted for himself and his family--and for which his own home would not have provided a guide. But his own family valued books and education much more highly than most.
- Riess: I think the idea was not that Merritt was a tremendous scholar but that Merritt had had some of the lacks in his education that your father had, and so he recongized some of the potential pitfalls. Merritt wanted your father to be president.
- M. Goodin: Does it come over that he was the one that wanted him? Because in the family mythology, the one who wanted it was Guy Earl. Guy C. Earl was on the Board of Regents. He was very impressed with my father. It has always been believed--in our family, at any event, it's not something I could prove, I was a child at the time almost--that it was Guy C. Earl that did it. He persuaded the Board of Regents.
- Riess: Monroe Deutsch was your father's provost, and had been his teacher?
- M. Goodin: Deutsch was his teacher in high school. Deutsch taught Latin and Greek at Mission High School when my father was there. I don't believe my father ever took anything from him in college, if in fact Deutsch ever taught at the university. I don't know that. I guess he did.
- Riess: But the division of duty somehow worked well and Deutsch was content with what he was doing for your father?
- M. Goodin: Yes, I believe he was, and I don't believe he had any further ambition. He was a very nice person, an exceptionally nice person. He had a wife with an acid tongue, I'm sure everybody will tell you this, with whom my mother, because she was a very agreeable, thoughtful person, got along very well. Most people had difficulty getting along with Alice Deutsch.

Monroe Deutsch was gentle and thoughtful. He wrote very well. I think my father had native ability to write. His education was classical in high school. He had a good background in Latin and Greek. His father was an enormous reader--I think all his life he read. I think civil engineering in those days was a discipline that didn't include the liberal arts at all. It was a rigorous discipline and it was a particularly rigorous discipline for my father because I don't think he had any native talent for what he was doing. He did very creditably, but he

M. Goodin: worked very hard to do very creditably. I think he belonged to the engineering honors society, although it is difficult for me to be sure about this because lots of them took him in as honorary member afterwards.

I think he didn't have time for a lot of liberal arts courses in college. But he was all his life a reader, in spite of all the papers he had to go through, and I feel sure this was true in his college years as well.

#### Family Attachments, Love and Games

Riess: Did he give you children reading assignments and memorizing assignments and things like that? Were you ever asked to recite or perform at home?

M. Goodin: No, we weren't asked to perform or only in the annual play for the Sproul/Donald/Griffith Christmas Eve party. We were encouraged to read, and we were encouraged to memorize. My father could recite reams of poetry from memory--so could my mother.

One of the letters that I was re-reading last night was from Echo Lake, and it says please to bring up the second volume of Sandburg's Lincoln because John had finished the first one, and had earned six dollars and fifty cents for having read it, and he would now like to get started on the second volume. I now remember that this sort of thing went on, with me also. It probably went on with Bob too. Although I don't know why John, because John was a reader. Bob was really not as a school boy--he is now. But anyhow, they were encouraged to read, and maybe I was too. I don't remember.

We were given monetary rewards. We were given monetary rewards for good grades too. The practice is greatly frowned on, by many people, but we were paid--a dollar for an A, nothing for a B and we had to pay a dollar if we got a C. And heaven knows we weren't even allowed Es and Fs.

Riess: Did your father have a photographic memory, or just a hard working memory?

M. Goodin: He had an excellent memory. Photographic, that means you see a page? No, I don't think so. I'm not sure. He had a very, very good memory. A memory for people and names, it's legendary, everybody talks about it. But also a memory for reams of poetry, and for his speeches. They were always given from memory.

He had a very considerable talent for--not writing real poetry--writing amusing verse. He was good at writing parodies of poems. I wish I could remember these, because these I've heard a thousand times and they're very good. My mother did remember some of them. The fact that we didn't write them down-- is very much too bad.

Riess: When and why would he have done that?

M. Goodin: He did it all through his youth, and a lot of them were left over from that. He wrote wonderful cards at Christmas, and sometimes they were in verse, to everybody. My mother actually bought all the presents, of course. He wrote the cards and the cards were wonderful. [interruption for telephone]

Riess: Your mother bought the presents?

M. Goodin: Oh yes, she always bought the presents.

Riess: You know, there are tales about the office parties he gave, and his thoughtfulness to all the staff. But there are limits to how much one can do.

M. Goodin: Well, my mother--don't ever tell Miss Robb--certainly bought Miss Robb's present. Miss Robb may have thought my father did, but he didn't. He would have written the card, and the card would have been very much more important probably than the present to the people. That would have expressed something that had directly to do with them. Those cards were terrific.

[speaking of shopping for gifts] I know that when I was in college he would at times spend hours shopping for presents for me. When I was in Lima, at the embassy, my mother had written me and asked me what I would like for Christmas, and I said thus and so, certain kinds of dresses. One of the letters I read last night said he had spent a whole afternoon looking for this kind of a dress in New York. He was in New York, and it didn't seem to be something that was being worn in New York. [laughter]

M. Goodin: But the fact that he spent a whole afternoon trudging around New York, which was not really something I think he enjoyed doing! Mostly, when he bought things for me he would see them in the window and think they were pretty and buy them, or he would see them in a magazine and send away.

Riess: Oh, how wonderful!

M. Goodin: They were often dresses that were much more glamorous than I was. But it was really nice. One letter also has a yellowed old clipping and a picture of Deanna Durbin in a dress which he thinks is the same as a dress that he bought for me. It's a very similar dress, but it's not exactly the same. He says he guesses his taste is pretty good.

Riess: That's such a nice story.

It sounds like he really enjoyed those trips away to New York. What a pleasure it must have been for him to get away from the campus in that way!

M. Goodin: I have a sense of that when they go to Echo Lake. The Echo Lake letters give you a real feeling that it was a hard life in some ways, and that it was wonderful to be up there with just very old friends and my mother and whatever children, all children if possible. We were never excluded from going because they needed peace and quiet. Nor were we excluded from bringing people. That was always permitted.

When he went East, he was working, but he had many old friends in the East, and he loved the theater so he did also enjoy it.

Riess: Rockefeller Foundation?

M. Goodin: Rockefeller Foundation, Carnegie Foundation, and he was some kind of consultant for the government all during the war on I don't know what. When he went East, sometimes he and my mother, if she went with him, would take a week or two off and go through New England or something like that.

There was a group of old friends, which I'm sure you've heard about, the Disputers--I'm not sure that they were always called that--but Henry Breck, and Turk Mills, and Don McLaughlin, and John Simpson, Uncle Allan, and all those people, I could pull out more names maybe if I had to--the man that hired me for the State Department, from the oil company Aramco, Max Thornburg. Anyway, they always had lunch together when he was in New York.

M. Goodin: They talked about politics and international affairs and a lot of things. They had a whole book of bets going on between them about what was going to happen in the world. Clare Torrey is another one who was an old, old friend, a boyhood friend of my father's.

He loved those lunches. Eventually they were almost all out here. They met at the Pacific Union Club. After my father's memory started to go and he still went but he really couldn't participate, that was terrible. That was really one of the biggest blows.

My Uncle Allan was of course part of this too.

Riess: Tell about Bob and Allan. Was Allan an advisor to Bob?

M. Goodin: I don't think they advised each other, but they were wonderful companions. They enjoyed each other when they were young--of course, that's only hearsay because I didn't know them when they were young--and certainly they thoroughly enjoyed each other when they were grown. They were very close, but I don't believe that they discussed problems, at least not problems relating to their jobs.

Riess: It seems to me that Allan would have a certain kind of expertise and a worldly view that maybe could be helpful.

M. Goodin: I think this came across to a certain extent in conversation. But, if you mean that he advised my father in financial matters, I think if anyone advised my father in financial matters it was Miss Robb. I think she was very canny financially.

I think my father really was not interested in money, or making money. I think he was interested in living a good life. He liked good food and he liked wine, he liked travel, and he liked having a nice house. To a certain extent you can't say he was disinterested, because these things require money. But I don't think that he was ever tempted by those bank jobs, which would have given him a great deal more money. I think that was not a consideration really. He had enough money to do what he wanted to do and to travel some. It wasn't a great deal even. Goodness knows, my youngest child has traveled more than my father did in his whole life.

Riess: His trip to Moscow--.

M. Goodin: It was very exciting and a real change of pace and a glimpse at another world. He enjoyed it thoroughly.

My parents had been to Europe before that. I don't mean they hadn't. But not as often as lots of people go nowadays. As for investments, I think he bought stocks on whim; if Miss Robb said it was a good buy, or maybe if my Uncle Allan said it was good buy at some point, then he'd buy it. Then he'd do nothing about it at all. He never even looked at the stock market pages in the newspaper. He was over in that area, but he was reading sports scores. (He was genuinely interested in athletics, too, that was not policy.)

Riess: Were you all genuinely interested? I know that you put in an appearance at all the games.

M. Goodin: I think we were interested. We still all go. I think we were all interested to a greater and lesser degree. I didn't like football so much; I liked the crowd, the occasion but not the game. But I loved baseball, and I loved basketball. We all went, and my mother went, everybody went, even my grandmother sometimes.

My mother didn't understand football very well. I'm not sure my father did. I'm not sure he was the sort of person who watched the line and knew what was going to happen or where the play was going to go. I don't believe it, but maybe he did. He never played football.

He loved the track meets. Of course that's what he'd done in college. He did particularly enjoy that. He liked most everything. He was a man of very catholic tastes.

Riess: In these interviews I've asked people who they think were your father's advisors and very closest friends, and I haven't asked you that directly, which I am doing now.

M. Goodin: Monroe Deutsch certainly was. There is no question about that. Dixon Wecter, perhaps--he thought very highly of him.

Riess: Among the regents, who would you say he was closest to?

M. Goodin: McEnerney, Garret McEnerney and James K. Moffitt. And I suppose, you'd have to say Jack Neylan. Of course, in the end it ended badly and he certain didn't take his advice in the end. They were great friends in the beginning.

M. Goodin: I don't know how much advice he took because it's hard for me to see that. I almost think that he must have relied on a lot of people that I don't know about--experts in a wide variety of areas. I think I thought that he just knew how to do all these things. He seemed much larger than life to me in some ways. The idea that he needed advice is somehow an extraordinary idea.

Riess: He comes across in a lot of people's recollections as someone who did just know how to do these things. A problem would be presented to him. He would take it under advisement--.

M. Goodin: He listened to everybody. He read all those position papers. That I know because they were there, and I read them too. But in the end I think he just decided what needed to be done.

I'm sure there had to be people whose opinions he valued more than others, but I'm not sure who they are.

Riess: So what would be a typical working day? He was doing paper work in his office before breakfast?

M. Goodin: He came home and ate dinner with us. We always ate dinner together unless my mother and father were going out. They went out quite a lot, or had parties; we didn't eat with them then. We ate dinner together as a family so I think he came home at six o'clock. We ate dinner at half past six. After dinner, if it was a school night we had homework. My mother, who didn't have a secretary for years, had her work at her desk. And I think my father worked again.

We did play games, but at Echo Lake or on Sundays. My father liked to play games. He invented games. He invented a game that was very like Monopoly. Isn't it too bad that he hadn't patented it! We played that.

Riess: With little cards and everything?

M. Goodin: Property and the whole bit. But this was a home made game. We also played a baseball game that he invented. You used to get baseball cards in candy. We played that at Echo Lake. We played it to determine who had to do the dishes. Somehow there were two losers. I don't know how there were two losers. We each had a team. My mother's was the Oaks. I think mine was the Boston Red Sox, but I'm not sure. I forget who had what other teams. It worked with dice and these baseball cards. We moved them around and we had scores. The two losers had to do the dishes. I remember that my cousin who was staying with us, who

M. Goodin: was Bob's age, Ted, who was killed in the war, spent a week with us, and he lost every day. He went home and said he was never going to play the game again, and that we had it rigged so the guests had to do the dishes.

Categories was another game that he loved. You have five categories of things, generally around some sort of a theme, a sports theme or something else. Then you have a key word and you have to think of something connected to the theme that begins with that letter. He didn't invent that game, but we played that all the time. We played Hearts all the time. My mother liked games, too.

We didn't do that on school nights. We did things like that on Sunday nights. He had tremendously high spirits. We played Sardines all the time too. You know, where you hide somewhere--preferably small--and as each person finds you, he has to hide with you. He just loved that kind of thing. In the same way his mother was, he was in a sense a kind of contemporary. He participated in children's things on that level.

It was an exciting family to live in. I don't think that anyone was prevented from being themselves. I think the discipline was quite strict, and I think we were held to very high standards. We never drank till Prohibition was off, and that kind of thing.

Riess: Is that because the public eye was on you?

M. Goodin: No, that was true before we were in the public eye. Other people had gin, or rye, or I don't know what they had because we didn't have it. No, it was because it was against the law. My father thought it was a terribly dumb law, but it was against the law, and therefore we weren't going to do it.

After we moved to the President's House, I know, and I may then have been explicitly told, that I had to behave myself better than other people because I was going to be looked at more. In those days people spiked the punch at the Palace Hotel and all that kind of thing, and I wasn't supposed to get involved in things like that.

Riess: Were you sent to Dominican so that you would be spared that?

M. Goodin: I was sent to Dominican to make a lady out of me. I wasn't sent to Dominican first. I was sent to Ransom's first. I was sent to Ransom's in part because it was a very good school, in part because my mother thought, and I think my father thought too, I

M. Goodin: was a very rough diamond, something of a tom-boy. I needed to be taught manners and to be more genteel, and more feminine perhaps. It had to be a good school because my father thought that I had done well in school and that I should be at a challenging school. The three that they considered were Ransom's and the Bishop's School in San Diego and the Dominican Convent.

They sent me first to Ransom's and I think I would have stayed there except the school failed in the depression. Then they had another choice. They chose, actually, the Bishop's School. The school sent out a list of uniforms, and I looked at the list of uniforms and I said I didn't want to be changing my clothes all day long. I didn't want to go to that school.

Riess: Oh, but that's away from home.

M. Goodin: It was a long way.

Riess: They must have guessed, if you were later homesick that summer at Middlebury that--.

M. Goodin: No, Middlebury came later--when I was in college. I think it was somewhat of a shock to me. I remember only one other case when I was homesick. I think perhaps I wasn't that much away from home. I think that must have been it. I didn't realize that I would be homesick.

The Dominican Convent I loved. I really enjoyed it. I wasn't a bit homesick over there. Of course it wasn't very far away. But we didn't come home on weekends when I was there. We went for something like six weeks and then we got to come home for a long weekend. We went to school on Saturdays, but not on Wednesdays. They figured that out so we wouldn't all want to go home on the weekends.

We went to school on Saturdays, but we didn't go to school on Sunday. I think I remember on most nice Sundays everybody in the family came over and we went on a picnic. It probably wasn't that often. The chances are it wasn't that often. That's my recollection, so it must have been pretty often.

Riess: In your mother's oral history she recalled John's essay about his father's job, and that one of the worst things about it, he said, was having to please everybody. There were too many people for a president to please. Is that just John's interpretation?

M. Goodin: No. I think probably that was even overtly stated, Suzanne, that part of this job was getting along with these people. I can conceive of that actually having been said. I don't think my father minded it. That's all. I think John would have minded it. But I think my father naturally liked pleasing people and did it rather easily, and without really compromising his own position. I don't think it was anything that came hard to him. I think he had an enormous facility with people, I really do, with all kinds of people. This therefore wasn't a particular strain.

Partly it was his catholicity of interest. If he could be equally interested in how a plumber went about his job as in how somebody wrote a thesis, then he was obviously going to get along with plumbers and graduate students both pretty well. So I don't think that that was a part of my father's job that was hard for my father, but I think it might have been hard for John. John might have perceived it as a difficult thing to do.

Riess: That's a nice point, and I guess I'm just viewing it as one of the more difficult aspects.

M. Goodin: In the beginning I don't even think that travel was hard. My father, in addition to other things, had really enormous energy. For most of his life he had enough energy for fourteen people. It was a very challenging thing for everybody to keep up with him. He didn't tire, and his health was in general excellent. I think he did miss the family when he was away. One of the things in the letters that I read last night, that I felt badly about: they almost all begin, "I'm sorry that I haven't written in a long time, I have been very busy, and as you never write to me I feel pretty good about it, because mostly I'd have to feel guilty about it, but I don't have to feel guilty because you never write to me." [laughter]

I think he wanted very much to keep in touch with us all the time. I think that my mother did keep him more or less in touch. I think he did feel that that was a sacrifice that he made, that he wasn't as close, and didn't do as many things with us as he would have liked to have done.

Riess: You're referring to the letters that you received from him. Then there's this box of letters. [letters from R.G.S. to Ida, dating back to 1914]

nite. I was feeling sort of low  
 when I set out from Berkeley on  
 Sunday, with only Mammi and  
 Molly to bid me good-bye, and  
 your thoughtful news changed the  
 whole dreary outlook. Somehow,  
 when I had established myself in  
 my bedroom on the Streamliner,  
 after no cocktails whatever (oh  
 my gin & bitters before my departure  
 from the House), and was  
 looking for my pajamas, the  
 discovery of your bon voyage  
 gift made me very happy. In a  
 world of false friends and real  
 trouble, I felt that I felt that



September 9, 1943

Dear Ida: This being Admission  
 Day, I may fairly begin a letter  
 with an admission, namely, that I  
 think you are not only a good woman  
 but a dear woman. I am moved to  
 this admission discreetly and pre-  
 fully by a small but not insignif-  
 icant act on your part: the  
 inclusion in my luggage for this  
 hurried trip of a box of ballet

3.  
I had something genuine to tie  
to, someone genuine who was con-  
cerned about my happiness. And  
so I started off on the journey,  
thanks to you, full of confidence.

Because you were so good, I  
feel doubly certain that I, in  
characteristic fashion, failed to  
remember our anniversary with  
my appropriate gift, even though  
I thought of it with full heart when  
the day came, and valued the occasion  
of which it reminded me so early  
the most fortunate of my life. Being  
doubly concerned with American birth  
and blood ancestry, I fail about  
invariably to demonstrate by being

92b  
works the sturdy faith that is in me,  
as far as you are concerned, but the  
faith I have in there, nevertheless, I.  
I can only hope that you sense them,  
forgetful I masticulate though I may  
be in their expression. You are early  
the best that life has given me, and  
our children the second best. So I  
salute you on our twenty-seventh  
anniversary, three days late, but  
the more vigorously I am sorry for  
the delay. You're more wonderful than  
you were the day I married you, and  
no praise could be higher than that.

I saw Marion East next night I will  
be seeing her in a few days, en route to  
Pam. She is looking well, in spite of her  
proposal of marriage in the last two  
weeks. What a woman! Love  
Koda

M. Goodin: There's this box of letters, and I don't know whether this will be useful to you. I would almost rather you read them than I tell you what I think having read them. Or at least I'd rather you read them first, because I'm going to filter them through a viewpoint that they ought not to be filtered through. They mostly pre-date my conscious recollection of my father. It seems to me that if they tell you anything about my father it ought to be what they tell you and not what I think as a result of having read them.

Riess: Presuming I'd read them and come back and asked, "Is that your father?"

M. Goodin: Is that my father? I would probably have to tell you, "In some instances, I'm surprised." He wasn't physically a demonstrative sort of person towards my mother. He was very complimentary to her at all times.

Riess: About how she looked and what she had done?

M. Goodin: No, no, no. That the best thing he ever did was to marry her. That she had contributed enormously to his life. This kind of thing. She was an extraordinarily pretty girl. There is just no question in my mind about that. Strangers on ferry boats even asked if they might call. Which must have been very unusual in those days. The pictures of her as a young girl are very, very pretty. Very vivacious and lively and so forth. I think he was very aware of that. But I don't think he said so. And physically, as I say, I don't think he was very demonstrative. They did not hold hands until the very end. I don't recollect any of this. I don't recollect any great demonstrations of affection, but I think unquestionably it was there.

Riess: Well, I look forward to reading the letters.

M. Goodin: It's quite an assignment. I just think that they'll sometimes reveal something. You can read the ones he wrote me too, if you want to. With very few exceptions, I can tell you what they say better. When I read them I can remember what occasioned them and how I felt, and this sort of thing. Whereas the comments I make on these are wrong. It's getting a third person in between. The letters to me I'm party to, so it's okay for me to say something about those. But if you want to you can.

M. Goodin: There's such a short time span though. I know there are some other letters. Another thing that he did was that when I was a little girl, he would write letters to me in which he made sketches of words. I can remember a whole series of letters from Alaska that had little pictures in the text. I can't find them.

Riess: You mean like a rebus?

M. Goodin: Yes, sort of. This was also making a game out of a letter. And maybe I didn't read so very well in those days. I don't know. I forget when they went to Alaska. I just remember particularly I got this kind of letter from Alaska. I was certain for years that I knew where the letters were. But I couldn't find them. Maybe they'll turn up.

Riess: I'd like to have a picture of you with your father.

M. Goodin: There's the one where I graduated from college. In those days they put a hood on one senior, a symbolic senior. For obvious reasons they chose me. I have a picture that was taken there, with my father in a cap and gown and me with the cap and gown and a hood.

Riess: Wonderful. That seems like a very sentimental moment.

M. Goodin: Well, it was.

I disappointed my father in a lot of ways. I was always refusing to do things. I was not very brave. I was actually asked to try out for commencement speaker. I wouldn't do it. He was very disappointed in that. And then when I worked for IBM, and they wanted to give me a big promotion, and I wouldn't take it, he thought that was awful. I didn't take it because I would have had to live in Endicott, New York, and I didn't want to live in Endicott, New York. [laughter]

Riess: I can't believe he would have encouraged you to live in Endicott, New York.

M. Goodin: He thought you shouldn't keep turning down promotions. I really didn't like to be in the public eye. I wanted to sort of be anonymous somewhere.

Riess: You lived right up the street from you parents. Did that happen later in your life?

M. Goodin: It was when Rob was in high school, so it wasn't very early in life. I wanted to live in Berkeley. I certainly wanted to live in Berkeley. I didn't want to distance myself from my family. In fact, perhaps I was overly dependent on my family. I thought that that was where the action was. I didn't have to provide any excitement. The excitement was there. Why should I go somewhere where it wouldn't be half so exciting, or where I would have to make the excitement. I might not generate so much as my mother and father did.

Riess: And you didn't feel that you had to run away to be individual?

M. Goodin: I never felt that I wasn't an individual. But the reason I understand about John, who said that you had to please everybody and be in the public eye, is because I think that both John and I would just as soon not be. John at present has a job where he is in the public eye. I think to the extent that he can, he stays out of it. I don't think he enjoys it. I think Bob would enjoy it, and I think my father enjoyed it. But my mother would not have.

Riess: She's pretty sure about that.

M. Goodin: It all sort of fits in. I bought this house here because I liked the house. I didn't start out to buy a house next to my parents. But I never minded. And actually towards the ends of their lives it was very convenient. I could easily be available and helpful without straining myself or my family. It was very easy to drop by all the time. If they had lived a long way away it would have been much more difficult. I probably would still have done it, but it would have been more of a strain, and I might have resented it more, and I might have felt it was taking me from other things. This way I didn't.

Riess: I think it's nice. I also think that there is not that need in Berkeley to go to the other end of the earth to find a good life. It's hard to leave this town.

M. Goodin: I didn't want to leave, ever. I didn't want to be in Endicott. I didn't mind going away for a time, if I knew I was coming back. I went a year to school in France, and I went to Peru for two years, and I enjoyed that. But I never intended to stay at either place.

Staff, Successors, and Success

Riess: Agnes Robb was such an important part of your father's life. Could we talk about how she fit into the family? I know that I have heard her refer to your father as "Papa."

M. Goodin: Yes, Miss Robb now refers to my father as "Papa," as my mother also did at the end, but I am sure that at no time did she call him that to his face, nor anything but "Mr. Sproul." I gather from your question that this seems to you to imply a degree of intimacy with the family that I don't think existed until quite recently. For one thing, "Papa" is not what the family called him. We children called him "Pa," or "Dad." My mother, for most of her life, called him "Gordon" as his own family did always.

After both Miss Robb and my father retired, the relationship changed gradually and now Miss Robb is very much more a part of the family. She was very helpful to my mother through my father's and my mother's illnesses, and we all feel closer to her. I want to remember to call her Agnes, but old habits die hard. My brother Bob always does; he is probably closer to her than any of the rest of us--and he is her lawyer.

Riess: Well, really, your connection with her was a business connection, and even though a man may call his staff his "family," it isn't taken literally.

M. Goodin: We all knew that Miss Robb was indispensable to my father, and we all liked her and were grateful to her for her dedicated service to him and to the university, not to mention all the favors she did us personally. It was a very friendly relationship, just not close.

Now I find it almost unbelievable that I cannot remember her being invited to dinners with the family, or, for instance, do not find her name on the list of invitations to my wedding--although she was invited to my daughter Sally's wedding--but one thing I'm sure about, and that is that it wasn't any sort of snobbishness. My mother and father were untainted with that. So, really, I have to conclude that that relationship reflected the distance typical of business connections in that period. Now I find it odd, and now I truly appreciate having Agnes as a good friend of the family, Sprouls and Goodins.

Riess: I'd like to ask about other staff that your father had, people like Bob Johnson and George Pettitt.

M. Goodin: And Grace Bird and all those people. Remson Bird was perhaps some influence on my father. He admired Remson Bird and he admired Grace Bird, and Grace Bird did work for him at some time. What exactly she did, I'm not sure.

But there were the Carleton girls, Marjorie Carleton, and all those people who worked in the office in very minor capacities, I think. Perhaps I'm not doing them justice. In any event, I think the staff was extraordinarily loyal to him. I think, like the family, they thought life was more fun when he was around. I think this was not something that just his family was conscious of. Everything was more interesting and more exciting. He was exacting in some ways, I'm sure. That he lost his temper sometimes I wouldn't be at all surprised.

Riess: Do you think they could argue with him the way that his family was permitted to argue with him?

M. Goodin: No. I would be very surprised. With the possible exception of Miss Robb. George Pettitt worked on the speeches and my father found him very helpful.

Riess: Will you say something about the transition to the chancellor system, and your father and Clark Kerr, and Kerr's presidency?

M. Goodin: My father chose Clark Kerr as chancellor. I think Kerr was probably also his choice for the presidency.

Riess: It was a tough transition?

M. Goodin: I don't think that was tough, but I think what was difficult was the way Clark Kerr reacted when he got the job.

I think everybody in the family would say more or less the same thing. Somehow Clark Kerr felt that my father was such a large looming presence, that he had to diminish him in some way. He had to get out from underneath that shadow and be his own man. The Kerrs did little things that I think offended my mother and father.

You know, honestly Suzanne, I almost hate to say this, because things get dim in my mind. They're not things that I place particular importance on. I think my mother was hurt by them, probably not importantly. They felt they were slighted in small ways. A senior reception thing that I remember, and I am not entirely certain that I am remembering it entirely accurately, was that there was to be a receiving line, early in Kerr's tenure,

M. Goodin: and Clark Kerr asked my mother and father not to stand in the receiving line so that there would be just Kay and himself. Or, when Kennedy came, my father wasn't asked to sit on the platform in the stadium. This kind of thing. Okay, it sounds so petty.

No advice was ever asked, ever, either by Kay or Clark as far as I know: of my mother, for instance about how she did Charter Day, or of my father about anything at all. It would have been tactful to ask even if the advice was ignored.  
[telephone interruption]

I don't know Kerr at all well, but he seems very unlike my father in personality. He's more reserved. He's more intellectual. The fact that the transition occurred at the loyalty oath time certainly had to create some sort of feeling. That period was very hard on my father. If you talk about fist shaking, I think this was the only time that my father felt not completely supported, by all parts of the university, by faculty, by students, by regents, by everything else.

He had always felt before that there would be minor differences, there would be disagreements, but there was a fundamental level of support for him. I think at the time of the loyalty oath he questioned it. It shook him. He felt he had acted, as always, to serve the university best--to protect it. Whether it was in the best interests of the university, or not in the best interest of the university--I'm not any expert on this but I think now it was a mistake--twenty-twenty hindsight. Certainly he felt he was not supported by all his constituency any more, and maybe he himself thought it had been a mistake--though he never said so. Clark Kerr was of course associated with the more dissident faculty, the faculty that was opposed to the loyalty oath, and was their hero, to a certain extent. That was a bit hard for my father to take because one thing he was sure about was that no one loved the university--this university--more than he did. Maybe they loved academic freedom or some abstract principle more, but not this place and its tradition.

My mother may have told you this story too. It's a story I've always liked. Professor Tolman was very, very prominent among the faculty that wouldn't sign the oath. He probably felt my father had made a big mistake, certainly felt that way. I remember that Mrs. Tolman met my mother downtown one day and she said, "There is just one thing that I want you to know, Ida, and that is, that although we're on opposite sides of this, we like you both very much." I think in a sense that was probably true, even among the people who felt my father had made a mistake.

M. Goodin: There was not very good feeling between my father and Clark Kerr in the end. He certainly chose him as chancellor, and I think he may have been influential in selecting him as president. I think he had great respect for Clark Kerr's ability. I think that what happened was that for whatever reason, whether it was really true that Clark Kerr felt he had to push my father aside in order to establish a position for himself, my father felt he was being pushed aside. After twenty-seven or twenty-eight, all those years, whatever it was, the university was his whole life. To push him out of that was to make him useless. So there were difficult feelings.

My mother of course resented the fact that they did over the house. That was so absurd. But anyhow she did. I think she somewhat resented that she was never asked about anything too. Although she would be less likely to resent it for herself. She resented every slight to my father bitterly.

Riess: All through the years that you lived at the President's House he walked across campus to Sproul Hall where his office was. During the loyalty oath years when he would walk across campus it must have been kind of agonizing.

M. Goodin: I don't really know. I don't think that that was agonizing. I wasn't in college then. I can't remember how students felt about this, but I'm not so sure that most students supported the faculty members who wouldn't sign the oath. Fifties students were not sixties students. The contacts that he made between the house and his office were student contacts, more than faculty contacts, and therefore that was as friendly as it had ever been. That's all. I think it must have been agonizing at meetings of the Academic Senate and regents meetings, because the regents were on the other side quite as angry with him as the faculty. The regents would have been more oppressive than my father was. He got it from both ends.

Riess: Yet no one has ever been as good a president as your father. I think that's what one concludes from all this.

M. Goodin: He was sort of the right man at the right time. The kind of a university it is now, perhaps he wouldn't have been so good a president. I don't know if it is possible anymore to maintain the kind of personal contacts that my father maintained with students, with faculty. It's just gotten bigger, and more bureaucratic, and more computerized, it's such a big operation now. It seems absurd to say we started small but it felt small.

M. Goodin: The university to us was almost an extended family. When you start small for a long time that carries over, I think. Whereas nowadays all these administrative people come from somewhere else. They come from running big things, other big things, and they don't have all the background of Berkeley in their blood.

We grew up in this city. My father had gone here to college. Our friends were here. It was a base to us in a way that I don't think it's been a base to anyone who's followed, and maybe not to anyone who preceded. The only other one would be Wheeler. They had only one child, and they didn't come from here. They came from back East. But certainly he was a very popular president too, and very much in touch with the students. But he was here a long time and the university really was small then.

Riess: Did the job get harder over the years for your father? I know that the loyalty oath certainly made it miserably hard at that time, but as it expanded?

M. Goodin: Oh yes. It got harder as he had diminishing energy.

Riess: Before the loyalty oath, as the university became bigger, it only made your father's job bigger instead of your father figuring out how somebody else could help him do the job.

M. Goodin: Maybe he wasn't very good at that.

Riess: Did he ever talk about that?

M. Goodin: No. Maybe he wasn't very good at delegating things. It seems to me he must have delegated a lot of things. He certainly did do a great many things himself that probably nowadays people don't. Perhaps that was the way he worked. But I think he did get tired at the end.

I think perhaps, even the loyalty oath thing, when he was younger, ten years before, I think he would have sensed better how the faculty might react. I think it came about partly from overwork and overextension, and not being so well in tune with the faculty as he had been before.

I think he felt what he was doing was absolutely proper. I think he thought he was protecting the university from a very-- I've forgotten the name of the committee, a committee that wanted to sweep with a wide scythe, knock a lot of heads off. I think he felt that by saying that he didn't think there were all that many Communists on the faculty and that he felt that they would

M. Goodin: be perfectly willing to sign a statement to that effect, that he really did think he was protecting the university. He thought he was keeping somewhat dubious people, who were not really Communist, but might be suspected of it, protecting their jobs.

He misjudged it absolutely. At least he misjudged it for a certain very vocal part of the faculty. I think he wouldn't have misjudged it ten years earlier. I think if he had not been tired, and if he had not been overextended, that he would have sensed better; he would have talked to more people; he would have gotten a feeling about it. What he would have done differently, I don't know. I'm not able to judge whether this committee would have been able to start firing people. That's what they wanted to do. And maybe they would have. That would have been very bad for the university.

So he still might have done the same thing, but at least he would have known what he was walking into. I think he didn't. I think it came as a shock. I think that he thought that they would recognize that he was acting in the university's best interest.

Riess: That's your father at his most paternalistic. But there is the line about the presidency being a lonely job.

M. Goodin: I don't think he would have thought that. I see that when I say I don't think he had a whole lot of people he relied on for advice, I'm saying that he made his decisions on his own. In the case of the loyalty oath, he most certainly was heavily influenced by Corley. That is one place where I really think he did take advice, but he certainly made the decision.

Corley felt very strongly that the legislature would take very punitive action if this didn't go through. My father came to believe that Corley might have been mistaken. But he never ever said so publicly, and he wouldn't want it said. I know he wouldn't. Corley was his friend, and Corley had given him the best advice that he was capable of giving him. He was an able man. My father took the advice. He was not about to say that anybody else was to blame for anything.

Riess: But he never did, ever, did he?

M. Goodin: He never did.

M. Goodin: He had a very generous spirit really, in many ways. I remember I complained to him once. I can't remember exactly what it was about. I complained to him that I had had a very good idea, and that it had turned out to be a very good idea, and that somebody else had taken credit for it. I was pretty pushed out of shape about it.

He said, "That's ridiculous. You shouldn't worry about the credit. It doesn't make any difference. You'll have more good ideas. That other person probably never will." [laughter] He said, "Over time, people will know who had the good idea. You don't have to take the credit. Let someone else take the credit."

Riess: Tell me some other great truths that you can remember.

M. Goodin: Oh, gosh, Suzanne, they have to come out of me spontaneously. I can't just produce great truths.

Riess: Are there things that you say to your children, and you think, "Oh, that sounds just like my father."

M. Goodin: No, I can't produce them ad hoc. Maybe it will come to me and I'll write you a letter.

Riess: Do you write the same kind of letters to your children that your father wrote to you?

M. Goodin: Well, as my father said, I was the worst correspondent that he ever knew, and I'm not much better with my children, I guess. I have written some hortatory letters! The one thing that I think is true, that I think my father said in one letter that I saw last night, is that he knew very well that he shouldn't continue to give me advice because I was older at the time this letter was written than he was when I was born. He had to let go at some point, but it was very difficult. And I must say, I agree with that. I don't think it's ever possible to ever let go. You still see what you perceive as mistakes that your children are making. Even though they're thirty-five years old you can hardly restrain yourself from telling them. You don't ever cease to be a parent. It's a lifetime job.

Riess: Then you don't ever cease to be the president of a university, particularly if you live right up the street from it.

M. Goodin: That's right, and that was a problem for Clark Kerr. I see that having this presence that sat right there in Berkeley was a problem. I think it was the source of the things he did that offended my mother and father. I think he was trying to distance himself.

Riess: I didn't mean to end it on that note particularly. But I think there must be some parallels in how your father was with his family, and certainly the university was his family.

M. Goodin: Of course he was never supplanted as our father. He could go on being our father forever. Nobody took over that job.

Riess: Could you describe him as you remember him earliest, just what he looked like.

M. Goodin: He was very tall, and very thin. He had quite a lot of heavy blond hair. I didn't think of my father as handsome. I thought him good looking. I thought of my Uncle Allan as handsome, but I did not think of my father as handsome. I thought that he was the best company in the world. He didn't have to be all that handsome.

Riess: Was he ever sick?

M. Goodin: Yes, he was sick. I think my mother said he had pneumonia I don't know how many times.

Riess: Pneumonia three times, and she said asthma occasionally.

M. Goodin: He had asthma. Asthma was something we lived with when we were children. He had attacks of asthma that came from pollen, and this sort of thing. It seemed to get--and I think he had all sorts of allergy tests and that sort of thing at one point--it seemed to get better over the years. I remember it particularly when I was young. Waking in the night, and hearing his difficulty with breathing. I can remember that.

I don't remember it in a way that was particularly frightening. I didn't feel that he was in imminent danger. In general his health was very good. He did at one point lose his voice, and had to be taught to speak again though.

Riess: No!

M. Goodin: Yes. Now why that happened, I don't know. But he absolutely lost his voice and he had to be taught to speak again. This was after he became president, and I think he was in the Dante Hospital in San Francisco, which doesn't exist anymore--the hospital, I mean, the building is still there but it's another hospital--but it was called the Dante Sanatorium. [now St. Francis Hospital, M.G.]

M. Goodin: It may have had some connection with the asthma, but I don't think so. I think it had some connection with some sort of a cold that resulted in this failure of his voice. And whether it failed completely, or whether it just became very husky and very faint, I don't know. But they taught him to speak again. And the fact that he lost it was kept very quiet.

Somebody would know about this. Maybe Bob or John would remember more than I, but I'm more likely probably to remember.

Riess: Well, in this day and age, one might interpret all this asthma and so on as anxiety.

M. Goodin: He had asthma as a boy, I think. I don't think he was an anxious young man.

Riess: He doesn't sound that way.

M. Goodin: I think his own childhood and family were very happy. I think there were a lot of economic concerns, but I think in terms of enjoying themselves, they did. They had simpler pleasures anyway.

Riess: So the asthma was not related to increasing stresses in his job. It was a childhood illness.

M. Goodin: He'd had pneumonia as a child, also. There probably was some weakness in the lungs. Nowadays they treat pneumonia very easily, but in those days they didn't.

And of course he did have ulcers and the mental difficulties at the end. I guess it was Alzheimer's disease. They didn't call it that then. But from what I read about Alzheimer's disease I assume that it was that.

He had some difficulty with his back, but I don't think it was too terrible. Everybody has difficulty with their back. Chronic twentieth century complaint. He did have incipient ulcers at one point in mid-career which I suspect was stress induced, but I don't think they were ever serious until the last one which was a perforated ulcer, for which he was operated on and in the hospital late in his life. The attack came after he had dinner at Lini Allen's. Poor Lini Allen, she always felt guilty about it. It certainly didn't have anything to do with what he ate!

But really, Suzanne, I am sorry you asked about illnesses at the end of our talk as it put stress where none should be. Until the very end, far from being a man in poor health, he was one of

M. Goodin: extraordinary stamina, energy and gusto. He threw himself into a vast variety of things with enormous enthusiasm, and brooked no backsliders in the ranks. He loved good food, good wine, and good talk in good company where he could more than hold his own. Nothing was too much trouble if he saw an opportunity to create an occasion--our family Sunday gourmet dinners, the Christmas play, the "Palace Hotel" meals at Echo (for one of which, I, being in charge of the first course, had to find a not-too-distant snow bank in which to jelly the consomme--refrigeration then being non-existent). He stirred us up intellectually as well--lethargy did not often allow an undefended position to stand, nor a casual unthought-out observation to go unchallenged. He was a very talented man, and, among his talents, not the least was luck. He lived at the right time, and he had the right job to use himself and his talents to their fullest extent.

Transcriber: Mark Meigs  
Final Typist: Keiko Sugimoto



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Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

John A. Sproul

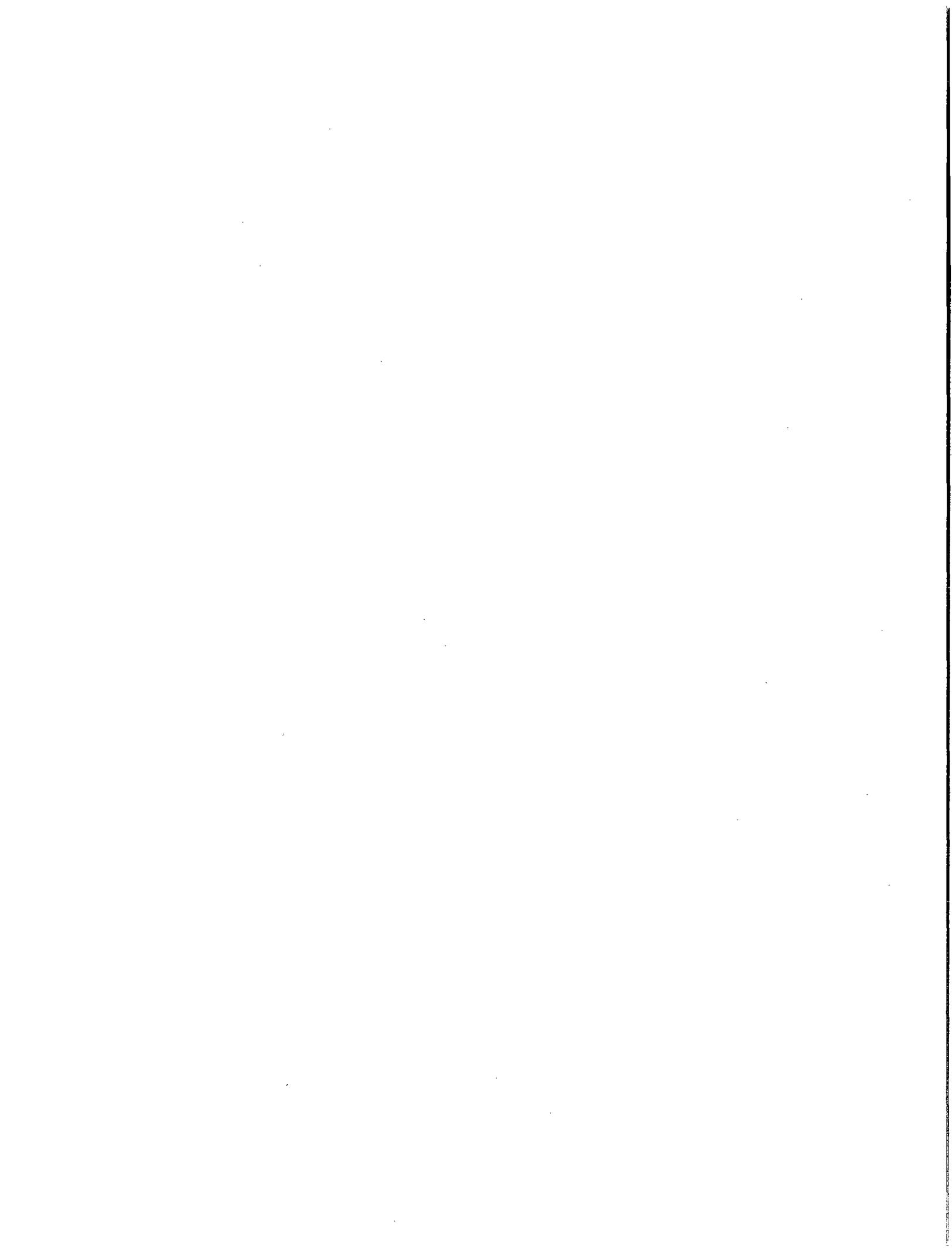
"JUST GREAT" MEMORIES OF THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

The biographical pages provided by the three children of Robert Gordon and Ida Amelia Sproul introduce the personalities, and the basic facts of life, of each of the three. Marion Goodin's statement is generous, straightforward, personal, conscientious. Bob's is cryptic and calls for further examination; in pale pencil he claims he never grew up, his community is mankind, his education rudimentary, his occupation paper pusher, and his special interest girls.

John Allan Sproul's professional biographical sketch details his career moves, avocations, and offspring. His sketch for the oral history project supplements that and offers, in honor of his mother, that she was the Keeper of the Presidential Seal--a different banner than "housewife."

Three children are three different people, as idiosyncratic and as individual as their parents were, and if I had thought to learn from them about how difficult it was to be the son or daughter of such a larger-than-life father, or how crucial it was to their development to rebel (and go to Stanford!), I was to be disappointed. The noisy discussions universally remembered at the dinner table were okay. Having to do something because they were the president's children was okay. These are interviews about life in the heart of a loving family.

John Sproul said in a letter, when he returned his edited transcript, "I am most appreciative of what you and your colleagues have done to make this particular project a reality. I haven't cried since USC beat California in a basketball game I attended when I was six years old--but in reading this interview over I must admit I came pretty close to doing so again at a number of places."

I consider The Sproul Children to be a sort of mini-series within this Robert Gordon Sproul oral history saga, and it has been a great pleasure to meet them all under these circumstances. The atmosphere was one of residual good feelings from the Ida Sproul oral history completed in 1981, and appreciation of the Class of 1931's generosity in proposing this as the first oral history by the terms of their endowment.

This summary could have preceded the whole group of family interviews, but I thought John Sproul's open statement of feeling called for a response in kind. The interview with Mr. Sproul, held in his office in San Francisco, was a good interchange, from start to finish. When asked what he had wished to say, as he anticipated our interview, John Sproul volunteered, "My parents made growing up just great...very enjoyable. That's part of what parents are all about."

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name JOHN ALLAN SPROUL

Date of birth 3/28/24 Place of birth Oakland, California

Father's full name ROBERT GORDON SPROUL

Birthplace San Francisco, California

Occupation President, University of California

Mother's full name IDA AMELIA WITTSCHEN SPROUL

Birthplace New York City, New York

Occupation Keeper of the Presidential Seal

Where did you grow up? San Francisco Bay Area

Present community El Cerrito, California

Education A.B. University of California, Berkeley 1947

LL.B. " " " " 1949

Occupation(s) Executive Vice President, Pac. Elec. Gas & Electric Company

Special interests or activities \_\_\_\_\_

## Biographical Sketch of

JOHN A. SPROUL

Executive Vice President  
Fuels and Gas Resources Development  
Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Born: Oakland, California, March 28, 1924

Parents: Robert G. and Ida A. (Wittschen) Sproul

Education: Public Schools of Berkeley, California  
University of California, AB 1947  
U.C. School of Law (Berkeley), LLB 1949

Business Career: Pacific Gas and Electric Company  
Attorney, 1949-1952  
Johnson and Stanton, Attorneys at Law  
Attorney, 1952-1956  
Pacific Gas and Electric Company  
Attorney, 1956-1962  
Senior Attorney, 1962-1970  
Assistant General Counsel, 1970-1971  
Vice President - Gas Supply, 1971-1976  
Senior Vice President, 1976-1977  
Executive Vice President, December 1977-

## Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Subsidiary Companies:

Pacific Gas Transmission Company  
General Counsel, 1970-1973  
Vice President, 1973-1979  
Member, Board of Directors, 1973-  
Chairman of the Board, 1979-

Natural Gas Corporation of California  
Vice President, 1971-1977  
Member, Board of Directors, 1977-  
Chairman of the Board, 1977-

Pacific Transmission Supply Company  
Vice President, 1972-1977  
Member, Board of Directors, 1977-  
Chairman of the Board, 1977-

Alberta and Southern Gas Co. Ltd.  
Member, Board of Directors, 1972-  
Chairman of the Board, 1979-1983

Alberta Natural Gas Company Ltd  
Member, Board of Directors, 1978-

ANGUS Chemical Company  
Member, Board of Directors, 1982-

ANGUS Petrotech Corporation  
Member, Board of Directors, 1982-

Calaska Energy Company  
Member, Board of Directors, 1978-  
Chairman of the Board, 1978-

Eureka Energy Company  
Member, Board of Directors, 1978-  
Chairman of the Board, 1978-1980  
President, 1980-

Alaska California LNG Company  
Member, Board of Directors, 1976-  
President, 1976-

Pacific Gas Marine Company  
Member, Board of Directors, 1976  
President, 1976

Pacific Gas LNG Terminal Company  
Member, Board of Directors, 1976-

Pacific Indonesia LNG Company  
Member, Board of Directors, 1976-

Rocky Mountain Gas Transmission Company  
Member, Board of Directors, 1980-  
Chairman of the Board, 1980-

**Military  
Service:**

First Lieutenant, United States Air Force, 1943-1946

**Memberships:**

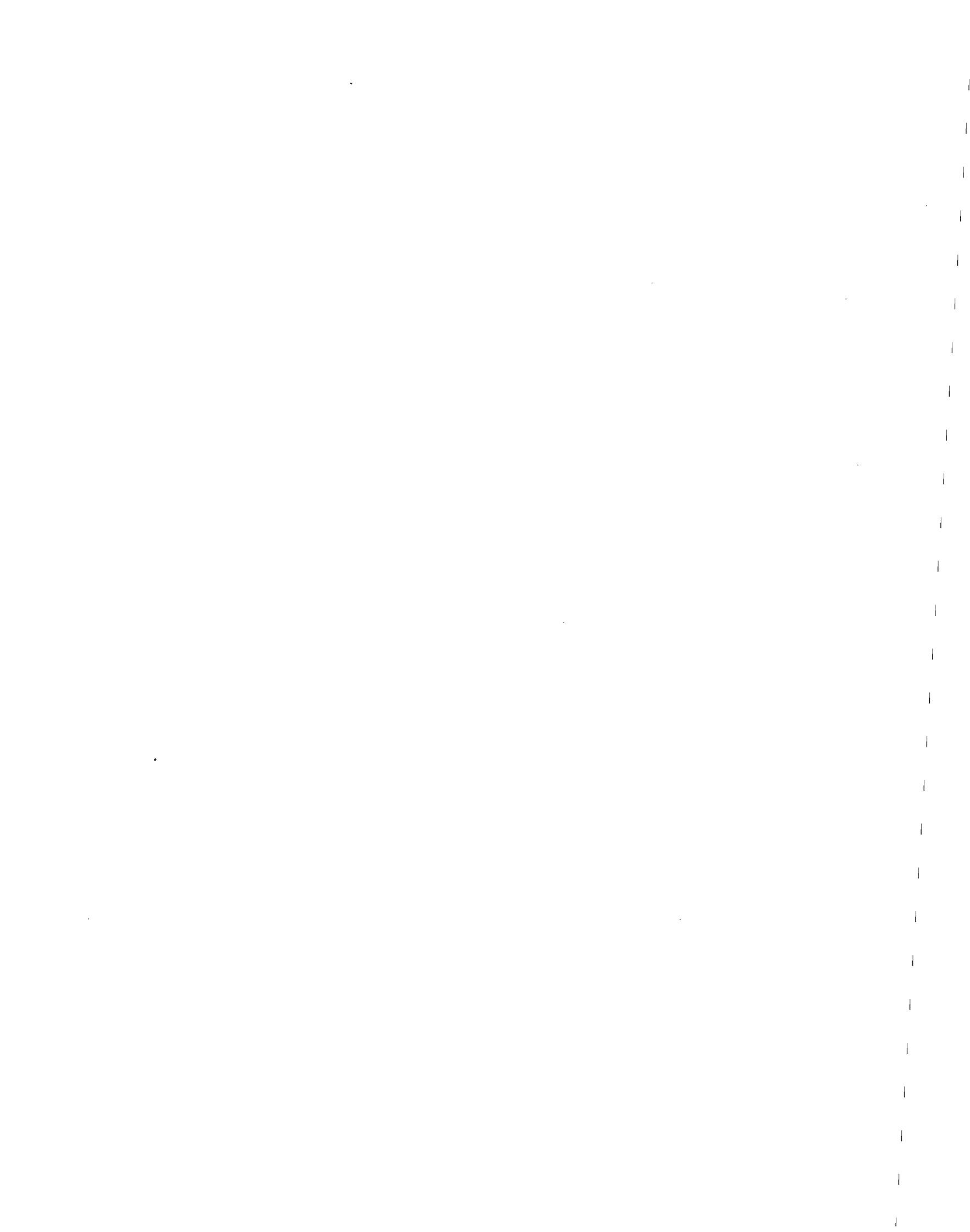
State Bar of California  
Bohemian Club  
The Commonwealth Club of San Francisco  
The Engineers Club of San Francisco  
Orinda Country Club  
The Pacific-Union Club  
World Trade Club  
Pacific Coast Gas Association  
American Gas Association

Institute of Gas Technology  
Member, Board of Directors, 1979-1983  
Gas Research Institute  
Member, Board of Directors, 1983-  
Canadian American Society of San Francisco  
Advisory Board, Lawrence Hall of Science  
Alta Bates Hospital, Berkeley  
Member, Board of Directors  
Alta Bates Corporation, 1982-

Personal: Married to Marjorie H. (Hauck) Sproul  
Four Children:

	<u>Birth-date</u>
John A. Sproul, Jr.	- 3-24-49
Malcolm J. Sproul	- 2-2-51
Richard O. Sproul	- 12-31-53
Catherine E. Sproul	- 11-28-55

Interests: Spectator sports - virtually all  
golf and trout fishing



Grandfathers, Fathers, Brothers, Boarders

[Date of Interview: October 4, 1984]

Riess: What kind of a grandfather was your father?

JAS: There wasn't all that much contact with the children over the period of years before his death. When they were growing up, when they were really small, we used to have Sunday nights at the house on the campus. At that time, and then when they got into the teen age, he saw a fairly great deal of them. He wasn't the kind of grandfather who really took them to ball games or went on walks with them, that sort of thing. When they were small, really small, he--tolerate is not the right word. [chuckles]

He wasn't exactly one that spent a lot of time with them. I guess that's one way to put it. Not that he didn't, I think, like them and enjoy them. When my kids got into high school and they all became runners, then he saw a lot more of them. But speaking generally, I think my kids when they were growing up were probably closer to my mother than they were to my father. Dealing with small children is difficult. And then the period of decline--it started to be gradual and then it got a lot worse. It just wasn't very easy for him to be around kids.

Riess: He might have been different with the first grandchildren.

JAS: They weren't all that far apart. The first boy, John, was born in '49. Then we had them in two-year intervals thereafter. The oldest child of Marion's and the oldest child of Bob's is kind of a level above, two years maybe, or three. But then the rest of our kids are more or less in the same age range.

It's hard to find the right word. He wasn't particularly close, I didn't think. Not that he didn't love them, or all that, and like to see them, but he didn't spend a great deal of time with them.

Riess: Well then, how about your father as a father?

JAS: He was great. I think we just didn't see enough of him. When I was growing up, and when we all were growing up, he was just spending a great deal of time in Los Angeles, I guess about half of his time. So a good part of the year he would be on the Los Angeles campus. And we would be in Berkeley. Of course, my grandmother lived with us.

Riess: And would your mother be down there with him?

JAS: She would be down there with him. But when he was in Berkeley he did spend a lot of time with us, especially when we were growing up, with my brother and myself. I used to come home from school, and he used to be in an office in California Hall up there on the corner. I would stop there and we would go home, and then he would hit baseballs to us out in the front yard at the President's House, which used to be grass--I guess maybe it still is. He didn't have a heck of a lot of time, but he tried to spend as much time as he could. The whole family, and he particularly, was interested in sports, so we went to a lot of sporting events together.

As I say, the only thing that I would--it was too bad, but he was running the university, and of course one of his great desires was to make it a state-wide university and to eliminate the friction that at that time was certainly there between UCLA and Berkeley.

Riess: And he was doing it in person.

JAS: Yes. He was doing it in person. Running the university in that day and age was probably a lot different than it is today.

Riess: Did he find any kind of big brothers for either you or your brother, any mentors?

JAS: I don't think so. No.

Riess: Graduate students, or young faculty?

JAS: No, not really. Most of the time that we were living on the campus we had somebody living with us. There was a room. Occasionally there was a law student, or occasionally it was somebody who was involved with track. Don Bowden lived in that house on the campus for a while. A guy named Jack [John H.] Saunders lived with us, who is now a judge down in southern California. And I've forgotten--oh, there was a basketball player named Orel Sofores who came from a family that raise sheep up in northern California. We just had a succession of guys.

Riess: How did he pick them out of the crowd of incoming students?

JAS: I don't know. Frankly, I'm just not sure. He must have had some way of doing this, within the university. I suspect most of the time he wanted somebody who was interested in athletics, because usually that's what we had. But that's not entirely true. Jack is a judge. And we had a guy who is now a Catholic priest, named Maurice Chase, who lives in southern California someplace. He was at that time in law school, I think. I don't know how the selection process worked, frankly, maybe Marion might know.

Riess: Do you suppose Miss Robb found them?

JAS: Miss Robb might be a better source. I think she would know how he found them, yes.

Riess: That would fit my idea of a mentor, but it depends on how much you saw of that person.

JAS: Not all that much, but they were certainly part of the family. They ate with us; they didn't eat out there in the back kitchen or anything. They ate all their meals, and they were just part of the family. Now they weren't around--they studied a lot, especially the guys who were in law school. Don lived with them after, really, all the family had left. This was after the war, when he was at Cal and when he was running.

But, I don't think, they were selected with that in mind, frankly. I think it was just a matter that it would be a nice thing to have a student who lived with us, and especially who needed help. That was the motivating factor, I think.

It's not as though my father was gone 90 percent of the time, but he was gone a lot at that time. Running the university was a much more personal thing, I think, than it is today. I don't know about Mr. Gardner, I guess he travels about as much.

Riess: Your father started out running the university when he was a lot younger, so that it really coincided with the bringing-up-the-kids years.

JAS: That's right. But he spent as much time with us as he certainly could. Echo Lake, of course--we were there a lot. Most of the summer at that time.

Riess: You were six when you moved to the President's House. Do you have a recollection of a difference between before and after?

JAS: Very vague.

Riess: An incident, anything like that?

JAS: Really very, very vague. We lived up on Tanglewood Road, at the head of Derby Street, and I really don't have much of a recollection. I was going to Emerson School at that time, which was right close by. And I continued to do that. That didn't change at all. I really don't, as I say, have much of a recollection.

Riess: Did you think of yourself as becoming a public figure when you moved into the President's House, whereas you weren't before?

JAS: No, I didn't.

Riess: There goes little Johnny Sproul, the president's son?

JAS: You don't worry about that, I don't think, when you're in grammar school. [chuckles] You may worry about that a little later--when I went to Cal. But that really never became a problem, at least for me.

Riess: Were your parents involved in your Berkeley High School years?

JAS: Well, my mother was involved. I'd say more so when I was in grammar school, rather than at Berkeley High. Certainly less so at Willard. But she had a fair amount to do with Emerson and my growing up there. At that time I had a really difficult speech problem. You know, I stuttered. They found a guy to give me, you know, whatever they call it now--probably something a lot fancier than they did then--a guy who used to give me reading lessons. And my father was the one, I'm sure, who was the cause of my being cured, if that's the right word.

Riess: Because he didn't just figure it would go away.

JAS: No, he went out and he found some guy. I've forgotten what his name was now. He used to give me reading lessons, and we would read out loud together. This was really right when I was in my early years in school. Not that I had any great difficulty with school; I skipped, I don't know, the low first or the high first or something.

But my mother was around a fair amount of time. I only weighed probably some small amount at that point, and the teachers were always feeding me [laughter], and she was involved in that process too!

Riess: How wonderful!

JAS: But really later on--you know, they didn't have "Back-to-School Night" then, as far as I know. Maybe they did, but I can't remember much about it. But as I went along, I don't think at Berkeley High that probably she was ever in the place. By then I was doing reasonably well. They didn't have a problem with any of us, really, scholastically. Not that we were any great geniuses, but we all got by. So they didn't have to worry that way. Really the biggest thing that my father did when I was going to Berkeley High was, he was the speaker at our high school graduation, which was in the men's gym on the Berkeley campus.

Riess: Were you an athlete at Berkeley High?

JAS: Of a sort. [chuckles] Not a very good one, but I was, yes. I played basketball there and at Cal.

Riess: Were you pushed to do that?

JAS: No, it just sort of evolved, really. Certainly we grew up going to a lot of sporting events on the Berkeley campus, but I can't say I was pushed. My father used to come to as many high school games as he could possibly come to when I was playing. But I can't say I was really pushed. And I was never really that good, either. [chuckles] I played basketball, as I say, but that's all.

Riess: Athletics seemed very important for your father. What did they mean to your father?

JAS: Well, I guess it was probably, you know, get away from the routine of the office sort of thing.

Riess: But in terms of the well-rounded man--could he respect someone who didn't have an interest in athletics?

#### Expectations, Religion, Values, Careers

JAS: Oh, I think so. Oh yes. Really I think that was one of the great things about my father. Today, just to take an example, I don't think he'd be all that fascinated with the gay community in San Francisco. But I think he could certainly have respect for people who were achievers within that community. He had respect for people of ability, no matter what their background or lifestyle.

Riess: So you didn't have to be perfectly well rounded?

JAS: I don't think so. That was probably a plus, but it wasn't anything that would have caused him to really actively dislike someone.

Riess: Reject, or something like that.

JAS: Yes. Right.

Riess: Did you have any feeling that you might have been rejected if you hadn't at least shown this inclination to basketball, or something like that?

JAS: No. He used to have a system which maybe other parents had, I don't think it was unique, but we were certainly always rewarded monetarily for good grades. And I think that would have caused him a lot more difficulty or concern than whether or not I played basketball. He was very interested in seeing that we did well scholastically. Very interested. I know when I got to Cal they used to have a system in Chem 1A, which was taught by Dr. Hildebrand as you know, they had a deal there that they had the labs. Dr. Hildebrand taught the first lab. You go from Labs 1 to Lab 12. It was all done on the basis of achievement on some test. He really pushed me to get into the first lab and I was really way out of my depth there with all these guys who knew a great deal more about chemistry than I did. I did a heck of a lot better in Chem 1B when I got down in about Lab 6. It was a lot better for me and Dr. Hildebrand and everybody else!

So he really believed, he was very strong on us doing well, and by and large we did. My sister most of all. She was probably the smartest one of the bunch.

Riess: The law degrees--when did you and your brother decide that law was going to be your career?

JAS: I didn't do it 'til after I got out of the--'til after World War II. And my brother says the same, that he went up to Harvard to look at the business school when he got out of the navy. He looked at the law school and found that to be more attractive. I don't know whether that's true or not, really. But I certainly never had an idea, when I was going to college or when I was in the service, that that was what I was going to do. It just sort of evolved after I got back, frankly.

Riess: That was not a dinner table conversation, "What are you boys going to do?"

JAS: No, not really, as I recall. No. I got out of the army in '46 and came back and finished. By that time, that's something I just really decided myself. At that time getting into law school was probably a

JAS: lot easier than it is today. I just applied to Boalt, and I was accepted. And my brother Bob did to Harvard and he was accepted. Certainly with respect to Boalt and I suspect with respect to Harvard, I don't think my father put any pressure on anybody or called anybody up and said, "My son has applied," and so forth. Getting into law school was a lot simpler then than it is now. But it wasn't a subject of discussion. And he certainly didn't push us in that direction.

Riess: Well, there's bit of a story that I had from talking with your mother, and I'm not sure whether it was a kind of a family joke, that Marion should become the president of a woman's college. But given the fact that there was some suggestion of what Marion should become, I should think even more so there might have been some thought of what the boys would become. What I was hoping to get out of this was perhaps any sense of regret on your father's part of the limits of his own education.

JAS: Perhaps. Not articulated, but certainly that might be there. He did come up through the university system in a kind of a unique way, without the academic background and without a particularly distinguished college record, I think. That could very well have been there. But as I say, if he spoke about it, he certainly did it privately to my mother rather than to the rest of us.

My mother worried certainly a great deal before her death about her grandchildren, and what they were becoming and what they were doing. I guess maybe she had the same worries about us. I can't recall her, really, but she must have. But by and large we all did conventional things and went to graduate school and got a job, and we didn't get involved with narcotics or anything else. There were some problems, I suppose, along the way. But we never were pushed. How do I say it? Never particularly pushed in one direction or another. I think my mother had some feeling with one of my kids that he would make a great clergyman, and maybe she had that idea with me. But you know, they didn't push it very hard. If we didn't go in that direction, that was okay.

Riess: Did you go to Mass with her?

JAS: No. No, we were all Episcopalians. That was an odd sort of thing.

Riess: That was neutral ground between Presbyterian and Catholic?

JAS: Yes. Well, you probably heard this tale about how when they got married, that my father just absolutely refused--in those days and perhaps today, because I don't know much about Catholics, there's a

- JAS: real push that you have to promise to raise your children in the Catholic faith. Well, he would have none of that. They went to see the archbishop, or whoever it was at that time. How he ever did it, I don't know--he was a very persuasive gentleman--but he never committed to raise his children in the Catholic faith. Still they were married in the Catholic church, and we were all raised as Episcopalians.
- Riess: And yet that was not your father's or your grandmother's religion, either.
- JAS: No. My father was never a great church-goer. My grandmother was. Certainly my father went only on rare occasions when he went with my grandmother, but that was very rare, really. Very rare.
- Riess: Well, who accompanied you to the Episcopal church then?
- JAS: My brother and my sister would accompany me to the Episcopal church. [chuckles]
- Riess: Marion said that your mother would go to Mass and your father would go with his mother.
- JAS: To my recollection, I never--I've been in a Catholic church, of course, for funerals and weddings and that sort of thing, but even when I was small I don't recall ever going to a Catholic church. Now my mother might have taken us and I've just forgotten about it.
- Riess: What Episcopal church did you go to?
- JAS: St. Clement's Church. [Claremont Boulevard, Berkeley]
- Riess: Even after you moved to the President's House you went back to St. Clement's.
- JAS: Right. And she would, of course, drive us. That's the faith, more or less, that we were raised in. And all of us can't think of any exposure that we had to the Catholic church. Once in a while I recall we would go to the Presbyterian church, on those rare occasions when my father felt duty-bound to go with his mother. [chuckles] But that wasn't very often.
- Riess: I wondered, on the law degree, whether Uncle Allan had had some influence on that?
- JAS: No.

Riess: How did he figure in your lives?

JAS: We never got to see him all that much, except on really rare occasions, until he moved here. He was in New York. I'm named after him; my middle name is after my uncle. I'm not sure when he moved out here, but it was probably the sixties. I hardly saw him when we were growing up. I never got to New York all that often; in fact, hardly ever. When I got my commission in the army at Yale, why that's really the first time I can ever remember being in their house in Scarsdale. It was after that.

Riess: Your commission in the army was at Yale?

JAS: I went to officer's candidate school at Yale. It was the U.S. Air Force, but it was called the army air corps at that time. After that, I went down and saw the Allan Sprouls in New York. As I say, that's the only time I can recall.

Going into law was a decision that I made myself. My father knew a lot of lawyers, and he was involved with them on the Board of Regents after he became president, and got along with them very well. But generally--and this is something I guess he fostered in us--I made my own decisions as to what it was that I was going to do. I got into practice and I came to work here [PG&E] in 1949. I was here for three years, and then I left and I went to work for a small San Francisco firm, and after four years I came back. I consulted him and my brother at that time, as to whether I ought to make the move, and both of them thought I should. That turned out to be a mistake. And I guess that reinforced the belief that I think I had before, that probably these decisions were best made by me, and that you really didn't have to consult other people about them. That's sort of the way that I've been.

Riess: You mean it was a mistake to leave here?

JAS: Yes. Looking back, I should have stayed. But it certainly hasn't blighted my whole life and I don't brood about it.

Riess: Well, one choice is whether to consult people. The other question is whether you're going to take their advice.

JAS: Yes, right. And I certainly used to consult him about what courses I ought to take. He had very definite ideas about that, and about which professors were best for me to have, and that sort of thing.

Riess: On those consultations, what was his stand on the humanities, on the arts and music and so on?

JAS: He wanted me to really take as broad a spectrum of courses as I could take. He didn't push me into engineering, for example. He really wanted me to have as broad an exposure to all the great professors that were on the Berkeley campus.

John Sproul at Cal, Before and After WW II

JAS: One of the real things that was just too bad for me, personally, was the war. I came to Berkeley in the fall of '41, and I went in the army in February of '43. So I was only around for, oh gosh, about a year and a half. Going to school then was just a whole lot of fun, I think probably a lot more fun than it is now. Even going to high school--I mean, I really had fun going to school! (One of the things that I really worried about with my kids is I didn't think they were having all that much fun. But anyway!) I was only at Cal for a year and a half, basically. And then I was gone for three years, and I got married in the service, and then I came back. And my first year of law school was my last year of college. You could do that at the time. So I never really got exposed to all that many people. But certainly Professor Hildebrand and Professor [Robert J.] Kerner.

Riess: Who was Kerner?

JAS: Kerner was a history professor, and very good. And Professor [Norman E.A.] Hinds in geology was another one. Public speaking--I had a gentleman by the name of Professor [Arnold] Perstein. I took a fair amount of math, but I can't remember who taught it to me. But that's the sort of thing I was usually pretty good in. And, oh gosh, I was trying to think of--I had an English professor whom my father was really very desirous I take a course from. Something like--oh gosh!

Riess: Was it [B.H.] Lehman?

JAS: No, but he was there at the time. As I say, I was there for about a year and a half. Then when I came back, why everything was sort of compressed, but I had a lot of great law school professors.

Riess: When you came back you only needed one more year to polish off the B.A.

JAS: I took six months. I came back in March '46 and went to school that semester, and--I'm pretty bad on names. There was a really good political science professor that I had. He lived in north Berkeley. Well, I'll remember him. But when I was in the army I never got out of the continental limits of the United States. I was always going

JAS: to school. So from that I got a fair amount of credit, which counted, and then my first year of law school was the last year of college, so those credits all counted toward graduation. But I did get a fair amount of credit from the army.

Riess: Those were officer training credits?

JAS: Yes. I started out to be a meteorologist and went to a succession of schools and took a lot of physics and math and that sort of thing. and then about halfway through the war, the army decided they didn't need all these people. You didn't have to worry about a problem about weather. So they just dispersed us.

Then I went through OCS after that. But I got a sufficient amount of credit. Then I came back and, as I say, went to law school. There really were some great, great professors at that time at Boalt, wonderful professors, [James P.] McBaine, and [Henry W.] Ballantine, and [Alexander M.] "Captain" Kidd. And it was a very small school then, too. But I'd say that's where probably I can remember more about names and professors than I can about when I was a freshman.

Riess: Why do you think you didn't pursue the sciences--meteorology, geology? It sounds like you really did love them.

JAS: I don't know. I just don't know.

Riess: I guess maybe you're sort of close to them here [PG&E].

JAS: Yes--not so much so. Basically here I'm in charge of the gas side of the business.

I don't know. Partially, I suppose, because I was married when I got out of the service, and it was just time to pursue a career that led to a job, I suppose. But you know some people are, at least they say they are, motivated from the time they're in high school about what they want to do and where they're going. But I sure wasn't.

Riess: Your mother was very proud of the fact that you were an Eagle Scout.

JAS: That was my brother.

Riess: That was your brother. Oh!

JAS: She was very unhappy about the fact that I never achieved that distinction.

Riess: Oh. Well-asked question!

JAS: I was a second-class scout for a longer period in the history of Troop 7 than any other member of that troop, I think. And I finally got beyond that. No, she wanted that; she was very proud of my brother for being an Eagle Scout.

Job Offers Turned Down; Family Decision-Making

Riess: Backing back to Uncle Allan--when he visited, do you remember how he and your father were as brothers?

JAS: Very close. Really very close. I think they saw a fair amount of each other because my father traveled a lot and was in the East a fair amount of time. I think they really had a close relationship. They were both in the same camp at the Bohemian Grove. I think they got along very, very well.

Riess: Were they jokey?

JAS: Yes, yes they were. They both had really good senses of humor. The problem with remembering my father all that well is--the whole thing is so blurred by the crummy last years that it's very difficult. But they both had great senses of humor, and I know that he consulted Uncle Allan about investment advice.

Riess: Do you think he ever tried to involve him in the university?

JAS: Not to my knowledge. Not that I know of at all. Uncle Allan, of course, spent his entire career with the Federal Reserve Bank--he lived when he was first with the bank on Tamalpais Road, and then they moved back East. I really don't think there was any attempt at involvement.

Riess: Those other job offers that your father had are very significant to people. People I interview talk about those as real watersheds in reaffirming your father's devotion to the university. They seem like trial balloons, to see how people will react. What's your recollection and feeling about those other job offers?

JAS: I can remember really mostly about the first one, the Crocker Bank, which I guess came along when I was in Berkeley High School. The Columbia University one came along after, and I don't really recall all that much about that. But, as far as the Crocker Bank, I can remember the students out in front urging him to stay.

Riess: And how about the decisions behind the scenes--were you in on how seriously he took that?

JAS: Oh, I think he probably took it very seriously. Maybe I was too small at the time, but we didn't have any family council of war about it. Again, I think, sure he probably talked to my mother. And maybe he involved Marion, but I doubt it. That's a decision that he made, and who he consulted, I don't know. I just recall coming home from playing in a basketball game, and all those people were out in front. I think we probably all thought, maybe because we just didn't know any better, that he probably wasn't going to do it. But there were no family conferences, that sort of thing.

Riess: What were there family conferences about?

JAS: Not much of anything. Nothing of any serious consequence. I mean, sure, we were together a lot, and we spent time at Echo Lake. And the conversation at dinner was always--my father loved to argue, and we all argued, so it was a very lively conversation. But I don't recall family conferences.

I think he decided if we were going to go someplace different for a vacation; that wasn't a decision in which the children participated, as I recall. None of us liked Los Angeles all that well, but we celebrated Thanksgiving for a number of years in Los Angeles, whether we liked it or not. [chuckles] That's what he wanted, and that's what we did. We all accepted that, really. There wasn't much of a family debate about things we would do when we were growing up, in the way of consultation about things to be done.

No, he and my mother pretty much ran the family. Not that they were tyrannical or anything. But there were rules, and we abided by them. When I went out I got home at a certain hour and that sort of thing. Nobody rebelled that I know of.

Riess: What were the punishments?

JAS: Nothing draconian or drastic. You just might not be able to go out the next week, or something like that, or you couldn't use the car, that sort of thing.

Riess: Well, I think that there is some logic in his running the family that way, because I don't think he entered into a lot of situations where he hadn't made up his mind pretty well anyway, already.

JAS: I think so. Now that's a side of him, of course, that I didn't see much of, but I suspect in his dealings with the regents he was a strong-minded man. At least up until the time of the oath, I think he got along with the regents extraordinarily well. But I think he had his mind made up about most things. I don't think he rejected advice, or didn't consult with people, but I think he was never afraid to do something, if he thought it was the thing to do, even where a whole bunch of people told him that he shouldn't do it.

That's a side of him that I never really got to see much of, as I say. Running a university at that time was a lot different, probably a lot less difficult. Students were, I think, a lot easier to control, if that's the right word. And so he was a very, very popular figure. Whether he would be under today's environment, or whether he would have been during the sixties, I don't know.

Riess: Yes, that's always open to speculation.

Your father was not a negotiator, I take it.

JAS: I don't know whether--that's not quite right. He wasn't too much of a negotiator, but I don't mean to create the impression that he was kind of like a bull in a china shop, because that certainly wasn't true. He had, I think, extraordinarily good relationships with the faculty up until the time of the oath controversy. That had to take a certain amount of negotiation, you know. I think dealing with professors takes a whole lot of skill. And I suspect he had to have a fair amount of negotiating talent.

Riess: I wonder if he dealt with them en masse, or whether it was just always one on one.

JAS: Probably more of the latter, I think, than the former.

Riess: I think one-to-one he must have been very powerful. Can you imagine not falling in with his ideas?

JAS: No, but they have minds of their own, too. That's what I guess I'm trying to say. Of course he was responsible for bringing a whole lot of people to that Berkeley campus. So he had a lot of good personal friendships within the faculty.

Riess: On the war years, could you have been deferred? What was the family attitude about going into the war?

JAS: I don't think I could have been deferred, and nobody even thought about it. It was just a normal thing, that I was going to go in the service, and that my brother was. My brother was in the naval ROTC,

JAS: so it was just inevitable, then, that he was going to go. I tried to get in that when I went to Cal and I couldn't get in because my eyes weren't good enough. But nobody ever even had the idea that we be deferred. I spent a good part of my freshman year looking for some sort of a program that would lead to a commission, and finally got into this meteorology thing.

But no, no--my eyes weren't bad enough, and it would have been unthinkable that I would have sought a deferment.

Riess: Mothers sometimes feel differently about these things.

JAS: That's what's a little different about today, or about the Korean War or the Vietnam War, I mean; people actively really sought deferment. Nobody ever did then, that I know of.

Riess: There were conscientious objectors.

JAS: Very few though, don't you think, relatively?

Riess: That's true.

JAS: Yes, very, very few, and I wasn't exposed to any of them. And certainly my mother didn't have those feelings, not at all. Things have changed a little bit, or quite a bit, I guess I should say. Because it was just expected.

Riess: When you were at home in the President's House, who did your father take calls from? How accessible was he, or was he closeted in there, at home with his family?

JAS: Oh, I think he was accessible.

#### The Loyalty Oath, the Regents, Close Friends and Successors

Riess: How about during the oath time?

JAS: Well, during the oath thing, when of course his great antagonist on the Board of Regents was John Francis Neylan, I can recall--he had a study that was downstairs, just off the living room where he just spent a tremendous amount of time--I can recall him talking with Neylan and arguing with him on the phone for, really literally, an hour at a time.

JAS: But he was certainly not closeted with his family and remote from the whole controversy. He was undoubtedly talking to professors and members of the board. The board was really split down the middle. Of course he had his own good friends who were on that board. His extraordinary friendship with Governor [Earl] Warren resulted in people going on that board; he had a lot to do with putting them there. But he certainly didn't lock himself up in the President's House and not get involved. He was involved a lot.

It was really very hard on him. You never know about what caused the later problems that he had. Maybe he would have had them if he had just been a gardener all his life and been out in the sun! [chuckles] But I think if anything caused him more stress than that particular controversy, in my opinion, it just wasn't there. That was really the worst thing that ever happened to him during his life.

Riess: Oh, I'm sure.

JAS: It was one hell of a battle. He fought it.

Riess: He didn't retreat from it.

JAS: No, and he didn't prevail, obviously. But he did compromise along the way. Really, looking back, he made some rather serious tactical decisions to start with.

Riess: Tactical errors?

JAS: Yes.

Riess: So during the whole controversy he would take any call at home?

JAS: Just about. Occasionally he would not, but just about. And if it was a regent there's no question about it. He was protected to some extent by my mother. When we were having dinner we would generally fend calls off, that sort of thing. But I really think he would take just about any call. Talk to newspapermen, that sort of thing.

Riess: Gosh, the distress in the household must have been enormous.

JAS: There was a fair amount. Right. Again, I'm a little blurred on timing. I think all of us pretty much were out of the household. We were in and out, we all lived nearby, but it wasn't as though we were living in the rooms that we had, and having three meals a day there.

Riess: So you weren't a continuing witness to the breakdown of this whole thing?

JAS: Exactly, exactly.

Riess: When you say the regents "who were his best friends," which come to mind instantly?

JAS: Let's see. Oh, Earl [J.] Fenston, from Fresno; Chester [W.] Nimitz was a good friend. Of course, Governor Warren, who was an ex officio regent when he was here, was a good friend. Governor [Goodwin] Knight certainly was not. Let's see, these names have sort of receded. You'd have to refresh my recollection, frankly.

Riess: You've got a lot of southern California regents. The [Edwin W.] Pauley and [Edward W.] Carter types.

JAS: Yes, okay. Pauley was there at the time--so-so, no great friend. But not the kind of relentless pursuer that John Francis Neylan was.

Riess: Some of the old ones, like [Sidney M.] Ehrman and [Edward H.] Heller, I think they were gone by 1949.\*

JAS: Of course they were great friends, but they were gone, yes.

Riess: Gerald Hagar.

JAS: Gerry Hagar was another one who was there at the time who was a great friend, right. Father [Charles A.] Ramm.

Riess: How about [Howard C.] Naffziger?

JAS: Yes.

Riess: I guess by "great friend" I would mean someone whom he might even be calling to lean on.

JAS: Certainly Hagar and Fenston would fit within that category. And there are probably others, frankly. My memory for names! [chuckles]

Riess: When I send this back to you I'll send you a xerox of who the regents were then.

JAS: Yes. I can probably pick out more names.

Riess: Originally he could probably look down the table and say, "These are all my friends."

JAS: He could, he could.

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\*Ehrman was regent 1930-1952; Heller was regent 1942-1958.

Riess: And at the end he couldn't say that anymore.

JAS: I think that's absolutely right. Sure, they probably had disagreements, but it was a board that was really united.

Today you have different people on that board. I don't say this in any derogatory sense. During most of his career it was a kind of an "old boy" board. You had solid, respected business leaders, who really felt that being a regent for sixteen years was an honor and a distinction. I don't think you have that today. I'm not saying this is wrong. You have a very diverse board--you've got students and you've got blacks and you've got ladies and you've got Orientals. They didn't have them then! But whether you liked the system or not, you had a lot of people who were very, very able, who were just absolutely devoted to the welfare of the University of California, particularly at Berkeley. That's all changed and probably changed for the better. The point I'm making is it was a different kind of a group, and he got along very well, until the oath controversy, with that particular kind of group.

Riess: Did he have social relations with those people also?

JAS: Yes, he did. They used to go to Tahoe with the Ehrmans, for example, or they would go to Palm Springs with the Pauleys, and that sort of thing. James K. Moffitt was an early regent that he got to know very, very well. I remember going to a couple of parties at their house in Piedmont, a great big house. He did. Of course that's part of being the university president, I guess.

Riess: Well, I don't know why I was kind of blind to that. I thought he was their executive director, sort of, and they were his board. I didn't think that those barriers were always crossed.

JAS: Most of these people were really personal friends. And, of course, my mother got along with all of them. She was just great as far as that goes.

Riess: How about other kinds of advisors your father would have--fishing buddies, and other things. Who comes to mind?

JAS: People from Davis that he got to know--I'm not sure how. But he would go on an annual fishing trip with people from the Davis campus. Stanley Freeborn came from there, and there's a professor named Ira Smith, I think. There were probably more--again, I'm not very good on names. I went a couple of times on trips around Echo Lake with people occasionally who would come up from Davis to go fishing. But he would go off on a kind of an annual event with the group, primarily

JAS: from the Davis campus. Where that association developed, I'm just not sure. Perhaps from the time when he was in the legislature-- you know, not in the legislature, but doing the university's lobbying in Sacramento.

Riess: Who do you think his absolutely two best friends were?

JAS: Farnham [P.] Griffiths and Bill [William G.] Donald. They were both in his camp at the Bohemian Grove. And we used to not celebrate Christmas itself, but have a Christmas party, a family party, with the Donalds and the Griffiths when we were growing up. He had a lot of friends, obviously, and he certainly enjoyed his camp at the Bohemian Grove as much as he did anything. But those are the two closest ones, I think.

You mentioned before his brother. His brother wasn't just his brother, his brother was a very close friend. He really was. But Bill Donald was our family doctor when we were growing up, and Farnham Griffiths was on the Board of Regents. He's another name. Very fine lawyer. Chaffee [E.] Hall was another good friend. He was a lawyer here in San Francisco. But the two close ones would be the two I named, I think.

Riess: How do you think he used those close friends in helping him govern the university?

JAS: I doubt that he really used them very much. Dr. Donald did have, after a while, a university position. He ran Cowell Hospital. So he had a job. And then Farnham Griffiths did become a regent. But I don't think he ever particularly would have consulted them as far as day-to-day governance of the university goes. I think when he was out with his friends, and especially at the Bohemian Grove, probably they didn't talk about the university very much. It was really a social outlet. Just like I don't use my friends to worry about what I do here at PG&E, I don't think he used his friends particularly about running the university.

Riess: He did have a staff of people like George Pettitt and Skinny Johnson and Agnes Robb and so on. Any comment on these lieutenants in his life and how he used them?

JAS: Well, of course Miss Robb, I think, you know, would be the--if you had to pick one person who was the staff, why, she was it. She certainly was tremendously loyal and devoted to him and probably, I think, played a considerable part in the success that he enjoyed. I would say she was the one who really ran things, as far as running the office for him goes, that sort of thing. The others sort of came along later. I think, basically, she was with him for a long time. The rest of the staff came and went.

Riess: They had their tasks.

JAS: Yes. But I think he probably relied on Miss Robb more than he did on anybody else who was on the staff.

Riess: How much did he like Monroe Deutsch?

JAS: I don't think Monroe Deutsch was a very close personal friend. I think they got along okay. I kind of use the same example here. There are a whole lot of vice-presidents within the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and I get along with them. But my close personal friends aren't in the company; they are elsewhere. I mean, there are a lot of very nice people here. I think Deutsch was the same kind of relationship. I think he [Sproul] had respect for him. Certainly they weren't enemies. He sort of laughed at him occasionally. I can remember one particular occasion when my father was going to be gone for a period of time, and Monroe Deutsch took the occasion to move into his office. My father viewed that with a degree of amusement.

Riess: That's very funny, I'd say.

JAS: Yes, and it's no big deal. But that's the sort of guy that I think Monroe Deutsch was. He enjoyed the perquisites, and the pomp, and the whole thing. I think he thought a lot more of that than my father did. But that doesn't mean he wasn't a very capable guy.

My mother and Mrs. Deutsch were great friends. My mother spent a fair amount of time on the telephone. I can recall when I was living in the President's House, she and Mrs. Deutsch would talk every day on the phone. They really were good friends.

Riess: Are you saying that that helped glue the whole thing together?

JAS: I think so, yes. Yes, I think so. For example, I don't think my father would have ever viewed Monroe Deutsch as his successor. I think he was perfectly happy with the job that he did. Although there again, I never had really all that much exposure to what you might call the day-to-day operation of the university.

Riess: Do you think your father was sensitive to the feelings of people who were very close to him?

JAS: Yes, I think so. Talking like this sort of brings back some things. I can't be very specific about this, but he would come home, and at the dinner table he would talk about problems that had come up during the day with people within the university. He would talk about them, basically with my mother. I think he was quite sensitive to the way people felt. Using Dr. Deutsch as an example, he certainly never

JAS: did anything that I'm aware of to run him down, or to make fun of him, or anything like that, in private conversation. It was always sort of that he could view things with a certain sense of amusement if people didn't exactly behave as he thought maybe they ought to behave. [chuckles]

Riess: Who did he view as his successor?

JAS: I don't know. I'm not sure he was all that pleased with having Dr. Kerr be his successor, but that's something that I never had any involvement with. By then, again, none of us were around, so if he said anything privately to my mother, why we wouldn't have known about it. We were all married and gone. I just don't know who he would have selected, but I just have a feeling that if the decision had been left to him, I don't think he would have selected Clark Kerr. I'm not knocking Clark Kerr.

I've often wondered how much of a voice he had in the selection of his successor. I have a suspicion that he didn't have very much. I just have kind of a gut feeling that he didn't have very much.

#### Working on a Speech

Riess: When you can remember your father being at home, and you being younger, was there any kind of tension connected with "Your father's working now, be quiet, he's writing a speech."

JAS: Occasionally. We had a big attic upstairs, and he worked very, very hard on speeches. He once said that for each minute that he spoke, he prepared for an hour. He really did, and he practiced out loud, and he would do it upstairs in the attic. And there were a lot of times when we were told to be quiet.

Riess: That's really interesting. I thought he was just a natural orator.

JAS: He was very good, but he worked at it. It may not have seemed to people that he worked at it, but he sure did.

Riess: That's good to know. Did he have any help polishing it, or was he up there polishing it himself?

JAS: Pretty much himself. And I think he wrote most of his own stuff. At the end he didn't. Maybe the university had speechwriters by then. But certainly in the early part of his career I'm reasonably confident that he really did most of the writing of his speeches himself.

Riess: Just looking at your father as the tremendously successful manager that he was, how would you say that in general he dealt with the tensions of his job? How did he leave it behind?

JAS: He dealt with them really very well, I think, most of the time. When he came home, when he had had a long day at the office, there were times when there would be a family argument about something. I don't recall him working at night all that much. He would come home sometimes late for dinner, or fairly late. But I think he sort of-- at least the time when I was growing up, when I was small and was in the house--he put the job behind him.

He would come home, and he would spend a certain amount of time, as I say, playing with my brother Bob and myself. We went to a whole lot of sports events all the time we were on the campus, some which were at night. Recollections are blurred, but the job didn't seem to have all that much tension connected with it. Now maybe it did, but I just wasn't aware of it. And then of course the war came along.

It had to have tension connected with it. Really, the university was in a time of great expansion, and he was right in the middle of it, so there had to be a fair amount of tension. But he didn't demonstrate it, and he didn't seem to carry the job home with him at night. We had a discussion at the table about all kinds of things. My grandmother loved to argue about anything, and of course my father would, too. [chuckles]

Riess: That had to have been important in your decision for law school. You had your brief ready!

JAS: Maybe really that's where it all started. I'm not sure. [laughter]

But for the most part, I think, he could leave the job at the office. Of course, the oath thing came along and that all changed, really, during that period of time.

#### A Great Knack for Being President, and Making Friends

Riess: My bottom-line question is what made him such a great university president?

JAS: What made him a great university president? I have some very definite ideas about that, because I think he was that. It seems to me that it was probably just the great knack he had of really getting along

JAS: with people. That's not quite the right way to put it, either. But he made friends so easily, with everybody. With alumni, and with students, and I think most of the time, with the faculty. And running the university certainly had to be a real challenge, and governing it. Although again, I think it was simpler during his day.

He had such a great relationship with alumni all over the state, which he really worked at. It seemed to me--although he had some student problems during the time he was president--but it was just his real ability to get along with people. Sure, he was a great speaker, and sure, he had an ability to go out and raise money for the university, which was part of his job, but that related to getting along with people. He had a great ability when he was in Sacramento to get along with the legislature, and to get things for the university and to lobby for them. But again, that's all a people-oriented sort of thing.

You pointed out before he didn't have a great academic background, but he certainly up until the time of the oath controversy I think always had the respect and the trust of the faculty. It takes a kind of a unique ability to do that.

How effective an administrator he was, how much he delegated, how much he allowed his subordinates to do, I don't know. I have a feeling that he probably wasn't the world's greatest delegator of authority. Most of the decisions were probably centralized in the office of the president at that time. He spent a lot of time getting, I think they called them provosts in those days, for the Los Angeles campus. And those provosts had probably more authority and more responsibility because they were isolated from Berkeley and travel wasn't always all that easy then. You didn't fly PSA whenever you wanted to go to Los Angeles.

I think it's fair to say my father's heart was probably always basically with the Berkeley campus, although he certainly worked hard at making it a statewide university and I think is responsible for most of the success in that occurring. How he governed on a day-to-day basis, it's really hard for me to say. But the university seemed to run reasonably well, so he must have done a pretty good job at doing that, too.

Riess: I suppose the provosts on the other campuses, if they were strong men, that would mean that your father had really given them the job, and if they were not, it meant that he wasn't going to let it quite happen.

JAS: Right. I think that's true, I agree.

Riess: For a while at UCLA he had a triumvirate running things, so he could still be running it from this end, I guess.

JAS: That's the sort of thing others within the university family would know better than I would. As a family growing up, we really weren't involved in that sort of thing.

Riess: Right, and I wouldn't have expected to ask you some of those questions, either, except--.

JAS: Yes, but that's all right. I brought them up.

Riess: And you're a manager here. Maybe some people manage unconsciously, but I don't think one can do it too well.

JAS: No, no. I don't either. [chuckles] It takes--just to digress slightly--we had a chairman here, and a president for many, many years, James B. Black, and he was a friend of my father's. He was a graduate of the university, the Class of 1912, and he sort of ran this company, when he ran it, out of his back pocket. Now it runs a lot differently; now we have a management committee where we have eleven people and we talk interminably about things. My father was more the Jim Black type; I mean, I think he sort of ran the university out of his back pocket. Now maybe that's an oversimplification. But I just have that sort of a feel, that that's how he did the job.

Riess: After your father retired and before it was so bad for him, did he ever have regrets about things that he hadn't quite finished doing, or directions he wished he could have pushed things a little further?

JAS: I think he had certainly very deep regrets about the turmoil that the university went through during the sixties. But I don't ever recall him saying, "I wish I'd done this," or "I wish I'd done that." You know, my father, like all the rest of us, certainly had an ego. And I think it's fair to say that I don't think he thought that the university was run as well after he left as it was run before. But I can't ever recall him saying, "If I'd done this," or "I should have done that." I'm sure there were things like that, but I don't recall them.

Riess: Were there people who continued to consult with him after he retired? Go around Kerr and talk to him about things?

JAS: Not to my knowledge. Perhaps that would have been the case, but again, I was living my own life and raising our kids. He did maintain an office for a while. It's really hard to kind of pinpoint when he started to fail, but certainly you could see the beginnings of it during that period of time.

- JAS: Maybe some people did try to go around Kerr and come see him. But it appeared to me that he was pretty well divorced from the center of things.
- Riess: And he didn't invite that?
- JAS: I would be surprised if he did. I really don't think he did.
- Riess: Kerr said a very nice thing about your father. He said that in that transition period that your father did maintain an office for longer than Kerr would have liked, certainly. And he kept a lot of unfinished business on his desk--.
- JAS: So do I! [chuckles] I'm the same sort of messy person. My father had a lot of piles of paper around, too!
- Riess: Well, Kerr was not objecting to mess, he was saying more, "Why doesn't this guy go and let me do it."
- JAS: Run the place, yes.
- Riess: But he said that your father's decisions were a thing of perfection on every issue that he hung on to. When he ultimately turned them over to Kerr, Kerr concurred, happily. So that was nice.
- JAS: Yes. And I didn't, again, know how much there was of that--whether the transition was difficult, or whether it wasn't. He and Clark Kerr weren't great personal friends. But he had certainly great respect for Clark.

I can't ever recall him, when we would have family gatherings-- and of course it probably wouldn't be a subject of discussion-- fulminating if that's the right word, about what Clark Kerr was doing to the university. He didn't do that! He just didn't do that. He worried about the university, but then, again, it was a period, certainly during the sixties, when he was just going downhill.

#### The Distinguished Visitors

- Riess: Yes, right. Okay. What do you want to say? This is your chance. What haven't we talked about?
- JAS: Well, for me personally, growing up on the campus was just great. I really enjoyed it; it didn't blight my life. Some people thought that when I went to Cal or when I was at Berkeley High, that I got special

JAS: treatment. I really don't think so. My parents made growing up just great. If I could say I did the same for my kids--which I'm not sure I did--I would be happy. Life was, by and large, they made it very enjoyable. That's part of what parents are all about.

One thing they gave me, which I will be eternally grateful for, is they tried to involve us as much as they could when somebody really distinguished would come. And we got a chance to meet them, and once in a while we got a chance to eat with them. If anything, they gave me an appreciation that there's nothing all that wonderful or perfect about great men. They are human and you don't have to kowtow to them, and they're not perfect, and they're wrong lots of times, and you don't have to view them with any degree of awe. They are human beings, and you don't have to go out of your way to cater to them.

Some of them you trust and some keep their word and some don't and some are petty in various ways and some aren't. Knowing that is something that's really helped me a very great deal. I run into a lot of people, business leaders, and they're not all perfect. It's just an ability to recognize that and to not really be awed by somebody just because he has a particular job or a particular title. And that's something that really I got from living in the President's House and seeing all these people.

Riess: Was that your own insight, or was that a message from your father?

JAS: No, I think that's my own. But he was responsible for that.

It was wonderful. We met Harry Truman, and we met all kinds of people. Really, it's a great experience.

Riess: Were you told to behave differently when these people came?

JAS: No. I'm sure my mother would have been appalled if we had done something really bad. But we were never told to behave differently. And of course, we weren't always there, either. But when Charter Day speakers would come, we would certainly have a chance to meet them.

Games, and Reminiscences

Riess: Had you been thinking about the prospect of doing this interview before I arrived? Or are you just winging it?

JAS: I'm just winging it, really. I just thought that would be better, probably. But if there is something that at some point you would like to follow up on, why fine. I got your letter out last night and I re-read that, and I just worried about my ability to recall things, which is not all that great.

I really think my father deserves this sort of thing. I would be pleased to talk some more when you want me to do so.

Riess: You know what we haven't done here is get down any funny anecdotes about your father and the local mailman, the postman, the things that would happen at Echo Lake, maybe with rangers, or strangers, or just funny family stories, where your father was at his best or worst.

JAS: Well, he had a great imagination at times like Christmas, to create sort of schemes--schemes isn't the right word--sort of games. I remember one in particular, where we would hide gifts to each other at the end of a string. The string went all through the house. That sort of thing.

And when we came back from the service we were all married and started to have families, and we would all gather on Sunday night. There would be some sort of a game that he would have concocted and planned for those occasions. For a while we were there most every Sunday night; not always, but most of them. We would all chip in on doing the chores after dinner. His idea was that we would shake dice for whoever did that. He would be the one who was behind all this sort of activity. There would be some sort of a prize at the end, and he would have that.

When we were growing up, at Echo Lake he invented a baseball game with dice and so forth. Sort of like a game Parker Brothers would have today. We all had a team and we all played in this league, and a lot of hours went by. This was the sort of thing that he could do very well, create these things. It was just a part of him--he was a very creative guy, he really was. As for funny stories--I'm not very good on funny stories.

Riess: Did he tell jokes himself?

JAS: No, not very much. He certainly enjoyed them, and he certainly enjoyed his camp at the Bohemian Grove where there is a lot of joke telling. But I can't really remember him telling jokes--once in a while, but certainly not very often. And certainly never an off-color joke. There are a lot of those told at the Bohemian Grove, and probably he laughed as much as anything. But I don't think joke-telling was something that I can recall him doing very much of.

Riess: And he wouldn't bring those tales home?

JAS: No. He would come home on Sunday afternoon from the Bohemian Grove. He liked to take a drink--not that he drank to excess, because he certainly didn't. But he got into his full share of conviviality at the Bohemian Grove, I know that.

Riess: That's a real letting your hair down.

JAS: Yes, I think that's part of it.

Riess: How about his other club affiliations? Did he use clubs in the city in the same way, as a place to go and relax.

JAS: I don't think so. I think he enjoyed his membership in the Bohemian Club. He urged me to join, and really started me to do it, as you have to start at an early age. But basically that's a business thing. The Grove is the social part, where you do let your hair down. I can't even recall whether he belonged to the Pacific Union Club, for example. I don't think so. He wasn't, I don't think, what you'd call a great club man.

As far as participating himself in sport, during college he did, of course. And he played a little bit of golf for a while when we were growing up, but he soon stopped doing that. He belonged to the Berkeley Country Club for a while, which is now Mira Vista. But that didn't last very long. So he was never really--you know he wasn't a golfer, or anything like that. Fishing was the thing probably he did as much of as far as an outside personal participant kind of activity.

Riess: When you were with him and he met someone who had no idea who he was, would he be inclined to introduce himself as the president of the university?

JAS: No. No, I think he would be inclined to introduce himself by name. Sure, as I said before, the prestige of the job was certainly something he enjoyed. And when we would go to a basketball game or something, having a parking place as close to the gym as we did, that's the kind

JAS: of thing that he liked about the job. But I don't think he was imbued with his importance. And he didn't run around, when he met somebody, saying what he did and who he was. I think that's one of the reasons why people liked him. Once he got to know somebody he had a remarkable facility, of course you know, to remember names.

Riess: Meeting a strange new person, would he draw them out?

JAS: Yes, he was genuinely interested, really, in what other people did. And particularly students. I think he really would draw them out and get them to talk about themselves.

There were a lot of functions we had when I was living on the campus. We had all kinds of things. And I think he could do this with visiting dignitaries, too. I think he had an ability to communicate and to get along with them, and to draw them out so they would talk. Even the ones who were hard to talk to.

Riess: Were there any of them that he was really wowed by, do you think? You learned something about the basic humanity of all these people, but how about your father?

JAS: I don't think he was really wowed by them, no. I think he had greater admiration for some than others. One of his colleagues, of course, for whom he had great admiration, was Dr. [James B.] Conant from Harvard. I'd say that of anybody in the university field, he had, at least it seemed to me, the most admiration for him. As far as the heads of state and that sort of things, there were certainly, I think, some that he probably was more attracted to than others, but none that he really was overwhelmed by.

Riess: When your family and your brother's and your sister's get together, do you get into recollections of your father?

JAS: Once in a while. Really maybe not as much as you might think. And I don't know why that's the case. Maybe it has something to do with the last years. But really, not all that much, frankly.

Riess: So he doesn't loom overwhelmingly large.

JAS: No, no. And maybe that's to our discredit. I don't know. I'm not sure. Really, again, it's part of the fact that the last years were so bad. There is more reminiscing--and of course my mother lived longer--there's more reminiscing about her. She really worried about the grandchildren, and that. And my daughter lived with her for a while. And that's just more contact, I think, more immediate contact.

JAS: She lived a good deal longer. She only died, what two or three years ago now. Our family and my children, specifically, just saw a great deal more of her than they did of my father.

Riess: In the family lore are you considered to be the one most like your father, or is it your brother?

JAS: I think my brother is. Most people would say that he's the one who is most like him. I'm not sure I agree with that, but I guess it's true. I think we all have something of him. I think probably that's more accurate. And my brother enjoys speaking and sort of public occasions, and I think my father certainly did that. Yes.

Transcriber: Elizabeth Eshleman  
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Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Robert Gordon Sproul, Jr.

LOOKING BACK ON IT

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Robert Gordon Sproul, Jr. is an irreverent, off-the-cuff fellow, but very sentimental about his parents, and though he thought he'd said it all after his mother's death in 1981, he was brought out of reminiscing retirement to be interviewed about his father, "Old Doc Sproul."

This interview history may be equally irreverent because my encounters with Bob Sproul have been so definitely informal, delightful, sometimes mildly manic. Unforgettable was the afternoon that I departed his office at Two Embarcadero Center with not only the photographs he had provided me for his mother's oral history, but the day's correspondence and legal briefs. "Light-fingered" he called me ever after.

Bob Sproul writes and speaks apparently easily. He provided a good introduction to the Ida Sproul oral history, The President's Wife (1981), and for the appendices to that volume he gave us copies of his lively 16-page account of the president's mother, "Mother Sproul...the story of how one lives for almost a century without running out of gas," and a 14-page account of his own mother, Ida, who "married Father on September 6, 1916--the greatest day of his life." His family account presented in Berkeley in April 1983 at the Town and Gown Club he titled, "Life Lived Backwards." It is appended.

When Bob agreed to an interview, the arrangement was that I come up and see the Bob and Ida Sproul memorabilia room in the barn of the Bob, Jr. and Cara-May Sproul house in the Napa Valley. On a Saturday in late November I drove up, the map leading me to the orchard outskirts east of the town of Napa. On arrival I had a tour of the estate, the vineyard, and a cup of Bob's brewed coffee in the Franklin stove-heated "barn." After the interview I had lunch with Bob and Cara-May and a charming very young grandchild who was remaining on after Thanksgiving Thursday.

The interview has been only minimally edited. As Bob Sproul said, in a note with the returned manuscript, "My changes are in pencil and all of them can be ignored if you wish."

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
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University of California, Berkeley



**R**obert Gordon Sproul Jr. was born in Berkeley in 1920, the year his father became comptroller of the University of California. In 1942, when the son graduated from this campus, his father was president of the University.

The younger Sproul joined the Navy and spent three years as an officer on the *USS Maryland* in the Pacific. He married Cara May Cutter, whom he met on the Berkeley campus, earned his law degree at Harvard in 1948, and returned to practice law in San Francisco.

President of the San Francisco Bar in 1976, Sproul made headlines when he proposed a citizen review board to adjudicate complaints against police, a board that now exists, and again when he instituted a Bar Association grading system for the city's judges. He worked to support the Pretrial Diversion Project in San Francisco, the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, Lawyers for Urban Affairs, and other organizations devoted to providing legal help for the poor.

An enthusiastic hiker and camper, Sproul took his family and groups of friends on long

hikes in Yosemite National Park, went trout fishing throughout the Sierra, and journeyed to the mountains of Wyoming to camp and fish. He served as a director of the Redwood League and other groups formed to protect the environment.

His brother, John Allen Sproul '46, recalls: "When we were children growing up on the Berkeley campus, we played in the attic of the President's House on rainy days with the kind of solid and substantial toy soldiers that were made in those days. My brother, being older, was of course the General, and one of the principal edicts he promulgated was that there could be 'No laughing at the General.' Well, as he grew up, he learned to laugh at himself, but more importantly he reacted with people, both young and old, throughout his life in ways that made them realize how important it is to have a sense of humor.

"Bob was a good man, one who cared deeply about real things. He was often impatient, sometimes irascible, and occasionally downright impossible. But, in sum, he was a man of principle and compassion. He was a lawyer who cared about justice (and this is not invariably the case), justice in the law and in the courts, and justice in society. He worked seriously, diligently, and productively toward these goals, but always the seriousness of his intent was saved from an excess of earnestness by his irrepressible comic flair.

"Above all, my brother was a man of prodigious capacity and talent for friendship. He worked at being a friend with thoughtfulness and imagination, and was rewarded in return with an outpouring of loyalty and love that was his greatest joy."

Sproul had a penchant for sending valentine cards to women he liked. Before his scheduled surgery for cancer last June, 50 of those women gave a party for Sproul and his wife at the Ferry Building in San Francisco. A plane was hired which towed a sign reading, "Bobby Valentine is 65."

Following the surgery, Robert Gordon Sproul Jr. suffered recurring bouts of depression. On December 3, he took his own life with a gun in the family's apartment in the Richmond District.

In addition to his sister, Marion Goodin '38, and his brother, John, he is survived by his wife and four children: Robert Gordon Sproul III '69, of Moraga; Curtis Cutter Sproul '70, of Sacramento; James Martin Sproul '79, of Berkeley; and Carrie Elizabeth Sproul, of San Francisco. There are two grandchildren, Carly and Nicholas Sproul.

Evening at Home, Etc.

[Date of Interview: November 24, 1984; Napa, California;]

Riess: I am curious about an expression you used in a letter to me about "What kind of a hairpin" your father was.

RGS, Jr: My father-in-law, he used to say that all the time. "He's this kind of hairpin, or that kind of hairpin," was his way of getting right to the point about people. He would go on from there. That's the first question he asked, you know. "Where do you tend bar?" That is, number one, "What do you do?" "What kind of a hairpin are you?" I don't know where that comes from. An old Sacramento expression. It's kind of descriptive.

Riess: To start off, the readings by your father on weekday nights, from 7:15 to 8:00 P.M., what kind of things did he read from?\*

RGS, Jr: Well, he read all of [Carl] Sandburg's Lincoln, and we read a number of historical novels. As far as I can recall, though, we didn't get into anything too deep. We didn't have any really classic readings, or anything like that. He tried to get things that would be interesting. But it was long on history, James Fenimore Cooper stuff, but maybe a little better. Whatever was current. Stories about the Old West and stories about the country, and that kind of thing, that would be interesting to the listener. They were good things. The audience would tend to wander off, but he was insistent.

Riess: He wouldn't let the audience wander off.

RGS, Jr: No, you had to stick around there. You know, it was like all families, if you didn't behave you got financial penalties and all other kinds of penalties. You had to go along with the guy. But it was a good thing. Looking back on it, it was a great thing. At

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\*See Written Reminiscences following interview.

RGS, Jr: the time, it didn't seem all that great. We all had other things to do, other ways to spend our time. But looking back on it, it was fine, it was a good idea. I wish we had more of that kind of thing.

Riess: Well, when you think about it, he certainly had other things to do, too.

RGS, Jr: Yes.

He was a big paper man. I think I told you he was an early user of those dictaphones. He would want a break for about an hour after dinner, let his meal digest, and then he would go back into his study, which was right off the living room, and go back to his papers. He always had plenty of papers.

Riess: How long did the readings go on?

RGS, Jr: Oh, I don't know, that's kind of hard to tell. It was when we were all going to school in Berkeley, and it was probably during the thirties, mainly. You know, my sister was three years older, my brother three years younger. And my sister went off to Dominican for high school, so she wasn't there all that much during high school. And it didn't go every night. If we hit two nights that was pretty good for a week.

Nobody does it nowadays. Not to say nobody, but most people don't. I've always been deterred, partly by the fact that I'm not a very good reader. He was a good reader, and good readers are hard to come by. My wife is a beautiful reader; she can read beautifully, with expression. I don't know, my eyes don't work on the page very well, or something, so I've never read aloud very well. It's kind of an art to read aloud well.

Riess: Did he read from the Bible also?

RGS, Jr: No, no, he didn't read from the Bible. He was somewhat of a non-church man. He used to go, I guess, Easter, down there at St. John's. His mother, she went three times a week: Wednesday, and 11:00 on Sunday, and again at 5:00 on Sunday. But he didn't. He kind of drifted off from church at a very early age, probably in high school. But he went once a year, made a big display, putting a large bill in the plate so we could see it. And then he, later on in life, loved being the chairman of the board of PSR [Pacific School of Religion]. He thought that was great. So that was kind of the thing that he did.

Riess: Was there always a moral to be drawn from what he was reading to you?

RGS, Jr: No, he was entertaining us. (This is pretty strong stuff. Boy, this is good, strong coffee, keep you awake.)

No, not at all. He liked entertaining. The games and the reading were sort of part of the same deal. You know, he loved games! And there are people like that, who just love games. A good friend of mine loves games, a nice young lady, this one right here [looking at photo on wall], she's happiest playing games. He was kind of the same way. Some nights we read, and some nights we played "Categories," a kind of an intellectual game. We had dumb games, too.

Riess: I always think people who love to play games are very competitive.

RGS, Jr: Oh, he was very competitive, liked to play, liked to win. I think I told you the famous story--you've probably forgotten. My Uncle Ted, my mother's brother, Ted Wittschen, was quite a guy. He was president of the State Bar, you know, a great attorney and a neat guy. His son, young Ted, got killed right away in the war. It really affected him. He had a big stroke right after that. He lived probably ten more years, and he couldn't speak, but his mind was good. He used to come over on Sunday, and we played all kinds of games, and Uncle Ted would participate the best he could, but he had to write everything out on a little pad, he couldn't speak. We were playing some game, I forget what it was, Hearts or something, and my Uncle Ted wrote on his little pad, handed me a slip of paper, it says, "Your father cheats." [laughter] I remember that! He was getting a little overly competitive. He was great at changing the rules in the middle of the game. There was a lot of yelling about that, because he would rig the deal so he would come out ahead. But he loved games, and you're right, he was very competitive. Extremely competitive.

Riess: So you couldn't have been shy in that family.

RGS, Jr: I don't think so, no. I think everybody is somewhat pushy. Some are worse than others, my sister is the worst, my brother is the best. But you had to be kind of pushy, yes, everybody.

Real Friends

Riess: Do you think he judged the rest of the world by the same standards? It sounds like they were pretty high at home.

RGS, Jr: Well, I think so, yes.

Riess: What about his tolerance beyond? Universities are full of very different people.

RGS, Jr: Well, I don't know. He just loved the university atmosphere, and all those prima donna, high-powered professors. They were all his friends. Guys who were deans and so forth, and people in the Academic Senate. And there were a lot of very colorful professors. My memory of the names of all of them isn't all that great. You know, Hildebrand was one of his really good friends. He took over that College of Letters and Science. He didn't want to do that, but he did it because my dad told him to. So he surrounded himself with very strong and forceful and highly intelligent people, but he lived in that kind of world, where he could find them easily.

There were a whole lot of them like Hildebrand, just didn't live as long. We can all remember him because he lived to be 102 years old. But there were a lot of very colorful, wonderful people, like Ira Cross and Henry Morse Stephens, and people like that, who were just as colorful as Joel, maybe more so. [Stephens died 1919]

But, you know, my dad's two best friends--that's kind of a clue, I guess, he had two. He didn't have a lot of really close buddies. My mother always said that there were friends that came with the job and then there were real friends. Well, real friends were kind of a minority, and friends who came with the job were legion. You know, in that job, everybody invites you everywhere, and you're lionized. But after the job's over, all those friends wander off to parts unknown, they just disappear. So he didn't have a lot of real friends. His two really close friends were Bill Donald, the doctor, and Farnham Griffiths, the attorney over at McCutchen's. They were his two buddies that he did things with.

Riess: What kind of things did he do with them?

RGS, Jr: Well, first of all, they were in the same camp at the Bohemian Grove, and they enjoyed that. He was a big Bohemian. But the Donalds went up to our cabin in the summertime. They made the

RGS, Jr: mistake of leaving the cabin and it exploded. The cabin burned down, Mrs. Donald was in it and got terribly burned.\* That was a terrible incident. But they were up there at the cabin.

The Griffithses--every Christmas Eve during the end of the thirties, and very early forties, we spent together with the Griffithses and the Donalds. They live up in north Berkeley, up there on LaVereda and LaLoma, the northern part. We rotated. We would have Christmas Eve at the Donalds, and then we'd have it at the Griffithses, and then we would have it at the Sprouls.

Those were kind of elaborate deals. Everything was a big festival, everything was planned. I must say everybody joined in; there were all kinds of games and we put on plays. Every family would have their own play, you know. We would write these really quite elaborate plays and do a lot of preparation. Again, you're right, it was kind of competitive, see who could put on the best show. So we did that with them, and then we saw them in the summer, and then I think he spent a lot of time with them. Of course, he had the two weeks at the Grove, and those are the guys he palled around with when he was there.

Riess: Would he spend time on the phone with them, would he consult with them?

RGS, Jr: I think Farnham Griffiths was a big advisor and confidant. Farnham was a regent, probably the regent he was closest to. And he always took such good care of his friends. I mean, I think they're all good people, but to be a friend of his was a pretty good deal. He made Bill Donald the head of the Cowell Hospital and all that. He got his friends all those jobs. [laughs] He would even get friends of mine jobs, you know. Always finding something for my destitute friends to do during the depression.

Riess: Yes, you said he found jobs for the out-of-work parents of your friends.

RGS, Jr: Right, yes. Oh, he was a big soft touch on that kind of stuff. You give him a sad story and he would immediately get busy and see if he could rectify the situation. You know, when he died, people owed him so damn much money--there were about fifty or sixty little

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\*Ida Amelia Sproul, The President's Wife, an oral history interview conducted 1980-1981, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1981, p. 134.

RGS, Jr: people in the office and so forth who knew he was a soft touch and would borrow from him. And he would do that; he was that way. He didn't understand money very well, and he was very free with it.

Riess: I would have thought he would have understood it very well, the Scotsman he was.

RGS, Jr: No, no. He was a non-business type, Suzanne. He was definitely a non-business type. He rose to be president through the business end of the university, rather than the academic end, but it was a good thing he got out of the business end. I don't think he had much of a talent for business. He never really knew much about what property he owned, and so forth. He never really got into the details of all that.

### The Tireless Type

Riess: Well, what type would you say he was then, if he wasn't the business type.

RGS, Jr: Oh, he's just kind of--I hate to say, I hate Ronnie Reagan, but in some way they had some things in common. He was a great front man for the deal. You know, that's what he did. He ran the deal. He was a great talker. What do you do when you're president of things? You get up and you make speeches. He did it about six nights a week. I mean he was so tireless and so energetic you can't believe it. And you go to all kinds of affairs and you front for the organization. But you don't sit around making up the budget, or doing that kind of thing.

My father had a better grasp of what was going on than Ronnie ever did. But Ronnie, if he's good at anything, he's good at fronting for the deal. Reagan can stand there at Omaha Beach and at the DMZ and look presidential. And my father could do that, too. He could talk, as you know, like nobody's business.

Riess: Well, when he was home with all those papers in the evening--.

RGS, Jr: Shuffling papers, yes.

Riess: The impression I get from other people is he would take office problems home and he would apply himself to whatever it was, and a couple of days later he would come back with fairly good solutions to them. So what was that process? It sounds like he really did work things through.

RGS, Jr: Well, he certainly was a great man for detail. He was really a very organized guy in a lot of ways. He started out early in life as an efficiency expert, and he might have been good at that. Systems and procedures and that kind of thing were kind of his forte. He liked the bureaucracy, he liked organization. He certainly was never scared by the largeness of the university, or bothered by it. He seemed to handle those kinds of things.

He was good with people, and he did get down into pretty small detail on small problems, you know. I find a lot of good executives do that. They worry about who sits next to whom in the executive dining room or the faculty club, and all that kind of thing. Those kinds of little details he got into. Nobody ever wrote him a letter that didn't get answered. That's one thing he did, sitting there with all those papers.

And really, you can't overemphasize the fact that he made use of those mechanical dictating machines in an early day. I guess it was in the twenties he had the Edison thing with the wax cylinders. That was a kind of rudimentary dictating machine. They used to kind of carry them in wire baskets like those used for milk cartons. In a weekend he would fill a couple of milk carton things and each one of them held six of those wax cylinders. He dictated, and the sound was like a phonograph record on those cylinders. On Mondays somebody would come by and pick those up to be transcribed, and I remember one time the person had a little accident and broke all the cylinders. [chuckles] That was the worst thing that could happen to you, it almost ruined his mental health. But that could happen today. Now they erase tapes--same thing happens. Anyhow, he was able to do huge volumes. He was kind of ahead of the game on the use of dictating equipment.

Riess: Was Agnes Robb in the office then?

RGS, Jr: Oh yes. Agnes Robb, as far as I know, was there from the beginning of time. [We're going to have a big deal, for Agnes, Suzanne, which I am promoting. She's going to be ninety on January 10 or something, and we're going to have a big banquet for her down in Oakland. It's just going to consist of the entire Sproul family, my brother and sister, and all the grandchildren. There will be about twenty people.]

Agnes was always there, yes. Agnes always considered herself to be part of the family, and I always considered her to be a part of the family, and I think my brother and sister did, to different degrees. We're all different, we all look at things very differently. But I certainly had that view of Agnes.

Riess: When all of those cylinders broke, that practically broke him, you said. In fact, didn't he have an ulcer or ulcers or something like that and a couple of real bouts with poor health?

RGS, Jr: I don't know, one problem with this whole process--you know, a wonderful way to go at this is when the person is alive. After they've died and they've been dead for ten years, all your memories are kind of mixed up and not very good. Not very good at all. I remember he had an allergy, and he was allergic to stock, and so forth. Before he became president, it was in 1928 or '29, he had this terrible bout where he damn near died. He had weak lungs, and he had these allergies. And it was caused by the fact that he had all this stock in the garden; at least that's what the doctor said. When we pulled it all out, he seemed to revive immediately. He wasn't sick very long. And I don't remember him being sick.

I know he had ulcers later on, and after he stopped being president he had a million health problems. He certainly was a lousy retired person. But my memory is, most of that happened after he was president. He may have had some health problems before he retired, but I don't remember it. Kind of a healthy fellow.

Riess: I think it was in your little memoir that you mentioned the ulcer.

RGS, Jr: I think that's later on. Yes, he damn near died--this was after he retired--and that was a stomach problem and ulcers. I guess they got malignant or something, and Dr. Richards took those out. But I think that was after he retired. Could be job-related, building up. Who knows?

### Lively Discussion

Riess: How about your dinner conversation being constant strife and argument? [laughs]

RGS, Jr: That's the bottom line, yes. It was pretty stressful, I guess, or it would be for some people. Again, that didn't happen every night, because he traveled a lot. I always figured he lived one-third of the time in Berkeley, and one-third down in L.A., and one-third on the road. So he was only around one-third of the year.

I told you before, we were all raised by my grandmother. She was always there. There were all these times when he wasn't around Berkeley, but when he was there we had everybody at the table, and

RGS, Jr: we certainly had lively discussions, and they usually turned out that people would take sides and we would discuss something rather controversial, like religion or gambling, or some other thing, or drink, or whatever you wanted to discuss. Everybody had an opinion, and everybody joined in, particularly my grandmother, who was a feisty person, really, at heart. My mother didn't join in all that much, but she didn't mind, she was there, she kind of enjoyed watching us. He liked lively dinner discussions.

Another big deal was always Sunday morning. We had a kind of a big feast every Sunday morning, a really good breakfast. One of the big favorites was kippered cod, I remember. On Sunday morning we would all be there, and the same kind of lively discussion would take place. A polite way of putting it is "lively discussion." People would get kind of wrought up occasionally. I told you about the time my grandmother stalked off and up to her room. She thought about it for a while, and then she charged back down again, and had some new points that she hadn't made before. You have to get them in! Pretty old lady to go up and down those stairs! [chuckles]

Riess: If he was with a bunch of friends at the Bohemian Club, for instance, do you think he tended to generate this sort of discussion about him?

RGS, Jr: He probably dominated his family a lot more than he did his friends. You know, you dominate your children a lot more. I didn't have anything to do with the Bohemian Club. He was a big Bohemian, but I never had any part in it, so I don't really know what he did up there in the Isle of Aves. I'm sure he was entertaining, and I'm sure he, you know, was the center of things.

They had another group that Uncle Allan I guess was the originator. They met after he retired. The Disputers, or the Debators, or something. They'd do the same thing. They used to bring up topics everybody would get into. And I'm sure they did that same deal up at the Grove. He liked that, and so did Uncle Allan, and so did his mother. They all liked that kind of stuff. They enjoyed that. We don't do that in our family now, but it was fun.

Riess: Gee, I think I would run away from home. That doesn't sound in the least bit fun to me.

RGS, Jr: I don't know; we got kind of beaten up a little bit, I guess, a little scarred, but nothing real bad. You look back on all these things, Suzanne, as being very enjoyable. At the time, maybe they weren't all that enjoyable.

The Faculty and the Organizations

Riess: You said that all the intellectual faculty women scared Ida out of her wits. You don't think that Bob had a similar reaction?

RGS, Jr: She said that, I think. I don't think I said that. She might have been exaggerating a little bit. But she certainly was scared. When she came here she couldn't face up to the first faculty tea and all that. Mrs. Wheeler got her going.

Riess: But how about your father? You don't think he had a similar kind of reaction?

RGS, Jr: No, he was full of beans, he had all that confidence. None of those guys worried him. I don't think he was overawed by any of them. There were some pretty big people, Mr. Hearst and so forth.

Riess: I went dipping back into some of the interviews done in the 1960s with faculty here. Stephen Pepper described your father as a Wild West guy.\* He couldn't get comfortable with him like he could with Allan.

RGS, Jr: Well, yes, I think he had very few friends, close friends. Uncle Allan had millions of friends. Dad kind of came at people with big noise; he was kind of acting a part all the time, a role. Uncle Allan was much lower-key. I'm sure he had a lot more close friends than my dad.

Riess: [Benjamin] Lehman admired your father a lot.\*\* Thought he was cagey and a little of a political operator.

RGS, Jr: Yes, he was a politician. I was a kid, a teenager. I don't know how he ran the university. But I think he was a politician or he couldn't have done it. He would form alliances. People in the

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\*Stephen C. Pepper, Art and Philosophy at the University of California, 1919 to 1962, an oral history interview conducted 1961-1962, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1963, p. 471.

\*\*Benjamin H. Lehman, Recollections and Reminiscences of Life in the Bay Area from 1920 Onward, an oral history interview conducted 1964-1966, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1969, p. 348.

RGS, Jr: Academic Senate who were his friends, he could count on, he would call them in if he had a big issue coming up, and be sure that they were with him. He operated in a very political manner. I'm sure he did.

Riess: Did people come to the President's House, like Lawrence, or Lehman, or Pepper, or Hildebrand? Did they come to his office at home in the evening?

RGS, Jr: No, not that I can remember. They came to social affairs, and there were a lot of those when he was around. They were every other night, practically. Every other night there was something going on at that house. When they were in town, they entertained a lot. And they would come to that. If there was a guest he'd have appropriate people, but I can't remember them dropping by and seeing him. I think they came to his office.

Riess: Plotting and backroom politics didn't happen at home.

RGS, Jr: Well, it happened over the telephone or in his office. Over the telephone I would think, more likely.

Riess: It's interesting to learn that he kept notes, dictated a little memo on all of his telephone conversations. Have you ever seen them?

RGS, Jr: Oh, yes. Everything that happened, he used that machine.

Riess: What was that instinct to keep such a careful record?

RGS, Jr: I don't know.

Riess: Do you do that in your office?

RGS, Jr: Yes. I have a terrible memory. He had purportedly a good memory and he certainly was a good memorizer, but I do the same thing. I'm often the same way. I learned something from him. I use my machine the same way and when I have a conference or something, I make little notes right away. I think it's a good practice, particularly in the law business. And I think it's probably good in the university president business. It's good business practice. I don't see anything political or diabolical or anything else.

Riess: Agnes Robb was the guardian of all that.

RGS, Jr: Oh gosh yes, she was keeper of all that stuff, all the paper, and all the little proclamations he got, and all that junky memorabilia he got, desk sets and ash trays, and all kinds of stuff. She had

- RGS, Jr: boxes and boxes of that junk. Never threw away anything. A lot of it she gave to me and I threw it all away as soon as I got it. I used it for prizes on camping trips and things like that.
- Riess: She listed in her oral history something like 270 organizations that he belonged to at the end of his life.
- RGS, Jr: I saw John Molinari the other night at a banquet, and he gave me a little rundown on his career. He's like Stan McCaffrey and my father. They belonged to thousands of organizations. There was the Committee Against Violence and then there was the Committee In Favor of Violence! [chuckles]
- Riess: The ultimate thing would be to be both a Republican and a Democrat. But he was really a Republican, wasn't he, your father?
- RGS, Jr: Yes. He was a lousy Republican. He voted for Roosevelt, I guess, three out of four times. But again, in his job he couldn't really be very political. He was very careful not to--politics is not one thing we talked about very much, or he told anybody too much about. He had to deal with the legislature, and deal with all kinds of people. But he was a Republican. Nowadays he would be a terribly liberal Republican, but in those days he was just kind of a fairly liberal Republican.
- Riess: Was one of the discussions whether or not he would stay in the job, or whether he would take these other jobs?
- RGS, Jr: Not with me. He might have talked with other people about it. The bank job, and the Columbia University job--I can't remember a lot of discussion on those things at all. I'm sure he talked to Ida a lot about all those things, and he talked to his friends in the top echelon of the university, but he didn't talk to his family about all these things.
- Riess: That wouldn't be the nature of a family conference?
- RGS, Jr: No. It wouldn't have made a big difference if he had gone off to Columbia. It wouldn't have made a lot of difference to the family. He and my mother were gone quite a bit anyway. They were down in Los Angeles as opposed to being in New York. I don't think he figured that would affect our lives too much.

Grandma Sproul

Riess: Is this serious when you say you were really brought up by Grandma Sproul?

RGS, Jr: Well, it was said partly to needle my mother. We all like to needle each other in the family, constant needling. But I feel that way. She was whom we talked to, and she was there at every meal at home, and she got us off to school. When I was going to college she'd go up to the fraternity house and do all that kind of thing. A lot of times my mother would be down in Los Angeles, or on the road, and she stood in for my mother in all kinds of cases. She made all the tents for my Boy Scout troop and did all the things that mothers quite often do. It was a great deal for her, you know. She was in her sixties when she got there and she got to raise another family. Big deal! It is a good deal; it was volunteer. [chuckles] You don't get very many volunteers for that thing, you know.

Riess: Did she get into the kitchen?

RGS, Jr: No. She probably got in the kitchen as much as my mother did, maybe a little more, but not much. The kitchen work was done by others. We had a pretty nice life, Suzanne, you know. We had a lot of help.

Riess: You were brought up in the same way that your father was brought up, if you had your grandmother doing it for you.

RGS, Jr: Well, that's hardly true. He was brought up in an extremely poor family. His father was there every day. And they moved around from rented houses, never owned a home that whole time he grew up, never owned a home, never owned an automobile, never owned a book even! My grandfather got every book they ever had out of the library. No, he lived in far different ways than I did.

Riess: But the values.

RGS, Jr: I guess the values, yes. They were a much more religious family than mine. We were a little odd in the area of religion.

Riess: Did he keep track of your reading at all? Did he control that aspect?

RGS, Jr: He didn't control it, but he encouraged it. We had these deals where we got paid a penny a page for reading. I guess he controlled it: I guess he had some control over what we read. And there were books that--well, we probably picked them, but he probably--they weren't just trash. If we read things that he thought were educational, we

RGS, Jr: got paid a penny a page, that kind of thing. He was great on all those kinds of incentives. That led to a lot of fraud and cheating, as you might gather, and people would turn the pages pretty fast. A lot of speed readers. [laughter]

It wasn't a very good system. He had other systems. He wanted to get the snails out of the garden, and he told my brother and I that he would give us a penny a snail. My brother and I knew where there were thousands of snails. They were all down there in the bushes. We went down and got handfuls of them. We got buckets and buckets of snails, and then he had to pay off. So he didn't change the deal; because we came in with these snails, he couldn't do anything about it. But he knocked it off right then and there. [laughter] There were a lot more snails out there than he realized.

But all these incentives--a lot of them had to do with money in all kinds of ways, picking up small change.

Riess: Were dinner table discussions settled by dictionaries and encyclopedias?

RGS, Jr: Yes, I guess we looked things up afterwards, you know, any kind of arguments about this and that. I think we looked them up afterwards, yes.

#### Thoughts on Education and the Law, and "The Best Deal"

Riess: In an interview with Ralph Merritt, he reports that he suggested some reading to your father, because he felt that your father hadn't dipped enough into cultural matters and expanded his education in the way that Merritt thought he would need if he were going to really stride forward. Do you think that's true?

RGS, Jr: I was about four years old when he was palling around with Ralph Merritt.

Riess: Oh, I don't expect you to remember, but do you think it's true that Ralph might have had that much influence on your father?

RGS, Jr: Oh, he probably did. He was kind of a fathead, but I guess he had that idea. My father went to Mission High, and I think he was very well educated. Those goddamn Republicans went around saying, "Now, this is the first generation in the history of America where the kids aren't as well educated as their parents," and I don't think that's

RGS, Jr: true. I think he was far better educated than his parents. He learned Latin and Greek, and Monroe Deutsch had a big influence on him at Mission High. He was very good to Monroe. Monroe got to the university, I guess, through him.

His mother was proofreader for the Argonaut and some other publications over there. She was a tremendous reader. And his father was a very, very intellectual man. You've heard the story of his father? He was the eldest son of all those sons in Scotland, but he didn't want to take over the family business. He wanted to be a doctor. He went to the University of Edinburgh and was one year from graduation when his mother died. And his mother was the one who encouraged him to be a doctor. His father cut him off as soon as his mother died. He left for this country, and that was the end of that. But he was a tremendous reader, and again, he was good at reading out loud. He read to us when we were small. So he came from a family of readers, all of them, his mother, and his father, and he went to a super high school. So I think he was always kind of an intellectual guy.

Riess: He didn't need Ralph Merritt.

RGS, Jr: Well, he might have learned something from Ralph, but I'm not sure he needed it. He was one of those book types. Couldn't screw a light bulb in, couldn't hammer a nail if he had to. [chuckles] In another generation he would be a lawyer. That's what happens to people who can't screw in light bulbs. They all become lawyers.

Riess: What do you think he admired most, what type, what discipline? There were the scientists that he surrounded himself with, and there were the lawyers that he generated in the form of sons and son-in-law.

RGS, Jr: Yes, he had a lot of friends, acquaintances anyway, who were lawyers, and he knew a lot of lawyers. When I came back from Harvard Law School he introduced me to a lot of his friends. And he would have been very happy if I had gone to work for Farnham Griffiths. He had a friend of his who was a sole practitioner, a man named Long, who was a pretty good lawyer. I can't remember his first name. He thought that was the greatest idea for me, to go in practice with Mr. Long, because he was older and I could someday inherit the practice and that was a way to move along fast in the law; he kind of liked that idea. So he knew something about lawyering, and how you go about it, but I don't think he was all that excited about lawyers. I think scientist were much more interesting to him than lawyers.

Riess: A lawyer, in a way, is something very much in the abstract. What's the point of being a lawyer unless you have an issue--I'm interested in that idea. Do you go into the law just for the sake of going into the law, or do you go into the law to solve problems?

RGS, Jr: You go into the law because you have nothing else to do. You're not good at anything else. You can't screw in a light bulb, you can't hammer a nail. It's a great dumping ground for all those people who are intellectually oriented, and they can't do anything else, so they become lawyers.

Riess: Oh, that's a little hard on yourself.

RGS, Jr: It's true. That's the way it works. It's wonderful. It works well. Then you can go out and have vineyards and do all kinds of things. All as a means to an end. You can live the good life in America if you're a lawyer. It's great.

Riess: Well, that's Bob Sproul, Jr. Do you think your father really felt that way?

RGS, Jr: I don't know if he looked at it that way at all. You know, he probably thought the law was a great profession. But Farnham, you know, he was kind of like I just described. Farnham was an admiralty lawyer, and he kind of fussed around in a small corner of the law. But he spent a great deal of time in Europe and traveling all over. I think my father thought his friend Farnham had a helluva life being a lawyer. And he probably was even envious of how much money he made at it.

Riess: Oh, I should think your father would have been more of a Calvinist than that.

RGS, Jr: I don't know. He always thought he was underpaid.

Riess: Who were some of the people he did favors for? You said that he got Monroe Deutsch his position.

RGS, Jr: Oh, I don't know. I can give you a couple of examples. There are probably millions of others, but I can give you a couple. During the depression, in the thirties, things were really horrible. You're too young to remember all that stuff, but they were horrible. The kids I was going to school with, a lot of their parents were out of work.

RGS, Jr: There was one good friend of mine, who is now a highly successful surgeon down in Beverly Hills--his father was named Mr. William Pomeroy--the son was a great buddy of mine. I used to go down to his place all the time and have lunch and spend a lot of time with him. But his father was out of work for a long time. They really were living on two meals a day and so poor you couldn't believe it and they didn't have enough money to go to the movies or anything else. So I told my dad all about the troubles they were having, and so he took Mr. Pomeroy, Bill Pomeroy on as administrator of the WPA at Cal. Mainly because I had said all these good things about him, what a nice guy he was. Pomeroy turned out to be a helluva guy. He ended up as controller at UCLA, really an able fellow, but he was down and out and really having a horrible time during the depression. And that's one example.

Another one was typical of my dad. When I was back at Harvard, I worked every summer for a gang that sprayed all the sewers and ponds around Cambridge and Needham and Dedham, and they were all Irish. There were Gallaghers and Fays and O'Mara. I was the only non-Irishman and I got along very well with them. My boss was a young fellow name of Houlihan; he ran the crew. He had started out in Boston College, and he wanted to be a pharmacist. He had gotten pretty far along, and then the war came and interrupted what he was doing. He came back and he wasn't able to continue, and he was out in the ditch, running all these people with shovels. I told my dad about him, and he got very interested in this guy and was going to get him back to Berkeley and so forth. The guy might have come; except he really wasn't all that ambitious; if the guy had had real ambition, he would have handled that one himself. So he was reaching on that one. But he was the kind of guy who was great on hard-luck stories. He would believe almost all of them.

Riess: Your father did?

RGS, Jr: Oh, yes, he was very gullible. When he died he had all these people who owed him money and we just kind of forgot about it. Miss Robb always kept a good record of all the people he loaned money to. He loaned money to relatives and so forth. There were a lot of people around during those days who just needed money. He was a soft touch.

Riess: Ida mentioned the tutoring you got from Carl Sharsmith. That just sounds to me like a great father.

RGS, Jr: It was good, it was a great idea. As long as we were living there on the campus, and everything else, he wanted to cash in on it. And going around with Carl, and getting those specimens, walking all over in Marin County--it was great. He's such a wonderful man anyway,

RGS, Jr: just to be near him was a great honor. My father wanted me to be a professor; he thought I was interested in science; he thought I would make a good botanist. So he was trying to encourage all that.

Riess: Your father did, or Carl did?

RGS, Jr: No, my father thought that I would be a good botanist. He thought that was the thing I ought to do; I ought to be a professor. His general theory was that that was the best deal in life, to be a professor. They have the best deal. He always thought that. They have all that time off, and they were doing things they liked. He was great at promoting that with all of us. That if you wanted to be something, be a professor. That was the best life you could have.

Riess: Rather than a lawyer?

RGS, Jr: Oh, he never encouraged anybody to be a lawyer. They all end up lawyers because they can't think of anything else to do.

Riess: Okay. Except law is a good deal, because--

RGS, Jr: It's a good deal because you get to own your own vineyard. It's not a good deal any more, Suzanne. Don't go to Boalt Hall from here. Don't go down to Boalt Hall and sign up. It's not a good deal anymore.

Riess: There was also a tutor that you had for boxing, you and John?

RGS, Jr: Oh yes, that's right. What was that guy's name? Stan Jones. He was a boxing coach. And he also ran a little gym on the side, down on Milvia Street. We would go down there Saturday mornings and have boxing instruction. It was horrible. My brother and I, neither one of us were any good. I got pummelled to death. I got knocked out by some black fellow who thought he was Kid Chocolate or something. I got knocked out by Bill Andrews, a plain old white fellow. Yes, he promoted that, it was his idea. Full of ideas, great idea man. You got that impression. Always ideas. And they were mostly good. He was the original idea man. That's all he did all day was think of new ideas.

Letters, Memorabilia, Brothers, More Friends

Riess: Tell me now about all of this stuff that we're surrounded with in the way of memorabilia here in your barn.

RGS, Jr: I just grabbed what I could, it all seemed interesting to me.

Riess: Is this from one of the houses or all of the houses?

RGS, Jr: That painting was, I think, from one of those big Hi Jinks deals or one of those big parties at the Bohemian Club where he was what they call the "Sire" and they do these fancy paintings, you seem them over there, of all kinds of people. And that one probably wasn't good enough to keep over there, so they gave it back to him, but I always liked it, it seemed to get the picture of the man.

Riess: Did he always wear a blue and gold tie?

RGS, Jr: No. He wore a lot of them, but not always. He wore a lot of those gowns, though. He had a whole bunch of them.

Riess: You mean all of the honorary academic robes?

RGS, Jr: Yes, he loved that stuff. I have a lot of stuff in the room there I was going to show. I really don't have all that much, but I did think it was a good idea to keep some of it. I guess my brother and sister have some, though I think I collected most of it. I threw away more than I saved.

Riess: When he went off on all of these trips, incidentally, did he write to you, each of you individually?

RGS, Jr: Yes, he was quite a good letter writer. He and his brother both had this feeling that you never wrote a personal letter using the dictating machine or using a typewriter. They were in his own hand. He had a very good hand; you could read his letters.

There's something I'm not going to let you read--it really kind of shocked me, I'd forgotten all about it. He saved all my letters when I was in the navy and when I went back to Harvard. There's a book here--I think he had Miss Robb do it--"President's personal letters from Robert G. Sproul, Jr., January '42-August '48." That's during the war and through law school. Here they all are. I don't even want to read them myself.

Riess: Oh, I know that feeling.

RGS, Jr: I hate to read them!

Riess: Were they written just to him, or to him and Ida?

RGS, Jr: Well, let's see: "Dear Mother," "Dear Mother," "Dear Folks," "Dear Father," "Dear Mother," "Dear Gram." He saved a lot of them.

Here's a telegram! A telegram: "Lieutenant Sproul, Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts. While you are considering educational possibilities, why don't you investigate Pulitzer School of Journalism at Columbia University, to have three possibilities in line instead of two. Love to you both." I was married then, in '45. Just barely married.

Here's a little accounting. I thought he never gave me any money, but he apparently did. "Total income, \$90, total expense, \$568." That's about right. "Deficit, \$478." That sounds like a request for money.

Well, someday I'm going to have to read these things. "Christmas needs: New Yorker, Time Magazine, knitted socks." All right. So, "Dear Dad." There's nothing back from him in here. He saved all mine; I didn't save his.

One time I was kind of like he was; I used to save all that stuff I got from both of them. I had a huge trunkful, and I finally just gave it all the deep six. This would really be fairly interesting to read sometime. There's a lot of stuff in here.

Riess: You probably should do it.

RGS, Jr: I just hate to face up to it, but looking at it, it looks interesting.

Riess: Your kids will have it eventually.

RGS, Jr: From Ensign Sproul. "Received two V-mails each from you, Mother, and Gram today." One of these things when I was out in the middle of the Pacific. A nice, friendly letter.

Riess: Was there any question about you or your brother going off to war. Did both of you endorse it heartily, and did your father?

RGS, Jr: Oh, yes, he was all for it. I had a friend--he's still a great friend of mine, we correspond every week--named Armstrong Hunter. His father was a minister at St. John's Church in Berkeley. It was both my father's and grandmother's church. "Army" was my best friend

RGS, Jr: in junior high school and grammar school and high school. He was a conscientious objector, and I know my father talked to him at great length to try to talk him out of it. No, he was all for it.

Riess: How much did he see of his brother Allan, and how much of an influence on him do you think Allan was?

RGS, Jr: Well, I don't know. Again, I don't think they were great buddies. They didn't do a lot together. But, on the other hand, they were good friends. They were great friends when they were small--kind of like me and my brother. We were very, very good friends, but we just don't ever see each other. That was kind of the same way with my dad and Allan. They mutually promoted each other and always thought well of each other, but they didn't do a lot of things together.

It wasn't until later on, I think after my father got sick and maybe even more so after he died, Uncle Allan became a great friend of my mother's. He spent a lot of time taking her places and doing things with her. But that really was very much at the end. My father had died and his wife had died, and Uncle Allan became very close to my mother. I don't think during the glory years they were that close. He would go back to Scarsdale and see him, but the families never did things together.

Riess: How about Sam Hume?

RGS, Jr: Well, Sam Hume goes back to a real early time. You know, he just happened to be in Paris when Sam got married. And Sam was one of his colorful friends, and he lived in Berkeley up there next to Farnham Griffiths. But by the time I was in my teen age, and I start really remembering things, Sam wasn't around. Sam's great glory, I guess, was during the twenties. I don't remember too much about that and their relationship. But he was a great buddy.

Riess: Is it true that your parents and the Neylans were good friends at one point, really good friends?

RGS, Jr: Yes, that story is correct, that John Francis Neylan was the guy who promoted him for this job, this obscure guy from the comptroller's department. I think John Neylan was his most enthusiastic backer, and they were good friends during the early thirties. I think that's all true and correct. And I think in those days my mother greatly admired Mrs. Neylan, and she liked John Francis, whom she later wished to get run over by a truck. But that wasn't 'til later. No, Neylan was one of his big buddies on the regents to start with. Not as big as Guy C. Earl and a few others, but a big buddy.

Person-to-Person Administration

Riess: Your remark in your letter to me seemed rather cynical--your P.S. that it's better not to say anything bad about him because he still is one of the biggest fundraisers for the university.

RGS, Jr: Well, that's true. I mean, everybody thinks that he's the greatest thing. But that's less and less with the passing years. Also you always used to hear--though you hear it far less now--"If Doc Sproul were around, everything would be okay." Particularly from these ultra-conservative people. They had this vision of Doc Sproul being the great defender of conservative basic principles. All the poor guys like Bowker and Heyns and all those guys who had all those troubles during the sixties and so forth--that was all because we didn't have Doc Sproul around. "He would have really cracked down." Well, I'm not sure Doc Sproul would have cracked down any better than they did! He was just luckier than hell that he was there at a relatively good time, you know. But people feel that way, very strongly. You hear it all the time.

You hear about the university having trouble with the legislature, not getting the support it needs. If we just had Doc Sproul around, all those things would be corrected! But that's not true, it's not true at all, and people who say that aren't really thinking the problem through. But they have that feeling, and it's very good for the university.

Riess: Well, I know they have that feeling that he would be able to take care of "the troubles."

RGS, Jr: Anything!

Riess: I don't think that it's so much that he would crack down, but they have the feeling he would go out and talk to the right people about it. There was that kind of touch, the hands-on, that he would do. And of course that's characteristic of his whole twenty-eight years--it was the one-man show.

RGS, Jr: Yes, that's true. He took the job when the place was relatively small, and he grew up with it. And he wasn't a delegator. I hate to say this for publication, but he always picked some guy that he could dominate as chancellor of all the campuses. He wanted to run the deal. And he did make a fetish out of going into the locker rooms, and walking around the campus, and showing up at student gatherings, and having all kinds of student assemblies, and all that kind of thing.

RGS, Jr: He just put an inordinate amount of time on this person-to-person type of administration. The only way he could do it was that he had grown up with it small, and the largeness never quite dawned on him. He couldn't do it as well towards the end, and towards the end he lost his energy. The last ten years were certainly not half as good as his first ten years, when he was full of beans, just a young guy. But that's the way he did it, and the rest of them couldn't do that.

He got followed up by Clark Kerr who was a real bureaucrat, and he had this multi-university concept, and he wasn't going to run it that way anyway. He was probably right; the thing had gotten too big for that one-on-one type of administration anyhow, and he had to break it down into smaller--. Clark had undoubtedly thought the problem through and had the right answer. But people didn't like it. They liked the old system better, and they had a terribly glorified remembrance of the old system, which just wasn't true.

But anyhow--that's all to the great benefit of the university. He was there for so long, such a long tenure--like a lot of other people, Eliot at Harvard and a lot of other people who stuck around a long time and they were there during a good period. Nothing really bad happened during his period. You know, we had the loyalty oath--that was bad. That was the only really bad thing, and that wasn't really as bad as the sixties. It was kind of a high-level debate that didn't get the sheriff's department and students getting beaten up and shot and everything else.

Riess: Were the Communists during the thirties bad?

RGS, Jr: It was kind of bad, you know. But that was kind of a short-term deal, really. That was just before the war, and I don't know all the ins and outs. I was just a kid in those days. He always felt that about three of those ASUC presidents were sent out here by the party. And it was easy to get elected to the ASUC presidency; it didn't take very many votes. And we had a lot of agitation--kind of minor compared to what went on in the sixties at Sather Gate. But then, lo and behold, Stalin joined up with Hitler and that ended all that. [chuckles] That didn't last all that long. I thought that was kind of a brief incident, and he came out of that really untouched, virtually. Oh yes, the Examiner was trying to get rid of him, thought he was too easy on all these left-wingers, but I don't think it lasted that long. The loyalty oath was a much tougher deal.

Visitors to the President's House

Riess: You talked about parties every other night.

RGS, Jr: Yes, everything I say is exaggerated slightly.

Riess: Well, let's say every other week, whatever it was.

RGS, Jr: Oh, it was more like every other night when he was around.

Riess: Was this always entertaining famous people?

RGS, Jr: Well, there was the Cal crew or the Cal baseball team. He loved athletic groups. And the Shah of Iran or the Queen of Norway, or whoever was coming through, they all got entertained. That's part of the job.

Riess: What are some of your favorite stories about the famous people?

RGS, Jr: I don't have any favorite stories about famous people.

Riess: No?

RGS, Jr: No, I'm not big on that. But we did have people who, you know, lived at the house, so we could have gotten more out of it. We were forced to mingle with them.

Riess: What do you mean?

RGS, Jr: Well, they were there. You know, in those days the Charter Day speaker would come and spend the week. And they would travel around, maybe go up to Yosemite, go down to Carmel. I guess they even motored down to L.A. The poor old Charter Day speaker had to speak at Berkeley and L.A. And when Conant came, he was there at the breakfast table with us, and we drove around all over hell and gone with him in the car. So we were thrown in with people like that. And Viscount Montgomery with his bat man was there, and the King of Morocco--he didn't spend a week, but he was there. And Madame Perkins, she lived there for three or four days. She was Secretary of Labor under FDR. And Marconi dropped by and spent the night. So all those people were around, and when they were around you normally had breakfast and everything else. They were shown family life in America.

Riess: That was the idea?

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\*Viscount Alexander of Tunis. See Ida Sproul, The President's Wife, pp. 240-241.

RGS, Jr: Yes, the family was included. Grandmother and all of us were included in all those deals. So we should have gotten a lot more out of that than we did. I remember during the war I came back and-- here's a little story for you--Admiral Nimitz was the admiral of the whole shooting match, you know, and I was just a lowly lieutenant jg, and he was staying at the house. I came in one morning from my ship and there he was in the front room reading the funny papers, sitting there. I remember I couldn't be more surprised! The admiral of the fleet reading the funnies. [chuckles]

John McCone, who was the head of the Atomic Energy Commission, he and his wife were staying there at the house. I came back from Harvard, and I told John about my looking for a job in San Francisco-- I was pounding the pavement, going around from firm to firm--and he said, "Oh, you're wasting your time. There's only one guy to work for in San Francisco and that's Bob Bridges and I'll call him up tomorrow and tell him to give you a job," which he did. He told Bob to give me a job, and Bob did. You know, that solved that little problem very nicely. It was nice having him around. I think he showed up at just the right time. [chuckles] So we got something out of all that.

Riess: None of you kids were shy, under the circumstances?

RGS, Jr: I don't think so. Well, we had to be kind of pushed out a little bit, but we weren't all that shy. I think all of us, to this day, we aren't bothered about meeting anybody. I mean, we've all done that all our lives. Up here at Napa I could have that senile bastard Reagan up here and I could entertain him. It wouldn't bother me. Nobody bothers me. I think my sister and brother are the same way. We were exposed to all these fancy people. They would eat breakfast and wander around the house.

Riess: Well, your father must have been very proud of his children.

RGS, Jr: I think maybe so, yes. We always did kind of what he wanted us to do. But everybody does that. My children did kind of what I wanted them to do. Even my son didn't rebel until he was about twenty-six or twenty-seven.

Well listen, I can show you some of this stuff because it kind of brings back some other things. I'll just show you what I collected. I'm going to show it to you anyway, Suzanne, after I spent all my time digging it out.

Riess: When Nehru was at the university meeting in 1949, were you in the house?

RGS, Jr: I think I wasn't there. I think I missed that. I heard the Shah of Iran, a young fellow. Nice fellow. A great friend of my mother's. There was a constant stream of people. I can't remember all their names. But Ida was pretty good at all those names.

That was the best one that's ever been done, that one of Ida.\* It was just the right time, she was in a remembering mood. That was a good story. I am one of maybe ten people who read it in the whole world, but it still was a good story. Very well done, just super. I read it and re-read it, and my kids read it and re-read it, so I'm sure there are more than ten people. No, that's great.

### Retirement

RGS, Jr: Too bad you didn't get my dad in 1960--between 1955 and 1960 was the time. I don't know what The Bancroft Library was doing at that time, but that was the time to get him.

Riess: We should have gotten Tolman, and Kroeber and your father and all of those people that weren't gotten.

RGS, Jr: Yes, that was the time to get him. I still say to you, and I'm sure it's right, that it's much better to get the person himself than to try to do it this way.

Riess: Oh, sure. Sure it is.

RGS, Jr: This is a hard way to go.

Riess: Do you think he would have enjoyed doing that whole thing?

RGS, Jr: Oh, I think he would have been all right. He got in trouble, mentally and physically, very quickly. I don't know the exact dates, but the last twelve years of his life were zilch. He might as well have been dead. And I don't know if people gloss that over, and people shorten it up, and people tell it to you differently, but it was about that way. I watched that taking place, and maybe four or

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\*Ida Amelia Sproul, The President's Wife, an oral history interview conducted 1961, and 1980-1981, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1981, p. 347.

RGS, Jr: five years before he really went over the brink where he didn't remember anything, he was having terrible troubles. He couldn't remember things. When I did that story on my grandmother back then, I asked him to help me on that and he wouldn't do it. He really felt frightened, he had these problems, it was just bugging him. I thought he was fine, but he obviously was having trouble then, and he never helped me at all. My Uncle Allan helped me a lot on the story about grandmother.

When he retired there wasn't much for him to do, you know. He was on the National Parks board, which was a nothing deal. And he had some of those kinds of jobs--chairman of the board of PSR. But that didn't interest him, really. He wasn't interested in any of that. He had this job where, I guess he was titular head of the East Bay Regional Parks. He'd sit there doing the same old things he had always done, dictating little dinky letters into the dictating machine about the shrubbery and the bushes in the park, but his heart wasn't in it. So he was terribly bored, he had nothing to do. If you're kind of a paperwork office man, you have a hell of a time retiring. He was one of these guys who never prepared [for retirement] so he was just absolutely without anything to do. And he didn't know what to do with his time. He would have loved to be interviewed. That would have been a great activity for at least a month or so.

Riess: When he was up at Echo in summer, what did he do with his time, with all the vacation time he allowed himself?

RGS, Jr: Oh, it all depends what time period you're talking about. When we were young, you know, he really loved to fish. He wasn't a great fisherman, though. He didn't know all that much about it. But he liked to get out in the out of doors. During the twenties, in that period, we used to camp together. That kind of ended when he got the big job. During the thirties we hiked all over that Echo region. We would do that. But he could hardly operate the motor boat.

He would bring papers up there, and spend four or five days, and then he would go back down to some kind of meeting or something. So he wasn't up there full time. The university in the early thirties didn't operate much in the summer, so he just kind of closed down, went up to the Bohemian Grove, went to various meetings and conferences, but my mother stayed up there the whole time. He came and went. Then when he retired he really never had much to do up there.

RGS, Jr: He didn't really take care of himself as well as he probably should have. He was a pretty good athlete, and a good tennis player. He took up golf and never got into it. But he kind of stopped doing all those things way too early in my opinion. So he really didn't do a lot of hiking and outdoor stuff after he retired. I mean, people nowadays in their middle and late sixties do all kinds of things. They climb Mt. Everest and everything else. But he was a little torpid. And he didn't do a lot of activity at Echo Lake. He mostly sat around. He was great at organizing the cabin, making lists, "fixing" the shades, all that kind of thing.

Riess: You could think now he would perhaps have been a great Sierra Club person.

RGS, Jr: I think he could have easily been, yes. He got on this job that took so much of his time. He was really a good mountaineer and a good outdoorsman, but after he got the job he didn't have enough time for all that. And he loved his job so much. He didn't want to take big hunks of time off doing interesting mountaineering things. He never developed hobbies, or anything else. He was left without much to do when the job was over. That was part of his problem. Not the whole problem, but I think part of his problem.

Riess: Well, let's go see what you've got in your picture collection for me.

ROBERT GORDON SPROUL  
MISSION HIGH SCHOOL

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Robert Gordon Sproul was born on May 22, 1893 "South of the Slot" in the Mission District of San Francisco. His father was a ticket taker\*for the SP and his mother was a type setter for the "Argonaut". In their entire life, his parents never owned their own home or even an automobile.

From 1895 to 1910 Sproul lived in the Mission District at 11 different locations, including 233 Clipper Street; a flat near Valencia and Dolores; a flat on Henry Street near the Franklin Hospital; and on 20th Street between Castro and Noe. He and his younger brother, Allan, both attended James Lick Grammar School. (Allan Sproul went on to become the Governor of the Federal Reserve Board back East.)

From 1903 to 1907, Sproul attended Mission High School. The principal in those days was named Pot O'Connor. Sproul's teacher in both Latin and Greek was Monroe E. Deutsch, who later became a Vice President of UCB. While at Mission High, Sproul played basketball; was the punt return man on the football team; and ran the mile and two-mile. In 1907 he was President of the Student Body.

While at Mission High Sproul worked as a paperboy; a street lamp lighter; and (after the 1906 earthquake and fire) as a chain boy for a dishonest surveyor.

Sproul became President of the University of California in 1930 at the age of 38 - the youngest ever. He served as President for 28 years - 1930 through 1957. In those days there were no Chancellors and he was the President of "everything" - all eight campuses. He loved the job.

He died on September 10, 1975 in Berkeley at the age of 81.

RGSJr.  
11-8-83

\*the polite term was "statistician"

TOWN & GOWN CLUB, BERKELEY  
Noon Monday April 18th

I. Reason For Meeting:

Several have asked if "this meeting is really necessary". I personally doubt it. Certainly not my idea. Margaret Wishart and Elizabeth Dunlap told me to do it - and I do what I am told.

II. Title of Talk:

This was quite a problem.

- Allison wanted "Life With Mother and Father" (really)
- "Life With Brother and Sister" (better)
- "Life With Grandma Sproul" (better yet)
- "Life Lived Backwards" (my favorite and most accurate)

III. Orientation:

Take it this is a meeting for history buffs and has to do with life on the U C Campus in the 1930s and '40s. Real students of history can read all about it in Ida's wonderful 1981 book - also Agnes Robb's earlier work published in 1976.

- Both are extremely well done.

- (1) The Setting: The Sprouls move into the President's House in October, 1930, and don't move out until until mid-1957, 27 years later.

Marion, age 13; Bob, age 10; John, age 7; Bob, the Elder 39; Ida 39 and Grandmother Sproul, age 62. This was the Cast of Characters on the premises in 1930s and 1940s. Academy Award Winners every one of them.

- (2) The President's House was a super place to hide out during the Great Depression.
- We had an upstairs maid; two downstairs maids; a cook and a gardener. There were continuous parties and mountains of party food. We had tickets to every sporting event from football to water polo.
  - Nubile Coeds were everywhere. Is Margaret Meads Wishart here?
- Please step forward.  
Prime example of Nubile Coed in '40s.  
Remarkably preserved.
- This is why I say I lived my life backwards - never again have I had it so good.

(3) My talk: Today I will tell you what life was like on the Berkeley campus in the 1930s from my viewpoint. My sister, Marion, will come back next week with her rebuttal and tell you the real story.

- I start as a Willard Jr. High School student in 1930.
- I leave P.H. as a UCB graduate in May of 1942 to join the U.S. Navy in the South Pacific.
- Right off I want to make one point clear: I was the Disfavored middle child.
- My sister went to the Dominican Convent, the Sore Bun in Paris and other fancy schools.
- My brother, John, was dotted on and got all kinds of special training and instruction.
- In college I was the only Junior who still had a paper route. At P.H. I lived in the back of the house with the help. The other five all lived all lived up front.
- Nonetheless, it was a very Happy Time and mine is a very Happy Story.

IV. Life With Grandma Sproul: I have to start somewhere so let's start with Grandmother Sproul.

- My Grandfather Sproul barely lived to see his son's Inauguration (and his other son's Presidency of the Federal Reserve Bank - Allan Sproul).
- Grandma Sproul moved in with the family at the President's House in 1932 and was there for the duration - every minute of it.
- Bob and Ida's greatest effort and accomplishment during the 1930s was the building up of the Statewide University and particularly UCLA. They spent as much time in UCLA as in Berkeley. When they were done they had eliminated the "Little Brother" image.
- Consequently, Grandmother Sproul got stuck with much of the day-to-day running of the family and of the home. She loved it. It gave her a whole new Second Life.
- Most of you know Grandmother Sproul (PICTURE). Wonderful lady who lived 4 days shy of age 95.
- For me the 1930s were in large part - Life With Grandmother Sproul.

V. Life in the 1930s: What was life in Berkeley like in 1930s - from the eyes of a teenage boy?

- Certainly life was Different and for all six of us it was almost All Good.

- There was very little Bad.
  - (A) We were somewhat isolated at the P. H. but the isolation made us a closer family. We also learned how to amuse ourselves with little outside stimulus.
  - (B) I got to know my Brother John a little too well - and visa versa.
- The rest of the life in the 1930s at the P.H. was Unbelievably Good for all 6 of us.
  - (A) The University System was expanding; the people in the legislature loved their University; the State of California was expanding and we were beginning to realize that we were the Richest State in the Richest Country in the World; in the 1930s people paid their taxes and they worshiped Education. Education (not computers) was a Growth Industry of the 30's.
  - (B) All three of us children had the run of the campus - it was our backyard. We had tickets to every game and John and I certainly went to almost all of them (football, track, basketball, baseball, cross-country swimming, you name it).
  - (C) Kings, Queens and Russian Czars came to the President's House as a guest of the University. There were big parties every other night and we got in on part of all of this. Big Bob considered himself the Front Man for the University and he and Ida worked on it like ditch diggers.
  - (D) Famous people would spent the week or weekend with us and the children got in on all of this. Not bad.

VI. Life With Father: Next in this somewhat "foolish recitation" I guess I should tell you something about "Life With Father".

- What was Old Doc Sproul really like? What kind of hairpin was he?
- Ida always said he got his Fulbright in Imagination. Ida was right. He was bursting with imagination and full of fun.

- In the 1930s and 1940s he was also very young and full of beans. He had enormous energy and he spent it all on his real love - the University.
- Big Bob loved his job and he and Ida devoted 100% of their time to it. They both were "Just as good as Advertised".
- The University in the 1930s was far different that it is today.
  - Old Bob ran the entire deal. There were no Chancellors in the 1930s. He got the President Houses on all 8 campuses. He was it.
  - In the 1930s UC was basically a nine-month operation with a minor summer school. Bob and Ida had time to be with the family at Echo Lake in El Dorado County for almost 3 months of the year.
  - However, in the 1930s and 1940s the Job was not all that easy. Pre-WWII the Stalinists and the Trotskyites rioted out at sather gate. The Hearst Papers and John Neyland claimed that Bob and UC were "soft on Communism." In the first two decades Bob certainly took all this in stride. (The Loyalty Oath in the 1950s was much tougher)
- RGS Sr. was, as I say, a bright, imaginative hard working family man.
  - (A) Sunday Nights Suppers were an institution for over ten years. Command Performance for the entire family, including the collateral relatives. Competitive games and prizes. Cutthroat competition.
  - (B) From 7:15 to 8:00 p.m. most weekday nights there were readings by RGS Sr.; intellectual games and cards. Again, a Command Performance for the immediate family.- Ida, Marion, Bob and John.
  - (C) Dinner Conversation was something to behold. It was constant strife and argument. Grandmother Sproul for example would get upset; stalk out of the room to her upstairs bedroom; later she would come back with a wholly new argument that she had just thought of. The only thing we all agreed on was our HATRED FOR STANFORD.
  - (D) Big Bob invented wonderful Board Games which the family would play for hours. He had a baseball game which we played for many summers at Echo Lake which was better than anything done by Parker Brothers. I remember Ida's team was the Oakland Oaks and mine was the Hollywood Stars.

- (E) Bob was not only a loud singer but an excellent cook. A remarkably kindly man. During the Depression he somehow found jobs for the out of work parents of all the friends of mine.
- (F) Agnes Robb can come back next week and give you a talk about all of this.

Bob could have been the President of Columbia University and of Bank of California. He had numerous other offers but in the end they had to blast him out of Berkeley. In 1957 he left kicking and screaming. He would have preferred to continue on the job for life. He loved it.

VIII. Life With Ida: So much for Old Bob. The only missing piece in this Happy Tale still left to go is Ida. It will have to be short because I still can't tell Ida's story without crying.

- Most of you already know the story of Ida; born and raised on West Street in Oakland down by McClymonds High School; worked for her mother in the Grocery Store and helped with the Dressmaking Business; never graduated from Oakland High School; met Old Bob in 1930 at the Oakland City Hall - mutual victims of Propinquity.
- Ida, too, was age 39 when she came to the President's House on the campus in 1930.
  - (a) She was Petrified. All those intellectual faculty women scared her out of her wits.
  - (b) Fortunately, all those intelligent faculty women turned out not only to be smart but also most kindly and helpful. People like Amy Wheeler and Alice Drütsch.
  - (c) Is ELLA BARROWS HAGER here?

Would she please step forward.

Ella is a prime example of the intelligent faculty type - the daughter of a UC President.

Ella is also a Very Nice Person - one mil light years from West Street.

- Ida ended up earning her Phi Beta Kappa and her Honorary Degree from the University of California.
- Nobody was ever any better at her job before or since. Unlike Bob, she was delighted to get out of it in 1957. Ida's motto was "I Did It; I Did It; Don't Ask Me to do It Again." For the 25 years after she left the P.H. she repeated that motto over and over again.
- Ida spent much of her retirement up on Tamalpais Road beating Harry Wellman at dominos.
- Ida had been legally blind for over 35 years but she could "feel" the dominos.

#### IX. What More Can I Say on This Topic?

I obviously should get out of Berkeley while I am ahead.

- I personally owe a great debt to the University of California - but, then, millions of graduates do.
- After 1940s, the story turned out reasonably well. All three of Ida's children were able to earn a living. All 11 of Ida's grandchildren (like her 3 children) went to Cal Berkeley. All 11 ended up doing some kind of graduate work. Everyone of them is a responsible citizen.
- The University itself has prospered Reasonably Well since the 1940s. As is always true, the future has its problems. Citizens no longer willingly pay their taxes. The people of California have lost a great deal of their passion for education. They vote for obscenities like Prop 13. And, of course, we are no longer so cocksure that we are the Richest State in the Richest Country in the World.
- For a while I hope that last November's Big Game would help relive the spirit of the 1930s and 1940s. We will see.
- In any event, many thanks for inviting me to Berkeley. Don't forget to put my sister on the calendar for a future date so that she can tell the true story of what went on at the Old P. H. during the 1930s and the 1940s. I would love to hear what she has to say.



Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

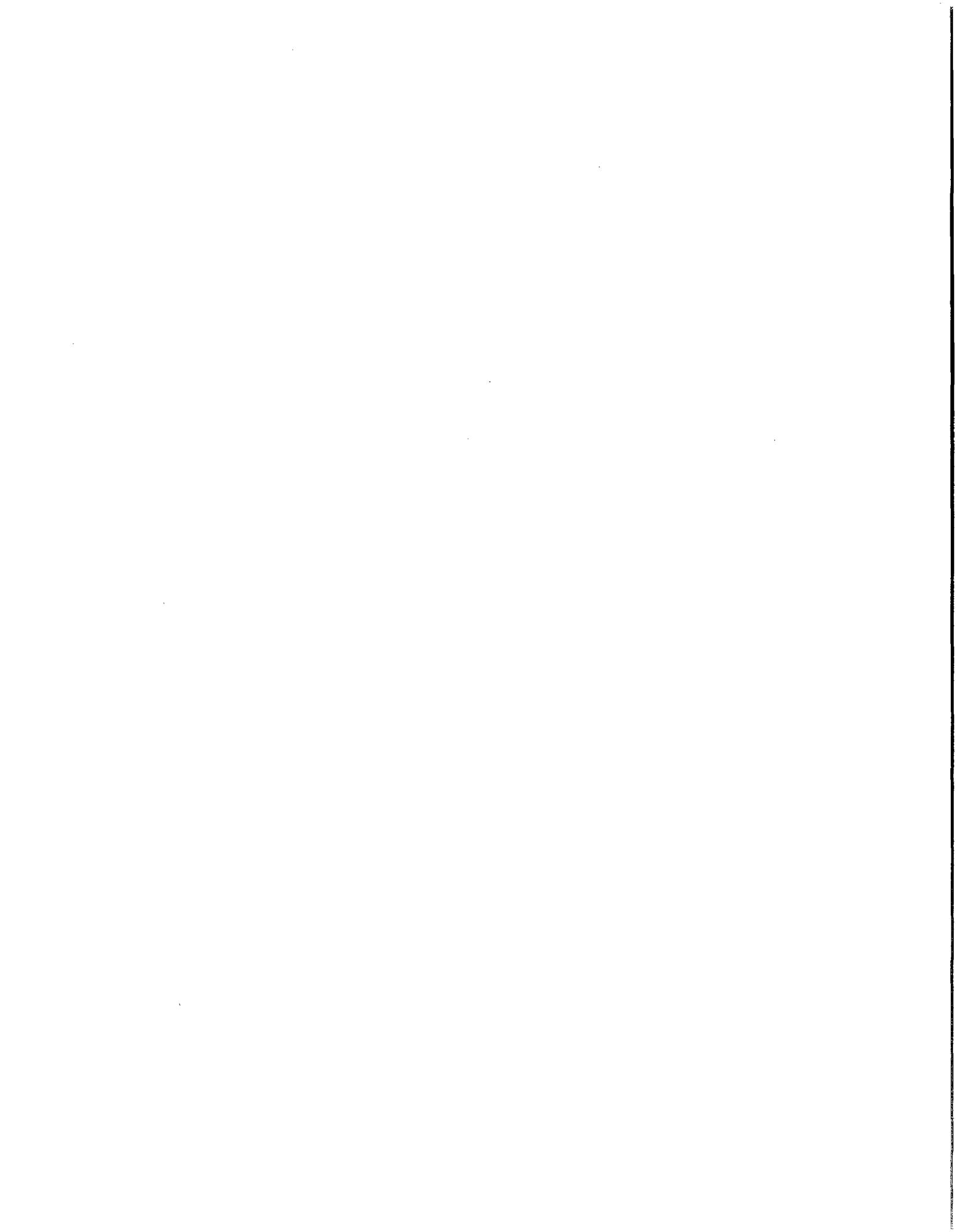
University of California  
Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Vernon L. Goodin

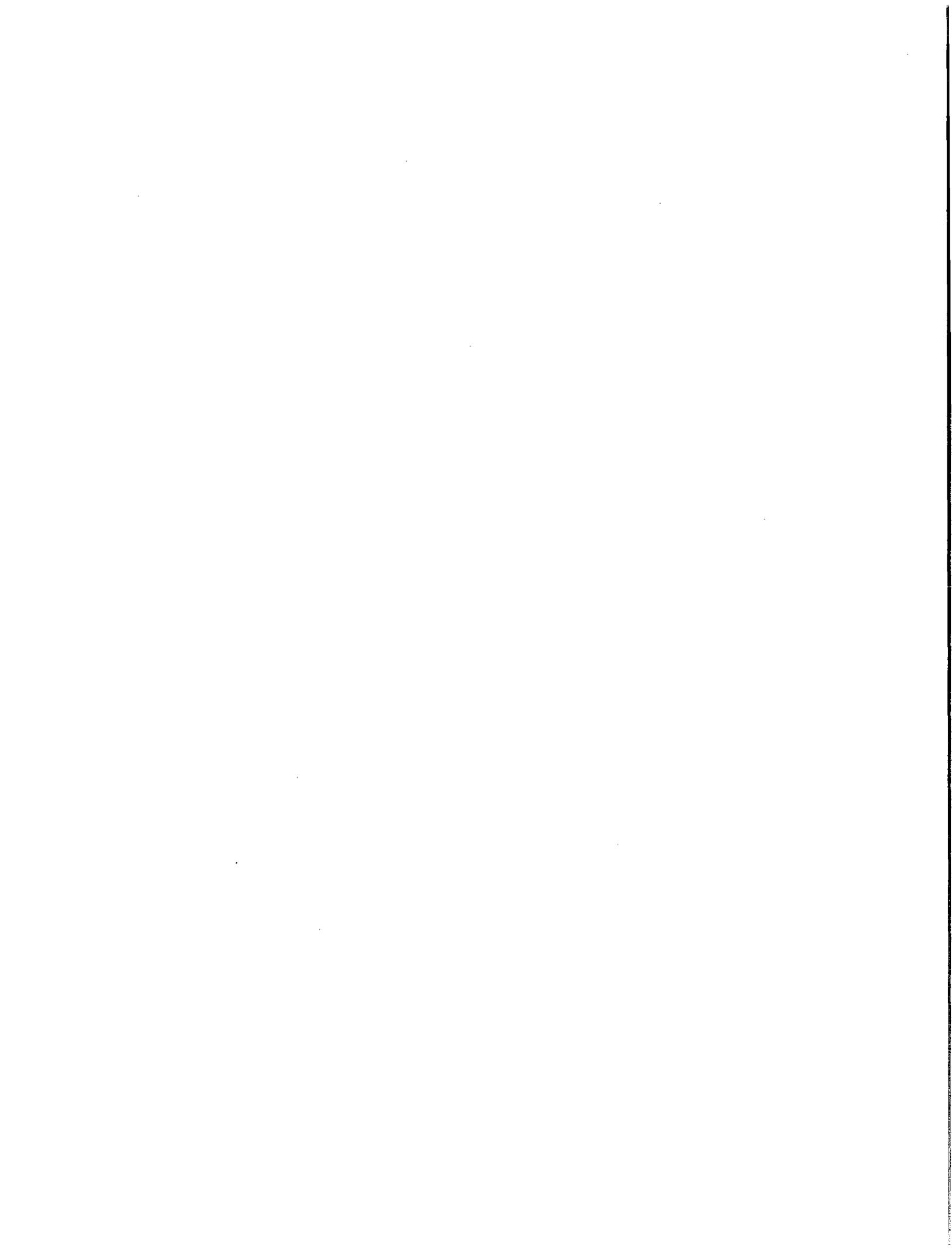
MEMBER OF THE FAMILY

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Vernon Lee Goodin--lawyer, partner in the law firm of Bronson, Bronson & McKinnon, and husband, partner in the Sproul family.

In an oral history interview Mr. Goodin did in 1981 he says of his being brought into the Bronson firm, "I was scared as to whether I would be able to cope, but I really was impressed with the friendliness." That may also just about describe taking on the Sproul family when Vern married Marion Sproul in 1945. But that was forty years ago.

Early in planning the Robert Gordon Sproul oral history I encountered the three Sproul children and Mr. Goodin at a reception dedicating the Ida Amelia Sproul memorial room at Berkeley's International House, and Vern Goodin was, in brief conversation, clearly a candidate for an interview, as a Sproul observer. Of the children, Marion was interviewed first, followed by John, son-in-law Vern, and Bob, Jr. They all present a different slant on family togetherness and the quality of that experience. The reader may wonder at all the emphasis in the oral history on family, but Robert Gordon Sproul was a family man, and the University of California governance for twenty-eight years was by a family man whose ability to extend that attitude contributed to his great success.

I interviewed Mr. Goodin in his Bronson, Bronson & McKinnon office in San Francisco, and the interview was a pleasantly informal give and take. In a telephone call, after receiving the transcript, he made mild pleas for much more editing, but conceded "that the spontaneity would be lost if I corrected all the bad grammar." He agreed to letting it be oral history, not a legal brief!

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name Vernon Lee Goodin

Date of birth April 6, 1915 Place of birth Healdsburg, California

Father's full name Robert Lee Goodin

Birthplace Williams, California

Occupation Real Estate Broker

Mother's full name Margaret Regina Mooney

Birthplace Chicago, Illinois

Occupation Housewife

Where did you grow up ? Piedmont, California

Present community Berkeley, California

Education Piedmont Public Schools; UC - Berkeley, AB 1937,

J.D. 1940

Occupation(s) Lawyer - Partner in Bronson, Bronson & McKinnon, a  
140 attorney firm based in San Francisco.

Special interests or activities California sports and alumni activi-  
ties; flying; skiing; and traveling.

Robert Gordon Sproul and the Students, Mid-Thirties

[Date of Interview: October 17, 1984]

Riess: What were issues for you in the late thirties in your student days? Were you ever a student rebel?

V. Goodin: No. I was not a rebel, I was part of the establishment. I was president of my class in the sophomore year, so I was sort of into politics a little bit. I forget all the things that I did, but I was active in the class. Still am, in fact.

Riess: What about Stiles Hall?

V. Goodin: I never had anything to do with Stiles Hall. I was a member of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity, and so we were much more establishment. I knew him mainly through being in the political arena.

Riess: You mean you knew Sproul.

V. Goodin: Yes.

Riess: I mean, Dr. Sproul. What did you call him?

V. Goodin: I called him Doctor. When we got married, the three of us who came into the family more or less at the same time, Cara May and Marjorie and I, we got together and we decided that we would call him Doctor, and Mrs. Sproul, "Mother S," to distinguish them from our own parents.

Riess: Did he ever say, "Please call me Dr. Sproul"?

V. Goodin: No, this was our decision. We used to call him Grandpa to the kids and among ourselves in later years, but as long as he was alive, it was always Doctor. Miss Robb still calls him "the President."

Riess: Or Papa.

V. Goodin: Did she say Papa? I guess we all say Papa now, but that's only in the last ten, fifteen years, I guess.

Riess: Wasn't it tongue-in-cheek, when you became really part of the family, to call him Dr. Sproul?

V. Goodin: No, it was just Doctor. Not Dr. Sproul. Just Doctor. You know, not many other people called him that. They called him President Sproul. Although he was really known as Dr. Robert Gordon Sproul. He used the doctorates even though they were only honorary. [laughs]

Riess: Maybe I could pursue that question of your student politics. Sproul is known to have said once, "I'm always suspicious of a young man who is not a radical, or a mature man who is."

V. Goodin: Well, maybe I didn't qualify. [laughs] I think he had some misgivings when I took his daughter off.

Riess: Do you believe that he really endorsed rebellion in a young man?

V. Goodin: No. That's a quote from Disraeli, I think. "If a man isn't a Socialist until he's twenty, he's got no heart, and if he is afterward, he's got no head."

Riess: You were saying that you did meet Dr. Sproul as a student. Around any particular issues?

V. Goodin: I remember going and seeing him with another good friend of mine, Will Goodwin, who was later president of the class in our junior year, and whom I still see. He lives in L.A. And I remember going to see Dr. Sproul about some burning issue [laughs]. We arranged through Miss Robb to see him. We had an appointment at six o'clock, and he finally saw us at seven. He was still there, working. But he was very affable, and listened to whatever it was we had in mind, and certainly came to satisfy us that he had taken the time to listen to us.

Riess: Did he have a reputation as being accessible to students?

V. Goodin: Yes. Absolutely. There was always a time that he would see you. Even if it was seven o'clock at night.

Riess: Were you a member of Cal Club? That began, I think, in 1934.

V. Goodin: That's right. No, I never was a member of that. That was the club between the campuses.

Riess: Yes.

V. Goodin: No, I was a member of--I forget all the things, but there was a sophomore organization, Triune, Winged Helmet the junior organization, and then the Order of the Golden Bear in the senior year. He did come to that, regularly, until the spring I graduated, 1937. At one meeting he was attacked (verbally) by a fellow by the name of Stan Moore, with whom I'd gone to Piedmont High School, and who was probably a card carrying Communist. The attack was so vicious that Dr. Sproul just refused to come to Golden Bear for several years thereafter.

Riess: Stan Moore had gotten into Golden Bear?

V. Goodin: Yes. He was one of the student radical leaders.

Riess: I thought that Golden Bear--I couldn't imagine a situation under which a student radical leader would be encompassed by the Golden Bear membership.

V. Goodin: Well, they were in those days.

Riess: I thought they had to be leaders of established campus groups to be in the Golden Bear.

V. Goodin: Yes, and I can't remember what he was leader of, but they were simply voted in by the seniors, you know. The seniors vote the juniors into Golden Bear for their senior year. There are a lot of people that get in that maybe shouldn't, maybe including me. [laughs]

Riess: Well, that's interesting. Were you present for the attack?

V. Goodin: Yes, I was there. I was horrified by it. And, of course, I knew Dr. Sproul, but not well. I'd seen him many times, and talked to him that once, and that's the only time that I really remember that I had any discussion with him. He used to have student "leaders" to his house, occasionally, and I was there I think twice for lunch, along with a group of students.

Riess: In those situations would he be sounding out students? What was the agenda?

V. Goodin: There was really no particular agenda, he just had a group of leaders, and I don't know how he picked them, or how Mother S picked them. Maybe Miss Robb picked them. Somebody picked them!

- Riess: Well, tell me what you remember of Stan Moore's attack. The reason I'd like to pursue it is because my impression of Dr. Sproul is that he stood up to attack, that he would not have ceased coming to an organization, that he was very well defended.
- V. Goodin: Well, he generally was able to defend himself, and defuse a lot of things, but Stanley was just so vitriolic, and--I mean this is really almost fifty years ago and it's hard to remember. All that I can remember is that it was just vitriolic, and so bad, and nobody could stop Stanley, and that Dr. Sproul got really irritated and left, and, as I say, didn't come back. I just can't remember much more about it. You haven't heard this from anybody else?
- Riess: No, I haven't.
- V. Goodin: I'd forgotten about it. I had made a list of things that I thought you would be interested in, but not that.
- Riess: Was it a personal attack?
- V. Goodin: Yes, very much. On the way in which he was picking the people that were running the--not running the university, but teachers, and that sort of thing. I know that at that time Doctor was really backing up Ernest Lawrence, but nobody had ever thought about the nuclear bomb, or anything like that, so it couldn't have been anything like that. And Stan was really more of an English major type. In fact, I think he later went into teaching English.
- Riess: Well, those were hot days actually, at least in retrospect. That was the era of regulation 17, and the issues of political speakers being allowed on campus, or not, whether Stiles Hall could be assumed to be a forum for radicals. And so I'm sure that Stan Moore would have things to be upset about.
- V. Goodin: I'm trying to think who else might have been there at the time. Of course Monroe Deutsch was there. He was sort of the patron saint of Golden Bear and he was horrified by the whole thing. He tried to calm Doctor down, and tried to do something in my recollection, but he couldn't, and Doctor just walked out, as I say. He came back after a few years, but he was not very happy with the Order of the Golden Bear for a good many years.
- Riess: Did he think that it should have taken on the disciplining of Moore?

V. Goodin: No, I think that he just thought Moore exceeded the grounds of free expression and free speech in attacking him so personally. I don't ever remember any other incident similar, and I had completely forgotten that until we started talking here.

Riess: Well, it makes the Order of the Golden Bear a little more representative.

V. Goodin: It had everybody in it. That was the whole idea, to get a cross section, and discussion, but not attacks on people, and try to look at the issues, not at people.

Riess: It was supposed to be a discussion of issues.

V. Goodin: Oh, yes. Absolutely. It's the type of organization that never takes a vote, never does anything except discusses. Doesn't even issue any consensus, if there is a consensus, which there generally wasn't in those days. I don't suppose there is now, either.

There was another fellow that was the editor of the Daily Cal, Bill Murrish. [William Murrish, Daily Cal editor, fall 1937-38] He was also a radical, and I believe that he was in Golden Bear. I don't have the list here. It's at home.

Riess: Dyke Brown, who I interviewed, took an opportunity to talk to Dr. Sproul at the time about what students really needed, and about relevant education. Did you know Dyke?

V. Goodin: Oh, Dyke and I are very close friends. Have been for years. He was also at Piedmont High School, and he was also a friend of Stanley's.

Riess: Dyke would be somewhere between you and Stanley politically, I should think.

V. Goodin: [laughs] We're about the same now, I think. He was a little more liberal, probably, in the old days.

Riess: Well, yes, he really took issue with the kind of education he was getting and talked to President Sproul about it. But you didn't.

V. Goodin: [laughs] No, I was just lucky to be there.

Dyke was in Golden Bear. He had graduated the year previous and was at Yale Law School, but he certainly heard about this incident. He and Doctor were very closely associated later on, too, you know, when Dyke was starting the Athenian School.

Riess: Were you a college athlete?

V. Goodin: Actually, I was more in athletics in high school. When I got to college, I did go out for track, and I remember seeing him down at the track one day. He said hello to several of us, and then he made a speech afterward, in which he said that he had overheard somebody say, "Who is that old bird, and how does he know me?" In his speech to the student body he said that he wasn't an old bird, and he didn't know the guy, but he thought everybody on campus ought to be friendly. I thought that was really something. This was my first year in college, first spring I guess it was. After that I got a job, and I didn't have really much time for more than working and politics.

Riess: Was that campus politics?

V. Goodin: Yes, completely. No political parties outside of--and no political party on campus, either. I don't know how I ever got to be president of the sophomore class, but once you get into that--.

Riess: So that's what you mean by politics.

V. Goodin: Yes, that's right. I guess that's politics. They were large classes.

Riess: Sproul couldn't have seemed like an old bird, could he, at that point? He was a young president.

V. Goodin: Yes, he was president at thirty-nine, but this is in the spring of '34, so he was then forty-three years old, and that was an old bird to an eighteen-year-old. [laughs] Seems very young to me now.

Riess: Was he an inspirational sort of person?

V. Goodin: Oh, my goodness, yes, absolutely, no question about it. And he was an absolute spellbinder, as you know. I think, I never was positive of this, but I think that what he did was write his speeches and then memorize them. He never used a note, or a piece of paper. I don't see how he could do it, give a long speech, the kind that he gave, and not have a note, or a piece of paper, or anything like that, but as I say, I think he did write them out, because they were so beautifully phrased. Rarely did I ever see him do an extemporaneous speech. Certainly not in college, I don't think.

Riess: Those were the years of the university meetings, weren't they?

- V. Goodin: Yes, he'd have a university meeting, and I forget whether they were every month, but certainly more than every semester. I think it was about every month. He would make a speech, either at the Greek Theatre or the gym if it was raining or something. They were always well attended, and he was always a superb performer.
- Riess: What did students think of Deutsch?
- V. Goodin: Well, Deutsch was just a revered person, without any question, with complete respect for his scholarship. I think that probably Deutsch took care of the scholarly aspects of the university, whereas Doctor took care of everything else.
- Riess: Did students go to Deutsch?
- V. Goodin: Oh, I'm sure they did. I didn't have much occasion to go to--.  
[laughs]
- Riess: Oh, now, Mr. Goodin.
- V. Goodin: "Mr. Goodin," my goodness. I get nervous when I get called Mr.
- Riess: I'll call you Dr.
- V. Goodin: I am a Dr. It cost me \$22 to get a JD!

Marion Sproul and Vernon Goodin

- Riess: Did you know Marion in college?
- V. Goodin: Yes. I met her on a blind date when we were seniors, and naturally when you meet the daughter of the president, why, you remember the daughter of the president, not vice versa.
- Riess: Is that really the story, she didn't remember you?
- V. Goodin: What happened was I was an undercover agent in the FBI in World War II, down in Peru, and Marion was sent down as one of the first women officers of embassy that were ever sent out of the United States by the State Department. When she was to come down to Peru, of all places, I thought, "My God, my cover is going to be blown."

V. Goodin: The way I found out about it was my mother was the only person I could communicate with, and she sent down just a little clipping that Marion was going to be down there, because of course this was newsworthy. So, I got hold of Marion the evening she got in and said, "I've got to see you," because I thought she'd see me on the street and recognize me, and do something.

When I got her that night at the hotel, picked her up, and took her out, why, it turned out that she thought I was another Vernon, Vernon Hawley. She didn't remember me at all. [laughs] But anyhow, that began the courting days. I started taking her out, and when she left a couple years later, why, by that time we were engaged.

Riess: Having sworn vows of eternal secrecy and complicity. Who had engineered the blind date?

V. Goodin: Well, actually, if I said blind date I'm sorry, I meant a double date. She had gone out with Charlie Wheeler, who was a fraternity brother of mine, and I was with somebody else.

Riess: Is this that Wheeler family that's so fondly remembered, that lived in northern California? Charles Stetson Wheeler?

V. Goodin: Yes, that family has been connected with the university for many, many years, and Charlie married Kate, I forget her name (Kate Gillard), but she's one of the Irvines, and so they've been living down in Irvine since they were married, I think roughly thirty, forty years ago.

Riess: Was Marion a very serious student?

V. Goodin: Well, of course, I just met her that one evening, and it was just an evening out.

Riess: She was normal.

V. Goodin: [laughs] She seemed quite normal that time. But she did very well in college, as you probably know. She was a Phi Beta Kappa in her junior year, and I never got to be a Phi Bete. Not even close.

Riess: Was there any real temptation on Marion's part to stay in Peru, to be a career woman, to take on a life that would mean not ever returning to Berkeley?

V. Goodin: No, no, never. As a matter of fact, she left the State Department early on, right after VE Day, she and the girl that she'd come down with, Miriam Kropp--we called her Kroppy, still call her Kroppy. They had both worked for IBM, both went over to the State Department, and they were the first two women that ever were sent out of the country with diplomatic status (as opposed to clerical or secretarial). Kroppy was there the whole time, actually. We saw a lot of her. Neither of them had any notion of making a career in the State Department. And, of course, when Marion left, she was going to make a career of me.

Riess: And the question of whether you wanted to come home to Berkeley?

V. Goodin: There was no question about that at all, that we were going to come home. We decided that we would not want to raise our kids anywhere except the United States. The question was whether I could get a job here, or not. I toyed with the idea of staying with the FBI.

I was offered two or three jobs in South America, but rejected them all by mutual consent, and took a cut about two-thirds in pay to come back and start practicing law here. There was never any question about that. Speaking of Doctor, I think he really wanted Marion to follow in the steps of Dr. Aurelia Reinhardt. Remember her?

Riess: Yes. President of Mills.

V. Goodin: Yes. So he may have been a little unhappy at her decision to get married and have children.

Riess: You mean he really wanted her to be a college president, that just struck his fancy?

V. Goodin: I don't know. I had that feeling. Not that he ever found any fault with what she did, but I think he felt that she had that capability. I feel that that's probably true, too, but she didn't, and that's the way it is.

Riess: Would there be occasional references to it in years afterwards?

V. Goodin: No, no, no, no, this is only the very beginning, a few comments like that. After the kids started arriving, there was no further comment, by Doctor at any rate. Marion went back one semester just to see if she could still think right, and she got straight A's, but I was so opposed to it that she only did it one semester. Now I regret that I didn't let her go ahead and get her Ph.D. A little bit, not much.

Riess: Regret! You should. [laughs]

It looks like there's a particular admiration for the law on the part of Dr. Sproul. He had two sons who went into law, and he had a son-in-law who was a lawyer. Did he ever express himself, that you can recall, about the importance of law?

V. Goodin: No. I don't really remember him as being enamored of it as a career, or anything like that.

Riess: I thought he might have had some influence over his sons both choosing to do law.

V. Goodin: I really can't respond to that at all. I was a lawyer by the time I came in the family, and they had started law school, or were starting, when I came into the family. We were married in November, and I had to go back to Washington to report into the FBI, and then we came back just before Christmas, so we were all back at Christmas time. They were all there at the wedding, so they were back earlier than we were.

Riess: That must have been an exciting time in the Sproul family, everyone getting themselves married.

V. Goodin: We were all living in--we called it the PH, the President's House. In fact the story is, well, there's no question about it, we would still be there if Mother S didn't find us an apartment after about three weeks. Marion liked the idea of having an upstairs maid and a downstairs maid and a cook and a laundress and all that sort of thing, which she didn't have when we got in our apartment.

Riess: And the boys were there with their new wives?

V. Goodin: With their new wives. We were all spread around, and we all just went into the rooms that were previously assigned.

Riess: What do you recall about that time of living in the President's House?

V. Goodin: Well, as I say, I think it was during that period of time that I got this impression from Doctor, but that evaporated very rapidly.

I was working in the FBI at that point, and I'd get up early and get off to work. As a matter of fact, John and I would occasionally take the Key System train to San Francisco together. We'd get up and Dr. Sproul would be down in his study dictating at six or seven in the morning. My impression is that he was just working all the time.

V. Goodin: But then he'd play when he wanted to play. He was great on inventing games, and that sort of thing. He'd "work hard and play hard," an expression that I inherited from Roy Bronson that fit Doctor to a "T" also. He was very entertaining and had a presence about him. He'd walk in a room and people would just know he was there. Not only because of the loud voice, either.

Riess: Were those the times when you had the Sunday night dinners?

V. Goodin: No. I forget when that developed, but it was considerably later on, because I remember we always used to have to get a baby-sitter for the children--by that time we all had children. Bob went back to Harvard in the spring of '46, I guess it was, and he was away for about two and a half years. I don't know how that got started, but certainly we had Sunday night suppers for a good long time. And they were fun. They were really fun.

Riess: And without grandchildren.

V. Goodin: Oh, no, we didn't bring the grandchildren to those parties, no, it was grownups.

Riess: Who decided not to have the grandchildren. Do you remember?

V. Goodin: Well, I think you just couldn't transport them around and have a dinner.

Papa--Doctor--I call him Papa now. I didn't in those days but in the last ten or fifteen years we would always refer to him as Papa. Anyhow, he would assign dishes to each of the girls. Never to the boys, of course. He would decide that he was going to have a Turkish dinner, for example, and he would pick out all these recipes and give them to the girls, and they would have to produce them. And you could hardly take care of kids, too.

He was a real gourmet. He was a member of the Food and Wine Society. And he would do these things occasionally himself. I'm sure you've heard the stories about when he decided that he would take the main dish, why he would get up on Sunday morning, create havoc in the kitchen, but would produce something very fancy and very special, but it took Mother S all day to clean up after him.

Riess: It was unusual for a man to enjoy cooking and all of that, don't you think?

V. Goodin: Oh, yes. He was a most unusual man.

Riess: Did Ida sort of cluck and chuckle about all of that? Was this just one more idiosyncrasy of her husband's?

V. Goodin: [laughs] I think you've hit the nail on the head, because she simply tolerated it. She was not a very good cook herself. God rest her soul! When Mother S was cooking, why, it was generally hash. Somehow or other she had never learned to do very much cooking, didn't have much interest in it. But she certainly tolerated Doctor doing it, and in fact, she had to go out and buy all the ingredients the day before. So she was a cooperator. She would just do anything that he wanted done, but not in any subservient way, at all, just by virtue of taking care of his idiosyncrasies, I guess.

#### Being Part of the Family

Riess: Joining the Sproul family was analogous to joining the Bronson firm. You talked in your interview with Sarah Sharp about being taken in laterally when you entered the Sproul family. Did you feel that you had to do a lot of adapting?

V. Goodin: No, not really. It was fun. I mean, my gosh, there was all sorts of excitement all the time because they would include us in many of their parties, and we met some fascinating people. And Mother S was just particularly nice.

Riess: Why don't you recall a couple of the good parties, or the fascinating people, for us.

V. Goodin: The one that stands out in my mind is when President Truman came and spoke to the campus. Mother S and Doctor had a big dinner party for him afterward. Mother S saw to it that we (children) could meet the president. This is in 1948 in June. Of course this was exciting, really exciting, to meet the president, even though we were sure that he was going to get beaten in November.

This is another facet--I think that I actually made a note of this--that Dr. Sproul got a lot of static and a lot of criticism for inviting President Truman in an election year. His comment was that any time that a president of the United States asked to speak to the University of California, he was going to invite him, no matter what. No matter what anybody else said. And so he did.

Riess: Do you remember any of the dinner table conversation there? After all, the politics were certainly different.

- V. Goodin: Yes. Of course, he and Chief Justice Warren were very close friends, and I remember him being there. But it's awfully hard to remember what the issues were, and I was not exactly called upon to express any opinions.
- Riess: I know, it's tough. I would hate to be interviewed. But if you sat next to Bess, and had some unforgettable--.
- V. Goodin: We weren't there for dinner, we were there for the cocktail hour, so we had a chance to talk to Bess, and to the daughter, Margaret. She was not married at that point. Bess was sort of a housewifely type, very down to earth, and actually Truman was too. I complimented him on his speech, which I thought was good. He said, "As a speech maker, I'm a iron monger," or something like that. You know, deprecating the way in which he would make his speech. I thought it was a good speech, and well delivered, but he made this comment. I will never forget that. Very friendly to everybody.
- Riess: How about other noble guests?
- V. Goodin: Well, I remember being at a dinner party one time when Ernest Lawrence was there, and he was the most interesting person. I didn't really realize what he had done at that point, even though I think he had gotten his Nobel by that time. I guess he got his Nobel in 1939.
- Riess: Do you think that Dr. Sproul really understood what Ernest Lawrence was doing?
- V. Goodin: Oh, boy, I'll say. I think the main thing that Doctor would do is if he thought he had somebody that really was super, he would go all out for them, and do anything that was necessary. He would go out and raise money for whatever they needed to do their job. When he got Dr. [Wendell M.] Stanley in biochemistry, he went out and raised money to build a building for him and get him to come to the campus and start a whole new department based on that alone.
- He did that in many, many different areas. If a department said that they would like to have somebody on the faculty, he would make a point of going and talking to them, and recruiting them, really. Personally. He was going back and forth across the country anyway, quite frequently, and he'd drop in on those potential recruits.
- Riess: Did you get to know Allan Sproul?

V. Goodin: Yes, and Marion was very fond of her uncle, and he, in turn, was fond of her. We saw a lot of Uncle Allan, as a matter of fact, over the years, because he retired early, came out here.

I think he came out even before Bob got into practice. I was his attorney from the time he and Aunt Marion returned to San Francisco until he died, in fact, settled his estate. Marion and I were planning a trip to Europe with Allan when he died, well, six or seven years ago. We were going to take a trip to England and France with him, and he died two or three months beforehand.

Riess: Was your family included in Sproul family events?

V. Goodin: Oh, yes, frequently. But by the time we got the Sproul family together, there was no other room! So we saw each other at any special occasion. For christenings--and there were an awful lot of those--everybody was included.

Riess: When it came to the christenings, which churches were you going to? It sounds like a lot of Catholicism in there.

V. Goodin: Well, not very much. My mother was a Catholic, but I never became a Catholic, was never confirmed or anything, in fact, quite the opposite, I was yanked away by my father early on. So I guess I consider myself a Catholic, if anything. But Marion had the same background, you know; her mother was Catholic, and father Presbyterian, and they reached the compromise of the Episcopal Church, so our kids were raised Episcopal.

Riess: Yes, John said that to me, too, and it was funny to think of the Episcopal Church as a compromise.

V. Goodin: Well, it is sort of a compromise, it's more Catholic than Presbyterian, certainly, and yet it's not Catholic, subject to the Pope. None of our kids, even though they were required to get confirmed, to my knowledge even go to church. Although they might now that they've got kids coming along that should go.

Riess: What qualities, do you think, have stood you in best stead in the Sproul family? Very introspective question.

V. Goodin: Good heavens.

Riess: Or what one quality?

V. Goodin: That I have, you mean?

Riess: Yes.

V. Goodin: Well, I really can't think of anything except maybe steadiness, and being able to support and take care of the family, and that's about it. Mother S was particularly close to me. On the other hand, there was no question that I was not any son of her's, I was a son-in-law. No mother-son relationship, just a really great mutual admiration.

Riess: I think that you had to have a highly developed sense of humor, an ability to let practical jokes wash over you.

V. Goodin: Well, yes. You've gotten this from somebody else, because of my brother-in-law, Bob. I always said that if he could get a laugh, if he had to cut off his mother's legs to get it, he would. [laughs] Well, Doctor was never quite that way, but if he could get a laugh, and it might cost you a hurt feeling here and there, why, learn to live with that. None of it was done maliciously, or anything like that, but, you know, a good remark comes across your mind, and it might hurt somebody, why you get the laugh.

#### Sharing of the Load

Riess: Do you think that there were ways that Doctor leaned upon you?

V. Goodin: Oh, occasionally he would ask me to review something when he wanted an outside opinion other than from the lawyers in the university. But that didn't happen very often. I was very honored when he asked me to look over some of these things, and I wouldn't mention what they were, because I'm sure that everybody would have thought that he should have been leaning on the general counsel's office of the university, but he wanted an independent opinion on two or three matters that I can recollect, and I was happy to do it.

Certainly he didn't lean on me for anything. He didn't lean on anybody for anything except support for the university, and then he leaned hard, on that.

Riess: Particularly the loyalty oath years was a time that he had to turn to his family more.

V. Goodin: Well, yes. I don't know that there was anything that we did or could do that was particularly supportive. Rather I think that he really leaned much more on Mother S during that period of time. That was a rough period of time, I tell you, and that went on for a couple of years. There was some very bitter feeling between Doctor and some of the regents.

- Riess: Did the children and spouses find themselves having to fend people off, and explain things constantly? Do you feel that it was a rough two years for you all, also?
- V. Goodin: No, it wasn't rough for us, because we weren't on the firing line at all. And of course the children were much too young. It was the late forties or very early fifties, and of course the children were much too young to be even aware of it.
- Riess: Well, actually, I meant you and Marion, and Bob and Cara May--.
- V. Goodin: Was Bob back here at that time? Of course, there were a number of people that were friends of ours who had taken the tack opposite the oath, and it was a bad time, there's no question. I guess this was sort of getting toward the McCarthy era. Do you remember when the oath was?
- Riess: Well, it was initiated in 1949, but the whole thing wasn't settled until '52.
- V. Goodin: And this is a good, long period of time. I felt that Doctor was in the middle on that one, because if he hadn't gone with the oath, why, the legislature might have done something very drastic to the university, and he felt that this was an easy way of doing it. Why should anybody refuse to take an oath that every judge in the land has to take before he assumes office? And why shouldn't a professor have to do that? But a large number of the professors thought otherwise.
- Of course, I thought it was a foolish thing to do, because it doesn't mean much. Any subversive wouldn't hesitate to sign up and it's not needed for the rest. I don't really know if Doctor was misled on that or not. He certainly was a keen judge of the legislature, and its feelings, and the ambience and everything else. I think that there was fear of what might be done if he didn't try to put the oath through. I can't even remember all the mechanics of how that went. Do you have any information on that at all? It was not anything that was passed by the legislature I don't think, was it?
- Riess: No. My sense is that Jim Corley suggested it to Sproul as a way of fending off possible requirements that a stronger oath should be taken.
- V. Goodin: That is my recollection. I'm glad that you confirmed that, because I always felt that it was Corley who started the thing, and that it probably was a mistake. But Dr. Sproul never gave the slightest indication to me or anybody that I know about that he blamed Corley for it. In fact, he and Corley were still close friends when Corley died.

V. Goodin: And Corley remained a key of his administration for many years thereafter. I felt that Corley was the nub of the problem, but certainly Doctor never gave any indication to me, or anybody around me, that he felt that Corley had done anything improper or wrong.

Riess: That seems to be one of the hallmarks of Dr. Sproul, taking it all on himself.

V. Goodin: I don't remember anything else he had to take on. [laughs] I'm sure there were a lot of other things. There were a lot of other things.

Riess: There must have been some bad decisions along the way where he could not blame someone else.

V. Goodin: Well, I'm thinking of the two or three times that he asked me to do something and talk to him about certain problems that were tough problems, particularly in those days.

Riess: Do you recall anybody who you would have thought of, other than Corley, perhaps, as his advisor? Someone whose counsel he would turn to in an informal way?

V. Goodin: George Pettitt was his speech writer. I knew George fairly well, but he wasn't the type of person that Dr. Sproul would have looked to for advice. He would look to him for ideas on speeches, and for doing the research and that sort of thing.

I think he relied a lot on Dr. Deutsch for taking care of the professors and the Academic Senate, and keeping the education part of the organization going, and improving on it. As I say, I think that his main forte was to build up departments, and to keep the people happy.

I'll never forget that Doctor even bought a house once to recruit Peter Odegard who was the head of the political science department of Reed College. Have you heard this before?

Riess: No.

V. Goodin: They needed somebody of Peter's caliber, so Doctor found and bought a house. I forget whether Peter bought it from him or not, but Doctor ultimately sold it. I can't remember. It would be interesting. I'll check before the editing is done, and see

V. Goodin: whatever happened to that house. (The Odegards did live in the house but no one recalls whether they rented or bought it.) At first, Doctor wanted to buy our house for them, and Marion wasn't about to sell it.

Riess: You mean the Tamalpais Road house?

V. Goodin: No, the previous house on 980 Euclid, where we were then living.

Riess: How could you possibly resist him?

V. Goodin: Oh, we could resist him. Particularly Marion. I think Marion was probably one of his best confidants, because she would always stand up to him, you know, in a very nice way. Well, she'll stand up to anybody in a very nice way for her own ideas.

Riess: If Sproul wanted to take the pulse of the campus community or the academic community, or the business community, it doesn't sound like Pettitt was the person, Deutsch, of course. But how else would he?

V. Goodin: I think that he saw a lot of Earl Warren, particularly when he was governor, and they had a lot of contact. He had many prominent people throughout the state that he knew and could call on. He could call instantaneously by name at least fifty thousand people in the state of California. He had an incredible memory for faces and names. Mother S had that, too. It was just amazing. He could call on almost anybody in any community, business, professional, educational, whatever community. He had friends everywhere, if he felt that he needed them.

Among his really close friends was Dr. Bill Donald. Another one was Farnham Griffiths, who was a partner in the McCutchen law firm over here. They were good friends, and had been for a good many years. Another one was Stan Freeborn, who later became chancellor at the Davis campus, who was in agriculture. Freeborn and Dyke's father and the Sprouls all had adjoining cabins at Echo Lake.

Riess: So he could see people like that for more extended periods of time and under different circumstances.

V. Goodin: Not really at Echo. Generally he and Mother S went up there by themselves. They rarely had any friends visit them. In fact, I don't remember any friends going up with them at all. They took their vacation themselves. They didn't even really tolerate many children around.

Bob and Ida--The Sproul Style

Riess: Ida really was very important for him, you're saying. She influenced him?

V. Goodin: Well, influenced him, but not with regard to the running of the university. All she did was help him there. I don't think she suggested any courses, or recommended that he recruit any particular individual. But if he had decided to do something, why, she was in there pitching, helping, and entertaining like crazy.

Well, that's not wholly true. He would have liked to have had a party every night, I think, to keep up. He liked to have the professors over, and the students. He had a lot of student parties, as I think I mentioned before. And he had those freshman receptions where he'd have up to a thousand people. You've heard those stories about him, that he would remember their names and faces.

Riess: That's interesting.

V. Goodin: I don't think they do that anymore.

Riess: It sounds impossible to have a party every night and then get up and write speeches at six o'clock the next morning.

V. Goodin: Don't get me wrong. They formed a rule, ultimately, that they would just go out every other night, because it was just too much. But it was a very active social type of thing that he was required to do in addition to running the mechanics of the university.

Riess: What's on your list, so that we don't miss out on your list.

V. Goodin: Well, have I mentioned the fact that he invented games at these Sunday night suppers? We played Hearts, most of the time, but he invented many different games. Some of the complaints were that he would just make up the rules as we went along. And there was frequently great objection to his new rules. [laughter]

One of the things that I thought would be interesting was that he was very observant of what should be done. As I mentioned, when Truman wanted to speak, he had him speak. Another time they were having a Charter Day, I think it was, and this was long after Governor [Culbert] Olson had gotten out of office, and he'd sort

V. Goodin: of been forgotten, but Dr. Sproul recognized him and arranged for him to get a robe and come in with the procession, which I thought was something that not many people would do. I mean, after all, this is even after he had had some problems with Olson when Olson was governor [1939-1943]. Olson was not totally supportive of everything Dr. Sproul wanted. Nonetheless, he thought that as a former governor and former regent, that he was entitled to this respect, and he saw that he was given it.

Riess: What kind of conflicts did they have?

V. Goodin: I think that there was not enough money for the university. I don't really remember. I was in law school the first part of Olson's regime, and then I went back East and into the FBI and I really wasn't around there most of the time that he was here. But, my recollection is that Olson was certainly not as supportive of the university and of Doctor as Warren. Warren and Doctor were very close, and Warren supported him and the university 100 percent.

Oh, one other thing I was going to mention. These were the days when you didn't marry a girl without asking for her hand. I was down in South America, but I did write a letter. In the meantime Dr. Sproul had been sent over on the Reparations Commission to Russia. He got the letter when he was in Germany, and he happened to be shopping at that point. He looked at the last name of his daughter's suitor's name, and it turned out to be G, and he happened to find a whole set of a dozen beautiful dessert knives, forks and spoons--gold plated, with mother of pearl handles, with a G in the mother of pearl. So we have this whole set as a result of my writing this letter.

Riess: That was wonderful. He took you seriously.

V. Goodin: Yes, he did. I don't know what those things cost him but it was probably a couple of cartons of cigarettes at that time. This was just after the war in Europe was over, must have been in the summer of '45, even before VJ day.

Riess: Did he send you a formal response?

V. Goodin: Yes. He said, "Welcome."

He was marvelous at running meetings and that sort of thing, conferring degrees, which he did beautifully. And remembering names. After being there and meeting him only that once--and as I say, I can't remember when Will and I went to meet him--I happened to be coming across the campus with some fraternity brothers. He

V. Goodin: was going on the opposite direction and we all said, "Good evening, Dr. Sproul." And he looked at me, he said, "Hi." And then he said, "Oh, Hi, Goodin." It may be that it was only three or four weeks before that we met, but this impressed my fraternity brothers. I think that he was able to do that with many students, and that's a very complimentary thing to do.

Commonwealth Club

Riess: Was he a member of Commonwealth Club?

V. Goodin: Oh, yes. And he spoke there many, many times. This was before I really got too active in the Commonwealth Club. I do remember hearing him speak once or twice. I gather you've seen that I was president in 1974. I'd been very active for three or four years before then, because you sort of have to go up the chairs.

Riess: It is a one year presidency?

V. Goodin: Yes, just a one year presidency, but at that time you remained on the board as a voting member for seven years. I cut it down to five, and it has since been cut down to three, which I'm in favor of. Now we're on the board for life, but not voting members. I go to the board meetings when I can, and I'm still very active. In fact, I was there a couple of weeks ago, sitting at that table, when Mr. [William] Webster was here, because of the FBI connection. Shirley [Temple Black] turned up with laryngitis, and asked me to preside and do the question and answer. So I did, I became active again. [laughs] I told the audience that I never in my wildest dreams or fantasies could imagine myself standing in for Shirley. But I was glad to do it, and it was fun.

Riess: Was Sproul active there?

V. Goodin: He didn't put very much time into the Commonwealth Club. He was the secretary for years but it was mainly honorary. He didn't go to meetings and things like that.

Riess: Honorary secretary, is that it?

V. Goodin: My recollection is that he was listed as secretary. I should know this, but this is another one of those things that I really haven't thought about. It seems to me that his name was on that roster

V. Goodin: for years as something. But he really wasn't active except to speak. Of course, lending his name to it was very helpful to the club, I'm sure, in those days, although I wasn't active at that time.

I am not a Rotarian myself, but my impression is that he did go down to the Berkeley Rotary quite regularly. I think they have a rule that if you miss a week in your own Rotary, you've got to make it up by going to some other Rotary. Now, they may have made an exception in his case, but I think he was there frequently. I remember people telling me about it.

Riess: Wakefield Taylor got you involved in the Commonwealth Club?

V. Goodin: Yes. Wake Taylor got me involved with the club. I was nominated to the board as a regular member of the board in '70, and then in '72, I was asked to be chairman of the executive committee. You're then committed to being vice-president the following year, and president the year after that. It's really a three year commitment, and a few years of interest, and having the board decide whether or not you're fit to be president. They're the ones who decide who gets the nod.

Riess: What was the reputation of the Commonwealth Club when you became involved in 1969, and how has it changed?

V. Goodin: Well, I joined in 1946, actually. Frankly, it really hasn't changed very much. The club basically has this Friday noon lunch. It was at the Sheraton Palace in '46, and it still is at the Sheraton Palace, mostly, now. If anything, it's probably become more active, it's increased in membership.

Riess: Different kind of membership?

V. Goodin: Yes. We went through several long, hard board meetings when I was a board member, and on the executive committee before I became chairman, several hard meetings as to whether or not we would admit women. [laughs]

Riess: Ah, that is a different kind of person, isn't it?

V. Goodin: It is a different kind of person. One of the reasons, when I was able to do it, to cut the term down for voting members, was because a lot of the old, non-voting members were just horrified that we were going to let women in. There's a coterie there of about, oh, twenty-five or thirty or forty elderly gentlemen. They've changed a little bit over the years, but there's still a coterie of elderly gentlemen that attend every single Friday lunch.

V. Goodin: If you're going over the radio, you really have to have a live audience to make the radio program interesting, I think. If you didn't have an audience there, it wouldn't feel so alive. And so these older board members thought that if we allowed women in, that these old gentlemen would not come. That actually didn't happen, but it was so important and such a major issue, that we discussed it for about four board meetings before really taking a vote on it.

We finally decided that we had to take a vote. We had to then separate these vociferous old men from the voting members, and it only passed by one vote. Of course, if we hadn't done this, we would have had all sorts of trouble. By doing it then, we avoided any lawsuits, because this was just the beginning of the movement to open up all clubs to women, which I think is a good idea anyway, and did then. But, as I say, the club has changed, and it's a much bigger club now.

Somebody long after me arranged for public radio, so that we go over National Public Radio, live, on Fridays. So it's a lot more active. Shirley Temple Black is the current president, and she's done an excellent job. I wondered about whether she would have the time to devote to it, but she has really done a tremendous job.

Riess: Was she the first woman who was moved up to that rank?

V. Goodin: No. There was Renee Rubin, who was president about three years ago. She's a lawyer, and had been the clerk of the court of appeals for some years, and a very wonderful person. She was a good president also.

Riess: Is your board representative enough so that you feel that you get a truly representative population of speakers?

V. Goodin: The club has such a reputation that if anybody of note wants to make a speech, they generally get in touch with the club.

Riess: Oh, really.

V. Goodin: Yes, and at the beginning of every year--at least this was true before, I'm not sure what we do now--we generally give an invitation to the president and vice-president, and all the cabinet, and other key people, and also the heads of state of all the countries. I don't know exactly how it's done now, but this is the way it was done when I was on the board.

V. Goodin: Then anytime that the head of state, or any of these key people would be coming through, they'd know that they could speak to the Commonwealth Club. We'd issue those invitations on an "if and when" basis. Like today we're having [George] Bush on a Wednesday because that's when he's available.

Riess: I see. So that is an "if and when."

V. Goodin: Yes. But we still have to have the live radio program on Friday, so we're going to have Allen Drury. This is a very busy week. Yesterday we had Clare Boothe Luce, and she was fantastic, at eighty-one, gave a great talk.

Riess: Does that mean that you have broadcast time for each of them, or only on Friday?

V. Goodin: The live broadcasts are only on Friday, but we tape every speech and send it out to every radio station. Most of the radio stations will run it, but not on their regular time.

Riess: And does it always have that fifteen minute follow up?

V. Goodin: Yes, it's the same format that has been existing since I've been aware of what they were doing in the club. At first, when I joined in '46, I just went over there occasionally. But this has been the format ever since we got into radio, which was in the thirties sometime: There will be a minute and three-quarters of introduction, twenty-seven minutes of speech, and fourteen minutes of question and answer. Roughly half an hour of speech and fifteen minutes of question and answer. But with the thanks, and all that sort of thing, it's timed down to the second, really. (The program has since been changed, at the request of National Public Radio, to one hour with questions and answers extended to half an hour.)

Riess: Were there any disasters in the year that you were president?

V. Goodin: Almost. [laughs] It's amazing when you're required to put on a program like this, every single Friday. In the weeks of holidays we'd use some of these tapes of the other speeches and send them out to the radio stations, and we just don't go over live radio at that point. A few times we've had speakers fail on us the last minute, but we have a whole roster of people who are ready to give a speech on a minute's notice, and they will fill in.

V. Goodin: There's a person by the name of Don McLaughlin, who was another good friend of Doctor's. When I became president--and he's a good friend of mine, too, I liked him, had seen him over the years-- I asked him to become my quarterly chairman the first quarter that I was in the club. He did, and he did a beautiful job, as always.

One day we were having the governor of Illinois, Governor Walker his name was at that point, and Walker's plane was delayed by something or other, and it looked as though he would not make it by radio time. So I called Don and said, "Don, you've got to be there, in case." This was during the gold crisis, and Don had no hesistancy on being ready to make a speech on an instant's notice. So he said, "Gosh, I'd like to, but I'm going to have lunch with John Simpson at the P.U. Club."

I said, "Don, we'll have John at the head table, too." [laughs] He said, "I don't know that I can trade the P.U. food for the Sheraton food." But, in the end he did and he was there, ready to make a speech, and just at radio time in walks Governor Walker. So we introduce him and go on with it. That's the type of thing that can happen to you. But that was the closest that I came to having a disaster.

Riess: How about particularly unresponsive or difficult interviews in your fifteen minutes afterwards?

V. Goodin: These are all questions from the audience. Some presidents have run out of questions and had to do it just off the cuff. That is very difficult, and it never happened to me; fortunately, I had enough written questions. Actually, most of the problem is ferreting out questions and listening to the speech so that you don't ask some question that has been answered point blank in the speech. You have to go over the questions while the speaker is speaking.

Another disaster that does happen occasionally is that the speaker will not take his full twenty-seven minutes. In the first place, you haven't shuffled the questions enough, but you have to get up and start the questions anyway. That happened a few times, but it didn't turn out disasterously.

Riess: How about heckling?

V. Goodin: I had very little trouble with that, we've had very few incidences of heckling. But we've got a pretty good staff and if there's any possibility of somebody really causing a problem--like when we had Kissinger last year, we had two instances of people jumping up, but

V. Goodin: they were gently escorted out if the staff thinks that there's any possibility of this, they'll have some guards on hand. Generally speaking the audiences are very receptive to the speaker.

Riess: And is it open to the public?

V. Goodin: No, but you can become a member by paying your fifty-five dollars. [laughs]

If you wanted to go in, nobody would ever question you, but you're supposed to be a member, or a member can bring a guest. We're always looking for new members. I'm sure that some people go in and buy tickets and have lunch. As a matter of fact, you can go in and sit, you don't have to buy lunch. There are always seats available for members that don't want to pay fifteen dollars or eighteen dollars for a two dollar lunch. [chuckles]

Riess: Brown bag members.

#### A Little Role-Playing

Riess: Now I want to put you into this extremely hypothetical framework of Robert Gordon Sproul being at the Commonwealth Club in about 1955. He would be there speaking about "twenty-five years as the president of the university." He would review the growth of the state and the campuses, and the change of students, and all of that. You're the president, and you have your questions from the audience, about the loyalty oath.

V. Goodin: You know, that is a very, very difficult question. Really, even as late as now, I'm not sure how he felt. He thought that it was too bad about the loyalty oath, there wasn't any question on it, but I feel that he thought that that was the best thing for the university at the time. That he tried to put the loyalty oath into effect and that his response would be that he made the best decision that he could at that time, and that, if presented with the same situation again, he might have followed the same course.

Maybe he would have handled it somehow differently, I don't know, because that was a bad time for the university. And you know, even many of his close friends just left him completely, including the later president of the university, [David] Saxon.

Riess: And what do you think of Senator McCarthy's work? [as if to Sproul]

V. Goodin: Well, Dr. Sproul would have, and did, decry that whole episode. I don't think that he felt that communism was such a threat. He certainly did not have any notions of admiring the system of communism. I'm sure that he thought that McCarthy's methods were excessive, and totally objectionable, violated people's rights and everything else.

Riess: This would be premature, but, what do you think, "Dr. Sproul," about the Women's Liberation Movement?

V. Goodin: "I'm all for it." [laughs]

He wasn't in the forefront of any organization, or anything, but certainly he hired women professors, and he was a great admirer of Aurelia Reinhardt, I know. I'm sure that he would think that the ERA was the right thing, the right way to go. Clare Boothe Luce said yesterday that the ERA started with her being on the organizing committee in 1919.

Riess: What do you think are the greatest accomplishments of your twenty-five years? [as if to Sproul]

V. Goodin: Keeping the university together, and making many campuses out of it. And keeping it still as one university, amply supported by the state of California.

Riess: What do you think is the future of the state college system? [as if]

V. Goodin: In 1955? He was part of the organizations that put together the master plans, and state colleges were part of those master plans. I don't think that he would like them called state universities. [laughs]

Riess: In other words, he would say, "Just so they remain colleges."

V. Goodin: "And as long as you don't take away support for a great university."

Riess: How have your ideas changed about academic freedom, and freedom of speech over the years? [as if to Sproul]

V. Goodin: As Dr. Sproul? This is in 1955, so this is from '30 to '55. Well, I think that at that point he might have thought that there was some erosion of the freedom of speech, in view of the McCarthy times.

- V. Goodin: I think that that had a sobering effect on a lot of people, and if not a sobering effect, then an enraging effect. But it did have an effect on people's thinking about their right to free expression. But other than that, it seems to me that there's been nothing but an enhancement of the right to free speech, except for that glitch of the McCarthy era and the witch hunts that had gone on immediately before, including the witch hunt that resulted in the loyalty oath.
- Riess: Ten years later, 1965, then he would have to answer some questions about the Free Speech Movement at the University of California. "What would you have done about it?"
- V. Goodin: I think that he would have handled it a lot better. If he had been in his presidency he would have still been so close to the students that I don't think that it would have occurred. I think that, in spite of the fact that he boycotted the Order of the Golden Bear for a while, he did want to know what was going on in all of the communities of the campus, and the students were a big part of that. And so he kept pretty close to them, and I don't think it would have gotten out of hand like it did. They wouldn't have brought the police car on campus that Mario could stand on top of. That's my feeling.
- Riess: Would he have had Mario in his office?
- V. Goodin: Sure.
- Riess: And made a friend of him?
- V. Goodin: You couldn't make a friend of those people. He didn't make a friend of Stanley Moore, certainly. Although Stanley, I don't think, ever came into his office. This [Murrish] did.

There was another Communist who was a thorn in his side, but he talked to him frequently and tried to reason with him. I forget what his name was, something like Gladstein (I think his name was Morris Gladstein), but I think that he had that same situation with that group, and he successfully defused them. There were articles in the Daily Cal that were subject to a lot of criticism by a lot of people, and for very many different reasons when Murrish was the editor. I mean, everything didn't go just smoothly, but he took care of them in some fashion. They didn't blow up into a free speech movement, at any rate.

He was such a great person that I--I mean, I think he was more important than Willie Brown and Deukmejian together, in his day. He was really so well respected.

Riess: It's interesting that you're alluding to Sacramento.

V. Goodin: I think he was the best known person in the state. You couldn't go anywhere without having him recognized. You'd go with him, and people would say, "Hello." I don't care where it was. And he knew most of the people, too.

Riess: Were there times that you and Marion went along with him that were kind of showing the flag?

V. Goodin: Well, we always went to Charter Day, and the Charter Day banquets. Oh, sure, we'd rally round. Not that he needed any rallying around. [laughs] It was fun to be there. But if he was making a speech, we always liked to be there.

Riess: I had kind of a feeling that it would be hard to find your own place around him. He was a very superior and vigorous person, and it would be easy to feel like a sluggard next to him.

V. Goodin: Well, no, he never put you in that position, I don't think. He knew his place, and he respected yours. I certainly never had any feeling of anything except enjoying his company, really, and having a tremendous respect for what he did, and what he had accomplished. And the respect that everybody had for him.

Riess: Your whole family went to the University of California?

V. Goodin: No, our children, none of them did. Marion thinks that this was a great disappointment to him. When our kids came along, we said, "You can go anywhere you can get in." And it was not very easy to get in by that time. And so they chose as far away from home as they could possibly get. [laughs] Harvard, Brown, and the University of Washington. But they all came back and went to graduate school at Cal. We've got one doctor that graduated from Irvine, and he's teaching at UC, San Francisco, right now. A son that graduated from Boalt Hall, and our daughter Sally got a master's degree in geology from UC Berkeley.

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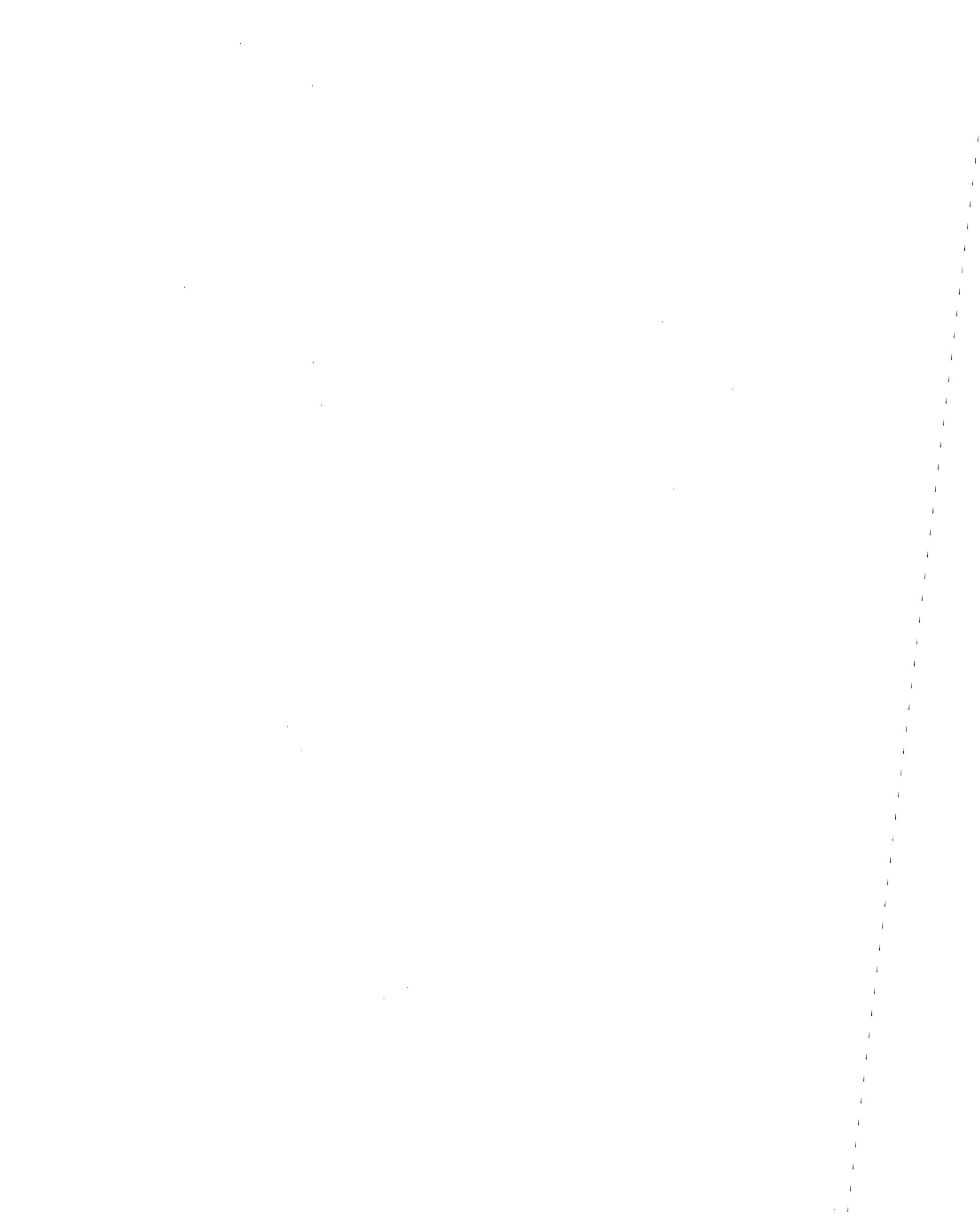
A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY REMINISCES

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Katherine Bradley, the friend of the Sproul family who often stayed for dinner, is the kind of observer oral historians seize upon. She bore witness to the family roundtables and the role of each of the players at the table. As Katherine Connick she lived on Tanglewood Road, in the Claremont area of Berkeley--not very far away from where she lives today and where we interviewed. It was the neighborhood where the Sprouls lived before Robert Gordon Sproul became president of the University of California.

Katherine Connick and Marion Sproul were best friends. Katherine joined President and Mrs. Sproul and Marion on a trip to Europe in 1938. From the journals of that trip she reviews the itinerary they followed and she recalls a revealing and amusing story of the "when in Rome do as the Romans do" philosophy of President Sproul.

Over that twenty-eight year presidency Robert Gordon Sproul traveled a lot. When World War II was over he was "stationed" abroad from late May to mid-August with the American Commission on Reparations, in England first, then France, Germany, and Russia. As a sidelight, in this interview introduction, I want to quote from one of his letters back to "Dear Ida," from which the reader will get a sense of Sproul's open enthusiasm for the challenge of the new situation. He writes from Moscow:

"I live in a room about 15 x 15, with a 7 x 5 alcove to house my bed and washstand. The living room, if I may call it such, holds ten pieces of antiquated furniture, leaving a minimum of room for me. It has a shallow closet for my clothes. There is electric light and hot water every third day. You have to sign up for a bath, as on shipboard, and it is prepared for you by the maid on the floor. I don't know whether she bathes you or not, because I arrived on the wrong day and have not yet had a bath. The food is good and many hours of the day are spent in eating, the Russians being very definitely not a short order, quick lunch people. Soup and tea are dishes I have especially enjoyed, the quality of these being definitely above that of the states, excluding, of course, the Sproul table. Caviar and vodka are most enjoyable, too, but priced high enough so that you are not encouraged to gorge yourself upon them."

But bounded by love of home and family, he yearns to be back in Berkeley. Katherine Bradley says in the interview he was a very "people-oriented person. He was welcoming to people--I think he loved being in the limelight." She concludes, "There may be very outstanding presidents at the university, but... rather impersonal." A remarkable number, thousands, felt some personal connection with Robert Gordon Sproul, and Katherine Connick Bradley's "insider" status adds another dimension to the family man picture.

Suzanne Riess  
Interview-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
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University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name KATHERINE CONNICK BRADLEY

Date of birth 4-6-16 Place of birth EUREKA CALIF.

Father's full name ARTHUR ELWELL CONNICK

Birthplace HUMBOLDT COUNTY CALIF

Occupation BANKER

Mother's full name FLORENCE ROBERTSON CONNICK

Birthplace GARBERVILLE CALIF

Occupation —

Where did you grow up? EUREKA AND BERKELEY

Present community BERKELEY

Education BA - U.C. BERKELEY 1937 SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Occupation(s) —

Special interests or activities FORMER TRUSTEE HEAD ROYCE SCHOOL

TRUSTEE ALTA BATES HOSPITAL

HONORARY MEMBER WALMME FORMER BOARD

MEMBER ART LEAGUE OF EAST BAY + JUNIOR CENTER ARTS

AND SCIENCE MILLS COLLEGE ASSOCIATE COUNCIL

Family Friends, Tanglewood Road

[Date of Interview: May 31, 1984]

Bradley: My family first met the Sprouls when they moved across the street from us on Tanglewood Road in Berkeley. Our families overlapped to some extent in ages, so that we became close friends and remained so.

Riess: Ida Sproul recalled playing bridge with a group of women. Would that have included your mother?

Bradley: I think that was earlier. However, she was an active member of the local book club in Claremont Court, which was quite an amazing group that met weekly with programs--and at that time they served tea. She was a very well-loved member of that group and was frequently asked back after she became the wife of the president. It's a geographically oriented group, but even so after she lived in the President's House she was invited back frequently.

"Dr. Sproul" is how I always think of him then because I started out at that age level. Years later of course I referred to her as Ida, but at the age I was you definitely didn't call your parents' friends by their first names--occasionally Aunt Someone-or-other. I think our feeling for them was just as great as if we were calling them by first names. But this was the older way of doing things.

Riess: What year was it that they lived there?

Bradley: It must have been 1929, or early 1930.

Riess: Was Grandmother Sproul with them?

Bradley: I suppose so. But I remember really her living with them on the campus. She was a delightful person, and had some of her son's characteristics. They were both positive personalities.

Bradley: One of my first recollections of the Sprouls was when Dr. Sproul was made president, and how very exciting it was. It was tinged with a little regret because this meant the family had to move out of the neighborhood. And Ida particularly had mixed feelings over that part of it, because she loved the neighborhood, and loved the house especially. They kept it for quite some time and rented it out rather than giving it up completely.

Riess: Do you remember talk in their house about his having been made president?

Bradley: I only remember that the general conversation about it all was that he was such an extremely young person, and so on, to become president. My recollection on that particular event was a reception, held for students I presume, the first semester that he was president, and it was one of those things with a receiving line and lines of students passing by, and Marion and I wore our first long dresses. We were junior high school age.

Riess: Was Walter Morris Hart also a neighbor?

Bradley: No. He might have been when they had the house on Elmwood.

Riess: I bring him up, because he was as well in line to be president as Sproul. Was that anything you recall being aware of or overhearing conversations about?

Bradley: I'm not aware of that. I know that on the faculty's part there were some real reservations because he [Sproul] was not an academic. And that reservation I think lasted for quite a little bit. But I think as he generated tremendous support for the university through the legislature, financial support for the programs university departments were doing, he was so successful in that regard, and was so supportive of excellence in academic matters and was so aware of academic excellence, I think that reservation gradually disappeared.

Riess: Was your father on the faculty?

Bradley: No, my father was a banker. And why I was so aware of these feelings and reservations I'm not sure. We did know faculty people and that's probably why.

Riess: Was making the transition to being president's wife a struggle for Ida?

Bradley: I'm sure it was, because she was always extremely modest. She didn't push herself forward at all, but she was extremely supportive and I think was an endless amount of help. I think for her it wasn't easy. There were really great demands, and as time went on they were even greater, with the caliber of people that she was expected to entertain. But she always did it in a very forthright and direct way, and I think people always admired her because of her modesty and honesty, and her warmth, of which you couldn't help but be aware. And she also exerted a calming influence when things got a little tense and exciting. [laughs]

It was a family of strong opinions, and while it seemed that hers were maybe less strong, if she felt something very, very thoroughly she stood up for her views against the louder suggestions of the others!

Riess: Do you think the expectations for the children changed with the change of title and position?

Bradley: No. I think probably, knowing Mother Sproul, that those high expectations had been instilled in her son by her. I think they were something that comes along from generation to generation, an expectation of achievement and excellence. Maybe there was a little more pressure; maybe possibly there was a little more emphasis on academic things. When you are in an academic environment this becomes more important.

I think an example is that when Marion was a freshman at the university her father insisted that she take freshman chemistry, which was really not her thing. She was an English major. But he felt that it was one of the best courses given on the campus. He had tremendous admiration for Joel Hildebrand and the course as an academic discipline, and he felt that this was something that she should do, as a matter of academic discipline. And so she did.

Riess: Marion went to Dominican Convent for high school?

Bradley: Yes, and that was at her mother's insistence, because she felt probably that she had less time to devote to Marion's "bringing-up" and so on than she might want to have. I think she felt that that was some sort of an environment that she needed. And also it was I think probably a good academic background as well. I don't think it was the religious aspect at all; I think it was all a matter of-- well, manners isn't quite the word, but knowing how to do things and doing them properly, and being at home socially, just so that she would feel comfortable with whatever environment in which she might find herself.

Riess: And perhaps Ida herself felt unsure.

Bradley: I think this is true. I've heard her say that that was why she wanted Marion to go to boarding school.

Riess: Was there any consideration, for the children, of going to any other college than Berkeley?

Bradley: I muttered a time or so something about the possibility of going to Stanford, because it was always very glamorous for girls to go to Stanford at that time, and then the horror expressed, the absolute horror! You could go, according to Marion's father, anyplace, anyplace other than Berkeley, but not to Stanford!

#### Dinner Table Topics

Riess: Where did you have these conversations? Dinners at the Sprouls?

Bradley: Yes, there were lots of conversations around the dinner table, and on all kinds of topics, current, whatever. I think everybody felt free to express himself, and did so. [laughs] There was a general, usually stimulating, conversation.

Riess: Was it focussed on the university?

Bradley: Not really, and I don't think he asked us a great deal, when we were in college, about our specific experiences. But students were not nearly as vocal then as they became later, of course. They were a pretty docile lot. I guess maybe because there was not much controversy, there wasn't as much dynamic discussion of the campus and the university as in other areas in which there might be a good deal of controversy. Like the dock strike, and the communist influences at the time.

I can remember our occasionally baiting him a little, because I presume we felt that he had relatively conservative views. I can't remember quite on what subjects it was that we did this. But I can remember with my own father too that I used to needle him a lot and sometimes said things that I didn't always believe just to get a reaction.

At that time Hitler was coming into power, and I can remember that being a concern with some of us before it was generally so in the country. And of course by the time we'd gone to Europe it was a real concern, because by then it was very obvious that war was imminent. That there would be no choice.

Riess: How about the New Deal as a dinner table topic at the President's House?

Bradley: [laughs] The New Deal. Now that was a subject on which--I think that was where some of our baiting came in!

Riess: During the depression years, do you remember seeing the down and out people around the university?

Bradley: No, I definitely don't. Of course by the time I was in the university it was the fall of 1933 to 1937. Marion was 1934 to 1938. Things were beginning to ease up a little. It's hard to judge by today's standards. Certainly everybody had so much less than they do now, and had so much less in the way of expectations as far as money was concerned. You chose between things. And if you wanted something you would think of how long it would take you to achieve it; you didn't think instant gratification.

Riess: Sounds like it could have been tempting to be a real rebel in that family.

Bradley: I don't think anybody really was. John, of course, was younger. At the time that I was visiting in the family most--he's maybe six or seven years younger--I think he was maybe rebellious about having to dress up for company at most.

Riess: Dr. Sproul always had dinner with the family?

Bradley: Yes. But I remember his frequently retiring to his study, which was adjacent to the room where we usually gathered, and using his dictaphone, and how I was completely amazed that he could continue to produce speeches in the volume that he did. He seemed constantly to be having to make talks. So he wasn't always free in the evening, but he made the effort to at least be there at dinner.

Riess: How present was religion in the household?

Bradley: Not very. Dr. Sproul would take his mother to the Presbyterian Church on Sunday, and Ida would go to the Catholic Church. And the children--Marion, it depended from time to time. I don't feel that there was a great emphasis.

I think it was really characteristic of Ida that while she seemed to be always willing and accommodating and so on, there were things that were important to her that she insisted on, and I think she had a close relationship with a sister. She was her own person, really, and I think she needed to be.

Dr. Sproul and the Great Outdoors

Bradley: I was very aware of Dr. Sproul's real love for outdoor activities and that sort of thing when we were at Echo Lake. He loved hiking and he loved fishing and had very positive opinions about them all. I remember one pack trip up in the Siskiyou mountains on which my father was along and Dr. Sproul took great pleasure in that, being really out and roughing it, away from civilization. He always spoke with great enthusiasm about his connection with the ski lodge of which Joel Hildebrand was a part. The professors who were involved in that I think were probably among his earliest supporters on the faculty. This was a group of men that enjoyed the outdoors.

Then of course my family had a close connection with his involvement with the Save-the-Redwoods League because he had been treasurer for that, I believe, since its inception. My family had come from Humboldt County and my father had been a longtime supporter of Save-the-Redwoods League also, so this was another area of common interest. The two families went on trips on two or three occasions up into the redwood area. I know how much he enjoyed that. He wouldn't be an environmentalist as they are now, particularly, but he was a person who was sensitive to the environment, appreciated it, before it was "the thing to do."

Riess: Was your father a close friend of his?

Bradley: Starting from the time they first lived across from us, he knew him quite well. Since my father later became president of the Save-the-Redwoods League they had contacts over the years. My father was somewhat older and Dr. Sproul was kept extremely busy between Berkeley, UCLA and general university demands.

My father was from Humboldt County. Interestingly enough, up to that time there were almost no people who lived in the redwood areas who had any involvement in protecting redwoods. They hadn't seen any necessity for it. My father had actually been born and grown up in Humboldt County, and he had always loved the outdoors. And as a banker he was extremely helpful to the group because he did a lot of their negotiations for purchases and so on, and knew many of the business people from whom they were needing to buy things.

Riess: Before they were neighbors, your father and Sproul were working together?

Bradley: I don't know how much they realized it. My father at that state was probably just very loosely involved in it because it was located in the Bay Area, and we were living in Humboldt until 1929.

Riess: What brought him down?

Bradley: He was transferred down by the Bank of America.

He was a very close friend of Newton Drury at that time. I think that Dr. Sproul was probably not as actively involved in the operational side of the league as for instance Newton was.

Riess: What was the family like up at Echo Lake? Was the style of life very different?

Bradley: Oh, it was extremely relaxed and casual. The style at the President's House was not very formal, I wouldn't say that, but up there it was an emphasis on hiking and swimming--if it wasn't too cold--and so on.

Riess: Could you come to lunch in your swim suit?

Bradley: [laughter] I can't remember. I do remember one of the advantages of the house was that it was adjacent to the Kleeberger Boys Camp!

Riess: Would Dr. Sproul be the sort of father who would pooh-pooh cold water--"Get on in there!"

Bradley: Yes, though I don't remember his swimming particularly. But that would be rather typical I think.

Riess: Was he a good naturalist?

Bradley: He wasn't any sort of expert on flowers or birds, as I remember. It would be more camping lore and that sort of thing.

Riess: I wonder if he had had those experiences as a boy himself.

Bradley: I really would doubt it. In San Francisco I know that he was a newspaper boy and worked some and I don't know that he had lots of recreational time.

Riess: I understand from Ida that the family all went down to UCLA to put in an appearance on that campus at times.

Bradley: Yes. In fact Marion and I were down there with them on Christmas I remember. It was sort of a holiday for us. Of course he was the first president who ever did that. I have a friend who graduated from UCLA, and I must say she was a strong supporter of Dr. Sproul and very enthusiastic, and so they must have felt down there quite a personal loyalty to him.

Bradley: I know it wasn't all that easy picking up and going down and being expected to entertain and do all the things that are the responsibility of the president and his wife for the faculty down there. Of course now that you have chancellors on each campus, this doesn't arise to that extent.

To Europe with Dr. and Mrs. Sproul, and Marion, 1938

Riess: When was the trip to Europe which you referred to earlier?

Bradley: In 1938 and 1939. Marion and I left in about late May or early June of 1938, just after Marion had graduated, and we came home in July of 1939. We planned it for a couple of years or longer. And her parents decided that they would go for three months.

We went via the Grand Canyon and New Orleans, then up to pick up a car in Detroit, and then drove to New York and visited her aunt and uncle, the Allan Sprouls, in New York. Then we drove to Canada, to Montreal and Quebec where her family arrived. We sailed from Quebec with the car, which is a switch on what is done now. It was a four-door Ford. We landed in Cherbourg and drove on from there, stopping at Bayeux and then on into Paris.

We stayed in Paris near the Arc de Triomphe. Reservations had been made before we left. Because of the Sprouls' connections we were extremely fortunate in Paris and had dinner with the Claude Lazards and another of the Lazard families at one of their homes, and together with some other people at a lovely club in Paris, out in the gardens. All the connections were simply superb for us, just marvelous.

Riess: You and Marion spoke French?

Bradley: We had both taken a good deal of French, yes. Mrs. Sproul didn't speak French, and neither did Dr. Sproul to any extent, but he loved things French, loved their way of doing things and so on.

From there we went through the chateau country, all trading off, except Ida, on the driving. Toward the south of France we stayed with a man who was a graduate of Davis who had married a French woman after World War I and had returned to Davis to study agriculture and then had taken over the running of the family property down there. We stayed in a small, old chateau where he grew premium peaches for the Riviera trade.

Bradley: We went on to Bordeaux and then on down through Nimes and Arles and Carcassone and Avignon and then back up through Lyons and Grenoble. We visited a good friend, Suzanne Bocqueraz, whose family had a home near Annecy, a lovely place. Then on to Chamonix and then across to Geneva and then back up to Strasbourg, and then we crossed over into Germany and traveled quite a good deal in Germany. We went on down into Munich, and visited with the American consul there who was a U.C. graduate. Of course this was during the time just prior to the war, and at that time he told us that the Germans had loaded two trains and taken them to the Czechoslovakian border with troops, and then pulled them back, and he didn't know why they had pulled them back. That had occurred one night during the time we were there.

All that traveling that we did, particularly in the areas close to Germany, made you realize that it was just a question of time until something happened. Later, the next spring, when Marion and I traveled to Sicily we were given an evacuation plan in case war was declared during the weeks that we were there. In fact that next spring they advised us to carry what seems ridiculous now, a hundred dollars in U.S. cash, saying that this could get you across borders to some neutral place.

Riess: Did Dr. Sproul visit universities along the way? Or was it a vacation for him from that?

Bradley: He enjoyed I think talking with people where we went and so on, but it was just his general enthusiasm for people.

Riess: Were people always aware he was president of the University of California?

Bradley: Yes, if it came to someone saying or asking directly what he did, but he didn't just announce it.

Riess: Was he uncomfortable not speaking the languages?

Bradley: Maybe that inhibited him somewhat. But I don't recall our having lots of problems with language, and I don't know why, whether there were a great many people who spoke English, or just what it was.

We drove from Germany and crossed over to Sweden and drove north to what would be across from Trondheim in Norway, and then south. And of course we couldn't speak Swedish. One delightful anecdote on that was that we were rather tired after we had left Stockholm, and I think it was either the first or second night out we were staying in a hotel, and we went down to dinner and looked

Bradley: at the menu and it was all unintelligible. The three women in the group said basically they would like something along the line of chicken or hamburger, something very recognizable.

And he said, probably in a booming voice, "This is absurd. When you are in a foreign country you get the food of the country. You don't look for something safe. You look for what is of the country." And so on, and so forth. So the waiter said, "And what would you like?" to him, and he pointed--because he couldn't do anything more--at what was the longest word on the menu.

He said, "I want that." The waiter said, "Oh, no, Sir." But of course there was nothing that encouraged him more than to be told, "No." And he said, "That is what I want."

So finally he persisted, with the waiter shaking his head as he went off. And the rest of us got our very plain soup and he didn't get anything, and didn't say anything. And then I think maybe we got a second course, and for him, nothing. And then we got our main course, and his came in with a flourish, and it had a silver cover over it, which was lifted off and it was a single artichoke. [laughter]

Of course he maintained that an artichoke was exactly what he wanted. (It wasn't of the country either, quite!) But I think that certainly exhibited both a very positive frame of mind, and sticking to it!

Riess: When you had made plans and reservations, was he in on the planning of it?

Bradley: We had guidebooks. Now, looking back at my diaries of that trip, I am really quite amazed, because a lot of our places were reserved ahead, although we weren't always completely on schedule. Now, knowing something of the mechanics of doing this, it must have been really quite a job. Also we got to places that were not standard at all, for instance places in central France, rather remote places, very interesting and picturesque. And also in Germany. I am sure he had done a good deal of research before we made the trip.

After Denmark and Belgium and Holland they left us in Paris and went home, with the car. We were in a pension in Paris, and planning to take classes at the Sorbonne.

Riess: Did Dr. Sproul go to Scotland to look up some family?

Bradley: No. Probably because there were all these things they wanted to do and see, and that was how much time there was.

Riess: Did Dr. Sproul dominate the trip? The one man among women, etc.?

Bradley: I think in one way he would somewhat dominate any situation he was in, because he was a positive person, with very strong opinions. But as I say, if it came down to a point where, for instance, Ida felt that that really wasn't right, or it was definitely "No," she said so, and things worked themselves out. I think he was amenable to listening to another viewpoint, and she was always very tactful.

#### Impressions of Dr. Sproul

Riess: Did you continue to be close to the family after you graduated from the university?

Bradley: Well, not as close, because I came back and married a year later and lived up in the Mother Lode country for quite some time.

He, Dr. Sproul, was a very people-oriented person. He was welcoming to people. He seemed to enjoy the stimulation. I think he loved being in the limelight, in the center of things, which he most frequently was. One story which I heard was that--as the students grew up and married and so on and had children, they would come back to the campus, or they would meet him at alumni functions here or there, and would have a baby along, and proud parents would display the child, and he would look at it and say, "Now, there's a baby." He said, "In that way I didn't compromise my integrity at all, and it was perfectly acceptable to the parents, who felt it was the biggest compliment I could pay." [laughter]

He had that way of making people feel important and welcome and so on. Certainly this is what made him so extremely successful in the position he was in, both from the standpoint of being an administrator of the university, but also in the frequent contacts he had in attracting support to the university, too. After all, he was dealing with all kinds of people from whom he was trying to attract financial support for the university. He was a person who I think inspired confidence and enthusiasm in whatever it was that he was promoting. When he was asked to take the position with Wells Fargo Bank I certainly remember that as a time when anybody connected with the university was saying, "Oh, he can't do that." He showed really tremendous loyalty to the university.

With current times you wonder whether he would have had the same success that he did at that time. The times are different. This is a time when there is such a tendency towards finding fault

- Bradley: with people in administrative places, much more I think than at that time. I think leadership was accepted more in that period than it is currently. Or maybe there aren't the leaders now. I don't know.
- Riess: You suggested earlier that maybe he had gone through a trial and been found not wanting, but that initially there was fault found with him.
- Bradley: Yes, but my impression is that academics are an extremely jealous group, and that that was what lay behind that. They are always sure that nobody could quite measure up--they're basically saying to themselves, to their academic standards anyway.
- Riess: Do you think Dr. Sproul was a man who was critical or analytical of himself?
- Bradley: It wasn't apparent. He seemed to have a good deal of self-confidence. I think a great deal of his self-confidence was justified.
- Riess: What do you think his view of women was, in general? Would he have been supportive of the women's movement?
- Bradley: I think he would have been supportive of it. There was a strong rapport between him and Marion. I think maybe their personalities were similar.
- Riess: What were his expectations of her?
- Bradley: At that time careers were not nearly as general as they now are. I think he would have supported her in any career that she wanted to follow.
- Riess: How were the two similar?
- Bradley: They both have a very positive directness I think. I think they are both achievement-oriented.
- Riess: What were his thoughts, as far as you know, on community social responsibility? I see that he was a member of over 250 organizations in his lifetime. Some must have been merely lending a name, of course.
- Bradley: You know, often you're lending your name because you feel there will be some value to the organization, which is often true. He was not extremely active in Save-the-Redwoods League; it was more a support. His title of treasurer didn't involve great responsibility. The

- Bradley: president and the executive director, Newton Drury, were terribly involved. Dr. Sproul's was more of a moral support, and not a lot in the way of time. I don't think that he had a great deal of time, frankly, and I would imagine that was true of a great many of the other organizations of which he was a member.
- Riess: The year that E.O. Lawrence was offered great positions elsewhere and yet kept by Sproul, who found money for him, was this the sort of thing that you as a student would have known about? Was it of interest?
- Bradley: I think I graduated that year, and we were in Europe. But I was always aware that Dr. Sproul was an extremely strong supporter of the sciences at the university, probably a great deal due to Joel Hildebrand, I think. He had a high regard for excellence and achievement and he would make an extreme effort to support these.
- Riess: Did you observe changes in Dr. Sproul over the years that you knew him? Was he weighed down by his office noticeably?
- Bradley: When there were some troubles on the campus and so on, I think he must have had real thoughts about accepting a position that would have been very flattering. It says something for him that he didn't accept it, because it would have been in some ways an easy thing to do. There are more problems running a university than there are running a bank; you are dealing with more publics, I think. You've got students, faculty, alums, the general public, and the state legislature. It's really demanding, and I think the fact that he continued to meet that really challenging situation is interesting. I think he was probably influenced by the real enthusiasm shown by these various people for whom he was working, and their support.

You'll still run into people nowadays, reminiscing about things, and they'll say, "Oh, wasn't he great!" My feeling right now is that there may be very outstanding presidents at the university, but that they are rather impersonal. They may be good administrators, and terribly able people and so on, but there isn't the leadership quality. The university is probably too big for that sort of thing anyway. But he had high standards, and a great ability to inspire enthusiasm from the various groups with whom he had to work.

Transcriber: Suzanne Riess  
Final Typist: Keiko Sugimoto



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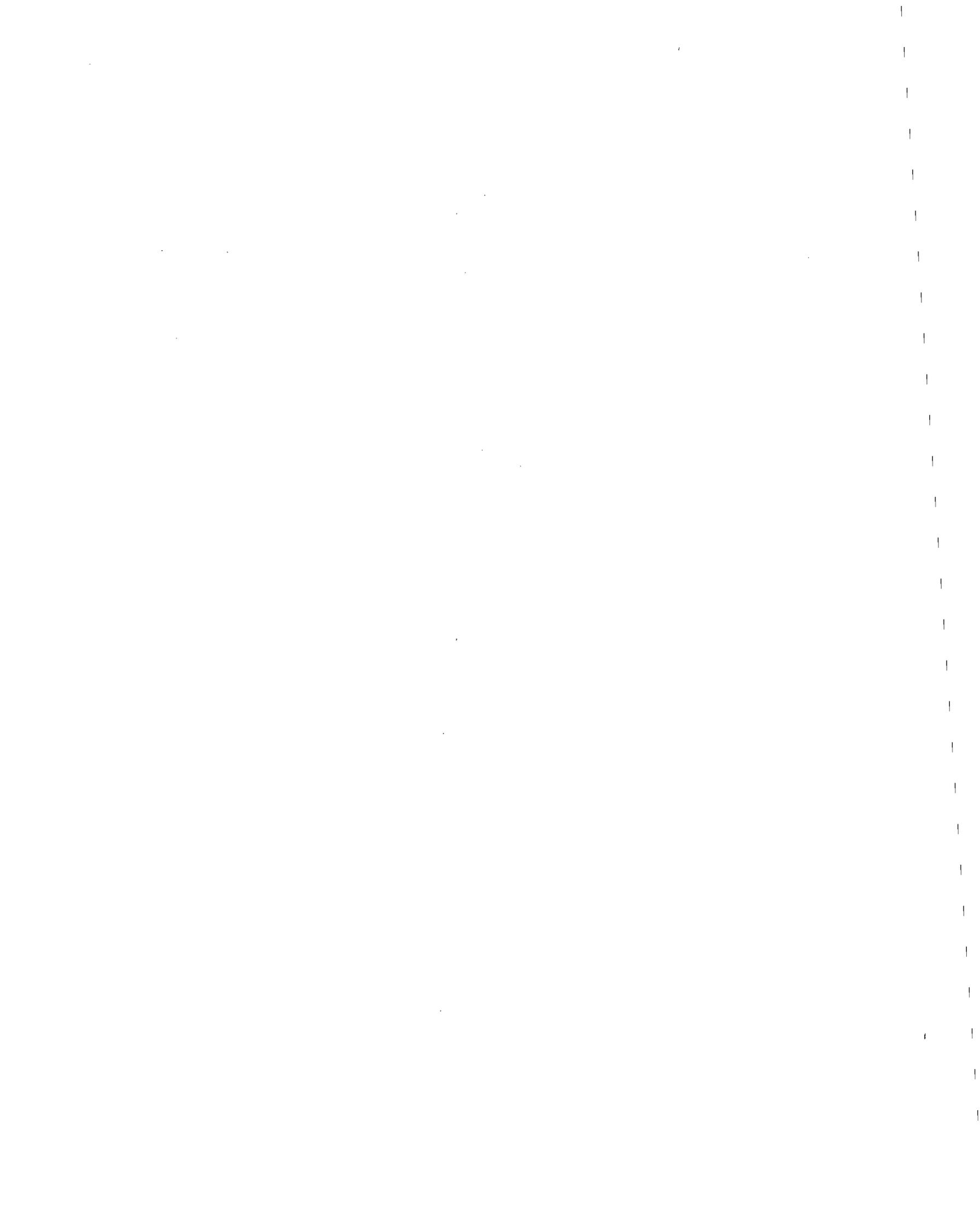
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Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Kendric and Marian Morrish

OLD FAMILY FRIENDS REMINISCE ABOUT BOB AND IDA

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

This very brief memoir with retired banker and lumberman Kendric Morrish, Class of '28, and his wife Marian, is more about Ida Amelia Sproul than her husband, the president. But in all the Robert Gordon Sproul oral history interviews it was the case that to name Ida was to evoke a hymn of praise of the woman behind the man, what a beneficent influence she was.

Marian Morrish's mother, Mrs. Winfield Scott Thomas, and Bob Sproul's mother were close friends, and that gave the families access to each other and a friendship which continued through the generations. Mrs. Morrish carefully nurtures the connections between those important past days and the present-day university, giving her children and their children as much as possible a sense of the early connections.

The pace of the life that Marian talks about is definitely after-hours, get-togethers at the Thomas's "semi-farm" with cows and chickens, ice cream maker, and a picnic atmosphere for the Sprouls and the Barrowses--David Prescott Barrows was president of the university from 1919 to 1923.

The Morrishes, a couple with a honeymoon fondness for each other, met with me in their home in Walnut Creek. The frontispiece photograph shows their closeness, and the pleasant countryside feeling of Rossmoor to which they have retired.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
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University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name KENDRICK BRADFORD MORRISH

Date of birth 1-15-07 Place of birth BERKELEY

Father's full name WILLIAM FRANCIS MORRISH

Birthplace SIERRA CITY, CALIF

Occupation BANKER - LUMBERMAN

Mother's full name FLORENCE BURPEG MORRISH

Birthplace OAKLAND, CALIF

Occupation HOUSEWIFE

Where did you grow up? BERKELEY

Present community WALNUT CREEK CALIF

Education GRAD U. OF CALIF 1928

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF BANKING

Occupation(s) BANKER - LUMBERMAN RETIRED

Special interests or activities OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES - PROFESSIONAL

GUIDE - 1921-28 - PROFESSIONAL OUTDOOR WRITER, NATIONAL

MAGAZINES - PLAYWRIGHT BOHEMIAN CLUB - COLUMNIST

ROSSMOR NEWS - PRESIDENT MT. VIEW CEMETARY (OAKLAND)

Old Family Friends Reminisce About Bob and Ida

[Date of Interview: October 11, 1984]

Riess: Just start out with your recollection of Bob Sproul, Mrs. Morrish.

MM: His mother worried about him overdoing. She always was telling him, "Bob, you know, you're not indispensable, and you're not indestructible."

Grandma Sproul and my mother were very close friends and were checking in with each other quite often, usually while having tea together. Ida would bring her by and drop her off at my mother's in north Berkeley, and they would have their visits, as well as on the telephone--lots to talk about exchanging information and whatnot.

I'm reminded of a story, when Grandma Sproul called my mother the morning after the Cal Club, of which our two boys were members--that's a group of fifty students who had a direct line to Sproul, in those days, back in the fifties. She called to say, "Well, the Cal Club was here last night, and you'll never guess what your grandson Bill did." Apparently he and two of his buddies asked Ida if she would permit them to go up and shortsheet Bob Sproul's bed. The Sprouls entertained the Cal Club twice a year, and this was Bill Morrish's final invitation. He was graduating.

Well, we all know what a wonderfully loud, infectious laugh Bob Sproul had. So Grandma Sproul said, "Ida gave permission. And when Bob found what had happened, you should have heard him laugh! You could have heard him all across the campus." [laughter]

Riess: To think that they would have thought that would be okay!

MM: And that was typical of Ida, you see. She was such a good sport, and loved anything related to the young. And he was always so jovial. We would see him at parties. I remember asking him, over at the consul-general's (from Sweden) home--Manne Lindholm--about how his mother was. He raised his arm like this, and he said, "My mother, she's just wonderful!" And that great voice carried all the way to the end of the drawing room!

Riess: Why would you have seen them there?

KM: We were the representatives for Oakland with the Swedish consul-general and his wife for a couple of years. That was a committee in Oakland formed to be a hospitality committee for the visiting consul-generals, and we were one, and they [Sprouls] were one. We had a delightful couple of years.

MM: We were also members of the University International Committee and there were times when we were in with other groups as well.

KM: A hospitality thing.

MM: We would have them at our home from time to time.

Riess: How is it that you have known the Sprouls for so long?

MM: My father was a professor, up to 1922, Winfield Scott Thomas, so the paths crossed. My mother was a member of the Women's Faculty Club and of the Men's Faculty Club. She was the first woman to be invited to remain as a member when her husband died, so she had access to the Men's Faculty Club. She used to take us to dinner there when our boys were in college at Cal. They would often bring their friends and we would dine and visit.

For years we have had a membership in The Faculty Club and from time to time we still have student lunches over there when there's a real incentive, a niece who's graduating or a grandson entering, or whatever. And we would always have Ida, and a few others of the university family, like Ella Hagar, Garff Wilson and several others who were dear friends and who would add such stature to our party. I would ask each one of the "family" to give us a little insight into the past of the university for the sake of the young ones there. They thrilled over what they had heard and learned, leaving the lunches with stars in their eyes and pride in their university.

Regretfully the last party was without Ida, who had recently passed away, but we were lucky enough to have her portrait, which had been moved from Ida Sproul Hall to the Women's Faculty Club. It was hanging over the mantel. And so I said, "Maybe not in person is dear Ida Sproul today, but she's here in spirit and smiling down on you fine young people. She always so enjoyed the students on this campus."

Riess: You watched Bob and Ida grow into the job of the presidency. How would you say they changed over the years?

KM: I wouldn't say they changed at all! No sign of change. They were so bright to start with, there was no room to change.

MM: And so democratic, so lovable. No, I would say there was no change, other than a broadening through the great experience that was theirs. But they treated their friends just the same always. Of course there was growth, but as far as their personalities, I never saw a change in them. They didn't make you feel as though they were way up there and you were way down here. Whether she was the president's wife, or the wife of the comptroller, I never saw any difference.

Ida was just so easy to be with. I remember I would take her and two of our grandchildren out to the cemetery, where my mother and father are, just for a ride. The children were little and we would take their tricycles, and a tea party, and my mother's handmade tea cloth. The children were maybe four and five. We made a picnic out of it, amongst the tombstones. My mother was great at sewing and cooking and I would take her special cookie that we kept on making. That was the Sunset Cemetery, and of course now that's where Bob is buried, and Ida as well.

I believe it was the first Christmas season after Bob had passed away that I made a plan with Ida to pick up her and our grandchildren for a trip to the cemetery with a Christmas decoration for both her plot and ours, taking a picnic lunch with us which I was putting together. Early that morning it started to rain, and I called Ida to ask if we could bring the picnic to her table so the children and I could have a visit with her, and I would bring our copy of Twenty-eight Years in the Life of a University President, which after lunch we could read a few excerpts and view the many pictures--nostalgia for Ida and me and an introduction to Bob for our young ones. Of course Ida, typically so gracious, refused my offer to bring lunch, instead served us a lovely soup, salad and dessert! For both the children and me this is a treasured memory.

This is maybe getting off the subject. But twice a year my parents would have student luncheons at our home, at the end of Euclid Avenue. We had a semi-farm; we had a cow and chickens and vegetables and fruit and so forth. We would make the ice cream, and my father's students would come, also the Sprouls and the Barrowses, I remember. I was a little shaver, but I do remember them coming, and so that's another part of the background. They were very, very gracious to come at all, you know, because we had a very simple home. But a large acreage, so we would wander around a bit.

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\*George A. Pettitt, University of California, Berkeley 1966.

KM: They were real people, no false front. He was a member of the Bohemian Club, and I am too, and over there he was just a regular one of the boys whenever he was there. He'd be up at the bar with the boys having a drink and joshing, and you'd hear them all over the property.

MM: They were the most democratic pair, considering their position, of anybody I could imagine. They were good friends with everybody, from the groceryman up to the president of anything.

Ida has told me her background, and it was difficult, she had to work very hard when she was young. She and Bob met when she was employed.

KM: She was a tough lady. [laughs]

Riess: When did Ida start to go blind?

MM: I don't know, but she would take official trips with Bob all over the country, and I remember her saying that people were just raving about the beauties out of the train or the plane or whatever that they would see, and she'd say [whispering], "You know, I couldn't see, but I pretended I could." That's what a good sport she was.

Riess: What were your connections, at Cal, with Bob Sproul, Mr. Morrish?

KM: Just that we were personal friends. My father was head of the bank there in town, and Bob was on the board, as I remember. That was the old First National. Bob and my dad were very good business friends and personal friends, and I met him, when I was younger, through my dad. When I got to Cal in 1924 of course he welcomed me and I saw him occasionally in those years.

Riess: The First National Bank, what were its interests in Berkeley?

KM: Well, it was an independent bank owned by local stockholders, and the president was Frank Naylor. My dad was the executive vice-president and left then to go to the Bank of America where he became president. In that time the old bank in Berkeley sold out to the American Trust Company, so the bank that my dad was running later became the American Trust Company, which is still in existence in the same building in Berkeley.

Riess: Is that the bank that Mason-McDuffie had some connection with?

KM: Yes, Duncan McDuffie was a member of my father's board when he was president of the bank there in Berkeley. Perry Tompkins was on the board. It had a very strong, local board.

Riess: I think Bob Sproul was very interested in banking and real estate.

KM: I don't know. I suspect he was a stockholder of Mason-McDuffie, because that was his group of friends. Mason-McDuffie was a very well-organized, strong group of real estate people. They were by far the outstanding group in the east bay at that time. They also started a savings and loan; I think it was called the Berkeley Savings and Loan.

Riess: The connections in Berkeley between town and gown sound a lot better in those days.

KM: I think in the old days there was a lot more feeling of town and gown melding, yes, people interested in the university and in business affairs downtown. The place is too big now, for one thing, to have the same homey feeling that it had in those days. And the racial structure in Berkeley has changed so radically that it makes a difference, no doubt about that.

My dad was president of every Liberty Loan drive in Berkeley during the First World War, I remember that.

Riess: I note here that you were a banker and lumberman before your retirement.

KM: Yes, I started in banking when I graduated, and then I got into the lumber business when my father retired as president of the Bank of America. He and a few other people bought a lumber company that was in trouble and they made a big success out of that, and I was treasurer of that. And I worked in a lumber mill as a young man. I'm not a professional lumberman, but I know a lot about it.

Riess: What is your camp at the Bohemian Grove? Same as Bob Sproul's?

KM: No, I am in Puma, and Bob belonged to the Isle of Aves. We'd see each other up there. There's a great feeling of camaraderie up there and you're welcome to walk into any camp. Bob was a good Bohemian; he enjoyed it.

Riess: Did you have any other clubs in common?

KM: No.

KM: It was hard to see much of Bob in his busiest years. He was too busy with affairs that took his time, you know. He had a world of friends; as far as I know, he never had any enemies. He was one of the most gracious guys, and he was firm. But he was just a wonderful man in every respect. I don't know anybody I had more admiration for than Bob.

Riess: Who do you think his closest friends were?

KM: I don't really know. Having not come from academia, I don't think he ever had the deepdown professional educator's rapport--like we "went through it together." He came from a business background really, not academic.

KM: [discussing summer job as a guide at Feather River Inn] I met a lot of amazing people there. People would come to Feather River Inn from all over the country, to fish. It was an inn of the quality of the Del Monte Lodge or Tahoe Tavern. The elite brains of the country would come there and spend time. I met a lot of nice people there.

Riess: University people?

KM: No. [laughs] Too expensive. Altogether too expensive.

Have you heard that Bob was a great first-name person? He would stretch everything to call you by your given name. He was very, very good at it, like he'd known you all your life, and in some cases he had! He was a genius at that kind of operation; he knew how to handle people, he just did. Coming in as a non-academician and getting the support of the faculty took some doing. Not many people can do that, because academicians can be a bit touchy on their own subject.

Riess: How do you know that about him?

KM: Oh, various ways. I've seen how he's handled people at the Bohemian Club, places like that. He would go along with the spirit of whatever the group was, never aloof, never trying to impose his view. He would meld in. But I know in the early days he had to overcome a situation of the academicians wondering about a non-academician running the presidency; that was a reasonably well-known fact.

Riess: Do you remember when Bob Sproul was offered the job as a bank president?

KM: I can't say that I remember that. But you know, his brother Allan was head of the Federal Reserve. He was a great guy too, wonderful man.

- MM: He was my brother's closest friend; they were best men for each other, Allan Sproul and Bill Thomas.
- KM: He was just as fine a man as Bob.- He was a heck of a guy, that Allan Sproul, very highly regarded in the banking field.
- Riess: How would you say he was different from Bob Sproul?
- KM: I think a little less ebullient, a little--well, conservative isn't the word, they're both conservative.
- MM: A very gentle man, so able and admired!
- KM: Yes, a quieter man, but effective. A great guy. A great smiler, a very friendly guy.
- MM: And a beautiful wife. She was Marion Bogle. Marion Goodin was named for her.
- KM: [speaking of the class of 1928] There was a heavy nucleus of the class that lived around here. This group that got together were all within thirty or forty miles of here, and a lot of us had gone to school together before college, and we always hit it off at class functions. We got all souped up for a rally or a dance--we turned out. We weren't great scholastically, I don't think, and we were in a real doldrums in the football team. We never won a Big Game the whole time I was in college!
- Riess: You didn't have a depression to deal with. What were your best memories of those four years?
- KM: We had a very happy time. President William Wallace Campbell didn't make a strong image--well, I mean, he didn't excite the kids like President Sproul did. But it was just a good class, you know and continues to hang together.



Regional Oral History Office  
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Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Carl W. Sharsmith

PARK INTERPRETER REMINISCES ABOUT SPROUL

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

The interview that follows has a number of remarkable facets to it, the most remarkable of which is the memorable Carl Sharsmith. Emerging from difficult beginnings--a rosy-cheeked, nature-loving northern "foreigner" thrown in amongst Galveston, Texas, toughs was a situation so ghastly that he left school for many years--he found his place in botany at UCLA, and in the Yosemite Field School of Natural History. With a doctorate from Berkeley he taught at Washington State, the University of Minnesota, and since 1950 at San Jose State University. Every summer he returns to Yosemite.

When Carl Sharsmith was at Berkeley in 1933 he was chosen by President Robert Gordon Sproul to tell young Bobby Sproul, Jr. "how life begins"--as Sharsmith put it. Ida Sproul in her oral history refers to Carl Sharsmith as "a graduate student who took Bob out on Saturday afternoons to explore rocks and flowers and things of that kind, a botany sort of thing." Wherever the emphasis belongs, on birds or bees or flowers, "Bobby" was privy to the guidance of probably the greatest botanist walking the valleys and climbing the peaks of Yosemite.

As for Robert Gordon Sproul's motivation in finding a mentor for Bobby, it pleases me to include an excerpt from a letter written to Ida Sproul by her husband a year earlier. After dinner at the Metropolitan Club in Washington, D.C. with Dr. Adolph Miller, with time on his hands, he seated himself in the club library with Bertrand Russell's latest book, Marriage and Morals.

"As a result I am much discouraged, for the book proves conclusively that fathers are of no importance whatever in the modern family, since the State is taking over all their functions except the one of starting the family, which he seemed to regard as rather trivial. But, seriously, with a daughter twelve and two boys coming along, it might be well for you to read the book. If half the things he says are true, and he says them very convincingly, we have some real problems ahead of us--not because modern life is rotten but because it is being lived on a basis fundamentally different from that under which you and I were brought up. I was pleased to find, however, that, despite our ignorance and miseducation from his point of view, you and I in our own relations, had behaved quite intelligently--extraordinarily so in fact."

Relevant or not to this interview, it is a fine look at Robert Gordon Sproul, concerned father and good judge of men.

A biography of Carl Sharsmith is being written by Elizabeth Stone O'Neill, author of the vivid account of "Walking with Carl" appended. Yosemite Natural History Association-taped interviews with Carl are providing much of the material, as well as O'Neill's shorthand interviews. Carl is participating in that work, reviewing and adding, as he did for his work with this office. And at San Jose State University, where we did our interview, he works daily on the collection he has built for that university's herbarium.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1984  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name Carl William Sparsmith

Date of birth 14 March 1903 Place of birth New York City

Father's full name Karl - (or Charles) Wilhelm Schaarschmidt

Birthplace Basel, Switzerland

Occupation Chef. (deceased)

Mother's full name Marie Sommer-Schaarschmidt

Birthplace Tschugg, Tsugg, Kanton Bern, Switzerland

Occupation housewife (deceased)

Where did you grow up? Switzerland, England, Canada, U.S.A.

Present community San Jose, Calif.

Education B.A., UCLA; Ph.D., U.C. Berkeley

Occupation(s) Professor of Botany.

(summers as naturalist with U.S. National Park Service.)

Special interests or activities Botanical except when leading

groups afield-although for practically the same  
purposes.

anglicized my  
surname whereas I was  
a boy of about ten, in  
England.

Education, Despite Obstacles

[Date of Interview: May 16, 1984]

Sharsmith: I was always, as a boy, very much influenced by my reading, and I was very fortunate in having very kind librarians to help me out. I think I've always been interested in nature. Of course, Muir's writings had an overwhelming influence on me. Heavens!

Riess: Where did you encounter Muir's writings first?

Sharsmith: During World War I. I was a boy, middle, early teens. Discovered him on the library shelves, I suppose.

Riess: And where were you in school then?

Sharsmith: At that time I was in Galveston, Texas. Nice old Rosenberg Library. [pause] There are a number of repercussions about that. The schools were kind of tough. You see, I was a northerner. And those boys, they were toughs. They were still fighting the war between the states, and I was just a damn Yankee to them. Every time during recess it was fight, fight, fight. I finally quit. I wouldn't go back.

Then Father and Mother migrated to California, and the first thing I knew, I was climbing the hills. About a year after we had arrived, I found a job in a logging camp and stayed with that. There was an interval of seven years following that seventh grade at Galveston during which I worked, mostly in the woods and so forth, until--let's see, I was about twenty or twenty-one--and had an urge to go back to school.

There I was, I was doing exercises in the schoolyard with these ninth graders, thirteen, fourteen year-olds, and here I was a big, gawky fellow. It didn't worry me a bit. I just stayed with it and continued right on through, without stopping, to complete.

Riess: What was the school?

Sharsmith: Well, I was delighted. I was accepted at the Le Conte Junior High School in Hollywood, a brand new school. I think it was one of the first junior high schools in the state.

Riess: Were you able to accelerate?

Sharsmith: Oh, no, I didn't know the ropes. I was just a hayseed out of the woods. [laughs] So I went through the whole thing, trudgingly.

Riess: Where had the logging camp been?

Sharsmith: They were in northern counties: Siskiyou, Modoc, Plumas, El Dorado, so forth. And one winter in the redwoods in Mendocino County.

Riess: I bet they were just as tough as Galveston.

Sharsmith: No. Oh, no. You know, I've often thought that middle teenage boys can be the cruelest, most awful. Oh! I haven't had to fight anybody since that time, with my fists anyway. [laughter] That's a fact. They're savages. Some of them are. And then it made it all the worse: the teacher admired my rosy cheeks, and those Texas kids, you know, sallow. Oh, dear. That made it worse. Well, anyway, that's just a little thing on the side.

Riess: But I know it's a nightmare. Girls don't go through it. Just to have your life, in a way, threatened every day!

Sharsmith: It was, yes. It was cruel. They were vicious.

Riess: So, having survived that, and then--I wonder if that gave you some particular advantages in terms of motivation, then.

Sharsmith: Oh doubtless, yes. I have never in the least questioned why I wanted to go to school. Oh, my goodness, yes, all the way through. I wasn't really happy until I entered the university. Then I found that that was where I belonged. In high school, all that, I only looked forward to the university, and then that was the place. It gave me what I wanted.

You asked me earlier where my interests began. Much was influenced by my reading, but it was always there. Then, of course, as far as botany was concerned, through all those earlier years, it was only a part of it. But then, when one was enrolled as a student, gradually you have to narrow it down to what you are really wanting. At first it was geology, but then I saw I was missing out on the life sciences, so I switched over and then finally chose botany.

Riess: That was UCLA?

Sharsmith: Yes. I got my bachelor's from UCLA.

Riess: When you started there, it was a four-year college?

Sharsmith: Yes, I think so. I graduated from UCLA in spring of 1932.

Riess: Was Loye Miller one of your professors?

Sharsmith: Oh, yes. Loye was there. And it was while I was at UCLA that I heard about the Yosemite School of Field Natural History, or however that title goes, I never was sure, Yosemite Field School of Natural History, either way is all right. That was in the charge of Harold Bryant. He was our teacher.

At UCLA, I had Loye Holmes Miller in at least two courses, birds and--oh, one other--mammalogy or something like that. He would imitate the bird calls. My goodness, he was marvelous. In later years he became greatly interested in paleontology of birds. We would go on the beach, a field trip, to Pt. Mugu. Some student would pick up a bird bone. He'd instantly name not only what the bone was but the bird it belonged to. That made a tremendous impression on us. But he was a marvelous teacher, just a marvelous teacher. I can see him now.

#### The Husky Hiker at Yosemite Field School

Sharsmith: I had in a broad sense, as my teachers, both Loye Holmes Miller and Harold Bryant, who a few years earlier had been chosen by Stephen Mather to begin a nature guide service for Yosemite. I had both of them as my teachers, you might say. I feel quite proud of that.

Riess: And you managed to combine both in your career.

Sharsmith: Oh, yes. I can go back a bit now. In 1930 I had somehow heard about the Yosemite Field School, and I was eager to be enrolled in it. And I made my application. I was refused, because I hadn't gotten my bachelor's. Apparently they wanted only college graduates. But I must have kept pestering them. Finally I was told that if there was a drop-out I would be considered. And sure enough, I guess there was, and I came.

Sharsmith: It was during that summer, when I was enrolled in the course in Yosemite Valley, that--I've forgotten whether it was Bryant or who--came to me and asked me if I'd like to become one of the naturalists for the National Park Service. Oh,-gee, did that please me! Don't tell anybody, but I was the only one out of that whole bunch that was asked to do that. [laughs]

And of course, that was what started me with the work. And I've been going at it ever since then, all in Yosemite, except one summer at Kings Canyon National Park.

Riess: That's always as a summer naturalist.

Sharsmith: Yes. Now there was another point, you see. I still wanted to pursue my work at Berkeley. So I was back, after the summer, in Berkeley, continuing my graduate work. I went there to be a graduate student after UCLA.

Riess: That year that you got into the field program, who were the other people who were there in that school, do you recall, not specifically, but what kinds of people?

Sharsmith: Oh, it was very broad. Oh, I know some of them were teachers. One girl that I fell in love with who became my wife. They were from all walks of life, very few young people, mostly, I'd say, early middle age.

Riess: That's interesting.

Sharsmith: Yes, that's changed a great deal in recent years now, it's mostly young people.

Riess: But they were all presumably as dedicated to doing it as you were.

Sharsmith: Oh, yes, yes they are.

Riess: What did you have that they didn't have?

Sharsmith: Well, one has to go back a bit. I was very fortunate during my high school years that I became acquainted with a man who was running a boy's organization. It was, in ways, unique. The leader was very particular; if any boy didn't fit in, he was bounced out.

Sharsmith: I discovered a canyon up in the San Gabriels that John Muir had explored. He talks about it in his Mountains of California. And I found it. Oh, it was a lovely place. And he would come up there with a group. To make a long story short, he asked me to help him with his boys groups. That was when I was in Le Conte Junior High School.

For a period of about ten years, I was one of his leaders. It was the campingest bunch you ever saw. Every weekend, every holiday, we boys would take our packs, get on the streetcar, get to the end of the line, and that's where the trail started in those days. We explored our San Gabriel back country; it was all trail country. There wasn't a road into it. We knew it intimately.

Then, of course, we got higher ambitions gnawing at us. Going up to the Sierra. For five summers we would go and I would lead a gang of boys. Then the boys were older boys. I wasn't much older. There would be fifteen, sixteen-year-old boys and myself, a few years older. There was an old fellow with a truck; he would let us off, say, on the west side, near Orosi or elsewhere. I insisted that the boys start right from the very base of the Sierra and hike on to the top and over to the other side. We did that five summers.

The following summer the old truck would take us to the east side, and then over and down. So that was five years. Many of the boys--I'm still corresponding with one or two of them. That was in the twenties.

Then I heard about the field school. So you see, I came there rather as a kind of a husky hiker to begin with. That may have appealed to them. Now I'm back where we were.

Riess: Right. Those are certainly wonderful credentials.

Teaching Bobby Sproul "How Life Begins"

Riess: Did Robert Gordon Sproul know any of these things about you when he called upon you?

Sharsmith: Now there you're coming to Robert Gordon Sproul. Dear Sproulie.

Riess: You called him "Sproulie"?

Sharsmith: Well, all the kids did. [laughs] Didn't you ever hear that expression ever before?

Riess: No, no.

Sharsmith: Oh, dear, yes.

Riess: You mean the students did?

Sharsmith: Yes, yes. They had names for the professors, you know, that the professors don't often hear. For instance, there was Mrak, a student friend of mine, that became the chancellor at Davis. We always called him "Fat. Hey, Fat" [laughs]

One day Helen and I were walking back to the apartment we had; we were married then. And there was a light burning in Giannini Hall or something like that. And she pointed up and said, "There's Fat's lab, Fat's laboratory." And then we caught the pun there and we laughed! Yes. Fat Mrak. We all called him Fat Mrak. He knew it.

Well, anyway, Sproul, Sproulie. Now here's the one anecdote I have that I think is worth recording. I don't know whether you ever heard it or not. I hadn't been enrolled as a graduate student more than a semester or so, so I was rather fresh from the southland. I was probably enrolled in one of Jepson's courses or something like that, or Setchell. I could look it up.

One day I received a call: I was to report to the president's office. "Oh, my God. What have I done?" I went there. The building [California Hall] was just to the east of the Life Sciences Building. The president's office was upstairs.

The secretary, of course, told me that Sproul would be in shortly. And then I was brought to where he had his office. I was overawed. It was a beautiful place. There was a huge desk, and here was Dr. Sproul sitting there. He bade me sit down, and he began to ask questions: what was I doing, what courses was I enrolled in, and why? I was greatly puzzled by this whole affair. I was wondering when he was going to come to the point as to some heinous thing that I had done. But I told him how interested I was and all of that sort of thing.

Then he said, "Well, I see that you are not a dilettante." I didn't know what that word meant. [laughs] At the first opportunity I went to the dictionary to see, after I left. And then he came to the point. He says, "I have a son, Bobby. He's

Sharsmith: a good boy. And what I want you to do is to go with Bobby, in any way that you see fit, to teach him how life begins." Now, wasn't that an order?

Riess: That was an order, yes.

Sharsmith: Well, then we chatted a little further and I left.

Riess: But you must have asked him a little bit more about what he wanted.

Sharsmith: No, I felt that covered the bill. It was up to me to do the rest of it. And so, I met Bobby, and we hiked up Strawberry Canyon. I don't know that I was successful at it all, because I felt as awkward as he did. But anyway, that's the one story I have that I thought might be worth having.

Riess: Oh, that is interesting. I think that's a very wonderful thing Sproul did.

Sharsmith: Wasn't that a marvelous thing? I don't know why he chose me. I was new in that area. In a way I should be very proud of it, and I am, as a matter of fact, merely from the fact that it is just embedded in my mind and telling you about it now makes it a very worthwhile thing.

From this on, Sproulie always knew me, he always recognized me. I'd run into him now and then walking through the campus. Later they had the centenary here for San Jose State. It preceded the establishment of the Berkeley campus by a year or two, you know. It's a little older. There was a celebration in one of the buildings up the street opposite the hotel there, that Hotel Ste. Claire.

After it was over, people were pouring out and I saw Dr. Sproul standing there. I thought I'd say hello. He recognized me instantly. We got to chatting, and I asked him about Bobby. "Oh," he says, "He's an attorney now," and so forth. We started walking. The whole crowd was going back down to the campus here. It was a huge crowd. Suddenly he realized he had a lunch appointment back at the hotel. So the poor man had to elbow his way back through this throng that was coming. Oh, I felt so embarrassed. That was the last time I saw him.

Riess: Tell me what you recall of what you did to fulfill Sproul's request.

- Sharsmith: Well, I don't recall the details, I'm sorry. But I know I made it all clear and simple to the boy and in a manner that he would understand and all of that. Did my best, I'm sure, although of course, it was hard to get. But Bobby and I got along famously.
- Riess: How old was he?
- Sharsmith: Bobby was a boy of about eleven, ten, somewhere in there. I don't know whether I saw him subsequently when I visited Dr. Sproul in his residence. You see, the President's House was on the campus, next to that street that goes along the campus on the north side, Hearst. I was there a couple of times. But only just, I'd say, a brief visit.
- Riess: Did this whole experience bring you into the family in any way?
- Sharsmith: No, no, it didn't. I wish it had.
- Riess: I wonder if you had known them up at Echo Lake, for instance.
- Sharsmith: No. I knew Dr. Sproul only on the campus and whenever I would see him elsewhere.
- Riess: As a matter of fact, in your UCLA years, do you remember anything about his reputation, or any feeling about him.
- Sharsmith: Oh, he was greatly admired. Oh, yes. I think there was a strong feeling of affection that was rather universal among the students, because I was one. He had a big booming voice, and his cordial ways. He could speak to the students in a way that they understood.
- Riess: He was quite a public speaker.
- Sharsmith: Oh, he was, yes. He was shining in that regard.
- Riess: Did you know Hildebrand?
- Sharsmith: Yes. Joel Hildebrand. He was my chem teacher. [laughs] Oh, gosh yes. One time he came up with the whole Hildebrand tribe. I had been on one of those seven-day hikes that the Curry Company sponsors through their High Sierra camps. Our last camp at the end of our loop is at Vogelsang, way up, the highest of the chain of camps. And the whole Hildebrand tribe was there. I think there were about thirty. They virtually filled the camp. Every time after dinner we would have a campfire, and he had no end of poems. He'd go just on and on.

Sharsmith: Finally, I think I probably had to excuse myself or something like that, because I had my gang with me. He pointed to me. "There's Sharsmith," he says. "If he's any good, it's only because of me!" [laughs] He recognized me. Goodness gracious, I don't know how, because in the freshman chemistry there were two hundred students!

#### Botany Department and "Ecology"

Riess: I might get your recollections of some of the other people in botany.

Sharsmith: There were two outstanding figures: Jepson and Setchell. Setchell was by far the more picturesque character, and interesting, and-- if I may say--lovable, far more than Jepson. His courses were always popular. I took every course he gave, because he was so wonderful.

Later, when I had my first job at Washington State University at Pullman, he wrote me a letter. Oh, it was a fine letter, encouraging. I still have it. When we graduated, he had a little coterie. I don't know how he selected them. He gave us permission to call him Uncle Bill.

Once he said, "Let's go to San Francisco and get something to eat." I don't know whether we went together on the ferry or not, but anyway, there he was. He says, let's go to the Manger. Manger, that means to eat. It was a French restaurant down in a basement. Oh, it was good. We ordered everything we wanted. That was the main course. He said, "Now we want to get some sweets, and I think I should introduce you to good Turkish coffee. I know of a Turkish restaurant."

We hiked out and jumped on the trolley car. I can see his figure now, climbing up the steps onto the trolley car. He was a big, portly gentleman, you know. Very big in size, moved very slowly, with a tremendous booming voice. We went to this place and had our Turkish coffee. So that was Uncle Bill.

That was Setchell. You see, his connection with the University of California goes way back. He was one of the beginners of botany there. He came from Yale, I think, accepted a position here. I think that Joseph LeConte was still on the faculty at the time.

Sharsmith: The quarters, I understand, were pretty meager. That was before the Life Sciences Building was built. He remained chairman of the department for at least forty years.

When I came from UCLA, I went to look him up. I thought I'd better see the chairman; he may get after me after a while about these incoming students that want to be accepted into the botany department. I went in there, and there he was, with his big cigar. Volumes of books all around. Very impressive.

"Well, young man, what do you want?"

I said, "I thought I had to see you."

"What courses are you taking?"

I said, "Well--" so and so.

"Well, now what are you particularly interested in?"

I said--and this was the wrong word in those days--I said, "ecology."

"Ecology? I don't know about ecology, but I think we can teach you something about plants." Because in those days ecology didn't have a very good reputation. It was given to the forestry division. Botany and physiology didn't have anything to do with it. It finally became a household word and misused in all sorts of ways.

Riess: What did "ecology" trigger for Setchell? What was the bad word about it?

Sharsmith: There was a feeling, and I think it was rather universal in the West--not so much back East, because some good sound work had been done there in Chicago, and then there was Clements, who was, you might say, the leader of the band. It was very true, because for a time I was on the faculty at the University of Minnesota, and Cooper was there. Cooper was one of the early ecologists. He was a sound worker.

But in the West, I don't know. It was wholly observational and based on hypothetical premises and so forth. So that didn't appeal to the people who were, you might say, much more objective.

Riess: That's very interesting.

Sharsmith: Yes, it is a fact, and I think it would make an interesting study to investigate or to bring to light.

Riess: What were the people in forestry doing?

Sharsmith: There was only one course; [Arthur W.] Sampson gave that, and it was a part of range management, I think. That was about the only ecology you heard about.

Riess: And yet what you were doing in your interpretation in Yosemite was ecology.

Sharsmith: Oh yes, yes it was. Sure.

Riess: Did they use that word?

Sharsmith: No, we didn't use the word, oh no. Nobody knew what the heck that word meant. We were studying nature. One of the precepts that was drilled into us by [Harold] Bryant: study nature first-hand, That was it. He was proud of this field school, and doubtless Loye Miller was, too, because it emphasized the first-hand experience. Look at things as they were, in the field. That we called field natural history; I suppose that was the equivalent of ecology.

Riess: Right. In field natural history, then, it is not so important to be able to name things, but it's the relationship that is important?

Sharsmith: Yes, yes, by all means. The naming is a means to an end. That's right. No, you can overwhelm people with names.

Riess: Yet when you do your seasonal tours and things, don't you find that people demand names?

Sharsmith: Oh, yes. That's inevitable. People want to have a tag, and it's interesting. So you name it. "Well, let's go on to the next. That's all fixed now." The name usually goes in one ear and out the other.

Riess: But if you can get them to think about it, then it's interesting.

Sharsmith: Yes, you can give them this little story to tie things together. Very important.

Riess: Is that what Bryant also espoused? A story?

Sharsmith: Oh, yes, indeed. Yes, names with him were secondary. Oh, yes, indeed.

Riess: The schoolteachers and more middle aged-people who were in that early Yosemite field school, were they there in order to learn how to interpret nature for their own?

Sharsmith: No, that I think was probably the basis for the thing, as a means of getting people who might be prospective park interpreters. As the field school went on, year after year, there were selections made and some of them became not only permanent but some also became important figures in the National Park Service or other governmental agencies concerned with the environment and conservation. That was what Bryant and others hoped would be the case.

### John Muir's Legend

Riess: Did people consider Muir to be an interpreter in the same tradition? Or is he a romantic mountain man?

Sharsmith: Somehow the popularity of Muir had come along with this sudden interest in the environment and all of that, so that his name you hear more now, than formerly, and there are more occasions that his name is brought up. It was quieter in those days.

Actually--off to one side--there was still a feud going on. A daughter of Hutchings, who was the pioneer that came into the valley in the sixties, was still living, Cosy Hutchings. I asked her one day about John Muir, and you know, she was still on the fighting side. You see, Muir was instrumental in creating the greater national park. The valley, of course, was part of the state for a time. That meant there were troubles, because of the mountain people, who were accustomed to grazing their cattle and sheep and so forth, and now they could no longer do it.

Then, too, Muir was one of the ones that was pressing for the return of the valley, which had been given to the state by the federal government during the Lincoln administration, to get it back to the federal and make it all a national park.

That affected the residents in the valley, because they had decided that was their home, and they had built houses, improved their property and so forth, and now they would have to leave. And Muir was responsible for it.

In a sense you might say he won it. There was that feud, and Cosy Hutchings, she didn't like Muir. There were a lot of old timers.

Sharsmith: Then there was Jay Bruce, who was a state lionhunter. The Bruces came into the Wawona area way back in the early days. Hattie [Bruce] was one of those old mountain characters, you know; she chewed tobacco. One time up in Tuolumne, Bert Harwell was the park naturalist, and we had a campfire, and all the people were there. I gave a talk on John Muir. Bert Harwell wanted to bring up the subject, too, so he took over and began to speak about Muir and became very poetic and panegyric: "Oh, wonderful John Muir!"

In the back was sitting Hattie Bruce with her husband. They were both chewing away there. And the more eloquent Bert became, the more she was disgusted. She was speaking aloud and of course creating a vocal disturbance there.

Bert was going on, and finally he got up to the point where he was just creating this great demi-god. Hattie couldn't stand it any longer. She just said, "Yeah," she said--everybody could hear I'm sure, in those days our campfire was more intimate--"yeah, John Muir, he's the guy that ran off with Hutchings' wife." Oh, gosh. The campfire broke up. Which wasn't true at all.

Those were the little feuds that were going on. You get back to the old timers, my gosh, yes. Muir, of course, he's virtually worshipped now, and I still do, quite unashamedly. There are celebrations for his birthday. You go into our visitors' center up in Tuolumne, and it has a lot of quotations all over the walls, you know, from his writings. Oh yes.

That wasn't the case in the thirties. It was pretty rough.

Riess: Did you get lots of Sierra Clubbers?

Sharsmith: Not very many. My work has been pretty well tied to the public.

Riess: So if the Sierra Clubbers came up, they had their own leaders.

Sharsmith: They take their own, yes.

#### Seasonal Ranger and the Tuolumne Summer Campers

Riess: Bob Sproul said that you were a legend because you fell from Cathedral Spire and survived.

Sharsmith: It wasn't Cathedral Spire; it was Mt. McClure.

Sharsmith: I was very lucky because the first assignment I had, almost the first assignment, I think, was to be the naturalist at Tuolumne Meadows. I was the first one ever to be there all summer long. The very first. And I ran that show there for about--I'd like to look it up--somewhere around a dozen to fifteen years, all by myself. I worked hard, oh, my gosh. But, gee whiz, it was wonderful. I'd get to the telephone, you know. I'd call the valley and ask, "How am I doing up here?" "You're just doing fine." So I'd carry on. I made monthly reports as to what I was doing.

Riess: You were the seasonal ranger?

Sharsmith: I was seasonal, in the summers. And that's what I am still at Tuolumne, you might say. It was very fortunate because you see I just had the field school in the summers before, and the climbing, and the boys. Oh, I loved it. I had hikes in all directions. We climbed every one of those peaks again and again and again.

Riess: Was Tuolumne Meadows as developed? Was there always camping up there?

Sharsmith: No, that's the point. That's what I was coming to. I was the only naturalist. There were only four rangers besides myself, so all of us were five. I gave the campfires; I led the nature walks; I made the programs, posted them, pecked them out. Helen would help me with the number of carbons on the typewriter, a little portable. Post them here and there, announce them at the campfires. I'd mount a horse in the morning, because there was no campground. People camped anywhere they pleased, and I would have to ride long distances to meet them, to invite them to campfires and hikes like that.

They would drive right across the meadows, each family, and they were repeaters, summer after summer. They had their own particular nook that they would drive to. You can still see the tracks over the meadow.

Riess: It never occurred to you that that might not be a wonderful thing to do.

Sharsmith: No, we never thought of that in those days, no.

But it was rough in this respect: there was a kind of a feud between the protection force, that is, the regular rangers, and the naturalists, because they thought of us as "posy pickers." And I'd have to put up with that. It was kind of rough.

Sharsmith: In those days, Henry Skelton was--they have a lake named for him--gosh, his father came west in the gold-rush days, was a miner and so forth. Skelton and other mounted patrol rangers that I knew at the time were all old timers.

Riess: And which side was he on?

Sharsmith: Well, he never gave me any trouble. He was somewhere close to retirement. It was the young, up and comings that did. For example, one of the things I felt I ought to establish at the Tuolumne Meadows Ranger Station was a wildflower show, because there was one in the Valley [run by] Enid Michael, who was one of the early nature guides--she was the only woman that was, at that time, at least--had a wildflower stand. In its containers were flowers, each with a little label. So I had one up at Tuolumne.

The only grocery store in Tuolumne was a little twelve-by-fourteen tent by a gasoline pump, a short distance from the ranger station. This was during Prohibition and in back of the store there were boxes and boxes of Canada Dry ginger ale. What that was used for, I don't know, but they seemed to sell an awful lot of it.

So, I saw, well, there are my bottles. I can use those. They were empties. I got some 2 x 4's, some haywire and made a stand and had a flower show.

The point I was coming to is that those young up and coming rangers would use those bottles as targets; while I was away on some hike or some duty, they would back off across the meadow and shoot those bottles. I'd come back and half of my wildflower show was shot down. The tree is still there where I had the thing standing.

Riess: Who were the people who were going into the ranger business?

Sharsmith: Oh, back in those days--oh, of course there were good ones, oh goodness, yes, there were some wonderful ones. But oftentimes you'd get those boys out for a good prank. I don't know how they ever got the job, but they horsed around.

Riess: They didn't need a college education to be a ranger?

Sharsmith: Perhaps they did. I never inquired. Maybe they did, but I don't know. Well, we don't have those [sorts of rangers] nowadays.

Riess: Were the people who came up to Tuolumne in those days enthusiastic about nature?

Sharsmith: Oh, yes. It was choice. And those days will never come back. One had to plan to be able to stay there. It meant a difficult drive; the old Tioga Road was a chore. It took all day. You would leave the valley, you might say, if you'd gotten that far, some time in the morning. You wouldn't get to Tuolumne till late afternoon. It took all day.

And somehow, it seems to me, it was colder in those days, because we had to build an awfully big campfire to keep people warm. People would come and stay all summer. They were the same people, often. I would say a very large majority came again and again and again, summer after summer. We got to know each other personally. It's no longer that way.

Riess: And they were good walkers?

Sharsmith: Oh, yes, oh heavens, yes, we had hikes. I had no difficulty. We climbed all the peaks within a day's hike. Goodness yes. Every other day we had hikes.

I remember Harold Bryant, at Camp Curry. It was after breakfast, and the people would be lolling around in chairs, the men smoking their cigars. I've often thought he should have had a Salvation Army band with him to drum up trade, to get people to come up, because he said, "Come on, folks, what are you sitting here for?" So forth, so on.

Now, if you announce a trip, why, you just can't handle all the people that come. We don't have to invite them, they're here.

Riess: But you said those people that were up there for the whole summer were keen naturalists and hikers.

Sharsmith: They were, oh, they were, they were always around. But I mean just through the regular, let's say, nature walks and things like that. Oh, I went around to remind people in between times: "Come to our nature walks," so forth, "We'll meet at such and such a place." All that sort of thing. I had to work hard for it, notwithstanding the fact that there were these regulars that were along all the time. You had to work to get the people to come out, indeed you did. Now it's not the case; they're there.

Riess: This included women.

Sharsmith: Yes.

Back Country Adventures

Sharsmith: One time I warned them. We wanted to go to the Conness Glacier. I made such a glowing picture of the marvels of this place, sixty people showed up for that hike. A few of the women with high-heeled shoes. Sixty. They don't have turnouts for hikes like that now.

Riess: That's great. Did you have to send the women back?

Sharsmith: Oh, yes! The ones with high-heeled shoes.

Yes, to come back, my one point for fame is when I fell off that mountain. You see, the field school in the subsequent years I was invited to be with them on their back country trips which were, you might say, the culmination of their six weeks course. Up until that time it was all in the valley or in the neighboring area. But the last week of the whole course was to be this long hike through the high Sierra camps.

Then years went on. They branched out from that. Dr. Bryant was called to Washington. The man that took his place was Joe Dixon, which was an excellent choice. Joe was a naturalist. He was one of the first field naturalists for the national parks. He was an old Alaskan. Gosh, he knew his stuff.

They were out on the ice floes. That was the early days. A bunch of young fellows that had just graduated from Harvard hired a boat. They got permission from the Canadian government to hunt in Arctic waters. They wanted a naturalist, and they asked Joe Dixon to be with them. They were along somewhere in the Point Barrow area, and the boys were having such fun hunting, they forgot that the summer was passing. Joe warned them, he said, "We'd better get out of here soon, or we'll get stuck in the ice."

But they disregarded it, and sure enough, there they were. So they got on shore, and Joe got the boys getting all the driftwood they could find and building huts. Then he sent them out to hunt seals, as many as they could. By that time, the temperatures were down below freezing. He taught the boys how to take care of themselves all that winter long. They saved themselves with the blubber and the liver and so forth. They carried on.

The only thing that happened, during the night the roof was in danger of caving in. There was some heavy body out there. And the boys ran out with their guns. It was a big polar bear, and in the dark, of course, they were shooting in all directions.

Sharsmith: Fortunately, nobody was hurt, but that was the only thing that happened that might have been disastrous, and they came out of it alive and in good shape. Only owing to Joe. And Joe was a leader for the field school.

I was invariably along, summer after summer, with these people, which then no longer made these High Sierra camps, but in various parts of the park. On one of them, a climb to Mt. Lyell, we were on the summit, and the day was about one o'clock. It was about time to go back, leave the summit. I suggested if any of the people felt like it, "Let's climb the neighboring peak; we still have time." So part of the group started back to camp, down the mountain. The rest of us went up the divide and climbed McClure.

While the group was admiring the view from the summit, which is rather sharp--there's a knife edge--I wandered along to look, and a rock broke under me and I toppled head over heels, rolled over backwards down out of sight.

People ran and they saw me sitting there, loose rocks coming down. They all wanted to go down there, but Jules Frisch, who was the first ski instructor for the Curry Company, he said, "Don't you dare do that! You'll start a rock and maybe push him the rest of the way." So they led them around, and they got me.

They yelled down, after they got me to the top, to the people who were still going back to camp. There were a few stragglers. One of them was a geologist. Another one was an entomologist, looking at the insects on the ice and so forth. So they were still on their way back, and they yelled down to them. They made a relay. By and by they came back with a stretcher. They found a couple of poles crooked as a dog's high leg, because that was at timber line. Blankets. They made a stretcher. By that time they got me lowered down.

In camp that night--I scorned air mattresses, I always slept right on the ground, but that night, some girl asked me if I'd like hers. Gee, yes! The next morning a bunch of CCC boys carried me back to the meadows and the hospital. That was the Mt. McClure experience, which occurred in July 25 or 26 of 1935.

Riess: The kind of thing that could happen to anyone.

Sharsmith: Sure.

Riess: You couldn't learn anything from it.

Sharsmith: I did. I think, I hope so. I've been much more careful since.

Riess: So you're saying that you should not have gone out there?

Sharsmith: Well, I probably should have judged my footing better than I did. Oh, I was full of vim. Poetic, you know. John Muir was running in there.

So, there's a whole lot of things in a nutshell.

Riess: You know, I wanted to ask you about the other thing that Bob Sproul, Jr. said about you, that you were the author of the Yosemite meadows study. I wondered if that was the beginning of Yosemite's policy on controlled burning, or anything like that.

Sharsmith: No, it wasn't, no. I can't claim that. The only meadow study I did, I was invited by the park to make a study of back country meadows, all of them in the Sequoia, Kings, and all of them in the Yosemite. I was out for two years leading that study. I was out all by myself and covered many of the back country meadows, from one end of the parks to the other.

Riess: When was that?

Sharsmith: That was in 1957, 1958, or '59, back in there. At that time, you see, the meadows were being badly abused by pack stock. They asked me to go evaluate that, and more than that, to make recommendations for their recovery. So I did that.

Riess: Of course, in fifty years of Yosemite you've seen meadows change, completely, from meadow to forest, haven't you, all over?

Sharsmith: Yes, that's a curious thing. In the central Sierra, the lodge pole invasion of the meadows is rampant. It becomes less so, progressively, as one goes southward. But it's very visible, and it has occurred in bursts over the years, probably beginning somewhere in the early twenties. So it can't be tied to the abuse that was given by the shepherders when Muir was around, because that was a much earlier date--that is to say, if lodge pole invasion was provoked by overgrazing, which is still an open question.

Riess: Well, I don't know all the issues, but I know that for a flower man, it must be tragic to see the end of the meadows that the people describe as a sea of blue or a sea of white.

Sharsmith: Yes, that's very true, yes. Some meadows are decreasing in the area. They try to stop that in the Tuolumne area. One can see places where they have removed quantities of invading trees.

Riess: Thank you, Mr. Sharsmith. We're at the end of our tape. Let's look at those pictures in the Loye Miller interview. [Loye Miller, The Interpretive Naturalist, an interview conducted 1967, 1969 for the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1970, p. 61]

# Walking with Carl

ELIZABETH S. O'NEILL

IT'S AN UNFORGETTABLE DAY. We have left Tioga Pass at the high eastern entrance of Yosemite National Park, crossed a frosty mountain meadow touched by morning sun and scrambled up a rocky slope beyond the last dwarfed white-bark pine. Now we are on Dana Plateau, a moonscape of broken boulders 12,000 feet in the sky. We marvel at the pygmy daisies dappling this alpine desert with purple and gold. "Try not to step on them," says Carl.

Carl Sharsmith was already a legend long before I met him. He's the man who knows more about the alpine botany of the Yosemite Sierra than anyone does, or has, or probably ever will. The beloved teacher of generations of college students—and generations, too, of hikers and lovers of the high places. The professor laden with honors, and the ranger leading the way.

Big cumulus clouds balloon over the horizon, grow, swell and combine. By lunchtime we are perched on a rocky promontory with several thousand feet of space falling away sheer below us. We can see storms in every direction, above the great Sierran sea of peaks and east over Mono Lake, a salt-rimmed mirror in the high desert.

The air rings with electricity. When we move, we snap and crackle. Phil poses on a rock cantilevered out over space, and everyone takes his picture with his hair standing eerily straight up.

Carl munches his bread and cheese and then smokes a pipe. After a while he suggests mildly that we come away from the edge where there is the most electricity. A kestrel vaults across the face of the storm.

"We're terribly exposed. It isn't safe," someone says. A few chime in, "Let's go down."

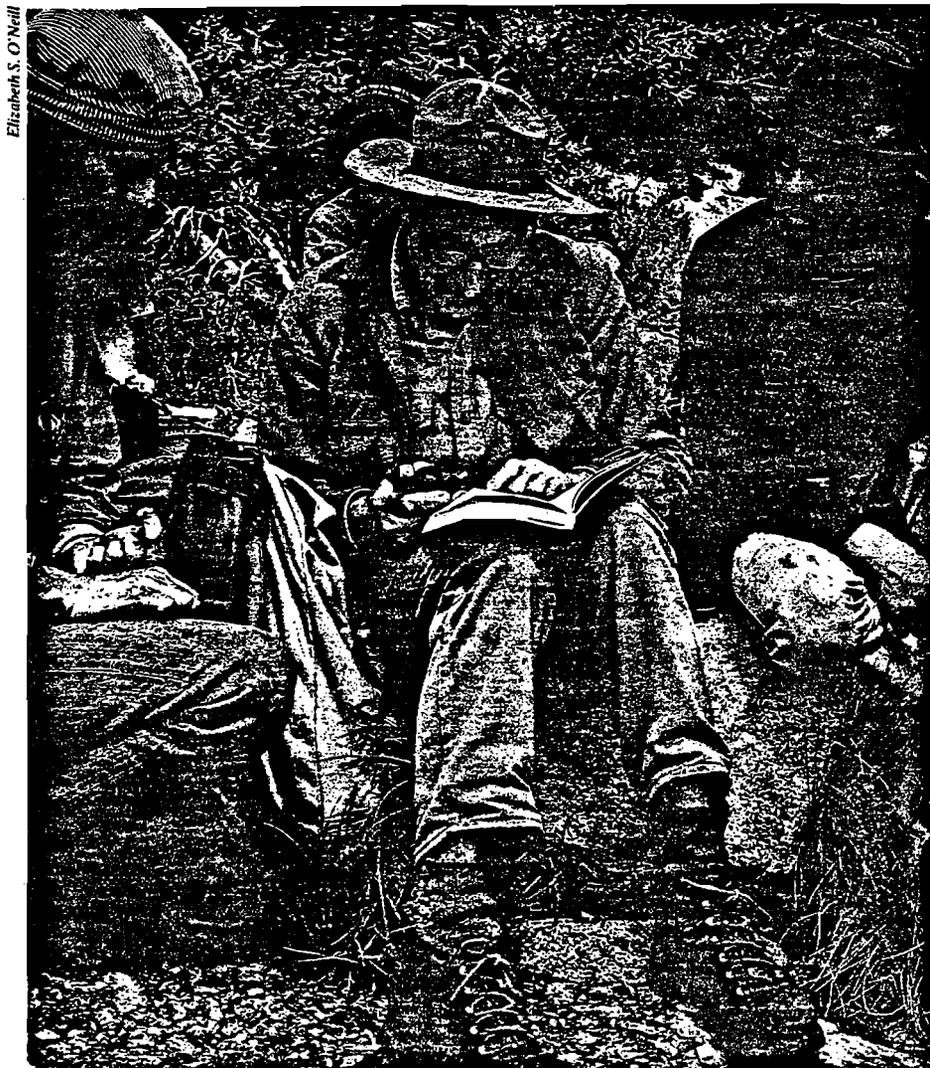
But Carl smiles and replies, "It's grand up here. You wouldn't want to miss the storm!" Looking back the way we have come, we know we could never get down to treeline, let alone camp, before it hits.

Then the storm is upon us, and Carl leads us to shelter under an enormous balanced boulder as big as a room. There we huddle, swapping stories while lightning flashes, thunder rolls and huge angled hailstones as big as fish eyes bounce on the rocks outside.

"They aren't really hailstones," Carl explains. "They're called *graupel*, frozen pellets of snow." We are all a little bit scared.

Then it slackens. A shaft of sun breaks through. Carl shoulders his pack. He doesn't say a word, just heads up through the lowering clouds and the still-falling *graupel*. A few hesitate. "Carl, we're cold. Let's turn back."

Carl looks at them, and his face is almost transfigured. "You know what John Muir would say? 'You can sleep an eternity in your grave. You're only up here a little while.'"



Carl Sharsmith (middle) and friends look up the name of one of the small miracles of the universe.

Then he turns and heads up again, and we all follow. The stiff climbing rapidly warms us.

The ground is covered with white several inches deep. Purple daisies, green and gold ivesia and rosy buckwheat are encased in the icy mantle. We are walking on a white carpet woven with Persian blossoms. The sky is dark and light like an El Greco painting, the rocks are gleaming wet, and we know it is perhaps the most wonderful day we have ever known.

Then another cliff edge. We look down more than a thousand feet to Dana Glacier, and the sun comes out to dry us. Carl stares downward. "There's a little sunflower I've found nowhere else in the park but on that black moraine," he is saying, and our minds leap the dizzying space below, sunflowerward.

At the end of the day when we return, Ferdinand, the park ranger who is unofficial king of Tioga Pass, hails us. "We were thinking of you in that storm, but we weren't worried. We knew that Marmot Sharsmith would find a hole to crawl into."

"It was a fine day," says Carl, "the finest I've ever had up there."

Kim speaks for all of us: "Yes it was! There'll never be another day like it!"

Unless we go walking again with Carl.

For years I had seen Carl's slight figure out on the trail, surrounded by attentive youngsters and oldsters. Twice my husband had climbed with him on a ranger hike to the top of Mt. Lyell, Yosemite's highest peak, and come back glowing with enthusiasm. Then it was my turn. I signed up for a five-day alpine



D. C. Lowe

*Gaylor Lakes, in the high country north of Tioga Pass in Yosemite Park, have been familiar to Carl for years.*

botany seminar in the Yosemite high country.

We were a diverse crew. There was David, the ornithologist working his heart out to save Mono Lake from being dried up by the diversion of its feeder streams into the Los Angeles water system. There was Heather, fresh out of Stanford, who would work for the Sierra Club the rest of the summer. Several were students, some were teachers. Nobi was an engineer and Jeff a fanatical hiker and sometime geologist. We had a metal sculptor, a contractor, a chemist, a psychologist. And there I was: writer, grandmother and long-time Sierra Club backpacker.

That first morning we sat in a circle in a flowery alpine meadow and listened to Carl. (Our first instruction was to call him Carl.)

Belding's ground squirrels popped up from their holes to watch us, and one rufous hummingbird stopped in midair to inspect a red bandana, then whirred away. Carl spoke slowly, fervently, with a slight smile. He told of the advance and retreat of the glaciers as though they were his children, and of the mountain flowers as though he were a troubadour singing of his lady. We felt, all of us, that we had come not for a college course, but on a pilgrimage.

By the end of the week the pilgrimage had become a great adventure, one that changed our lives.

As we picked our way after Carl into a mountain cirque, he hardly suggested a knight errant. When on duty as a ranger, he wears the ranger uniform. But on this trip (sponsored by the Yosemite Natural History

Association), he was dressed in nondescript khaki pants and a faded shirt. What had once been a tweed jacket settled about his figure like mountain snows fitting the contours of the slope they fall upon. It was darned here and there, patched at the elbows, and of a comfortable mottled gray like the rocks themselves. On his back was a not-so-old rucksack given him by a student the year before to replace the one he had darned and patched for twenty years, "after my son tried to throw it away."

Long before Schumacher came up with *Small Is Beautiful*, Carl had perfected his simple, low-impact way of life, which suits his frugal Swiss upbringing. To him, old is beautiful; the most striking part of his apparel is his Stetson hat, bought for ten dollars in 1924, which today no self-respecting moth would even consider.

"A fine hat," he says. "They don't make hats like that anymore." It still has its jaunty flat brim, but every seam of the crown has been restitched by hand, and the crown restitched to the brim. There is no hat like Sharsmith's hat, monument to a lifetime of wind and sun and storm.

His car is a 1936 Ford roadster that would qualify for Harrah's Reno museum. Like the hat, it is well cared for, with almost 300,000 miles on the original engine. But Carl doesn't overtax it. He keeps it under canvas most of the time and usually accepts rides with other people.

His frugality is legendary—his 50-year-old flashlight, his diet of beans. But he is never frugal with enthusiasm, kindness, strength or endurance. He gives himself to the mountains and to people like the wildest of spendthrifts. We are all richer for it.

So, following Carl, for five days we walk the high places, the alpine fell-fields. We see marmot and pika and the rosy finch that plunges off the peaks and eats insects congealed in the snow. Carl shows us a rare saxifrage, left over from a colder period, that can only survive deep under shaded rocks with its feet in the cold snow-seep. He shows us which flowers must stand in running water, which can only survive on an unstable slope, and which must espalier themselves to boulders to take advantage of thin envelopes of warmth in order to grow.

Carl talks of the grasses that girdle the boreal regions of the globe. He talks of the Coppermine River, the Aleutians, Greenland and Siberia, and they flicker before our eyes until we, too, are walking the tundra in our minds. Our boots sink into the mud as we squint through magnifying glasses at blossoms of sedge and rush, discovering new and strange beauty.

One day he runs his hand through the

mosses under the overhanging edge of a tiny meandering stream and comes out with his eyes gleaming and a tiny piece of earth speckled with blue-green dots. "This is a Siberian liverwort," he announces. "You can always tell it by the peculiar color."

What is Carl's magic? We feel that these small dots are a great treasure that has been revealed to us—and so they are.

One morning as we hop the boulders rimming a high mountain lake, we come upon Newberry's pentstemon, the brilliant pink flower called *Pride of the Mountain*. "It was named for old Professor Newberry," Carl muses. "But he's gone now." He names another half-dozen well-known botanists, and his eyes wander out over the ranges. "They're all gone." We look at each other silently; my mind repeats Ishmael's words: "And I alone am returned to tell thee."

Lunchtime. A Clark's nutcracker flaps by croaking about pine-nuts, and Carl talks about his past. After a boyhood in Switzerland, he went with his parents first to England, then came to the United States. When he ended up a seventh grader in Texas and found he had to fight all the time, he quit going to school.

"I came up to the mountains and got work, sometimes as a miner, but mostly as a logger. At sixteen, I could cut off a limb as big as your arm in one clean cut." He smiles and pulls at his pipe. "They were good people, the loggers. Many of them were real woodsmen, and I learned a lot from them. Then I got interested in climbing mountains. In 1920 when I was seventeen, I climbed the north side of Mt. Shasta, alone."

"But Carl," Mary asks, "how did you get to be *Dr. Sharsmith*?"

"Well, I always wanted to study botany and geology. So when I was 21 I went back to the ninth grade, and stayed in school (supporting myself all the time) through high school and college and graduate school, until I got my Ph.D. at Berkeley."

Carl taught at Washington State and at the University of Minnesota. "But I always wanted to come back to California. So in 1950 I came to San Jose State and stayed until I retired in 1972, when I was 70."

Heather brings him a tiny white mountain-cress, and he squints through the hand lens as though seeing it for the first time. His face lights up. "Ah, now I see them. Tiny hairs with their ends turned out like stars." He looks up earnestly. "The drabas are evolving very rapidly," he tells us. "Each of these mountains has a different species, but you can tell them apart by the hairs." He hands the flower and glass back to Heather.

She stares intently, and he waits for the slow smile of recognition. "See the stars?" he asks. "This one is Brewer's draba."



*Newberry's pentstemon, "Pride of the Mountain."*

Another day he continues, "I studied and later taught in the winters, but I came to the mountains every chance I could get. In time I heard about the Yosemite Field School and was accepted as a student for the summer of 1930." (The National Park Service's Yosemite Field School of Natural History, which no longer operates, trained many people in two-month sessions during summers; some students later went on to become rangers or naturalists.)

"About halfway through the session, I was very pleased when they asked me if I would like to go into uniform the next season as a summer ranger. I was the only one asked. So I started in 1931, and I've done it most summers ever since. I guess I've probably got the most years of service of any ranger-naturalist in the whole National Park Service by now."

When he became the first ranger-naturalist in Yosemite's Tuolumne Meadows, Carl had joined the ranks of a great company of Sierrans. This meadow in the sky is where John Muir had come as a young man to herd sheep. It was partly out of this experience that the Sierra Club was born.

By 1931 there was a road to the Meadows, but it was narrow, steep and difficult. "We let the people camp anywhere, not herded together like nowadays. Every morning I used to get on my horse and ride all up and down the river seeing who was there. Sometimes they'd invite me for a cup of coffee, or

even fresh biscuits and blackberry jam."

Carl never throws anything away, not a flashlight, not a letter, not a memory. He's still savoring the biscuits and blackberry jam of 40 years ago.

It was in those early days that he started leading hikes and climbs up all the major peaks. He also gave campfire programs and does it still. A spellbinding storyteller, he may sing Indian songs, even do Indian dances.

He's popular as a campfire entertainer, and people learn a lot from him. But none of this is so fine as walking the high passes with him. Nothing is finer than walking with Carl.

Among the purplish rocks on windswept Tioga Crest, I find an unfamiliar blossom, a brush of feathery leaves and seed heads like pale unripe strawberries. "What's this one, Carl?" I ask.

"Oh, that's something special, a Drummond's anemone! Come here, everyone! Oh, my darling," he addresses the flower. "Where have you been, my lovely? I haven't seen you up here for 20 years." Days later he is still talking about the anemone.

One thing Carl *doesn't* talk about is the honors that have come his way. We students honor him, and others in higher places have done it, too. Someone tried to name a mountain for him—but for that a person has to be dead, and Carl's very much alive. The Secretary of the Interior gave him an award for meritorious service. Scholars with bigger names because they publish thick books have deferred to him because he knows more than they do about the mountain flowers. We sense all this, but on these glorious rambles, we really don't care. What we care about is being here and having him with us as our guide. Like many a great teacher before him, his gift to the student remains oral and evanescent.

A few years ago, Carl went back to Switzerland for the first time. "My mother and father had always spoken Swiss dialect to each other. So when I went back and heard that dialect, it was like finding my parents again, like going home."

Around one of our campfires, Carl fingers his accordion and plays a little. "My mother taught me all the old Swiss songs," he recounts. "One day when I was back in Switzerland, I was up on the Faulhorn above Grindelwald. The sun was setting on the Jungfrau. It was so beautiful, I started to sing one of those old Swiss tunes. A Swiss couple there wondered about this American singing Swiss dialect. They were so delighted they invited me to visit their farm, and I did."

In the Yosemite Sierra we don't have the Jungfrau, but we do have Lyell and Dana. We have our sunsets too, and our hulsea of sunset-gold that shares the mountaintops

Courtesy of Yosemite Natural History Association



Carl Sharsmith is never short of smiles. Here, without a hat for a change, he relaxes with a pipeful of his favorite tobacco.

with sky pilot's fragrant clusters of heavenly blue. For five days we have walked with Carl in this magical mountain landscape. And now, too soon, it's ending. We have our last campfire.

When Carl does the ranger talk for the whole campground, he builds a big fire, as rangers do. But with us, his little seminar, his happy disciples, he builds *his* kind of fire: very small. It's warm if you sit very close, thrifty of wood, and hardly any trouble to the universe.

Last night Mary, Heather, Ed and the other "youngsters" had a party in the campground. They ended up a bit tearful because it had been so beautiful, and it was almost over. But this evening it is really over, and we are sobered by the thought. We try to tell Carl what it has meant to us; we can't get it out quite right, and even after the tiny fire burns out, we linger before saying our goodnights.

Don almost makes a speech. "I've learned a lot, I've met many new species and some higher primates who may become lifelong friends. But the most thrilling experience was being enveloped in the aura of Carl Sharsmith. Thanks to all of you for being part of one of the best weeks of my life."

Mary is silent, but I know what she's

thinking. This afternoon as we walked back from Slate Creek in the rain, she had told me about a dilemma just solved, a commitment newly made. "I've been pulled in one direction and another in my college life," she confessed. "But now I know I want to give my life to studying botany."

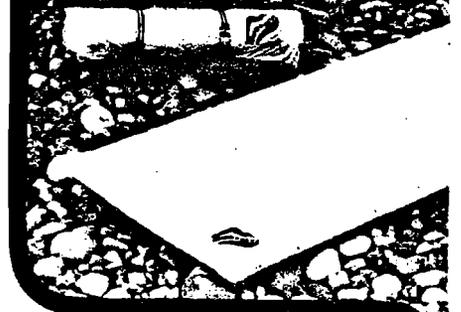
For most of us, though, this trip has been an interlude, time snatched from our ordinary pursuits to walk in Carl's extraordinary universe. We will go back richer for having made certain small important commitments of our own. We will walk more softly and see more deeply into the nature of things.

This was two years ago. The other day I saw Carl again. He told me he'd soon be backpacking up Clouds' Rest to look for a rare eriophyllum that hasn't been seen since the 1880s. May he find it! But before he left he added, "You know, I'm having the time of my life this summer. It gets more beautiful every year. You see more."

In a way, it doesn't matter about the eriophyllum. Whatever Carl's been searching for, he's found it. □

*Elizabeth S. O'Neill is a retired teacher turned freelance writer who has backpacked in the Sierra since the 1950s.*

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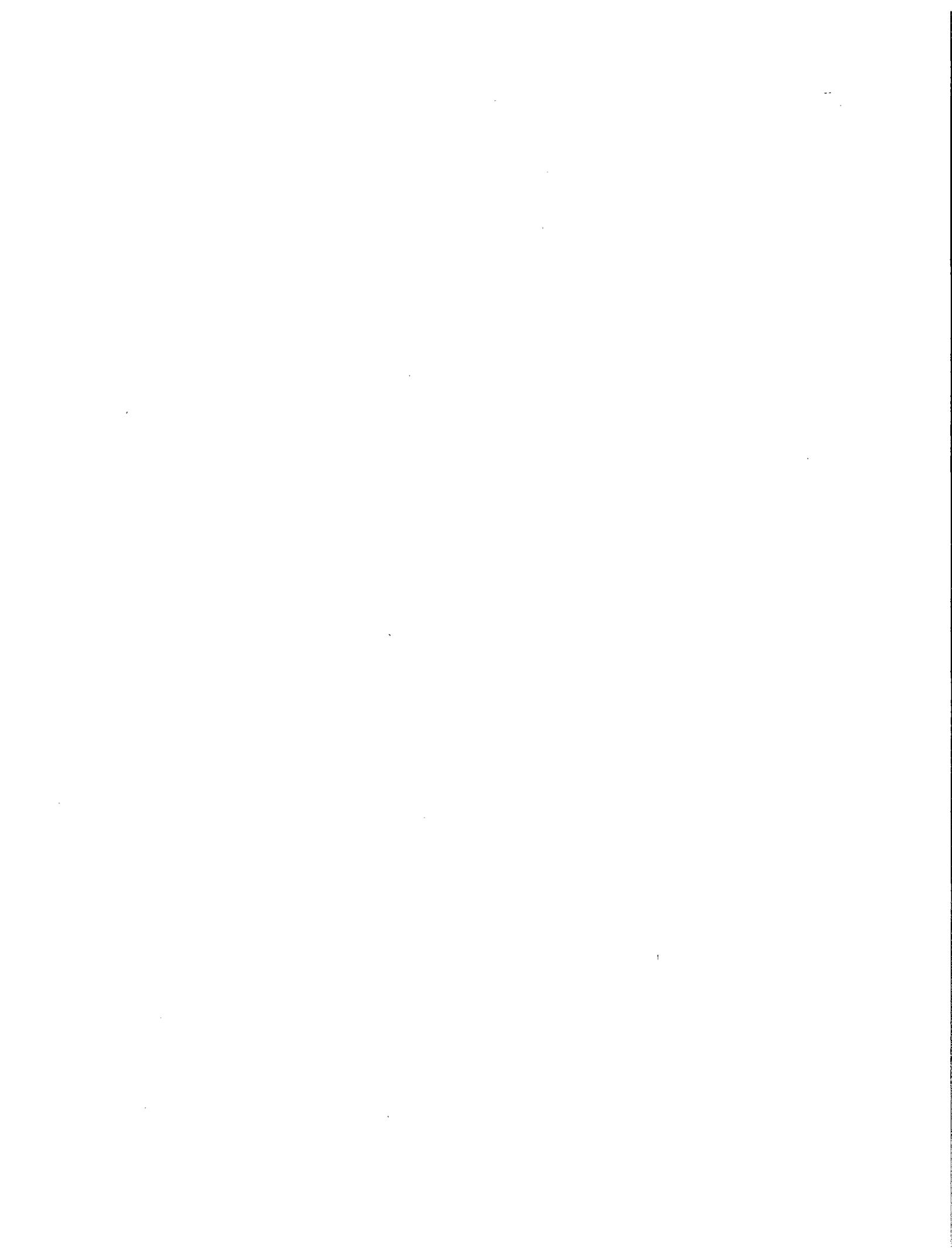
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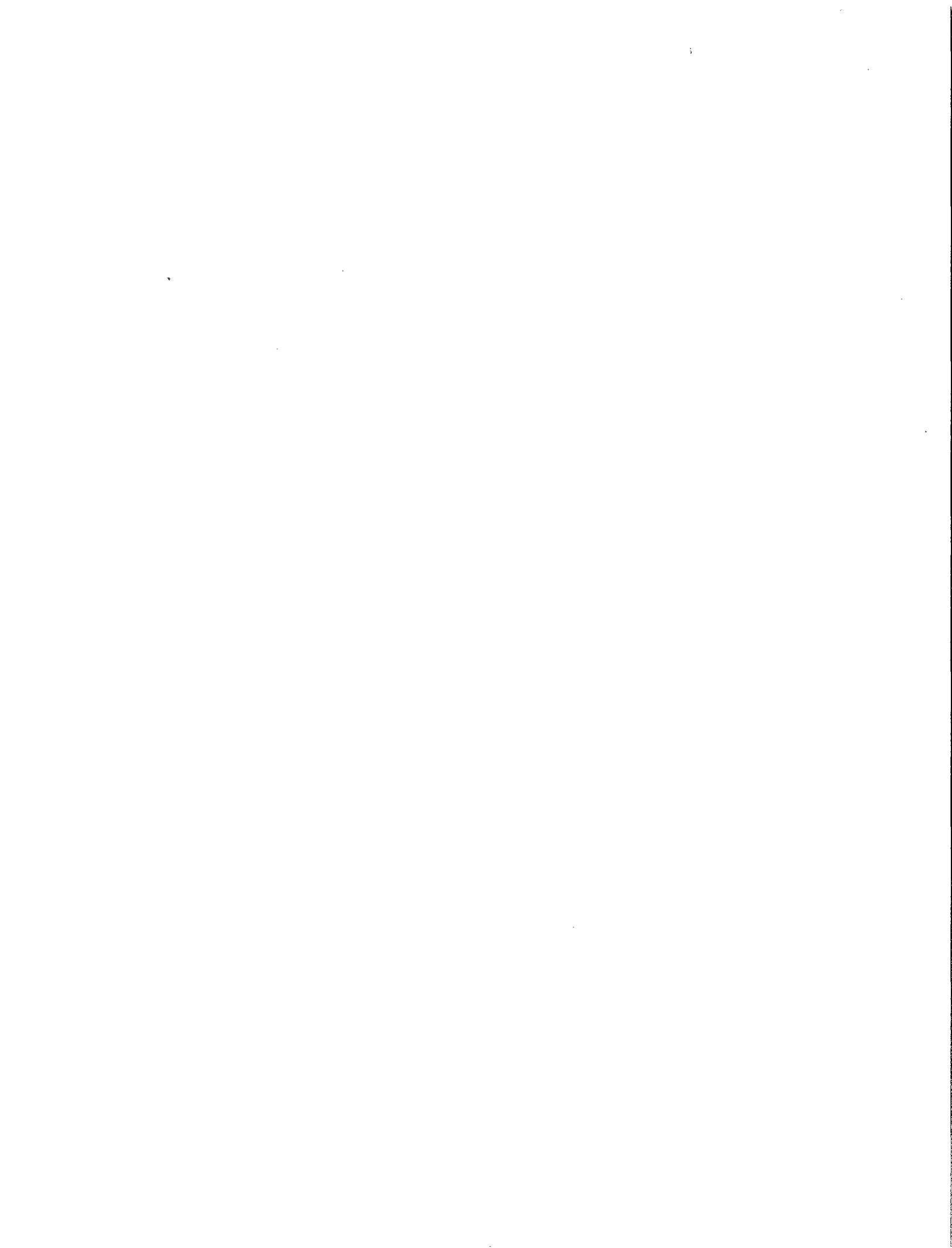
University of California  
Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Robert M. Underhill

UNIVERSITY FINANCIAL OFFICER AND FRATERNITY BROTHER

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

In 1967 the late vice-president of the University of California James H. Corley said of his colleague in university administration Robert M. Underhill that he is "thoroughly devoted to the university, full of energy and confidence, fearful of no man or beast...and a real team man in the building of the University of California." He was "one of the most independent, forthright, and hardworking members of the University Administrative Family."

From 1918 to 1963 Robert Underhill was successively acting clerk, business manager, assistant comptroller, land agent, and secretary and treasurer of the Board of Regents--the latter for thirty years. As an officer of the regents he arranged the agenda, recorded the proceedings, signed the documents, and prepared for the weekly meetings of the finance committee. As land agent he negotiated sales and purchases of campuses, field stations, and lands acquired through gifts and endowments, and he managed properties held in trust.

The citation on the LL.D. awarded Robert McKenzie Underhill in 1964 says: "He negotiated some of the earliest contracts with the office of scientific research and development, establishing influential precedents for government relationships with the academic community during and after World War II"--and that meant the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory.

The interview that follows continues the Regional Oral History Office's relationship to Mr. Underhill as informant: in 1967 we completed a memoir titled U.C. Lands, Finances and Investments, and in 1979 the science and technology oral history program of The Bancroft Library interviewed Mr. Underhill on contract negotiations for the University of California.

In April 1984 Mr. Underhill welcomed Jim Kantor, retired university archivist, and me to his home in Oakland. Bob Underhill and Jim Kantor were university friends. Mrs. Underhill was also present during the interview, gently curbing her husband's responses on occasion, and graciously offering coffee and cookies. The topic for our meeting, Robert Gordon Sproul, was an excellent outlet for Mr. Underhill's good memory and particularly charming negotiated responses. Our two-pronged, carefully plotted approach to this witty, wise and discreet servant of the university brings to light no state secrets. Good stories, yes, good history, but secrets, no. What follows is Bob Underhill, Class of '15, on the subject of his fraternity brother, Bob Sproul, Class of '13. Mr. Underhill's editing was careful, bearing in mind historical accuracy and appropriateness of remarks.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name Robert M. Underhill

Date of birth May 4, 1893 Place of birth San Francisco

Father's full name George Lyons Underhill

Birthplace Stockton, Ca.

Occupation Aug 8 1860.

Mother's full name Louise Devore Underhill (nee King)

Birthplace San Francisco Ca

Occupation Nov 12 1859.

Where did you grow up ? San Francisco.

Present community \_\_\_\_\_

Education SF Schools, University of California.

Occupation(s) Retired

Secy + Treas of the Regents, Emeritus

Vice President, Emeritus, Univ of California

Special interests or activities \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Fraternity Friendship

[Date of Interview: April 27, 1984]

Underhill: I entered the university in the January term of 1912, and I lived in our home in San Francisco and commuted every day during that first six months. My second oldest brother, James L. Underhill, a retired lieutenant general in the Marine Corps living now in Pacific Grove, was a member of Abracadabra. He lived in the house and did not commute during that period. I suppose, as they used to call it in the sororities, a sister or a daughter was a "legacy," and therefore automatically got into the sorority, so maybe that's how I got into Abracadabra.

Riess: I don't know that term, a "legacy?"

Underhill: A sister of a member of the sorority, or a daughter or a close friend of the family, was known sub rosa as a legacy, and they got in. Maybe that's how I got into Abracadabra.

Anyway, the next term, when I started my sophomore year--because I was only a freshman for six months and that's another matter--I moved into the fraternity house in which my brother was a member in Sproul's class. So, I got a little more acquainted with Sproul probably not only from the fraternity membership but from my brother's association with him, both civil engineer students, and I think for some time in the same teams or groups in the camps.

Abracadabra was what was called a house club rather than a fraternity. I think that was a little looking down the end of the noses by the fraternities that were national.

Riess: What was its reputation on campus?

Underhill: Well, it had a student body president many times over its period. It had a high scholarship record. It was a second-class citizen in the Blue and Gold because it was listed not as a fraternity

- Underhill: but as a house club. Now, it did have all its names, the members, in the annual record, and it did have a picture of everybody in the outfit. I don't believe it had any bad reputation, because it had positions on the committees, and many student body presidents. It had a director in the student body store continuously for about twenty years, including the speaker [Underhill]. It didn't have a great many Big C athletes that I can remember, but it went to everything else and took part in campus management. I don't know what more I can say about it.
- Riess: Was there a lot of mystery and secrecy?
- Underhill: In joining it we had to take an oath that was secret and a pledge that was secret, and that we would never join any other organization of like character, which meant any fraternity. And two fellows did join a Greek letter fraternity and promptly got thrown out of Abracadabra. Of course, they didn't care anymore.
- Riess: Over the years did you and Sproul have a common sense of this Abracadabra, a secret handshake feeling?
- Underhill: I don't believe so. We were loyal friends with a lot of members of the organization, but I don't believe there was any mumbo jumbo or finger pressing or that kind of stuff. We did have an annual banquet or meeting of the alumni. We had a so-called house association which all alumni members joined, and that supported part of the cost of operating the house. No, I don't think there was any mumbo jumbo or any of that kind of stuff going on.
- Riess: Did he have in his administration any Abracadabra men other than you?
- Underhill: Not at that time. Oh, wait a minute, yes, but they were not in the organization as students when he was. Yes, there were others who came along, but no, I don't think there was anybody else who was in college when he was there.

I remember him as very much interested in student activities. They had a thing they called the Big C Sirkus, and I remember he was manager of it as a senior. I didn't see very much of him in the fraternity house. He came to lunch occasionally. It was sort of a convenient place for outside members. We paid thirty dollars a month for room and board membership, and the outside members seemed to pay about three or four dollars a month, and they could eat a free meal any time they wanted to come. It was a pretty good bargain for them.

Kantor: He was living at home, wasn't he?

Underhill: Yes, in Berkeley. The family lived in Berkeley--mother, father, and brother. The only time I saw him or had anything to do with him was in this Big C Sirkus in his senior and my sophomore year. I was kind of his aide; he was the manager of it. I ran around, messenger boy, relaying his orders to people and so on while they had this circus to raise money for some athletic event. It was held in the area now occupied by Barrows Hall.

Riess: How did he get people to do things, back in those days? What kind of qualities did he have?

Underhill: He had a big personality. He was forceful in a way. He could also kind of lift you up a little. As a matter of fact, he got me one summer to act as an advertising salesman for the YMCA freshman handbook which they used to get out. Whether they get it out now, I don't know. It's been a long time since I've been a freshman. I would go around and sell ads to the local merchants on the theory that a freshman might want to know where to buy a suit of clothes or where to put his bank account or something. Of course, on the other hand, it was probably pure charity on the part of the banker or the clothing storekeeper.

I had no interest whatsoever in the YMCA. As a matter of fact they thought that because I was the prize salesman and made so much money for them that, of course, I was going to get on the next cause. The next cause didn't interest me in the slightest--no money in it. So, I was a wheeler and dealer. I sold ads on a commission.

Riess: You were a wheeler and dealer?

Underhill: Yes.

Riess: It sounds like Sproul sized up his men anyway.

Underhill: He did what?

Riess: He was a good person for sizing up other men?

Underhill: I don't have any comment on that point. It would be inappropriate. I told you I might duck now and then.

Assistant to the Comptroller, Los Angeles

- Riess: When you went down to Los Angeles in 1922, Sproul had already been going back and forth as comptroller himself.
- Underhill: I had contacts long before that with him. He always was in Berkeley.
- Riess: I would be very happy to have a kind of chronological record of your contacts with Sproul. When you came on to the Los Angeles scene, what were the stories about Sproul? What was the reputation that he had already in Los Angeles?
- Underhill: I don't know as I could say what record or reputation or what thoughts he had brought out in Los Angeles. I'd only been in Los Angeles once before in my life before I was transferred there, except a few times to straighten out the local business office in 1920 and '21. I did go down in 1915 and stayed a day or two when I went down to the San Diego fair, the same year we had our big fair here. So, I can't say that I talked to him. I know that was the third job in the university to which he either appointed me, or was influential in getting me appointed.

In Los Angeles he was trying--even before I went down there--to straighten out some very difficult understaffed situations. He told Dr. [Ernest Carroll] Moore, the director or chancellor or whatever his title was then, that he would send me down there, and Moore accepted that and then turned it down three times, and finally accepted it. So, I don't know. He must have had some standing and acceptance by Moore, otherwise he wouldn't have gotten over what he wanted to do. He wanted to put me there, or somebody there, as his deputy.

The business arrangements at Los Angeles were inadequate and when I was sent down several times in 1920 and 1921 for a few days, that could not keep things in order. So after the three times I was assigned to the transfer, and then rejected, Moore consented.

I probably had been rather emphatic on my trips south, and Sproul knew I was positive and perhaps aggressive. So he told me not to get into any fights for a year. If I did he would not back me. If I had none for a year, he would back me. Well, about six months after I moved south Sproul told me he was surprised that I was not in any fight. I replied that I had been but he did not hear of them because I did not maim; I finished the matter completely, and no one heard of it. [laughter]

Underhill: I think they didn't want quite so much authority under them. I think they had seen me several times and recognized me as a rather determined young brat, and I guess I was.

Riess: It was Sproul who was talking Moore into it, rather than President [William Wallace] Campbell?

Underhill: You asked me about Sproul?

Riess: Why would Sproul be dealing with Moore, rather than Campbell?

Underhill: Campbell didn't come to Berkeley from Mt. Hamilton until '23.

Riess: Okay. Why was Sproul dealing with Moore in '22, rather than [President David Prescott] Barrows?

Underhill: Sproul was dealing with Moore on the business arrangements needed for the place. Whether Campbell, when he came in, was paying much attention to him or not, I don't know. As a matter of fact, I know that at one time they weren't getting along very well-- Campbell and Moore.

Campbell would come into town and he wouldn't even ring up Moore. He'd ask me to drive him around somewhere and go with him, and then Moore would hear about it from the man he interviewed, or the regent he saw in Los Angeles, and he'd ask me, "Did you see Mr. Campbell?" And, I'd say, "Yes. And, he'd asked me to go with him somewhere, and I did." Hmm.

I was strictly on the business operation. I kept out of everything else. It wasn't my affair at all, what they did. I wasn't an officer at UCLA; I was in effect a deputy general officer for business in southern California, so I can't tell you some of those facts. And, as I think you found out before, I only answer in regard to things I witnessed or things I personally took part in--that I know myself. I don't pay any attention to hearsay.

Riess: I appreciate that. I think that a lot of my questions will require a kind of indulgence on your part in hearsay.

Underhill: I will consider that, but I will have to identify them as hearsay if they are. I'm not trying to duck you here, but I don't want to put stuff in that I don't know.

Riess: Yes, it's just that your hearsay may lead to somebody else's fact.

Riess: Both Sproul and Walter Morris Hart were being considered for president of the university. I was interested in whether Hart went down to Los Angeles, and whether the people in Los Angeles knew him.

Underhill: As to Sproul and Hart, and Hart's situation, I saw Hart in Los Angeles once. You say they were both being considered for the presidency, and I imagine they were, because I am sure that Campbell, when he nominated him as a vice-president, expected him to follow along in his line, but at the same time he nominated him at the Board of Regents--and you can confirm this in the regents' records, probably executive session--the regents, some of them, put Sproul in as the vice-president simultaneously.

I only saw Hart in Los Angeles once, and I never knew of any of his contacts with Los Angeles except the one time when they were trying to decide where the new campus should be. There were seventeen areas offered for campuses. They asked me to arrange a car for them to go to Fullerton, and over there on the coast, south of Redondo in the Palos Verdes hills. Campbell, Sproul, and Hart came down, and I talked to Mrs. [Margaret] Sartori, a regent, and she lent us her big car, and so we drove around to those places.

I don't recall if Hart ever said anything particularly on the trip. I didn't ride with him in any of the cars when they were looking around the Fullerton area. On the one to Palos Verdes I was with Campbell, Sproul and Hart, but Hart never said a word. As a matter of fact, as I would see him at some meeting, he never said very much.

He had a terrible bump on his head during that ride. I was in the jump seat right in front of Sproul. Campbell was sitting in the front seat with the driver. Hart was sitting in the back. They were just going like the devil and they hit a dip in the street, and Hart went right up and hit the roof. I grabbed the back of the seat behind the driver and hung on, and Sproul grabbed the back of the seat I was in, so he stayed all right. Poor Hart, he really got an awful bang. So I don't know much about Hart in connection with Los Angeles. [laughter] A lot of this stuff can be expunged.

Riess: No, that's so vivid it's marvelous! Do you have any questions about those Los Angeles years, Jim?

Kantor: Were you the only officer of the regents in Los Angeles at that time? Everybody else was under Moore, but you were under the regents?

Underhill: My staff was under me. We were the only ones not under Moore. I also served on matters involving Riverside, San Diego and other matters in the south.

Kantor: The campus moved to Westwood in '29. Where was your office when you moved to the new campus?

Underhill: In the library building on the new campus. My first office was in Millspaugh Hall which was the administration building on Vermont Avenue, and then at Westwood I had an office in the lower level, a kind of half basement somewhat down below the rest of it, in the library building. I had proper offices.

Kantor: In those years did Sproul come down often, or very rarely?

Underhill: They used to have a committee of the regents on "Southern California Institutions" so-called, and he would come to it. When he was comptroller, secretary of the regents, and vice-president, quite often. Sometimes the president would come, but mainly Sproul as secretary of the Board of Regents, which he was too, would come down there. If he couldn't come, he would send the assistant comptroller at Berkeley down there until I told Sproul I'd resign if he sent him again, because I knew more about the place than his Berkeley assistant did, and I wasn't going to be junior to that fellow in Berkeley. I was on an equal status, and that was my territory, and Sproul could keep him out of there. He never came back again, so I represented Sproul after that.

I don't think I was easy to get along with, at times.

He would come down for one day and then go right back again-- a committee meeting or some special thing he wanted to look at. When he did that, I usually would go with him. Whatever he was doing, he'd take me. As a matter of fact, I think I had the only car except for the president of the university and the people in the agricultural extension service, the farm advisors. I had it because I had a wider territory; I had Riverside and Meloland down in the Imperial Valley and San Diego. I had a lot of area to run around to.

Riess: Meloland?

Underhill: Meloland; it's out by El Centro. It's an agronomy station. Riverside had a place in Whittier too.

Kantor: The pathological laboratory.

Underhill: No, it was for insect study. But that finally moved out to a place near Mount Rubidoux, and then gradually moved out to the Riverside campus.

There were things going on down in southern California. For instance, there might be some real estate matter that Sproul wanted me to investigate or something. That was true of some land that we leased for oil drilling up in the lower end of the San Joaquin Valley. I had a much wider geographical operation.

Riess: You came up then to the Berkeley campus at regular intervals, didn't you?

Underhill: Every three months. That was one of the conditions when I went south that I was not to lose contact with Sproul's top administration.

Riess: One of your conditions?

Underhill: They weren't going to put me out there and forget me.

Riess: So that was a condition that you--.

Underhill: Asked Sproul--I would come every three months. As a matter of fact, I had family living up here too, so I came up. One time would be the time of the Big Game. So, it was every three months based on that, and I'd come and spend several days.

As a matter of fact, I had to keep in touch. You see, Sproul as comptroller--and that's when I served under him--he had a monthly meeting of his division heads. Now the other three assistant comptrollers were all there. One would come from Davis; that didn't take much time or cost anything. And the fellow from San Francisco. The Berkeley men were there. The chief purchasing agent, the chief accountant, the chief engineer, the head of the newspaper like The Clip Sheet, and that sort of stuff, they would all come. I would attend that meeting. Four times a year I would come up.

Riess: Had you been promised a return eventually?

Underhill: No, except when his first assistant comptroller at Berkeley resigned in the late twenties, knowing I was basically a northerner in my history, he offered me the position in Berkeley, but pointed out it would not be as separate an operation as mine. I would be in the room with him, and carrying out less independent operations. I declined the transfer, believing with the coming move to Westwood

Underhill: and the distance from headquarters I had a more interesting position and perhaps a better exposure should something else in or out of the university be offered.

Riess: Your career, as far as you were concerned, was with Los Angeles?

Underhill: There was nothing else said beyond that. There wasn't anything to promise.

Riess: I wondered whether you had a close enough friendship with Bob Sproul to be in on any kind of speculations about what his future was, and how you might have been involved in his future.

Underhill: I think that would have been a rather improper question for me to place to him. I accepted the promotion to go to Los Angeles. I don't think I would have been in order, speculating on the future. I don't think I could trade on our fraternity membership or that he had been instrumental in giving me a job. (Even as a student, he hired me; when he was cashier of the university, I was number one cashier taking the student fees in that one year.) No, I think that would have been a very improper thing, and I think he would have had to put me in my place if I'd asked that question.

Riess: On the other hand, on one of his trips to the south, because you were an old friend of his, he might have talked about it from his point of view.

Secretary and Treasurer to the Board of Regents, 1930s

Underhill: I'll tell you, one more step about that question. I raised the subject once. He was down there and occupied my office with me for most of the fall before he became president. I don't believe that it was a very comfortable position for him--now this is my opinion--sitting around in Berkeley when Campbell probably was grooming Hart for the promotion. Sproul moved down to Los Angeles, and he was doing a lot of studying and preparation for his change, and there was no other place for him to come but sit in my office. I had a big table in back of me, and he could sit there. I don't think he was inspecting me or anything because he knew me all right by that time. After eight years down there, he knew how bad I was anyway. So he sat there.

Underhill: At that time there was a discussion in the Board of Regents about not having any regent act as treasurer. Now a regent was treasurer, Mortimer Fleischhacker, for a while. I think for some reason or other they thought that was not right because they were very, very careful not to do business with themselves. In other words, if one of them was a director of a bank, they wouldn't put any money in that bank. But the treasurer, he's got to hold the money. What was he going to do with it, put it in his own bank? Gradually, they took it out of there, and he put it in another bank in San Francisco, but I think there was a pretty close relationship.

I heard they were discussing the matter of who the treasurer would be, and I said to Sproul, "I'll take that job. That's just the job for me." Actually, I had practically no investment experience but the university didn't have many investments. They had some.

Sproul said, "That's impossible."

I said, "Why is that impossible?"

"In the first place, you're not a bank president, and in the next place, you're not worth a million dollars."

I said, "That's not the way to appoint a treasurer."

He said, "It'd be impossible."

So, you ask me a question, and I answer it; maybe that's something about him too.

He assumed the presidency before any appointment was made of a comptroller and/or secretary of the regents. He asked me to suggest a division of the office between the Berkeley assistant and me in such a way that I would accept either. I listed a division in four items for each. It was reviewed in Berkeley, where the assistant made one change after another, so that it became an impossible arrangement and I refused. The result was I got the assignments I wanted, and I am sure in one respect at least I was better qualified. I was less qualified in one other which I did not get.

It kind of turned out a little differently later on when Sproul and [John] Calkins, the attorney, and [Luther] Nichols, the comptroller, and I went to San Francisco after I was elected secretary of the board when I was back up here to call a special meeting of the Board of Regents to elect a treasurer.

Underhill: We all were speculating on the Key Route going over to San Francisco as to which bank president in San Francisco was going to be appointed treasurer. Now, this was an honorary job. We couldn't figure out, but there was one possibility because there was one bank [directoriate] that the university had no connection with on its Board of Regents. Anyway, it was going to be a bank president, until a couple of attorneys sitting at the meeting nominated me. I snapped my head back, and left the room.

Riess: Really. You had no idea?

Underhill: No. But you asked me if I ever discussed promotions with Sproul. I did, but he had no suggestions. He couldn't appoint the treasurer. The treasurer was independent from the president or comptroller.

Riess: Do you think that those were just two parallel events, or do you think Sproul suggested to the regents that they appoint you?

Underhill: No. I think he got the shock of his life. Of course, I was not in the room after. The two attorneys made a speech about a different plan--no more outside honorary job. McEnerney made a big, long speech about the whole plan that he and Neylan had worked out. He said, "Mr. Neylan, now take over."

Neylan said, "We've decided Underhill is doing all the work anyway." (I was doing the investing.)

I snapped my head back; I said, "I guess you don't need me." I got up and left the room.

I have no idea, but I know Sproul knew nothing about it. It was simply between McEnerney and Neylan, the proposal. I could be quite sure from looking at Sproul, from the way we were all talking. Of course, if he knew he might have hidden, like playing the game, but I don't think he knew anything about it. He certainly knew that I had offered myself several years before, only to him.

Riess: We know he had a very good memory.

Underhill: Yes, he had a good memory. Mine wasn't so bad either. [laughter]

Kantor: Could we go back a minute? You said that he came down to Los Angeles. This was after he was named to be the new president?

Underhill: President-elect.

Kantor: He came down and he spent time with you. How did people there at Los Angeles feel about his appointment as president?

Underhill: I never asked for any comment, and it wasn't any of my business. I kept to my own affairs. You mustn't get your foot in places you don't belong.

Kantor: I just wondered whether people said things to you without your asking them.

Underhill: I can't remember that.

Riess: I could have told you that's what he would have said.

Underhill: What's the matter now?

Riess: I could have told Jim that that's what you would have said.

Underhill: [loud laughter] You're getting wise to my evasions?

Riess: Yes.

I have a little question. Are you serious that you went over on the Key Route? You fellows didn't have a car for getting back and forth to the ferry?

Underhill: So help me. That's right. It only cost 15c or 20c.

Riess: I know, but it took time.

Underhill: It was the only way.

Kantor: Don't you remember Mrs. Sproul's story later about how they had to borrow Miss Robb's car to send somebody over to the city because there was no car?

Underhill: The university didn't have any cars. No, that was regular. Now, later on when I had an office in San Francisco when I was treasurer and secretary, I used to go over there two days a week. Two days a week here and two days a week there and on the average two days on the road somewhere. Now, I might have been gone for three weeks even. Then I used to take my car over. I might have had a lot of books, I might have had a lot of stuff, and I always took a secretary over with me. I operated out of my office in the Crocker Building.

I had so much business with the brokers, real estate, and bonds and stocks, and the banks, that I just had to be over there. We didn't have any transportation of that kind. As a matter of fact, for a long time the board met at the State Office Building,

Underhill: in the governor's office during Rolph's term as governor. They all met out there. Rolph very seldom came, but they'd be there anyway. So, we'd shag over there; we'd take our briefcases and all our stuff, and go out on a streetcar out there. We had an office downtown. Later on, they gave up going out to the state building out there and met downtown in their own office.

Continuing Friendship

Riess: Backing back a bit. When you were in Los Angeles, aside from coming up every three months to Berkeley, how did you and Sproul communicate? Was it by memos or by phone?

Underhill: That book on the top there is my report to him every month of what we did. On the other hand, we did write back and forth. We telephoned back and forth, not too much. I regarded that as my territory and, generally, I knew the width of my fields of authority. That doesn't say I never communicated with the boss. I just figured that--the daily business had to be done, and that was what I was sent there for.

Riess: I just wondered if there was a substantial amount of regular telephone contact.

Underhill: Oh, if there was an emergency matter like when I was sent up there to Ventura to settle the dispute on the breaking of the Fillmore Dam.\* I was ordered to go up there and settle that dispute if I could, or make peace. You'd have emergency matters like that.

One night Sproul got me up after I was in bed, and told me he wanted me on the 1:30 A.M. train going to San Diego.

"What for?"

"I want you to buy a boat down there tomorrow morning."

"All right." So I got up and dressed and went to the campus and got the night watchman who knew me to help me so I could get enough cash out of the vault so I had enough in my pocket to pay

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\*Robert M. Underhill, University of California Lands, Finances and Investments, an oral history interview conducted for the Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1967, p. 415.

Underhill: for my expenses on the train to go to San Diego. We had an emergency once in a while. I got there first because I went down that night. Some fellows went down in an automobile, but I owned the boat by that time. [laughter] Sproul knew when he wanted action and you sure gave it to him.

I want to say something to you. At half past ten, we'll have a little break, and Mrs. Underhill will make some coffee for us if you'd like it, and we'll take a little rest, and I'll get my wind back again.

Riess: I don't want to wear you down.

Underhill: No, no. Wait a minute. You do what you want. I'm not ready for the hospital yet. [laughter]

Riess: Were you and your wife [Grace] close to Ida and Bob socially?

Underhill: Very close. Very close. Oh yes, and before the marriage I was still living in San Francisco in the family home over there, and I would come over about once a month and Sproul and a man named Theodore Sharp, who was in the agricultural department, and his wife and I would play duplicate whist--not duplicate bridge, duplicate whist. You know what you've got to do with that?

You take the tricks like you do in bridge and the last card to the dealer is the trump. You play twelve decks, and you place the cards so they go back where they were before. After the twelve, this fellow or the lady here or this person here gets the hand that I had before. It's comparative, how much that team can make against this team with the same hand. The trouble with the game was that I could remember, after the third play, about what was in that hand over there. So, they made me go out and buy twelve more decks. Then we'd play with twenty-four. [laughter]

I was friendly with Sproul, very friendly with him. At that time I wasn't working for the university. I was working for a paint company over in San Francisco after I resigned from the first job the university gave me. I would come over here, I wasn't married, and play duplicate and so on.

Riess: What period are you talking about?

Underhill: I'm talking about '16 and '17. I got the job over in San Francisco after I resigned as cashier of the university. I got that job as a cost accountant and statistician for a branch of the National Lead Company, and that was from the spring of '16 until January '18

Underhill: when I came back to Berkeley as accountant for the School of Military Aeronautics. I wasn't married until June of '18 and it was in that period that I would come over to the Sharps. So, I knew the Sprouls pretty well.

Riess: After you were married, did you continue these whist games?

Underhill: No, no. I had to pay some attention at home then.

Riess: You might have brought the wife.

Underhill: No, I don't think she was interested in that. That kind of changed. That kind of separated a little bit. I'd see the Sprouls, I'd visit them, I attended one of their family weddings. Oh, yes, we kept up our friendship all right, but that once-a-month business quit.

Riess: In the interview I did with Ida Sproul, she described one of their houses, on Grant Street. He used to walk home every day at lunch time.

Underhill: I walked home with him after work. For the first eighteen months we were married, I had an apartment on College Avenue near St. John's Presbyterian Church, which I didn't attend, but I was near, and then I was on Josephine. He was on Grant. We would walk home together. I was assistant accountant then, and we'd go over things, but generally he wasn't much concerned with the detail of the accounting, but that was in his division, of course.

Riess: When you walked home you would talk business?

Underhill: Oh, yes, or anything we wanted to. We might even talk about the football game or something. I don't know what we talked about.

When I came back from Los Angeles, we played squash or racquets, whatever you want to call the game where you play handball with something like a tennis racquet. He and Harold Leupp, the librarian, and I, and I can't remember who the fourth fellow was. We'd play a little after five o'clock for a while to get some exercise. I used to play handball as a kid.

[Interruption] Oh, come on in.

Mrs.

Underhill: I was just taking the mail down to the box.

Underhill: I promised them that you were going to give them a cup of coffee at half past; that gives me a break, you know.

Mrs.

Underhill: We will do that.

Underhill: They're having trouble with me. [laughter]

Riess: I know that Ida missed the kind of friendship that she had with an earlier group of people when she was in the President's House.

Underhill: We were close friends. There's no question about that.

Riess: And the easygoing card games and that sort of evening.

Underhill: One year he spent most of his time in Los Angeles.

Riess: 1936?

Underhill: 1936? I don't remember what it was. He occupied the chancellor's home down there, he and Ida. Her sister [Enna Wittschen] lived there. My wife and I were invited down to spend a weekend or something down there, so we stayed in that home. We were close friends with the Sprouls, there's no question about that.

Kantor: That was the first Mrs. Underhill who never worked at the university.

Riess: Your present wife, she was a secretary in Sproul's office?

Underhill: This one was a receptionist in Sproul's office. She was at the outside desk there, and had a little switchboard besides. She'd know who was going to come in there. Most of the telephone numbers, she'd have in her head, the people he was ringing and the people he wanted to be busy for. She was in his office for a long time. She was not in my department, but I knew here there, of course.

#### Real Estate Interests

Riess: You were dealing in lands and buildings, and all of that. I have heard that Sproul had a kind of hobby of real estate, and I wondered if you would have any comments on his canniness about good real estate investments. Do you think that he had a particular gift for seizing the opportunity?

Underhill: I don't think I can judge that. The university had some real estate and quite a few real estate loans during the time he was the comptroller and then vice-president and secretary of the board. I think he was more familiar with real estate and real estate loans than he was with market securities. Maybe that's why they had so many.

Underhill: Most of the investments during that period were quite local. They were in California, what you could see across the street from the campus, or downtown San Francisco, which really became a problem later on. It became a problem because it concentrated a big chunk of tax exemption on one locality like Oakland or San Francisco. I recommended to the board that we disperse it, get out of it, because you can't have people attacking you when you're raising their taxes. The regents went along with my recommendations. They were easy to administer, I would say, if you could see them across the street or within carfare. Or you could see them from San Francisco where there is a well-placed building of some kind.

No, I don't know that he had any great personal interest in real estate, but the little they had at that time--I know when I took over they only had sixteen million dollars worth of investments, and about 80 percent of it was based in California, and about 60 percent of it was based in real estate. That may be an indication of his interest when he was doing the investing. Now, the treasurer of the university didn't do the investing in those days. He'd bank the money and collect the interest on the mortgage loans and so on and deposit it in a bank account. He kept the securities, but he didn't take any active part in generating the investments or managing them.

Riess: At one time Sproul was a director of a Berkeley bank that was very closely connected with Mason McDuffie. I'd love to have someone from that period who could tell us about Sproul's interest.

Underhill: I think it was more of a savings and loan than a bank. It was at the corner of Addison and Shattuck.

Kantor: That was the building John Galen Howard built. It was called the Bank of Berkeley or something. It's still there.

Underhill: I don't know who built the building.

Governor Young was part of that crowd, too, at one time.

Kantor: He was a Berkeleyan.

Underhill: Gerald Hagar, who was a regent, was mixed up in that deal for a while too. There were quite a few of them who were directors of that thing. I have no idea what part he took in the management of it at all; I just know he was a director.

Sproul and I were fellow directors of M.J. Connell Co., owner of eight buildings mostly rented to the garment industry in Los Angeles. The university for UCLA received 38 percent of the

- Underhill: stock by will. There were then two directors, the testator's attorney and his relative, a niece I believe. They wanted U.C. regents or officers but could not agree on any of the regents in Los Angeles so asked the finance committee to choose. The committee named Sproul and me. I believe he attended one meeting but could not take the time to go south for the meetings. I continued.
- Riess: I would think his interest in real estate would have influenced his ability to make good real estate decisions. I don't know. I'm trying to put these things together.
- Underhill: I don't know anything about the basis of how those loans or property acquisitions took place. I inherited what they had in '31 when I came up as secretary of the board and the investment officer. That was really my prime duty. And two years later on, when I also got the added name on the front door, as treasurer, but that didn't mean any more money.
- Kantor: So you were doing the investments before you became treasurer and just continued.
- Underhill: As secretary of the corporation. That was in my duty. I was in charge of the investments.
- Kantor: As secretary?
- Underhill: As secretary. You see, they divided.
- Kantor: But then they put the two titles together, and you had them both.
- Underhill: Yes.
- Kantor: What happened afterwards, when the titles split?
- Underhill: I got to be a vice-president too.
- Kantor: In the sixties, when you retired, you were still both secretary and treasurer and vice-president?
- Underhill: Up to June 30, 1960.
- Kantor: Then they separated the two.
- Underhill: They separated them in the process of breaking up the four divisions that I was running.
- Kantor: Then, did the investments go to the treasurer, or did they stay with the secretary?
- Underhill: They went with the treasurer.

Staff Salaries

Riess: Would you say that it was obvious that Bob Sproul was a Scotsman when it came to business matters?

Underhill: The staff thought so when it came to the payroll. [laughter]  
Well, you asked the question.

Riess: Now, would you please expand on that answer, Mr. Underhill.

Underhill: I think the administrative staff always thought they should have had a little bit more on salaries, but on the other hand the university is an academic institution, and the main show is the academic side. We're just off-shoots of the rest of it. Maybe they've got to have the necessary evil around there.

I think the rates, particularly for the women, were extraordinarily low. I really think that they--the administration were second class citizens anyway. The crowd that had nothing to do with the faculty certainly are not first class up there. Now, I had no trouble. I seemed to get along all right personally, but I don't think many of them were quite in a position to demonstrate what they produced. It was obvious, in fact, what I was producing. There it was. But the great group haven't that kind of a chance. That isn't necessarily a criticism of the financial administration and the cut of the money. The people doing similar jobs around the place and with limited authority certainly don't have a chance to have the evidence right on the table.

At one time there was a serious feeling among the clerical staff, let's say, and the maintenance staff, that they didn't have very many privileges or many advantages. They got Sproul, when he was president, to appoint a joint committee of junior employees, let's say, in the administration. I got to be chairman of it. Out of that came a better relationship changing the sick leave rule, for instance. Then you could have a day a month but you couldn't accumulate it. When you get sick, you're sick more than a day! Things like this.

There were academic faculty members of the committee. I was not an academic faculty member; I was chairman of the committee, and we had staff members of various echelons, and great harmony in everything. I think that some things came to light in that thing. I don't know that too much happened in the salary situation, but vacation rights were changed, and other things were really brought up on a more equitable basis.

Kantor: When would this have been? Early on in his administration or was it later?

Underhill: I would guess that it was--I don't know. I can't give you the period of it.

Kantor: Before the war, though?

Underhill: I think perhaps in the late thirties. Some of the staff, the clerical-maintenance crowd, probably knew me better than they would have known me in the forties and fifties, because I never had anything to do with them then. You see, I'd grown up from this, so maybe that's why they asked to have me made chairman. As far as they'd go, they wanted me chairman and Sproul approved that.

Riess: That's interesting.

Underhill: Oh, I was around. It was easy to throw the job to me, you know.  
[laughter]

Jim Corley, Business Officer

Riess: Some people say that Jim Corley was the power behind Sproul. I would really like an opinion on that, because I've been very interested in people who have been extremely influential in Sproul's decision-making process. It's been suggested that Jim Corley was one of the most influential people.

Underhill: I have no knowledge that that's true. As a matter of fact, I think Sproul was the power behind Corley. On the other hand, Corley did a magnificent job in Sacramento. Therefore, he would hear things that Sproul wouldn't hear and it was, therefore, his duty to bring them to Sproul. In bringing what people were saying or what was surging or what was coming along, I don't think that's what you would call influence. I think that's your line of duty.

As an example of that, I tipped Sproul off, and the smaller book there shows it, about what was going to happen to the universities before World War II. The record is in, either in that book, or is in the smaller book. I don't say that that made me influence Sproul. I think that was my duty. If I picked up something that Sproul hadn't heard, and it was not in my department at all, and I thought it was serious enough, I certainly think that, as part of the team, it was my duty to tell him.

Underhill: Corley was reported--now I was not here at that time; I was on a three-months leave of absence in South America--to have tipped him off to the attitude of the legislature that demanded the loyalty oath. Now I was not here, and I probably would have been in the room in Santa Barbara when Corley and [John] Calkins talked to Sproul about this demand of the legislature--"We've got to get tough about this business, and adopt some kind of a requirement of the faculty." As I say, I was not there. I was on a leave of absence. I think Corley was right in doing that, if he heard it. Now it was up to Sproul to take it or not as he wanted to.

I don't think I could ever be accused of having influenced Sproul, but I certainly think it was my duty to tell him what I sensed what was happening at another university in the United States and that we would be right up to our ears in it before we were through. Now, I shouldn't have been told this, but a fellow told me; it was secret, top secret. But I told Sproul right away. Sproul said, "Next Tuesday, you tell that to the finance committee." I said, "I don't want to get into trouble, being a spy or something." He said, "You'll be protected."

So, Corley, I can't agree that you can say that he was the influence, or the power, or the mind behind Sproul. I think Sproul had his own power. I'm not trying to belittle Corley either.

Riess: I guess it depends on what areas he got involved in.

Underhill: Sproul was president of the university as it was expanding and growing. He simply could not know everything that was going on all over the state and all over the United States. He couldn't take part in it.

You tell us, lady [to Mrs. Underhill], when you're ready.

Mrs.

Underhill: I'm ready now.

Riess: The question is whether someone knowing that Corley would have some influence would use Corley to get to Sproul.

Underhill: I wouldn't have any way of knowing that. I was busy. I was up to here all the time myself, so I wouldn't and I didn't inquire the attitude of other officers. They were independent of me, and that was their business.

Do you want to take a little break?

[break]

The Supportive Regents

Riess: In your earlier oral history, you talk about the regents individually from your own point of view. But I'd like to hear about them from the point of view of Sproul. You said of Ed Heller that he was a very good friend of Sproul's. That's the only time you mentioned Sproul and a specific regent. I'd just like to hear more about Sproul's relations with the rest of the regents. Crocker, for instance, was the first chairman of the board in Sproul's administration as president. Did he have a kind of protective and fatherly feeling about him, do you think, in the beginning?

Underhill: I really don't know Sproul's relationship with Crocker. The only time I would see them would be at the table.

Riess: You helped Sproul prepare the agenda for all of those meetings?

Underhill: My secretary typed the agenda. He would send in to me the items he wanted to take up, and I would put the items that I wanted to take up, and I was low man on the totem pole in this situation. (Of course, there was an advantage in that because they were in a hurry, and they'd pass mine right away.) [laughter] The president has a right to go first, you know, so his secretary would send me the items that he wanted to talk about, maybe four or five words, a title, let's say, that he'd want. They'd be typed out on a list, and so would Calkins or [Ashley H.] Conard or whoever was the attorney, and mine.

For a while, the then comptroller [Luther] Nichols would have a few items himself, but generally he went through Sproul. While he was a so-called independent officer, as I was, he couldn't really be independent of the president because he was dealing with the campus all the time, and all the business of the campuses, while I dealt with all of the business external to the campus and external to the personnel. So, he was bound to go through the president, or he could be interfering with the president all the time.

I didn't prepare his agenda. We typed the items that they told me they were going to talk about. He didn't discuss with me what he was going to say about anything that came out. The first I would hear about would be at the meeting. One time Sproul said Nichols and I had agreed with him on a certain point. As a matter of fact, it was a mistake. I hadn't agreed with him at all; I had some grave questions about it. I didn't say a word in the meeting. Nothing. I came back after the meeting. I said, "I'm going to have to correct that next week, because I did not approve that item."

Underhill: He said, "I'm sorry. I made a mistake. I'll correct it next week." I was going to back right out of it because I wasn't going to be committed to it.

No, I didn't prepare his items, and he didn't discuss them with me. I wouldn't know what he was going to bring in.

Riess: Actually, Garff Wilson said that Bob Sproul's habit was to canvass the regents ahead of time so that there were very few surprises in the meetings.

Were there always two groups? Was there always a "southern" group.

Underhill: No, I'd say no. I don't think there was a northern or a southern group. The only separation I ever saw was on the oath. The only serious separation was on the oath. That's all in the record.

Riess: Wasn't there an attempt to create a kind of sub-committee of southern regents during Bob Sproul's time?

Underhill: There was a committee on southern California schools, colleges, and institutions, mainly to discuss growth matters that the director, I think it was Moore, would want to talk about, the problems at UCLA. It had Scripps Institution matters under it too. But that was the only committee besides the committee on the medical school that was based on a separate academic division. There was a committee on agriculture also, but that had all the agricultural operations. That was gradually abolished. The committee on finance, the committee on grounds and buildings would handle Los Angeles just like it would handle Berkeley or San Francisco. I don't know why that southern committee was established; it was established before I was secretary of the board. They used to have meetings in Los Angeles, and matters never seemed to be very serious.

Riess: By the fifties, if you were to point a finger at the regents who were no longer supportive--

Underhill: I wouldn't dare. [laughs]

I never noticed any particular antagonism with the southern regents. I think that [Edward A.] Dickson was a strong advocate of getting Sproul to be president.

Riess: We've got twenty-eight years to look at.

Underhill: No, I don't think I noticed in the board any division based on geography. I can't sense that.

Riess: And you don't feel that there was a deterioration in the relations even after the loyalty oath?

Underhill: There were regents who, after voting for it, followed Sproul when Sproul asked to have it rescinded. After about a year, and the faculty were raising such an uproar about the matter, they wanted to get it rescinded and Sproul, I think, wanted it rescinded. At that time, he agreed with the faculty. In other words, maybe he thought that at the Santa Barbara meeting, maybe the action was hasty. Maybe it should have been considered longer, maybe he felt that, but the regents did not rescind it. Of course, then they had that Tolman vs. Underhill lawsuit at which I never was even served, so I couldn't testify. Of course, I'm glad of that too. [laughs]

No, I can't sense that, and I'm not ducking you.

Kantor: Of course, it was true that there were bad feelings between Neylan and Sproul because of this. Evidently that was a very deep wound with those two families. Did you sense any kind of a falling out between Neylan and Sproul before the loyalty oath?

Underhill: No, and by the way, Neylan was not present when they adopted the oath. He got accused of doing it, but he was in Arizona, he was not there that day. Near as I could observe it, Neylan said that the regents have adopted this thing, and there we are. He had not voted for it, and whether he would have voted for it or not, never came to light, as far as I know. But, the board having adopted it, he was going to stick with it. I will say that the board was pretty loyal. When they did something, they'd stick with it.

For example, which probably has got no bearing on this, when I recommended that we start, through the subcommittee on investments, which was just [James] Moffitt and [Sidney] Ehrman, that we start buying common stocks. There were only thirteen regents present at the meeting when it went to the board. It was adopted by a vote of seven to six, and McEnerney had voted against it, so Ehrman moved to reconsider it; he had voted for it--Ehrman had voted for it. So it was held over another month. Next time there were thirteen regents present and McEnerney voted for it, and Ehrman having put the motion up, he had to vote against it. [laughter]

Underhill: So, they stuck with what they did. The thing is, McEnerney said, "The board adopted it. And that's all there was to it, and they're not going to act just because I disagree. The majority of the board adopted it." And he turned right around and voted for it. I know he had no regrets. It didn't do us any harm, I assure you of that.

I don't think I'm in a position--I don't think I observed that at all, what you say. There were some pretty serious differences. As a matter of fact, we had a meeting in La Jolla during that period when there was a strain. But the strain, I don't think, was geographical. I happened to walk by after dinner in the hotel where we all were, and one of the regents said, "Come on, Bob, sit down with us."

I said, "I'd better not. You people are talking about what you're going to do tomorrow and so on. I don't think it's my--"

"Oh, you always keep your mouth shut, sit down and have a drink."

And they were talking about the oath matter. He said, "You keep your mouth shut; you don't sing. Sit down and have a drink." That was not a geographical separation, because the man who invited me was a northerner.

Riess: That's wonderful that you really had the trust of so many people.

Who was that group of people and what were they saying?  
[laughter]

Underhill: I could keep my mouth shut, all right. Maybe I'm not acting that way now. Of course, I'm not under serious obligation at this point.

Riess: You mentioned in 1967 that you had nicknames for all the regents. What were the nicknames?

Mrs.

Underhill: Oh, no.

Underhill: Wouldn't that be discourteous?

Kantor: Unless they were pejorative, but if they were friendly nicknames, I think--.

Underhill: I pass.

Mrs.

Underhill: Some of these people are still alive today. I wouldn't want to get anybody into trouble. Some of them have already passed away, but--.

Underhill: I tell you--I don't think that should go down in the record--Corley had a party for his top business officers, and they came in from all over the state and so on. Sproul, Calkins, and I were invited as guests, but we were not in Corley's office. And, I wrote a play of a Board of Regents meeting.

Riess: And you said you lost it. Have you found it?

Underhill: I lost it. I can't find it anywhere. I wish I had it. So, I assigned jobs to various people to mimic the officers including someone to mimic me and somebody to mimic Sproul, and someone to mimic everybody else. And, I took the part of seven different regents. [laughter] And I changed my voice, my stance to match them. And Corley told Ehrman that. And Ehrman said to me one day at the finance committee, "Bob, I understand you're a playwright."

"Well," I said, "I wouldn't go that far."

He said, "Can I read your play?"

Here I am mimicking regents, and I hadn't mimicked him because he didn't have any particular eccentricity. I got him a copy, and he read it, and the next Tuesday, "Thank you," that's all he ever said.

No, I don't think that that's appropriate. I don't want to do anything that is discourteous. I'll answer the facts. But that's some personal action on my part. I don't think that should go into the record. But I'm sorry I lost that play. I'd have given it to you.

Riess: Maybe Regent Ehrman made a copy of it.

Underhill: I don't think so. I suppose some of the people who had to take their turn speaking had a copy of it, but I don't know where it went.

Riess: I do think that people were more clever in those days and did more of those kinds of funny little roasts and spoofs.

Underhill: I want to tell you. The administration in this institution is a very serious piece of business. It might be good to have some way of letting off steam once in a while. Maybe my imagination used

Underhill: to run away with me at times. In this play I even mimicked the voices and [laughs] the positions and stances of some of these people and so on. So, you'll have to excuse me on that one.

Riess: Regent Heller you felt was a particularly supportive regent.

Underhill: Sure, and he was't the only one. Ehrman was a great supporter; [James K.] Moffitt was a great supporter.

Now, maybe my statement of great supporter was because they took lots of actions and were more active than the rest of them. Maybe that's where I thought he was great. He was always backing up the speaking and so on. It wasn't just Heller, or Ehrman, or Moffitt who were supporting him. Lots of them were supporting him.

Riess: But some of them more visibly.

Underhill: Yes. I would say that Dickson in Los Angeles was a great supporter of Sproul too, in many matters. The fact that the others weren't as vocal, let's say, maybe they hadn't any reason to speak up more.

No, I didn't see any great difficulty in the board with Sproul. Sure the board has a perfect right to ask the president or me or anybody else to defend recommendations. That doesn't say you're not supportive. Maybe he or I or whoever the person might be didn't explain fully enough ahead of time in making his presentation. Now, that's not attacking. Maybe some are more inquisitive than the others. There may be some more experienced in the item that was coming up and, therefore, might have more enthusiasm.

Riess: There might have been some with whom Sproul discussed it more ahead of time, too.

Underhill: Oh, I have no doubt he used the telephone. I was using it too.

Kantor: I certainly think he talked to McEnerney a lot.

I wanted to ask you another question--.

Underhill: McEnerney had a tremendous mind and a great analysis of things and great judgment. Now, when I say that, it doesn't mean that I couldn't say the same thing about a lot of others. (I've got to be careful the way this thing goes.)

Executive Session

- Kantor: Over the years, do you think there was a change in the amount of time that the regents spent in executive session? Toward the latter part of your career, was more time taken in executive session than say in earlier years?
- Underhill: No, I think it decreased, because of the state law that so few things could go into executive session, the state system. The state passed some rules, and there weren't many things left that you could take into executive session. That's based, I think, on the state law, though I don't think that affected the university, but the university had better follow the state law when it doesn't interfere with its own operations. No, I don't know, Jim, whether I answered that or not.
- Kantor: I'd forgotten about that. That was the Brown Act; they could only discuss personnel and a few things.
- Underhill: I think that had a good deal of effect on the board. No, I don't think the executive session deal was abused. You can get men to speak a little more frankly or a little more in depth on some matters if you go into executive session.
- Kantor: That leads to another question then. In the earlier days, were there very few outsiders attending a regents meeting compared to say nowadays?
- Underhill: Much less.
- Kantor: Or even in the sixties. You didn't have the press there, did you, as a rule?
- Underhill: Never.
- Kantor: But anyone could go if they wanted to? The door was open?
- Underhill: That's right. As a matter of fact, sometimes the audience back there would jump into the act. I remember one time, one lady who was advocating something, the appointment of a dean of the pharmacy school. She said--as an example, to make her case--they had a tour around the place, and they went in there, and somebody was making an emulsion. And just to show how bad this whole thing was over there, the emulsion cracked. And Crocker looked up at her with a puzzled expression on his face.

Underhill: "You know, Mr. Crocker, when you're making mayonnaise, it separates." I can just imagine Mr. Crocker making mayonnaise.  
[laughter]

Another one, a similar situation, at a meeting in Los Angeles--that one was over in San Francisco--something was going on, and some guy jumps up from the back row and he started to argue. Moffitt was chairman and he said, "Have you given your credentials to the secretary of the regents?" You could see the guy going down like this. [laughter] It wasn't any of his business. These are just examples. Anybody could come. Then if they moved to executive session, everybody left except the top staff. Sometimes it was regents only except, "We want Underhill to stay," or we want somebody to stay. Sometimes there wouldn't be any secretary or anybody in the room, completely separate.

Riess: But it would always include Sproul?

Underhill: Oh, he was a regent. Sure he was a regent just as much as they were.

Riess: There would be nothing he would be excluded from?

Underhill: I never remember such an occasion.

Kantor: I suppose he could have been asked to leave if it related to him, just as the Kerr situation.

Underhill: You brought that up. I could have brought that up too, but I was not there at that time.

Kantor: No, of course, it was later.

Riess: When you said, in response to Jim, that there was no press there in the beginning, why is that? They weren't interested or they were excluded?

Underhill: I don't think the public really thought it was any of their business in those days. The university's broadened out and is into a lot of things it was never into before. The public in general is becoming more inquisitive. It's taking a part in so many things it never did before. The university was much more confined to what people thought historically was the field of an educational institution. They didn't know enough about running a university. No, I don't think there was--the fact that they spread out and here we've got large government contracts, we've got the faculty also acting as consultants for business firms, things that come in the newspaper now. Therefore, the public thinks they're wearing two hats at the same time.

Underhill: I think the university was much more self-contained, into its campus problems. You could see that yourself. That's why all these people hang around now, because they know there's going to be somebody objecting to something. So, the press is right there to gobble that stuff up.

Riess: [to Kantor] Have you ever gone to a regents' meeting?

Kantor: No, I never did.

Riess: I want to go sometime and see what it's like.

Underhill: I really think that there should be more knowledge of the staff, of how the thing operates and so on. I saw to it that members of my staff who were not really putting on something, I saw to it that they once in a while went to a meeting. Of course, in executive session, they had to go out. This young lady [Mrs. Underhill] went to a couple of them with Sproul's permission.

Mrs.

Underhill I went down to Los Angeles a couple of times. I went to Santa Barbara; I went to Lake Arrowhead twice on duty.

Underhill: Anybody could come to them.

Kantor: In the early days, you met in that room in the city. It wasn't that big, was it?

Underhill: No.

Kantor: Was that in the Crocker Bank?

Underhill: The committee room we had in San Francisco might have been a little bit longer than this room, but not much. We did have a long table. We would have thirteen or fourteen regents maybe at a meeting. I remember one time we didn't have a quorum. At that time the regents had to vote the degrees. Now, that's about as remote and strange and stuffy as anything in the world. A guy's passed all his college work and everything else, and the faculty has passed him to get his degree tomorrow. That particular day, that Friday--the graduation was on a Saturday--we only had six regents present.

We adjourned the meeting, to meet at ten o'clock on Saturday morning, and I was told to go out and find a couple of regents. We got seven.

Riess: You mean because graduation was on Saturday?

Underhill: Yes, in the afternoon. I persuaded somebody who couldn't have come the day before to show up, and that meeting lasted ten minutes, and the degrees were awarded.

Riess: You told them how to vote, I hope.

Underhill: I didn't have time. [laughter]

I want you to make it clear it wasn't my business to tell the regents how to vote. I don't want to be trapped on that one. I plead not guilty. [laughter]

Riess: The faculty often over the years were bothered by the fact that they couldn't get into Sproul, they couldn't get decisions, they felt put off a lot. You got in to see him whenever you needed him?

Underhill: Usually he called me. I didn't call him. Once in a while when the matter was very serious, he might come down to my office. That's where the conference would take place. No, I never interfered in his business. If I found out something that I was sure he had to know, I'd as I stated earlier, it was my business to inform him.

"I Remember--"

Riess: Please tell us some stories about Sproul.

Underhill: I think one of them was what I was talking about when you came in the room, about taking over Santa Barbara. Would that qualify?

Kantor: Yes. That's a good one.

Underhill: When the Santa Barbara campus was taken over, the date was the day after a regents meeting in Los Angeles, and Sproul, Corley, Harold Ellis, the newspaper man, and I were at the regents meeting. We got in the car with the business manager from Los Angeles, George Taylor, and went up to Santa Barbara, and we walked into the room where the president of Santa Barbara College was--I can't remember his name. (This was, I would say, about '49 or somewhere. Whatever time we took this thing over.) So Sproul walked in, "Good morning, Dr. So-and-so, here comes the liberation party." He said, "It looks more like the invasion to me." [laughter]

Kantor: Because that was foisted on the regents. The state insisted that they take over.

Underhill: The state passed a law without the regents requesting it, and the regents let it sit there for one year before they took over Santa Barbara.

I don't know if I can think of any more. My work was so independent of his that I wasn't around with all the funny things he was experiencing. Those kind of things are more personal.

Kantor: But you had a personal relationship with him too, so there may have been amusing things that came up socially or something like that.

Riess: You were really a better whist player than he was, I take it?

Underhill: I didn't say that. I deny the allegation. [laughter] Just because I could remember what people played sometimes before.

No, I'm not sure I can do much for you on this.

Riess: How about back to Abracadabra?

Underhill: He'd come to the meetings of the members, the Monday night meetings once in a while, but he didn't always attend. I don't think there were very many funny things like that.

I do remember when he was head of that Big C Sirkus, they had one crazy stunt where you had to pay a dime to get to these side shows and so on. One of them had a great big sign with a lot of allure, telling about the beautiful ladies, and "You'd have to be careful to come through, to open this door," and you'd open the door and this little door lets you right out on the sidewalk and you had to pay to get in again! I finally had to come back and tip Sproul off that they were going to be raided pretty soon with this gag being pulled on them. That's one of them. He was the general manager; it was a good money maker. [laughter] I doubt if I can be of very much help to you.

I remember the night that he got his first honorary degree. Occidental College gave him his first LL.D. He came down to Los Angeles, and I had the university car down there. I drove him over to Eagle Rock where Occidental College is. I would say that he was kind of embarrassed all the way over. This was kind of a strange, new experience for him, but he carried it out all right; there's no question about that.

Riess: Did he have a speech that he had memorized for the event?

Underhill: No, anymore than I had when I got mine. You don't say anything.

Riess: You don't say anything for an honorary degree?

Underhill: You shake hands with the president.

I do remember one story about him. (You've got to prompt me and urge me.) One time we were playing a football game. This is when he was the vice-president and comptroller, and he came down to a Cal-USC ball game. The Sprouls were sitting with us in the bleachers, and Cal was about forty points behind at the half. He said, "I'm going down and sit on the bench." So, he walked down and sat on the bench, and USC got as many or more points the second half as they got in the first half. When he came back, I said, "You'd better have stayed up here." [laughter] Which was kind of facetious on my part, I would say.

Riess: He had a lot of friends down south, because there was that group, the Andreas Canyon Club? Did they still meet whenever he came down?

Underhill: Once a year, they had an affair. I don't know who the moving spirit in it was, but I know that McFadden was one of them, Regent [Arthur] McFadden. They had a kind of two or three days down there. He used to go down to that regularly.

I know he went down to the Lincoln Society down there. Dickson was very much interested in that. Sproul went down and gave the Lincoln's Birthday address down there one time when Dickson was the head of that. He had lots of friends down there in southern California. No doubt about that. He had no trouble making friends.

I don't know if anything more comes to mind.

Riess: Good. That's lovely.

Underhill: I think I've been a flop on that. I can't give you very much on that. I wasn't with him all the time, you know. I was kind of busy myself.

Riess: I'm sorry that he wasn't on the train with you a few of those times. It sounds like your train trips were when you all let loose.

Underhill: I remember coming back from Los Angeles on the train on the day of the Rose Bowl game when Cal beat Ohio State 28 to 0. Barrows was the president. I came back on the Lark, which left at nine o'clock, and went back to the lounge car and was sitting down there. Barrows spotted a man there that he hadn't seen before, but he knew him out in the Philippine Islands--John Landon's father. (Landon was an attorney up here.) He went down and shook hands with him. Barrows had a great big booming voice. "You know," he said, "I have a friend in Columbus or in Ohio somewhere who is a graduate of Ohio State, and she's been to every Ohio State game this year except this one. She couldn't get out here. She's worn these crimson and silver ribbons, and she's got the score of every game printed in 'em." You could hear him all over the car. He said, "I'm going to put the score on today in indelible ink." It was 28 to 0 against Ohio State!

Riess: You seldom hear Barrows stories. That's good.

Underhill: I never was very close to Barrows. I never had very much to do with him.

Riess: I think maybe the clock has chimed its last chime.

Underhill: If I have more that you want, you're welcome to keep the inquisition going on.

Clark Kerr: The Succession

Kantor: I'll ask another question. You said that, pretty clearly, you didn't feel that there was any change in the feeling of the regents toward Sproul, that they weren't out to get him at the end, that he was going to retire. Did you feel that Sproul would have liked to have [Stanley] McCaffrey named as president when he retired?

Underhill: He never said so to me.

Kantor: Of course, I shouldn't ask you that. That was in the executive session.

Underhill: McCaffrey was one of his vice-presidents.

Kantor: I shouldn't ask you what the regents deliberated about the presidency.

Underhill: They certainly didn't tell me.

Kantor: You wouldn't have been in on that?

Underhill: As a matter of fact, about this presidency business, the day the regents voted Kerr as his successor--it was at Davis--that was a regents only session, right then and there, so I know nothing about what they said or what went on there. Of course, the "regents only" means the secretary and treasurer get out, and the attorney gets out, and everybody else, and there's nobody recording. I didn't have any assistant taking down shorthand notes. The next thing I knew about that was that I got a telephone call when I was over in [Stanley] Freeborn's garden. Freeborn had a little party for the regents after the session. Five regents didn't show up with the rest of them.

Pretty soon, I got a telephone call at the party in the backyard that I was to get over there to a certain room just as fast as I could, and I was to bring two people with me. I rounded them up and brought them over there. I came into the room and here were five regents sitting around the room. I didn't know what was going on. There were no chairs, so I climbed up and sat on top of the table. They handed me a note and said, "Read this." And I read it and here they had voted Kerr in. "That's the announcement that is going to go out. What about it?"

I said, "Well, I tell you. If you ask me a question, maybe you ought to change this sentence a little bit." "That's right, we will." Then I passed it around to the other two. They said, "Get the news service in Berkeley and the news service in Los Angeles on the telephone, a conference call, so this thing goes out exactly the same minute to San Francisco and Los Angeles." So, I don't know anything about the discussion in the room at all. Then, I was told to go back over to the party before the regents, and I was to announce the name of the new president.

So, I got Freeborn to rattle on the cocktail glass [demonstrates], you know, call people to order, so I could announce that Kerr had been elected president. Then Kerr and Sproul and all of the rest of them walked into the yard. That's about all I remember.

Riess: A very interesting sequence.

Underhill: So, I had to announce it.

Kantor: In other words, when there were "regents only" sessions, there were no notes at all, or did they write something up afterwards?

Underhill: Somebody would give me what was to go in the executive session. Some regent would hand me the action, and the action would be just the result. I would put that in the minutes, and I would have to certify to it, but the top would show that there were nobody but regents present, but I would have to certify to it. And that didn't happen very often.

There were quite a few times when there might have been almost exclusively regents, but the attorney and I might have been kept in the room. "Regents only"--I know another one that was "regents only," when a certain high-ranking member of the staff was catching it from the board. The board had made a decision of a policy, and he took it upon himself to make public speeches against the policy. We were sitting around. I was waiting to go in there with my staff and pick up the papers and all of the stuff and get out of there. The meeting was in Los Angeles. He came out, boy, he was really beat up when he came out; he was stuttering. I said, "What happened to you?"

He said, "They gave me hell."

I said, "For what?" He told me, and I said, "I guess you deserved it."

I knew what had happened at the regents session because he came out and told me.

Kantor: In other words, there were occasions when it was regents only, with another person in there who was getting hell.

Underhill: I've been the only person at times, but I didn't get the hell. Maybe I should have. No, I tried to conduct myself so that I wasn't eligible for that. [laughs]

If you have any more hints I can help on--. Some of these things may pop out. I don't know, but I think you've pretty well cleaned out all my chips in my computer.

Transcriber: Jean Teague  
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Garff B. Wilson

SPECIAL RECOLLECTIONS BY THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO PRESIDENT SPROUL

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Robert Gordon Sproul had his match in rhetorical skills and sheer showmanship in his master of public ceremonies, Garff Wilson. Garff Wilson titled his 1981 oral history The Invisible Man, referring to his behind-the-scenes role as head of the Office of Public Ceremonies at Berkeley. Though he thought of himself as "the unidentified man on the right," he in fact was well known over the years as the nimble-witted debating champion of the Class of '31, doctor of dramatic arts from Cornell, professor of speech and rhetoric at Berkeley, true Old Blue author of the "Tribute to Andy Smith," and actor and dramatic reader. From 1946 to 1982 he was special assistant to four presidents and six chancellors.

The following interview and a half with Garff Wilson extends the discussion of the president's office begun in The Invisible Man. Garff was brought into Sproul's immediate circle of assistants in 1941 when he responded to Sproul's request to be one of the faculty helpers at the reception for new students. In 1946, returned from the war, he worked out a smoothly-functioning system for the reception, a hand-shaking ceremonial event where Robert Gordon Sproul's reputation for never forgetting a name or a face was established. Sproul kept Garff Wilson on as special assistant, taking advantage of his single man status to, as Sproul said, "call on him any hour of the day or night."

For additional vivid tales of the Sproul years, I recommend the Garff Wilson oral history chapters recalling post-war Berkeley, meeting and greeting VIPs, and the California Club. And Agnes Robb, in Robert Gordon Sproul and the University of California (1976), portrays the boss she knew from fifty-five years as his administrative secretary. Both are Regional Oral History Office interviews.

I was Garff Wilson's interviewer for his 1981 memoir, and it was a pleasure to have a chance to come back for more. This time, instead of Sproul Hall, our meeting was in Professor Wilson's office in Moses Hall where he was writing his book "about all this chit chat," among other things. In choice of detail and in delivery he is a master. The added story of Earle C. Anthony and the Pelican Building is a delightful picture of the dramatis personae, Sproul, Anthony, and Garff Wilson.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

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University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name GARFF DELL WILSON

Date of birth 9 JAN 1909 Place of birth ORDEN, UTAH, U.S.A.

Father's full name ROBERT EMMETT WILSON

Birthplace ORDEN, UTAH, U.S.A.

Occupation SALES MAN

Mother's full name ALVA HELEN GARFF WILSON

Birthplace LOGAN, UTAH, U.S.A.

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Where did you grow up? ORDEN, UTAH

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Education A.B. - UC BERKELEY 1931  
M.A. - " " 1933  
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Occupation(s) UNIV. PROFESSOR  
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Special interests or activities TRAVEL

UNIV. HISTORY (UNIV. = UC BERKELEY)  
SWIMMING - JOGGING  
MUSIC - DRAMA - ACTING

First Impressions of President Sproul

[Date of Interview: April 18, 1984]

Wilson: I was a minor member of Sproul's staff during the last twelve years of his presidency, by which time he was a very experienced, very wise administrator.

However, I'd known him long before 1946, because I was graduated in 1931, and that was the first commencement over which he presided as president. I won't forget it because I was one of the two student speakers. My mother had come up from Los Angeles to represent the family. We were in the depths of the depression then, and it was all we could to send one member of the family to Berkeley. And an aunt of mine had come from Salt Lake City.

They were way up in the bleachers. This commencement was in Memorial Stadium. I wanted them very much to meet Sproul, the new president of the university, but I knew it would take some time for them to get through the crowd down onto the field and onto the stage. Rather timidly I said to President Sproul, when it was over, "My mother and aunt would love to meet you, but it will take at least fifteen minutes." [imitates Sproul's voice] "Why," he said, "that's no trouble at all. I'll wait for them." So he took out a cigarette--and that's the only time I've seen him nervous--and puffed on it very nervously.

I guess he had been tense, this being his first commencement. Everything had gone well in spite of the threat of rain. So he waited there on the stage, and finally my mother and my aunt came, and he gave them a very hearty, wonderful greeting and stood there chatting with them, and then he said, "I have other guests at my house. I must leave you," and he departed.

Their impression of the great man will always be one of graciousness and thoughtfulness. It wasn't too much to wait there fifteen or twenty minutes so he could greet them and talk to them. I'll always be grateful to him for that.

Riess: Do you think that students were his favorite constituency?

Wilson: [pause] I'm pausing a long while because he was so aware of his obligation to all his constituencies. My impression was, the faculty, at the beginning, was skeptical because he hadn't been an academician himself, but only a staff man: Will he understand faculty people, how peculiar they are, how each one is completely individual and has to be treated completely individual? Well, Sproul certainly surprised and pleased them all by showing from the very beginning that he understood the faculty animal.

And the staff was always warmed and ingratiated by him. And the students, of course, adored him. Then he won all the alumni. He had that annual alumni trip up and down California, where he spoke, and he would always bring a scholar or two along with him, and somebody from the staff and the alumni association. He was known all over California. When he wanted to rally the state to the need for something at the university, he went on one of his tours, and he got the support. And Sacramento felt the pressure. [laughter]

Okay, what do you want to ask?

Riess: What other college presidents would you say he was close to?

Wilson: One of them was the president of Harvard, Conant, they were very close. I recall a meeting at The Faculty Club. Conant was visiting the area and agreed to speak informally to the faculty. There was a lovely sparring match between him and Sproul. One thing I remember is that Conant said, "We used to compete in trying to pull faculty members away. Sproul tried to get my people from Cambridge, and I tried to get his people from Berkeley. Then we found it was kind of a draw. He couldn't get many from me, and I couldn't get many from him. So we had a gentleman's agreement that we would just keep hands off our faculty members."

It indicated a long-time, very warm relationship. He was the one I remember particularly.

Riess: Between two people who initially would have been rather different.

Wilson: Oh, completely different. Conant was a person with the kind of mind and the background that you expected of a university president. Sproul wasn't. He was a big, commanding man without the looks or traits of an academician.

Once they tried to get him to be president of a bank and he refused. They tried to get him to be president of Columbia University, you know, and he finally refused that.

Riess: Are you saying that he was the kind of person who could do anything?

Wilson: That's right. I think he had great talent for administration in general, and he could have administered a bank, he could have been a cabinet officer, he could have been a governor. Oh, a lot of people wanted him to run for governor several times. He would have had plenty of support, because of his alumni tours, and because he was a masterful public speaker. Also he could extemporize. He prepared very carefully, as I may have told you before, but I've seen him extemporize on the spur of the moment and say very funny things.

Riess: Speaking of preparing, did he write all his own speeches?

Wilson: In general he wrote his own speeches. When he would get in a bind, he might call on somebody else. Did I tell you before, that was one of the first things I did for him?\* In my little one-room apartment on Dwight Way, it must have been just after I returned to the campus from the Second World War, I guess it was after I had reorganized the president's reception for new students, and he had been so pleased with the new format, but either that fall or early in the spring of '47 it was my day without classes, I was lying abed, the phone rang, and it was the president. He said, "Garff." "Yes sir, Mr. Sproul?" "Do you have any free time today?" I said, "Yes, I don't have any classes."

"I'm in a great emergency. I have to make a speech tomorrow, and I have done nothing in preparation. If I send over the material, will you put together something for me? By tonight." I said, "Well, if I can do it, Mr. President." He said, "I've got a lot of miscellaneous material." He sent it over, I spent the day sifting through it, and put together a speech. He said, "I won't be back until eleven. It's got to be at my house by eleven o'clock." I walked it over a little before eleven. Well, I guess it was after that that he called me in and arranged to buy one-sixth of my time. That was the beginning of my official connection with the president.

#### President's Office Staff

Wilson: As an administrator, he had some sterling qualities. He realized that the head of a command, as in the military, took the responsibility for any mistakes. If you did a good job, you were always complimented.

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\*Garff Wilson, The Invisible Man, or Public Ceremonies Chairman at Berkeley for Thirty-Five Years, an oral history interview conducted 1980, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1981, p. 442.

Wilson: If you made a mistake and there was some complaint, he took the blame. He would never say, "Well, that was a staff member of mine who did it." He always took the blame and defended, shielded you. And that's a wonderful quality in any head man.

He remembered his staff people at Christmastime, too. I have had cards from later administrators I've worked for, but he always had a little gift. Very often, since he knew I was fond of wine, it would be a nice bottle of wine. I think I kept one of the first little cards he included with that, saying, "Merry Christmas to one of the best of my very excellent staff."

Riess: Do you think he actually went out and bought cards? I mean, this man seems to have been at a lot of places at a lot of times.

Wilson: No, I think somebody else, but I think he told somebody, "I want you to get a bottle of wine for Wilson; I want you to get so-and-so for somebody," and they went out and bought it. But the card was in his own handwriting. He had a distinctive handwriting. You never were in doubt that he had written it himself. Although by the time I was on the staff, Agnes Robb had so perfected his signature that she could forge his signature on a check and get by with it. [laughter] I was amazed when I discovered that.

Riess: How did you discover it?

Wilson: I saw her writing it. I said, "Let me see that." I said, "It's a perfect reproduction." "Well," she said, "I've worked on it long enough!"

Riess: Maybe you could describe the office workings a little more.

Wilson: It wasn't a huge operation the way it is now. It was up there on the second floor of the "Ad" Building, and the president's office had the suite at the north end of the second floor. Everybody was crammed into that. They had one large room with a great many desks, and somebody like Bob Johnson had a desk there, and Gracie Lynn, who did a lot of the president's typing, had a desk there. I don't remember Frank Stevens. I think he'd retired before I was connected with it.

Then there was a small private office next to that big main office, and that was where Agnes Robb presided. And then there was the president's office on the corner. Then on the other side of him Pettitt had an office, and so did the provost and the vice-president, Monroe Deutsch--all were clustered in a fairly small space.

Wilson: All I had was an in-basket on top of a file cabinet [laughter] where I received messages and got notes. I had to learn the jargon.

Riess: What were the levels of authority there?

Wilson: Pettitt was the executive assistant to the president, and Agnes Robb was the administrative secretary to the president. They worked very closely together, but nobody saw the president except through Agnes Robb. She protected him fiercely and loyally. And if you had trivial business, why you never got in to see the president. She would handle it herself. "I will get in touch with Dean So-and-so and he will settle your problem." You had to have business on the presidential level before she would put you on the calendar.

I'm not quite sure now in memory who divided up the folders that had all the material for a problem that had to be analyzed for the president, and then a recommendation put in. Actually, at the beginning of my work with Sproul, I got some of those things. Folders: "Will you please digest this, write a summary, and make a recommendation to the president." I remember how colossally worried I was when he accepted my recommendation. I felt like saying, "But please, go over the material, Mr. Sproul, and be sure I haven't made a mistake." [laughs]

In the later years of his presidency, he knew he did not have the time to do that kind of research on the files, although he always spent the morning at the President's House going through files himself. But there were analysts, too. Bob Johnson was an analyst first-class, I think, and he had to analyze these problems. I was called a special assistant to the president. As such, I got a lot of miscellaneous things before I got into the groove of protocol and public ceremonies. That eventually became my preoccupation, and I did none of the analyzing of problems in those files.

I think Agnes Robb assigned a lot of the files, because her office was stacked up with these files on the desk, on the table, on the floor, on the windowsill, everywhere. And of course she knew exactly where everything was. If you asked for a certain file, she'd dive for exactly the right spot where it had been placed. I remember the surprise when she went on vacation once, when I went into her office--spic and span. Not a paper in sight. Nothing out of place. Not a file anyplace. I didn't recognize the place. [laughter] She was a remarkable person.

It reminds me that when I was a graduate student, I got an appointment with Sproul through Agnes Robb. We were suffering from the depression, and the university budget was being cut severely. And one of the things that was going to be closed was old Strawberry Pool. Have you ever heard of the pool that was up in Strawberry Canyon?

Riess: No.

Wilson: There was no real development up there, but there was a trail in back of the stadium through the trees and shrubs, which the men of the campus knew about. If you followed the trail to its end, you came upon this beautiful open space that had a concrete pool that sort of followed the contours of the canyon. It had grass around it, and the only dressing room was a little wooden shack without a roof on it. There were a couple of showers in there. There were pegs to hang your clothes. You still had to wear trunks that they issued to you then. And it was a wonderful haven. Closed to women. Open to males, students, staff, and faculty. Some faculty members were loyal patrons of Strawberry Pool. Bull Durham [Willard Higley Durham] was up there lots of times.

When it was announced that Strawberry Pool would be closed, there was real heartbreak. I got together with several other loyal patrons of Strawberry Pool and we decided that we would like to have a fund-raising campaign and see if we couldn't raise enough money to keep it open. But we needed Sproul's blessing.

I went to Agnes Robb, told her the problem. She said, "Yes, I think the president would be interested." She gave me an appointment. Sproul was very sympathetic. He said, "Let me think about it, and I will call you."

He thought about it. He said, "The amount of money needed to keep it open is very small. What would you think if we charged ten cents per person to use the pool or the hot water and the swim trunks and the attendant? Do you think enough people would pay ten cents to use the pool so we could keep it open?" I said, "I certainly do, President Sproul. Let's try it." He did, and it remained open. At least while I was around. At ten cents per person, which seems so miniscule now you can hardly believe it. But it kept the pool open, at least for two years. I'm afraid it eventually closed as things got worse, because the whole maintenance on the campus stopped. They didn't water the lawns during the worst of the depression. The lawns all turned yellow, brown, and so on. They just died.

Riess: He was a good problem-solver.

Wilson: Yes. And rather than have a fund-raising campaign, the kind we're so accustomed to now, he just figured out "let's try this small charge and see if that will keep the pool open." And I know it did for at least two years.

Riess: For as long as Sproul was on campus, was that basically his staff setup?

Wilson: Yes.

Riess: It didn't grow as the situation grew?

Wilson: No. When UCLA moved to Westwood, brand new beautiful campus, he had a separate staff down there, because he was president of the whole university. And he [laughs] tried to run the whole university, too.

The provosts, they were called, who were the chief local officers, they took their orders from Sproul. And there was the one year when he and Mrs. Sproul moved to UCLA, you recall, and spent a year in residence at UCLA. Because there were a lot of problems that needed his daily attention before things settled in, he was down there. He had a very excellent staff down there, too.

Riess: With the same analysts and so on?

Wilson: Yes. He had the equivalent to Agnes Robb down there, Hansena Frederickson. As the university, as the other campuses grew, the chief administrative officer asked for more and more authority, and got it. But Sproul gave it up slowly and grudgingly because he felt that if he were going to be president in name, he had to be president in command. That changed slowly. When Clark Kerr first accepted the position as the first chancellor on the Berkeley campus, he called me in and asked me if I would work for him, in addition to working for Sproul. I said, "If you think I can do so." Then he called me in and said, "I've changed my mind. I'm not going to accept the chancellorship. I've had a long, long argument with President Sproul, and he refuses to give me the authority which I think I must have if I'm going to be an effective chancellor. I told him I wouldn't do it. So you're released from your commitment to me."

Riess: You were privy to an interesting couple of days there.

Wilson: Yes.

Riess: Did anybody else know that he was going through that?

Wilson: Probably Gloria Copeland would have known, although I'm not sure when she became his executive assistant. When he was chancellor and president, Gloria Copeland was the Agnes Robb of his regime. She moved into Agnes Robb's office when he became president.

But I don't know what happened. I've always assumed that Sproul gave in and said, "If that's the only condition under which you will accept the chancellorship, then I must yield and give you that

Wilson: authority." Because then I got called a third time. [laughs]  
 "I'm going to accept the chancellorship, and I want you to help me."  
 Which he did, and then was promoted to the presidency.

And then came the decentralization. Having served as chancellor, Kerr knew the problems that the chancellor had if he had to refer a great many problems to the president. So he gave away much of the president's authority and assigned it to the chancellor. Now the chancellors are about 95 percent autonomous. There are only about 5 percent of the things that the president has to know about or hear about, I am told.

#### Sproul and Monroe Deutsch, and Faculty Appointments

Riess: How did he work with Deutsch? Did you have a chance to observe that kind of delegation of responsibility?

Wilson: Deutsch was his senior. Deutsch was an elder faculty statesman and commanded respect from the faculty. He had, of course, been a scholar in the classics, a Latin scholar. He had been dean of the College of Letters and Sciences. I found it hard to learn to call him Provost Deutsch or Vice-president Deutsch, because I had known him as a student as Dean Deutsch. He was always Dean Deutsch. So he carried a great deal of respect, admiration, and affection on the campus. Sproul recognized that and treated him royally, even when I would hear Agnes Robb grumbling a little bit about, "Here the provost has a meeting or a dinner tonight. It's only four o'clock and he's left. He should be here." Deutsch enjoyed the status of an elder statesman, and took advantage of it.

I think Sproul often assumed burdens that Deutsch really should have assumed. But I have only a tiny insight into that.

Riess: As far as decisions about faculty appointments.

Wilson: Oh, yes. Deutsch was the man who telegraphed me an offer to become a faculty member here. It wasn't Sproul; it was Deutsch. And I telegraphed back that it wasn't enough money, even for me. [laughs] So he raised the ante. I came down. Jerry Marsh, who was for fifteen years chairman of the speech department--in 1941 called the Department of Public Speaking--it had been Marsh's recommendation to Deutsch. Deutsch knew me as a student, and he was the one who invited me, since I had a brand-new Ph.D. from Cornell. So I came. At that time the chairman of the Department of Speech shared an office

Wilson: with another member of the Department of Speech, and the secretary was in there, too. One office on the fourth floor of Wheeler. Compared to the proliferation of office space now, I remember this with amazement.

Well, I happened to be in there talking to the other faculty member who shared the office. The phone rang, the secretary answered it, and she said, "It's for you, Dr. Wilson." I got on, and it was Agnes Robb saying, "President Sproul would like to speak to you." I held the phone aside, and the voice said, "Garff." "Yes, Mr. Sproul?" "You're here in Berkeley!" "Yes, Mr. Sproul." "Nobody told me you were on the faculty now. I should have been told. Will you help me with the reception this fall, right now? I want you to be one of the faculty hosts for the reception." I said I'd be honored to do it. He said, "Well, congratulations. I'm glad you're home again." We chatted a little while.

So I knew he didn't know--he hadn't approved it. It was Deutsch who had the final say on an appointment, but that was at a very low level. I was appointed as an instructor in public speaking. That's below assistant professor. It was a great day when I was promoted to assistant professor.

Riess: So it was very appropriate for Deutsch to be doing that. You're saying that in fact Deutsch should have done more of it.

Wilson: But if, say, somebody were being brought from Harvard as a full professor and there would have to be salary inducements and other inducements, then of course the president would be in on it. Did I tell you before that I at one point saw a file on the promotion of E.O. Lawrence from assistant professor to full professor, and the correspondence that went into that? It was between Raymond [T.] Birge, chairman of the Department of Physics, and President Sproul. Birge was a delightful person, but he was such a fussy budget, much worse than I ever became. [laughs] He was saying, "Mr. President, we must promote this man right now to a full professor with a full professor's salary and status, or we will lose him. He is one of the great physicists of our time. He will win a Nobel prize. If we let him go, we'll miss a Nobel prize."

President Sproul entered the decision, "We will keep him. We will jump him right up to full professor, and do whatever we need to keep him." And they were both correct. E.O. Lawrence became the shining light of the world of physics, and he was the man who was responsible for one of our greatest departments, physics.

Riess: What went into his decisions? Do you have any sense of how he mulled things over? Did he look to his creator for answers, or what was the input?

Wilson: He, by the time I knew him, had had so much experience, and had discussed problems with so many people, that his own mind was a fabulous computer, of which he asked questions. The computer had stored up all the necessary information to produce an answer. I think he was greatly self-reliant, except in certain areas. Certainly he depended on Birge when it came to deciding about the worth of E.O. Lawrence. He--I don't think he ever discussed these problems with Agnes Robb. I'm sure in academic matters he would consult proper people. In administrative matters he may have discussed things with Pettitt. In public ceremonies matters he liked to have a hand in it.

#### Public Ceremonies

Wilson: He arranged what we in those days called the president's party. We call it now the official party. That includes the participants in the program, the chief administrative officer on the campus, chancellor and/or president, the regents, the other vice-presidents, and so on. The official party. Sproul always--I would make a trial listing of how they marched, who marched with whom, and send it in to the president. He would look it over and always make switches. When I would ask him about why so-and-so, he said, "Well, now, they haven't been friends for many years." [laughs] Or "They're right now having a quarrel, and I think it would be wiser to shift them in this way."

He always okayed the outlines I gave for any program of a visitor. Since we last talked, I've been writing my popularized version of The Invisible Man. I have a chapter on presidents and prime ministers. I'd finished writing it. Then, lying in bed one morning before I got up, it suddenly popped into my mind that I'd forgotten that President Sukarno of Indonesia had spent a day on the campus. I'd completely forgotten that. He was the president of Indonesia, and sort of the George Washington of Indonesia.

Well, I went to the public ceremonies record, and he wasn't in it. I called the Alumni House and asked them if they had any record of President Sukarno. Finally I called Jim Kantor, who was still the archivist. Everybody was skeptical. They eventually said to me, "Are you sure?" Jim Kantor said, "Are you sure?" I said, "Yes, Jim." Because we took Sukarno to the library, and the library showed some of their fabulous informational equipment. "Would you like to know,

Wilson: President Sukarno, what recent articles the New York Times has had on Indonesia?" Out came the answers. And Jim said, "Well, we have the Daily Cal now indexed, the articles." He said, "Let me consult that index, and I'll call you back."

He did so. He said, "There's no mention of Sukarno." I said, "Well, I remember the reception at University House for him, too. And I remember he was asked to say a few words, and he said to the guests, 'You must come closer. I do not have the big voice like your president.'" [laughter]

Jim said, "I have an idea. I'll call you back." In a few minutes he called me back and he said, "Guess the piece of paper I'm holding in my hand." I said, "I give up." He said, "It's your original memo to Robert Gordon Sproul saying, 'Dear President Sproul, If you approve, the following is the program we've arranged for President Sukarno of Indonesia on such and such a date,'" and listing them. I said, "For heaven sake, my original memo on blue stationery?" (You know, interoffice stationery.) He said, "Yes." I said, "Where did you find it?" He said, "In Sproul's papers." I said, "Well, you're a genius, Jim."

Riess: Very satisfying.

Wilson: But it proved a point, that Sproul wanted to know and approve exactly what was going to happen. And he would make changes if he felt it was necessary.

Subsequent people I've worked for say, "You do it. Don't bother me. You know more about this than I do." But Sproul grew up in the old school. His suggestions were always excellent.

Riess: Along the line of decision making and his cognitive processes, I remember you mentioned to me how he liked to keep his Charter Day speakers and plans a secret. What kind of insight does this give us into him? And were there other administrative decisions that he was secret about?

Wilson: He liked to keep the name of the Charter Day speaker close to his vest and then surprise the campus with it. I don't really know how that started, unless he learned it from the days of Benjamin Ide Wheeler. Wheeler was the old-fashioned autocrat who kept most everything secret. [laughs] When he finally retired, you know, and when Barrows became president, Barrows tried to continue that tradition, and there was a real faculty revolution then. I suspect that he had learned that from Wheeler, and that Wheeler had a flair for the dramatic. Sproul perhaps learned from him.

Wilson: He thought that it would make for a better, more popular Charter Day if the news came out not too far ahead. I think all newsmen realize that there is a proper time to spring a certain story or to announce something that's going to happen, that if you announce it too far ahead of time, people forget about it and don't do anything. I think it was probably sound newsmanship. But I think he also enjoyed keeping it secret. Agnes Robb alone knew about it. Sometimes if the rumors got out that they were corresponding with somebody or there had been a phone conversation with somebody, then it would be leaked and Herb Caen would publish it, and it might spoil the deal.

### Cal Club

Riess: Another question on decision making: When we talked about Cal Club, you said that a list of possible Cal Club appointments would be submitted to Sproul each year and he would choose among those students. Now, that seems to me to be an almost hopeless area for him to make an informed decision about. How did he do that?

Wilson: We sent him, or I always sent him, since I was the state coordinator, just as much material on each student as possible.

Riess: So there'd be a little file that came with each student?

Wilson: Yes. All of what he had done, where he came from, what his grades were. Sproul thought they should be not only campus leaders, but scholars with high grades. And Clark Kerr continued that. Kerr made personal decisions. The nature of Cal Club at the time was such that the president had to make the decisions, because it was his personal contact. When it became a "multi-versity" rather than a university it was his personal means of keeping in touch with campus leaders on each campus. He wanted them to realize that he personally had made the decision, and he wanted them to feel that they could get to him, and Agnes Robb knew this, that a Cal Clubber could get on the phone and call the president of the university and get through to him. That was one of the privileges.

Riess: So she would know the names of those people.

Wilson: Oh sure, she had all the lists for each campus. It was an informed decision. Of course, in those days Sproul participated in a good many student affairs. He used to attend meetings of the Order of the Golden Bear when it was only seniors, only men, and very, very confidential. We had university meetings then. The yell leader

Wilson: would be there. The ASUC president would be there. And through such contacts, Sproul kept in touch with students on the Berkeley campus, and I think he would do the same thing when he went to Davis or when he went to UCLA, for example. He personally kept in contact with a lot of students, and if he didn't know them personally, he judged by their pedigrees whether they should belong.

There were always some ex officio people whose position was such that they had to be in this intercampus, goodwill, close-to-the-president organization: the student body president, the student body vice-president, the editor of the paper, the head yell leader. Because there was lots of friction in athletic contests, you know. The head yell leader had to be aware that the unity of the university was more important than winning this particular game. And he got that message in Cal Club.

Cal Club alumni still mourn the fact that there isn't any such club anymore. And Peter Goldschmidt, who is our lobbyist, you know, in Washington, D.C., is now working on President David Pierpont Gardner to revive Cal Club. But I've had to point out to several other people who've said, "Maybe the new president will revive Cal Club," that the first and original purpose of Cal Club is already fulfilled. There's little or no intercampus friction and enmity and hatred. The nine campuses now have reached their own personalities, their own status, their own pride, their own traditions, their own names, and so on. They're not envious of Berkeley anymore. We're envious of some of them! [laughter] Sproul used to say, "If Cal Club does its job, it will eventually do away with itself."

It was Clark Kerr who realized that the presidency was becoming more and more remote from each campus, and remote from students in general, and he developed a second purpose for Cal Club; that is, as the means whereby the student would keep in touch with the president and the president would keep in touch with students. And that function became more and more important. It still is a good reason for such an organization. All the president has nowadays is the Association of Student Body Presidents. You and I know that the student body presidents these days represent almost nobody on the campus but a small clique.

Riess: Was Sproul sensitive to issues of representation by minorities when he was collecting his Cal Club appointees?

Wilson: Oh, indeed yes. And to how many women were in each group. I had to make a digest, you know, say how many women, how many blacks, how many orientals, and so on.

Riess: Was this an instinct he had for this kind of thing, or was it enough of an issue on campus that it had been drawn to his attention?

Wilson: No, he was kind of a leader in being sure that women were represented, for example, and that the blacks were represented. He made good choices. I am now still a close friend of Thelton Henderson, who is the federal judge for all of northern California. He was a black athlete; he was a baseball player. He was a Cal Clubber. He had certainly earned it. On the UCLA campus one of the leaders, of course, was Rafer Johnson, who was a leader in Cal Club, too, down there.

My memory is that Sproul was, on his own, aware of social developments and sensitive to them and wanted to be a leader. I think if you check back in some of his speeches, you'll see that he was very forward-looking, ahead of many of the movements which are now commonplace.

Riess: I remember one story you told me so I won't repeat it here, but I did think it was very much ahead of his times to have Kinsey here for a few days.\* The more I think about it, he didn't have to do that.

Wilson: Absolutely.

#### The Public Man

Riess: How do you think Sproul matured and changed in the job?

Wilson: I knew him first as the new president who was chosen and assumed office in 1930 when I wasn't here, but he presided at my commencement. I wasn't privy to anything but the fact that he was a handsome, commanding presence and was winning friends everywhere. Then I left for my first job at Humboldt State Teacher's College, as it was then called, and then I went to Cornell. Then I came back to Cal in '41. There was a lapse of ten years where I had very little contact with Sproul. And I was here only for year, then into the army for four years. Back in '46. That was when I came into close contact.

But by 1946 he had been president for fifteen years. And by that time he was this experienced administrator that made very few errors, and if his staff made an error, he took the blame for it. So I have nothing but rosy, admiring memories of Sproul.

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\*Wilson oral history, pp. 292-296.

Riess: How did he use his sense of humor? There's a booming voice there all the time that I hear about. Was his sense of humor dangerous?

Wilson: No, it was always delightful. I know sometimes he repeated his jokes if the situation permitted it. For example, if he were introduced as a speaker in a very high falutin manner, all sorts of gorgeous compliments paid to him, he would say, "Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that very complimentary and gracious introduction." He said, "I listened carefully to every word you said, and every word was true." [laughter] Which always brought a laugh.

He was a delegate at the Republican national convention when Dewey was nominated, and Earl Warren. He was there to nominate Earl Warren for the presidency. Earl eventually was nominated for the vice-presidency. It was a sweltering day without adequate air conditioning, and he said, "My fellow Republicans, on this occasion I greet you warmly." Or, "With the greatest warmth," or something of that sort, which was just capitalizing on the fact that they were all sweating. [laughter]

I think I told you that on the occasion of welcoming the new students to the Berkeley campus when there wasn't any chancellor and Sproul did it, he very often used the same humor. He would look over the class of the new students, both freshmen and upper classmen who were transfers, and say, "This is the best-looking group of new students I ever welcomed to the campus," and there would be laughter and some tittering, and he'd say, "All right. You may laugh. You may have heard that I said this last year and the year before that and the year before that, but just remember on those occasions I had never set eyes on you!" [laughter]

Riess: That's lovely. It's just charming.

Wilson: Yes. So he had that, but he could improvise.

Riess: And on a one-to-one basis, would he use charm in the same way?

Wilson: [pause] Yes. When I took him that photograph, which I think you reproduced in The Invisible Man, of my shaking hands with Sproul on the occasion of his final commencement, when I asked for his autograph, he sat down and said, "Sure." And he wrote: "To the best master of ceremonies in the whole wide world, from his friend Robert G. Sproul." And I have that framed. When I had it framed professionally, somebody smudged the ink in the process of framing. But I'm still going to reproduce it in my popularized version.

Riess: Did you have other occasions to help him with speeches?

Wilson: I don't recall doing more than collecting some material on rare occasions. George Pettitt was the man who did more speech writing than anybody. Just recently I heard Agnes Robb say with some disapproval that the faculty always used to say, "Well, there's George Pettitt, who writes all the president's speeches." He took credit for that or got credit for that. Agnes Robb said, "You know that that's not true, that Papa"--she called him that, not to his face--"that Papa always wrote his own speeches, or most of them. It was only on rare occasions that he depended on somebody else. They gathered material for him, but he did the thing himself." She was much put out with the fact that George Pettitt had the reputation for being the president's speech writer.

Riess: Actually, referring to him as Papa, was that the kind of feeling of paternalism?

Wilson: I don't know how that started. Because she was deferential with Sproul. I never saw her anything but deferential, an absolutely correct staff person. If I, on occasion, were talking to him in his office and he needed her and buzzed for her, she would open the door and come actually running in. He would say [in Sproul's deep, booming voice], "No need to run, Miss Robb. No need to run." [laughter] But that was just in her makeup. He was such a great man that she would do anything. But it was always "President Sproul." But with a few close friends she would say, "Papa did this," or "Papa did that." I have no idea. Someday I'm going to ask her.

She's still a very active person and comes to lots of university events. In fact, I was her escort when an associate justice of the Supreme Court was here at Boalt Hall judging the moot court. There was an elegant dinner for him. I've forgotten his name. But Agnes Robb was invited to the dinner and called me and asked me if I'd like to go, because her invitation said herself and guest, and I said sure I would. So I called for her. She is--everybody knows her from the old days, so she just immediately enters the room and she's surrounded by people. Even Marion Sproul still calls her Miss Robb. Almost everybody calls her Miss Robb. I'm asking myself, do I ever call her Agnes? I think I call her "A.R." sometimes. When I had to telephone her, we had a regular system, and I said, "Wilson calling," and she said, "Robb here," and we'd go on. "Wilson here."

But anyway, since I see her not infrequently, I'll ask her how she ever got to call Robert Gordon Sproul "Papa." I never heard anybody else use that term for him. I suppose the Sproul youngsters when they were tiny would call him that.

Riess: I guess his children were familiar to everyone on campus.

- Wilson: Yes. I wasn't aware how often they used campus facilities, but on one occasion when I was at Strawberry Pool, here came Sproul with Robert, Jr. and John. Just small boys. And they stripped down in this little roofless hut, you know, and put on the little briefs and came out and swam in that cold, cold water. It was warmed only by the sun. There was no heating system in the old Strawberry Pool as there is in the new Strawberry pools plural. So you had to be fairly hardy. But there was Papa Sproul and the two little Sprouls paddling around in that cold, cold water. And seemingly enjoyed it, splashing each other. But I don't recall of any other time when I was there-- they undoubtedly used the pool.
- Riess: How about just strolling around campus? Wheeler had a great reputation for being around campus on horseback, and I see Mike Heyman, on foot, a lot. How about Sproul?
- Wilson: He always walked from the President's House, now University House, to his office, wherever the office was, with a bulging briefcase. And he always hailed people and students and so on. He would stop if he met a gardener or somebody and would say, "I think that shrub over there needs pruning. Better get to it." In a jovial way; just a means of contact. He had a little joke he sometimes told, that he once stopped a student on the campus and said to him, "Young man, you're a student here?" "Yes, Sir." "Do you know who I am?" "No, I don't, Sir. But if you remember your address, I'll try to help you home." [laughter] He used to tell that on himself. So it means he often would stop and chat with students.
- Riess: He spent his mornings at the President's House.
- Wilson: Doing all his paperwork, and then he had all his appointments with people in the afternoon.
- Riess: Did Agnes come up to the President's House, to assist?
- Wilson: No, she was in charge down in the president's office. She sometimes sent a messenger up with a--he'd call down that he's missing so-and-so, such a letter or such a paper, and the messenger would go running up there. He did all his paperwork up there and a lot of his speech preparation up there. And all his interviews down there.

I'm sure I remember telling you, he always dictated the minute an interview was over. There was an interval where he dictated what had been said. The next time you came, he will have looked at that-- those were all typed up and dated and indexed, and if he were going

Wilson: to talk to me again about Strawberry Pool, he'd look up "Wilson-Pool" and begin the conversation exactly where we left it off before, because it was all on paper, all written down.

Riess: How could he look up "Wilson-Pool?" I mean, he wouldn't have a file on you.

Wilson: I don't know how that was indexed, but it was indexed so he could look up a conversation that happened ten years before and see exactly how he had recorded it on the dictaphone.

Earle C. Anthony, and Money for the University

[Interview 2: June 12, 1984]

Riess: I came back today because we realized that the unrecorded story of Earle C. Anthony's gift to the university was part of the Sproul oral history.

Wilson: Yes. Earle C. Anthony was the first editor of the Pelican, in 1902 or 1903, whatever year it was. And it was dear to his heart, the humor magazine, forever afterward. As you know, he became a very wealthy man, chiefly remembered because he was the Packard distributor for southern California. He founded the radio station KFI--I suppose it became a TV station too.

President Sproul was a friend of Anthony's for a long, long while. He also knew that Anthony was going to leave some money to the university, and he wanted to keep Anthony happy with the university and loyal to the university and a friend to the university.

So when Anthony proposed a building to house his beloved Pelican magazine, and for that only, it was greeted with mixed feelings on the campus. Nobody really wanted a "Pelican building." But President Sproul said, "We'd better accept this gift. If we don't, we may lose a lot of money later on." So, the building was built, and completed in 1957.

I wasn't involved much in the preliminaries. I remember vividly though getting a phone call one night around 9:30 in the evening. It was the president's voice booming over the wire, "Garff! Can you fly down to Palm Springs tomorrow?" I said, "Well, let me check whether I have classes or difficult appointments," and then I said, "Yes, I can, President Sproul. What's the problem?"

Wilson: "The problem," he said, "is the dedication of the Pelican building. Mr. Anthony wants a Hollywood-type dedication. He's told me he would like to outline the building in neon lights. He would like to fly up dancing girls from some Hollywood studio. He would like to release a flock of pelicans to fly over the Bay Area." He said, "We can't let that happen. I want you to go down and talk him out of it."

"What do you suggest, President Sproul?"

"I don't know, you'll have to think of something."

So, I called and got a plane reservation to go to Palm Springs and was met at the Palm Springs airport by Anthony's chauffeur and his man-of-all-functions. Meanwhile I had been thinking on the plane: What in the world can I say to him? The only glimmering of an idea was to suggest instead of a Hollywood type event, that we have a 1903-type dedication. Revive some of the traditions of his era and have the band there and the glee club there and have the student body officers there, and so on.

He and I got along very well. He was then an old man, and partially disabled, and evidently he was a lonely old man, too. As I recall, he had one son, but they were estranged. And I understand that the estate was somehow tied up; it took a long time to settle the estate and to pacify the son and so on when he finally died. But anyway, that day we had lunch around his pool, and I asked him about his memories of the campus in 1902 and 1903. He loved to reminisce.

Then I said, "Wouldn't it be nice to revive some of those traditions for your dedication?" Well, he evidently hadn't thought of it. And I said, "You know, we've got a great band, and they probably will be practicing on Hearst Field." (At that time Barrows Hall was not built, and so there was a grassy field right down to the Pelican building.) "The band will probably be rehearsing there and we can get them to play, and we can have the glee club. And, Mr. Anthony, both the manager and the editor of the Pelican are females now." Well, this pleased Anthony; I thought he would bristle at that, feeling that it is a man's world, but no, he liked the girls very much. So he bought the idea, but he insisted on one pelican. He wanted to have a live pelican on a platform for the dedication, and I said that would be fine. But the flight of pelicans and the Hollywood tinsel, that was all out.

Well, Anthony came up a couple of days early, and he sat like a potentate on a special chair on the porch of the Pelican building. He looked around, and he said he wanted vines around those pillars for the dedication. He got vines, in pots. They searched the Bay Area

Wilson: to find the kinds of vines you can put up with scotch-tape and wind around pillars. He wanted a bridge across the Strawberry Creek which runs just behind the building, so that people could come directly down from Wheeler Hall. And that bridge was built in two days! They certainly moved everything for him.

He loved the two girls who were the chief officers of the magazine. He sent them to I. Magnin's in San Francisco to get special outfits for the dedication. They could chose any kind of dresses or hats and gloves and accessories that they wanted, so long as there was blue and gold featured in the ensembles--which they did.

While he was sitting on the porch one day, the band did march over and serenade him, and he was happy as he could be. Of course, the president had met him and greeted him effusively, and asked him to think about things that we should do for him, and he asked those difficult things, but Sproul got them done--the bridge and the vines. [laughter]

Riess: Did he stay with the Sprouls while he was here?

Wilson: I don't know. He probably did.

But anyway, the dedication went off very well. The live pelican behaved himself. Everybody pampered the old man and gave him all the honor that he wanted. As I recall, President Sproul presided at the dedication. And they had all the traditional events on the program that he had okayed and thought would be good. So Anthony departed, a happy man.

I asked Agnes Robb, after he died, whether his will had yet been probated, and what he had left the university. She didn't know at the time, but sometimes after that I asked her again, and she said yes, it had been a complicated will, and a complicated estate, but it had finally been settled. The university got six or eight million dollars from Earle C. Anthony in the will, and it went to engineering for some project over there. I don't know why.

But the acceptance of the Pelican building, and the planning and staging and dedication that pleased him, was partly responsible for the bequest. And it was Robert Gordon Sproul who was the one who had his eye on the money right from the beginning and knew what to do in order to keep Mr. Anthony happy and a friend of the university.

End of story.

Riess: Any other examples of Sproul's courting money?

Wilson: Well, I'm sure he kept Steve Bechtel happy all the time. There's a Bechtel room in the Alumni House, and there's a Bechtel Engineering Center now. I'm sure that Sproul cultivated both Steve and Laura Bechtel.

I'm sure he kept the Hearst family happy as he could. Hearst Gymnasium was dedicated, if my memory is correct, in the fall of 1926 or the spring of 1927. I was a freshman that year. I got an official invitation to the dedication, which astonished me, and I think it was because I was here on an academic scholarship, and they went down the list of new scholarship students at the university and sent them invitations. That's the only time I saw William Randolph Hearst in person. He was at the reception and dedication. I didn't meet him, but I saw him. He was sitting in a throne chair like a potentate too.

But the Hearst family and the Hearst Foundation have been steadfast friends of the university. And I'm sure that Sproul was aware that they had to be treated with special courtesy and special graciousness because they had been such loyal friends of the university.

Riess: All calculated.

Wilson: Well, I wouldn't use the word calculated. Sproul was sensitive to the needs of the university, and he was aware that you cultivated friends when you could in a nice kind of way. He never missed a chance for a gracious kind of cultivation of these people.

Have I told you about getting the invitation for tickets to the rededication of the Hearst Greek Theatre? The year of that gala performance of Puccini's Turandot? After William Randolph Hearst died, Marion Davies then married legally a man named Horace Brown. She became Mrs. Horace Brown. At that time we were keeping gift records for all the campuses here in Berkeley. And sending out invitations to big donors. And Marion Davies had given a lot of money for the children's clinic at the UCLA Hospital, and so she received an invitation under the name of Mrs. Horace Brown.

She sent the card back, asking for four tickets. We had no idea who Mrs. Horace Brown was, that she was the former Marion Davies. There happened into the office then Regent McLaughlin [Donald H.] and he was thumbing through these big donor requests and he said, "God almighty!"--we had prepared tickets in an envelope for Mrs. Horace Brown--"you can't send her tickets." "Why not?" "That's the former Marion Davies. Why, it would be an insult to the family. They have given all this money to redo the theater, and oh, it's impossible!"

Wilson: And at Regent McLaughlin's direct order we had to put in the envelope instead of the tickets that were originally designated a little card which we had had printed saying that "due to the great demand for tickets, the supply has been exhausted and we are very sorry we can't fulfil your request." So, we never got to see Marion Davies.

Riess: But there wasn't all that much active pursuit of money in those days, was there?

Wilson: We didn't have to. We had governors and legislatures that were very friendly to the university, understood what a university was all about and were proud of the ranking of the University of California. It was only after that we had unfriendly governors and legislatures, and after the demand for public money became so tremendous that we fell on hard times and had to organize a development office which has done a heroic job.

Riess: In fact it was Sproul's regents who were able to bring in money in his day.

Wilson: Yes, and they provided money themselves. Crocker, and Ehrman, Sidney Ehrman.

Riess: He could have made Earle C. Anthony a regent, not that presidents designate regents.

Wilson: No, but I'm sure that for much of his career he was very influential. It was only after the oath controversy when John Francis Neylan turned against him that he had difficulty with the regents. But Sproul and Warren were buddies, and I'm sure Warren didn't appoint a regent without checking it with Sproul. Times have changed completely.

I'm sure I've told you the story of the telescope, and Governor Warren saying, "Five hundred thousand dollars is not going to do any good. I'm going to put a couple of million in the budget for that telescope." Well, there was a big surplus there from the days of the Second World War when money was accumulating in the state budget.

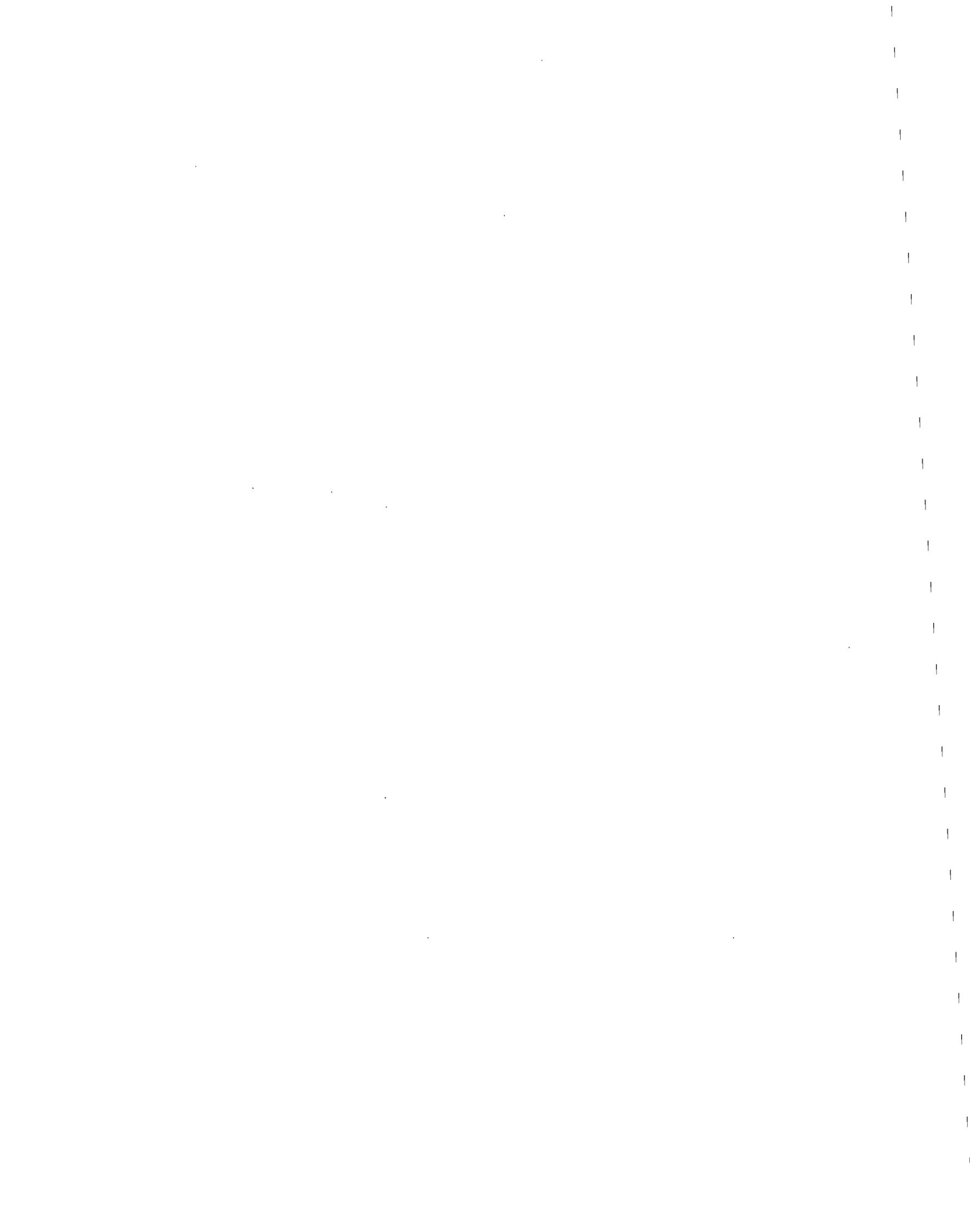
Riess: Sounds like Sproul managed to give time and attention to details.

Wilson: Yes, indeed. For example, he always arranged, or checked the arrangement, of the president's party--as we called it then--the official party, made up of the guest of honor at Charter Day or

Wilson: commencement, the president, the regents, the participants in the ceremony and so on. He checked it very carefully. He either made it out himself, or he checked my suggested arrangement. Once Kerr became president, he said, "You do it, Garff, you know more about it than I do." Many, many things which Sproul checked personally, Kerr did not check personally. Of course, the number of campuses had increased, and Kerr was much involved with the growth of the university and the new campuses and divesting himself of many responsibilities which Sproul insisted on keeping.

Sproul had once said at a faculty conference at Davis that he was being criticized for reserving too many decisions for himself. He went on to say something like this, "As president, I feel there are certain matters which I must know about, and certain responsibilities which are mine alone. I would not consider myself the president if I relinquished these." So he retained most of these responsibilities to the end, and during his long tenure there was no one--student, alumnus, faculty, staff, or just plain citizen who did not know who was president of the university.

Transcriber: Sam Middlebrooks and Suzanne Riess  
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Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Walter S. Frederick

SPROUL'S USE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Perhaps predictably, it was easy work to do an oral history interview with professional journalist and publicist Wally Frederick. He is an enthusiastic, positive person, a raconteur, easily led on lengthy side excursions down memory lane. And I certainly went along on the trip. The interview that follows concludes with my note bemoaning the end of the tape supply, to which woeful remark Mr. Frederick responded in his editing, adding yet another interesting memory.

As with all the Robert Gordon Sproul interviewees, Walter S. Frederick himself has a whole history and significant association with the institution of the University of California. The memoir following presents the publications and public voice aspect of the university since its early days, while pointing up Sproul's foresight in making that voice substantially more important.

After doing undergraduate work in journalism, Mr. Frederick took law school courses, got in some graduate work in history, wrote for the University clip sheet and University Extension, taught in the journalism department, was White House-navy liaison officer, and then came back to the university to accept a position as publications manager, an area President Sproul was determined to bring under some kind of control. Retired from that position in 1975, Wally Frederick now lives in Carmel where he applies his charm and energy and public relations know-how to Monterey peninsula social and conservation issues.

We interviewed in Piedmont, where Wally and his wife Christine were housesitting in some splendour on Big Game Weekend, 1984. Later Mr. Frederick supplied us with an appended personal note from Sproul, highlighting Robert Gordon Sproul's ability to make his friends and his staff feel known and appreciated.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
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University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name Walter Smith FREDERICK

Date of birth 4 Oct. 1905 Place of birth Carnegie, Calif.

Father's full name Henry David FREDERICK

Birthplace Farm near Quincy, Illinois

Occupation School teacher, clay products manufacturing, small business

Mother's full name Margaret Hislop FREDERICK

Birthplace Paisley, Scotland

Occupation Housewife

Where did you grow up ? All in CA  
Carnegie (6 yrs.) Crockett (12 yrs.) Berkeley (46 yrs.)

Present community Carmel Valley, CA

Education B.A. and M.A. Univ. of California Also graduate studies  
in Law and Education

Occupation(s) Public Relations, Journalism Instructor, Publications Management  
Fund Raising

Special interests or activities American History, U.C.'s Land and Water  
Reserves System, various Community projects on the Monterey Peninsula.  
Various other interests.

Personal Background, Daily Cal Editor

[Date of Interview: November 15, 1984]

Frederick: All right. A little background. I was born in Carnegie, California. And you have to pronounce that properly, Car-náy-gie. My Scottish grandfather ran a plant there. He had come from Scotland, my grandfather, James Hislop, H-I-S-L-O-P, with my grandmother, and my mother, who was a young girl at the time. He was very disappointed, he said in his journal, because he landed in San Francisco eventually, and found it not to his liking. Well, I was disappointed in his regard for San Francisco, until I found out later the reason he was disappointed was that there was no clay manufacturing there. And his schooling in Scotland had been in clay manufacturing.

There were some people named Treadwell who owned property over the Livermore hills. To get to what was called Carnegie, you went past what is now the Wente brothers' vineyards, the Concannon vineyards, and up over the old Spanish road. And when you reached the crest, down several miles to an area which the Spanish called Corral Hollow, because they had kept stock in this lovely hollow, they found a good clay fault there, and the plant was set up, and made tile, pottery, and a brick that became quite famous. Every once in a while, although the plant was closed down in 1911, two or three times in Carmel I've come across Carnegie brick. And I've talked to old brick masons, and they said, "Oh yes, we used to use it. It was very good, and therefore expensive, so you don't see a great deal of it." But you see it occasionally, and it's still in service, probably seventy or eighty years later.

Riess: Why was the town named Carnegie?

Frederick: My grandfather, supposedly, had a lot to do with naming the town after the Scottish hero Andrew Carnegie.

Frederick: There must have been two or three hundred people who lived there when it was going at its top production. It even had a railway spur line that came out of Stockton, Western Pacific, and ran from Stockton to Carnegie.

My earliest memories are of my father--who worked for my grandfather, married grandfather's daughter--going to Stockton for a holiday, and being transported there by a special caboose, which was put on the railway. And we would go not in a private car, but in a private caboose from Carnegie to Stockton for shopping and whatnot.

After the winter of 1911, they closed the plant down because there had been a great rainstorm and flood that washed out a lot of the trackage. The Treadwell brothers also lost a lot of money in a bank failure. And my grandfather decided to go down to Inglewood and start a new plant down there. My father at that point decided he didn't want to go to southern California, and he came to Crockett and was with the California and Hawaiian Sugar Corporation until he died. He wasn't in Crockett too long, because I was only eleven and a half years old when he died.

Following schooling there, my mother moved to Berkeley. In the meantime, my sister, who was eight years older, had gotten married. My brother started a long career with California and Hawaiian Sugar, also. And my mother and I moved to Berkeley. I started at the university in 1924. With the exception of four years in the navy during World War II, and occasional leaves of absence--including a year on loan to raise money for Alta Bates Hospital--I was there for forty-six years, 1924 to 1970, when I retired. Then I went back to Alta Bates Hospital on the fund raising staff again.

Now, let's see. All right. So I start in with Berkeley now, and with the university?

Riess: Right. I'm just buttoning my lip. Of course, I'm very interested in a lot of things, but I figure chronologically this will work. You were an undergraduate when Campbell was president?

Frederick: Yes.

I entered in '24. I'd always been interested in journalism. I enrolled in the English department and later I transferred to American history in which I have a master's degree. I took what journalistic courses there were. They were sparse; there were only courses given by a Professor Charles Raymond, loved by all the students who worked on publications.

Frederick: I went out for the Daily Californian, which was very competitive in the twenties. You started out with fifty or sixty or more freshmen, and at the end of the year they probably cut back to about thirty to forty. And then at the end of the sophomore year they cut back again to about twenty, perhaps. At the end of the junior year, there were eight or so senior editors.

I spent four years on the Daily Californian. And we all knew the scholarly William Wallace Campbell, who would stroll around the campus with a gold or silver-headed cane, a black Homburg hat, a dark blue suit, and a dark waistcoat with white piping, and a somber tie. President Campbell had enormously bushy white eyebrows. He was a very distinctive-looking character and he often took campus walks. He was not the easiest man to see for those of us on the Daily Californian. We often got to see Walter Morris Hart, who I believe was the academic vice-president. Of course, stories would emanate from or about the young, blond, handsome Robert Gordon Sproul, the comptroller, who had also been made a vice-president.

Riess: Why would they emanate from him?

Frederick: Sproul spent a good deal of time going up to Sacramento. By chance, he became comptroller at a very early age; his predecessor stepped out and went to to some very highly paid job, and his young assistant, Sproul, took over.

We used to hear that Sproul would dazzle the legislators by his complete fund of knowledge of everything related to university finance. They would hold meetings with a committee of six to twelve members, and they would ask him every possible, conceivable question, and he had every answer, at every time. He was never stopped by difficult questions from the legislators.

Riess: And the Daily Cal covered the news from Sacramento?

Frederick: Not particularly. Although during this period we did get some news from Sacramento because there had been, at the university, great difficulty with the agricultural interests of the state. It must be remembered that the university, at the time of its founding and its early years, revolved around agriculture. They more or less set the schedule, which I believe they've now gone back to, so that the students would get out in May to go back to their family farms, a great number of them, and help with the summer harvest, or help with the agricultural crops. That would be over and they would come back in late August. The school calendar was set by agricultural interests.

Genesis of Public Relations Arm of the University

Frederick: Time went on, and in the twenties I remember distinctly there was a strong feeling among the agricultural interests, their lobbyists and their representatives in the state capitol in Sacramento, and many of the legislators, who came from primarily agricultural communities and counties, and felt that the university wasn't doing enough for agriculture. They felt that the agriculture offerings were too academic. The courses for the most part were on the Berkeley campus. This brought about the genesis of what was to be the public relations arm of the university, because Sproul, as comptroller, worked on this problem. His strong reputation was made with the legislators, and his plan was to do more with agriculture, and also to publicize more thoroughly everything the university was doing in agriculture.

Sproul hired from the Sacramento Bee the agricultural editor of that paper, a very knowledgeable man named Harold Ellis. This was the genesis of the University News Service. One interesting facet of this had to do with the Board of Regents, of which in the thirties Fortune magazine once characterized, "There are no knighthoods in California, but the nearest thing to it is election to the University of California Board of Regents." It's extraordinary the quality of the men, and--[chuckles] I don't remember any women during the early years--the quality of the men who were appointed to serve on the Board of Regents.

One of these was a man named John Francis Neylan. He was a powerful force in California. He was the attorney for all the Hearst interests, which were a strong factor in California at that time, much more so than today. Regent Neylan abhorred anything relating to public relations. That might have been one reason they named the new department the University News Service.

Staff: Ellis, Pettitt, Frederick

Frederick: The first employee to work with Harold Ellis was a graduate named George Pettitt, later Dr. George Pettitt, a Ph.D. in anthropology. He had been editor of the alumni monthly. And the next person was Kenneth Priestley. His father was a professor of history. Ken was a friend and fraternity brother of mine. He ended up as the director of the radiation laboratory, later called the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory. [Priestley was business manager of the radiation laboratory, 1942-1949.]

Frederick: It was Kenneth Priestley who was responsible for my coming to the administration. He saw me one day in the summer of '29, when I'd just finished one year of law school, something that my mother insisted on, and he said, "The regents elected a new president. This was in June, 1929. They're going to give him a leave of absence to travel throughout the country and visit institutions of higher learning. There are going to be two or possibly three new administrative posts, and one in the University News Service. Are you interested?" I said, no, I was going back to law school.

In the middle of the night I woke up and realized that I detested law school, I just didn't want to admit it at the time. I was working with Jackson Chance and John Harrel, who believed that you should get to Boalt Hall at eight in the morning, and leave at eleven at night. I didn't like this regime, and they chided me a great deal for not putting in more time. They had nothing but A's, and I had poorer grades, in part because I was pursuing a romantic interest. I went down the next morning and told Priestley that I'd changed my mind. He said he'd get me an interview, and very soon I was interviewed by Harold Ellis.

There were one or two amusing things in the interview that came up. I was just about to go when Ellis asked me if I used the touch system in typing. I said, "Yes, sir." I had used two to four fingers up 'til then, but when I left, it was a Thursday morning, and between Thursday and Monday I went down to a typing school, and they gave me enough lessons for a full day Thursday and Friday, and I worked on it Saturday and Sunday, and by Monday I could use all ten fingers at once on the typewriter.

Riess: [laughs] That's wonderful.

Frederick: The second thing was, my classmates had gotten out of Berkeley and for the most part were earning \$75 to a \$125 a month. I didn't know any classmate beyond that range. Ellis offered me \$150. When I looked at him somewhat disbelieving and didn't say anything, he said, "Well, if that's not satisfactory, I'll try to get you more," and he did get me \$175, which was very good for a beginning, starting salary.

Riess: Among your classmates, were there people who went into journalism from that kind of training as an English and history major with a journalistic bent?

Frederick: There were a few, yes, a few that went into journalism.

Riess: Raymond was really the only professor?

Frederick: Raymond was the only one. He was in the English department, he had been with the Associated Press, was a very fine lecturer and instructor, and his courses were called "journalistic studies." It turned out that the English department absolutely refused to consider having a journalism department. They thought journalism was too vocational for a university of high academic standing.

The journalism department didn't come along until the latter part of the thirties when the newspapers of the state, the journalistic societies, the professional societies such as Sigma Delta Chi--the publishing interests of the state, brought great pressure on the university, and finally, it wasn't until the latter part of the thirties that a Department of Journalism was started.

Riess: Interesting. I wonder if Hearst, earlier, might have endowed a journalism department, or pushed one in any way.

Frederick: No, not to my knowledge. It was the publishing interests and the journalistic interests of the state who brought great pressure to bear.

Perhaps I could say a word about the University News Service?

Riess: Yes. And in those college years, you said some news emanated from Sproul. If there's more to be said about that, and the Daily Cal before he was president--I'd like to know whether he really used the Daily Cal as a way, for instance, of getting across some points of view of the agricultural interests?

Frederick: No, I think instead of the Daily Californian he used Harold Ellis, who started out by putting out material in a university "clip sheet," which is still published sixty years later. This is a larger page or more with newspaper stories that could be clipped out, and there were usually twelve to fifteen of them which were put together each week. Some of them on agriculture, others of general interest.

Riess: But not dated?

Frederick: They were dated for release, yes, they were were always dated for release. Half of them would be dated for release for morning papers and half for evening papers.

Frederick: When I took over Priestley's job, there were three of us, Ellis, Pettitt, and myself. The university was small enough in those days so that it seemed like almost everything was on the second floor of California Hall. Not a very big building. Sproul was at one end on the second floor, next to him the comptroller and the vice-president, and we were down the hall, next to Dean Lucy Stebbins. Everybody has heard of her, she was the long term dean of women. The dean of men, Tom Putnam, was down the hall, and down at the very end of the hall either admissions or the recorder's office. I think the recorder's office's name has been changed. But there we all were.

#### Sproul's Vision, and His Expectations of Staff

- Frederick: I soon found out that Sproul, being a very active man after he came in as president, would come down the hall, occasionally, and pop in. Just like someone out of a jack-in-the-box. That device kept everybody on their toes, because you weren't going to have that door open and have the president standing there and not be in some beneficial work. But he would be interested, too, in what we were working on, and he would occasionally come down and suggest a story of some award that was coming to the university.
- Riess: Other than that, would you go out in search of news to fill the sheet?
- Frederick: Yes.
- Riess: Was it news of a kind of amusing and incidental nature, or was it solid?
- Frederick: It was usually more solid news. We would find out what the faculty were doing, what the various departments were doing. We'd call the various departments, and ask if they had anything of interest, and they were very helpful.
- Riess: Did you ever reprint from the Daily Cal?
- Frederick: No, I think occasionally we took material out of the Daily Cal and rewrote it.
- Riess: What was the distribution of the clip sheet?

Frederick: The clip sheet was sent to all California newspapers, and anyone else who was interested in it. There was, for example, a representative of the New York Times in San Francisco, and we sent him a copy, and we tried to ascertain where additional copies might go. We were happy to send them out to any interested newspaper or magazine.

Incidentally, Harold Ellis, with others, helped start the National University Public Relations Association. We had the convention one year at Berkeley, and it was very successful.

We all admired Sproul during this period, and we soon found out he had a great vision about what the university should accomplish, and where it should go. His edict, if he did give us an edict, was to make the university well known. He felt that it was on the threshold of being a great university, and he felt that the public didn't know enough about it. We found ample ways to write about the university regarding any faculty achievement, and new scientific discoveries.

Early in the thirties, Ernest Orlando Lawrence came on the scene, and that was the beginning of all the material on the cyclotron, which Lawrence invented, and all the discovery in that field. And that was very helpful in getting top stories about the university. With the invention of the cyclotron, and Lawrence's work, and his colleagues' work, the New York Times and the eastern papers and the Chicago papers became very interested in that.

I would like to tell one little story about coming to the University News Service, and my first brush with the president:

There was no such thing at California Hall or any place we knew as a device for making coffee, so occasionally, if we wanted morning coffee, all we had to do was step outside Sather Gate. The area between Sather Gate and Bancroft, now part of the university, housed a series of shops and restaurants and coffee-houses on both sides of the street. We would just step outside Sather Gate, and there would be a very nice coffee shop.

I was going down for coffee one morning--now President Sproul each night always took an enormous work load of material home with him, and spent part of the evening, he told us, having to read and digest a lot of it--well, I was walking out the door of California Hall when the president appeared. He said, "Good morning, Frederick." (He called me by my last name.) "Tell me, why is that flag at half mast?"

Frederick: I looked to see a flag at half mast, and I said, "I don't know, sir."

He said, "Well, look, if you're going to work around here, if you're going to work for me, you better find out things like this. Now go find out why this flag is at half mast." And you can be sure that I forgot all about coffee, and I found out that a professor had died, and I got the word to his secretary within a few minutes.

Riess: Was he as gruff and abrupt as that sounds?

Frederick: He could be very convivial, and he could be very demanding. Very much so. He worked in such a manner--I think twelve or more hours a day were nothing to him--and he expected people who worked for him to put in a lot of time also. We even worked on Saturday, at least half a day on Saturday.

Riess: Did the University News Service service all the campuses, or just Berkeley?

Frederick: Ellis would spend one day a week at Davis and come back with several stories on agriculture. George Pettitt, who wrote the science stories, would go to the medical school, UCSF, not regularly, but on occasion, when he would find out through the director of the medical school whether there was something worth writing about.

Riess: And how about UCLA?

Frederick: UCLA? No, I don't remember that we did much with UCLA. In fact, in the thirties they started a small news bureau of their own that took care of UCLA and Riverside.

Riess: After a while did Sproul get enough confidence in the University News Service that he didn't pop in and keep you on your toes, or was that always his practice, to be unexpected?

Frederick: As long as I was there, and I stayed for seven years, 1929 to 1936. I then went up to the ASUC to run their news bureau.

Riess: As long as you were there, he always made himself felt?

Frederick: Oh yes, very much so. A remarkable man. I remember the day before I got married he came popping into the news service and gave me a big, hearty handshake, and wanted to know more about it, said he was sorry that he couldn't attend the wedding which was

Frederick: in Marin County. Sent my bride and myself a beautiful wedding present. He took time for a lot of small things where the president today would have to depend on the staff. He had very little in the way of staff. And everything seemed to pass over his desk.

I remember we used to marvel at the fact that he kept track of everything. He tracked me down one time. I occasionally went to the University Extension division across the bay. They had a beautiful building on Powell, a block and a half up the street from the St. Francis Hotel, that was obtained some way or other. They held all the San Francisco extension classes there.

One day I went over. I had a university car--and this had to be after the Bay Bridge was built, in '36--and after I got back one of the police officers gave me a call. He said, "Say, you'll probably get a call from the president."

He explained that he was driving Sproul across the Bay Bridge when I shot past pretty fast and he said, "Find out who is driving that university car! Let me know." [laughs] He said, "This is just warning you that I'm telling the president." I said to the police officer--there were only two or three of them, we all knew them--that I had an important assignment. And the police officer must have told that to the president, because I never did hear from him about driving too fast.

Riess: That's funny. Before the clip sheet went to press, did he take a little look at it?

Frederick: No. He would never do that.

#### George Pettitt and Sproul's Speeches

Riess: It's said that George Pettitt was his speech writer.

Frederick: The president often had George Pettitt write a speech for him. Pettitt was intrigued with the study and writing of science and he took over the science writing for the University News Service. I remember that one time he spent a week writing a speech for President Sproul which the president was to deliver to a regional or national medical society in San Francisco. Pettitt spent, I would say, a good week on it. Then the president took it home late one afternoon, and the next day delivered it without a note. This

Frederick: was the first time I saw that remarkable photographic memory of his. It just was unbelievable to have gotten this forty or fifty minutes speech and not need to refer to it. Pettitt asked him about it afterwards, because we were all interested, and he said, oh, he'd read it over a number of times that night before he went to bed, and a couple of times in the morning, and he said he felt he had mastered it.

Riess: Did he make changes in it?

Frederick: Not to my remembrance, no. Pettitt was very skillful at speech writing. This brought about this factor: along about the middle of the thirties Sproul decided that he needed someone in his office not only to write speeches but to answer correspondence and do reports and a lot of other things, so he took George Pettitt on, gave him the title of assistant to the president, and that began a period which is documented by the book by George Pettitt, titled Twenty-Eight Years in the Life of a University President.

#### Leon Richardson, and University Extension

Riess: Did you write speeches for the president?

Frederick: No, I never wrote any speeches. I had double duty, however. Part time I had to write all the publicity for the extension division [University Extension]. And as I said, everything seemed to be in California Hall.

The extension division on the top floor, the adult education arm of the university, was presided over by another extraordinary man, Professor Leon J. Richardson. He was a professor of Latin, and he held forth in the extension division, with office hours of ten to twelve each day. It was sometimes difficult to get in to see him, and he enhanced my writing ability, because almost everything I wrote, he would have me sit down and tell me that I didn't use enough verbs, I used too many adjectives, and we would go over whatever was written, and it usually improved it a great deal.

My one best story about that: One time I got in to see him-- these were "forewards" to various bulletins and publications of the extension division--I got in to see him with a "foreward" that I thought was very fitting, and he said, "Sit down here." He said, "No, no, we've got to do quite a bit with this." And I

Frederick: said, "Professor Richardson"--and every time I said, "Professor Richardson--" he said, "Look here, let's shorten this sentence by adding a verb at the beginning of this sentence."

I said, "But Professor Richardson, I've been trying to tell you, you wrote this yourself."

He stopped for a minute, and looked at me, and he said, "Well, you can always improve anything that's written, let's go to work and make this even better." [laughter]

One other little anecdote I remember was once he said, "Frederick, I've been watching the way you walk. In World War I, I wrote the manual for the army on the proper way to walk. Come on out here in the hall." For the next twenty or thirty minutes he taught me how to walk the way he had written for the army manual. He was full of surprises.

The chief part of my duties was writing press releases and extension publicity and interviewing people. Ellis would give me a lead, or I'd uncover leads myself, and go and call on university departments, getting something that would be very applicable for the clip sheet. Or if it was strictly local news, we would release it just to the Bay Area papers. At that time there were four very good newspapers in San Francisco. The Examiner, the Chronicle, the Scripps-Howard paper--the Daily News--five papers, the Call, and the Bulletin, later amalgamated as the Call-Bulletin. In Oakland were the Hearst paper, the Post-Enquirer, and the Oakland Tribune, and in Berkeley, of course, the Berkeley Gazette.

Riess: If someone wanted an interview directly from Sproul, for instance, at the New York Times, that would have been possible? Was he open to that?

Frederick: Yes. President Sproul would be open to an interview if he thought it was worthwhile. Certainly he would be happy to see the New York Times.

Riess: How about on down in descending importance?

Frederick: Well, we would arrange interviews with all university personnel, and they soon became aware of the fact that the president was very anxious to get the name of the university known. There'd been very little attention paid to that with his predecessors. In fact, I guess little or no attention paid to that. He had the vision that it would be very helpful in recruiting if the university was mentioned in nationally known newspapers. And his support was a great help.

Sproul: A Master Recruiter

Frederick: Can I say a word about recruiting? When most people think about college recruiting today, they immediately think of recruiting for the football team, or the basketball team, or the athletic team of a university. But I think President Sproul had the great attributes of a recruiter for outstanding faculty members. He was a master at it. And it seemed to me that whenever he was going to bring out someone from Princeton, Yale, Michigan, University of Chicago, Harvard, Wisconsin, that in most instances it would often be in the winter months. Whether he worked with a meteorologist, I don't know, but these people who were brought out usually had left a cold and stormy New Haven, or Madison, Wisconsin, or Ann Arbor, or whatnot, and they would say, "My goodness, is the weather always like this in Berkeley?" We would say, "Well, most of the time, yes, most of the time." And that had a lot to do with helping get distinguished faculty out to Berkeley.

President Sproul spent a great deal of time on this. For example, I got to know Wendell Stanley very well. Wendell Stanley was a virologist, Nobel laureate at Princeton, and he was brought out, and he was favourably impressed, but he told the president that the difficulty was that the laboratory space wasn't to his liking. Sproul asked him to stay over and then he made a study and brought Stanley in and said, "We'll build you a virology building, if necessary." And he did. The virology laboratory was built expressly for Nobel laureate Wendell Stanley, and the people that he brought in with him in that field.

This was just one of the many devices that Sproul used. Often this meant raising money from private means. He would go to well-to-do regents or others who would help him with this. For example, when Ernest Lawrence was starting, and didn't have space, why he got Crocker to put up money for a laboratory. And there were many others that he would call on.

Riess: At the same time, he was recruiting for UCLA. How did that work?

Frederick: Yes. Well, when Sproul came into the presidency, the university was almost wholly the Berkeley institution. The southern branch had been a very undistinguished normal school operation to begin with, and it came into being as UCLA in the late twenties and thirties. Sproul had to give it a good deal of attention. He got good leadership to start growth down there, and he would go down fairly often.

Frederick: In addition, the Davis campus was simply known as the University Farm, and was in effect the practical side of agricultural teaching, and it was some years before it became a university in the true sense, with liberal arts colleges. Riverside was simply an experiment station. There was nothing in San Diego for a long time. There was nothing, of course, at Santa Cruz; Santa Cruz didn't come along until the mid-1960s.

Riess: I was wondering whether, when he was recruiting for Berkeley, whether he would interview people at Berkeley that he was considering referring to Los Angeles.

Frederick: Yes, and there were a few that he re-directed from Berkeley. I remember there was one distinguished professor, his name was Robert Nisbet, who was sent down to Riverside to help bolster that institution. They wanted to start a school of engineering at UCLA, and Sproul was chiefly responsible for sending a man named [Llewellyn M.] Boelter, who became the dean of the school of engineering down there. So there was interplay with the other institutions. But mostly in those early years everything revolved around Berkeley, and it would be my estimate that the outstanding faculty he attracted in the thirties from the midwest and eastern schools came to Berkeley.

I'd like to go back to Campbell a bit. President William Wallace Campbell served from 1923 to 1930. Historically, this was an era of prosperity in the country. Campbell was a scholar, an astronomer, and as an administrator he came to the university at a very good time, had no tremendous problems, and in the summer of 1929 told the regents that he wanted to retire the following year. As an astronomer he must have been looking at the stars, because he gave the regents notice just a few short months before the Great Depression hit us in October of '29.

Sproul came in in a more difficult time because he came in with the Great Depression during that difficult decade of the thirties. And then he went through the war years with the birth of the atomic bomb. The university and its scientists, Oppenheimer and others, were very much involved with that. Then he served through the 'fifties until 1958 when there was compulsory retirement at the age of sixty-seven.

A very curious thing we remember Sproul saying at one difficult period of his presidency which shows that he occasionally thought of his tenure, was this-- "Remember that the average tenure of a college president in the United States is four and a half years." Well, of course, he made the odds a little different with his twenty-eight years as president.

Frederick: Looking back on his twenty-eight years, it's difficult to describe all the accomplishments of President Sproul, but it is possible to say, from what he said about his vision of a greater university, that the university ended up far exceeding the vision that he talked about in the 1930s.

Riess: Did he actually talk about the vision? What kinds of things are you recalling?

Frederick: He didn't use the word "vision," but it was his feeling that Berkeley had this tremendous potential which was lying dormant, and he wanted to make it an outstanding institution, well known throughout the country. And he did this, and I think that the university ended up far exceeding what he thought he might be able to achieve.

Riess: Was it at university meetings that he would talk like that, or would he do that informally in your office?

Frederick: In various meetings. We would gather around, for example, at an annual Christmas party a day or two before Christmas. We'd have the Christmas party from noon through the afternoon, and often at that time the president would tell us about his feelings on the progress and what he hoped the future would be.

In his time, of course, the faculty became very renowned due to his masterful job of recruiting. The number of outstanding departments was eventually ranked right at the top of American universities along with Harvard. The library was another interest of the president, and whereas when he started it ranked well down the line as a library among university institutions, by the time he left it was ranked third in the nation, exceeded only by the Library of Congress and Harvard University.

The president was very interested in the physical plant at Berkeley, and it grew to take care of larger and larger enrollments during his tenure. As I said earlier, he was also very interested in the development of the other campuses.

### Three Hours in Chicago, A Story

Frederick: I've got what I think is an amusing story that I am not sure has ever been told. I've never heard anybody tell it: Everybody remembers the president for his artesian voice. It was an amazing

Frederick: voice, and when he started laughing, it was a rolling rollicking, hearty voice. One time at a staff meeting--this could have been at Christmas, he told of having been to New York, he often went there to see foundations and do business in New York--he told us that he had had a rather odd experience coming back.

In the thirties, of course, and the forties, too, everybody traveled by train. The only way to get from the West Coast to New York was to change trains to a different railway line from Chicago to New York, and there was always a wait over. Sproul was coming back from New York, he got into the Chicago station, and he found out he had perhaps three hours to wait. He needed the exercise, so he started walking. He decided he would have his dinner someplace, and he ended up in what turned out to be a restaurant and a night club.

For the first show they brought a comedian out on the stage who told jokes that the president said just struck him as being exceptionally amusing. He had been at some dreary meetings in New York, and he hadn't accomplished too much, so he started laughing. He said he went on, and he didn't realize that he was laughing as long and hard as he was, and the comedian got a lot of applause.

Soon thereafter the comedian put a hand on his shoulder and said, "Excuse me, sir, but did they hire you?" Sproul said, "Did they hire me?" The comedian said, "Yes. Why this is the greatest evening I've ever had. You had everybody rolling, and applauding and laughing. I hope they hired you."

Sproul said, "No, no, no." The president didn't reveal who he was, he simply said, "Oh no, I'm just here, and I have to catch a train later on. The comedian said, "Well, geez, sir, I sure wish you could get on the payroll here. You'd be the best thing this club ever had." A few minutes later, he had the manager come and tell him that the comedian wanted to know if there was any way that he could come around occasionally, and Sproul said, no, he lived on the West Coast.

When he finished his dinner and looked at his watch, he saw he better get moving. He called for a check and had a lot of difficulty. Finally he stormed around, and the manager came out. "Oh," he said, "There's no charge, no, you come back any time you want. You come back. There's no charge for you for dinner. No, sir." [laughter]

I'd forgotten that until just recently.

Riess: Instead of singing for his supper, he laughed for his supper.

Frederick: He laughed for his supper. He had this strong voice as a boy. I understand that his mother thought that he should go into the voice field, either opera or some other outlet, because he had such a strong voice even as a youngster.

Riess: Amusing that he told the staff the story.

Frederick: We'd all tell stories at the Christmas afternoon meetings, and Ellis would write skits. Our office would write and perform a number of skits, "take offs" on the dean of students, and a little frivolity with a skit on the dean of women, and the recorder, and some of the other officers of the university.

Riess: It sounds like you were a really close little family there.

#### Sproul's Relations with Deutsch, Neylan

Riess: Did you observe his way of relating to the people he was with? Were there favorites? Provost Deutsch?

Frederick: Yes. Of course Provost Deutsch had been an instructor of the president at Mission High School in San Francisco. Sproul was very fond of him, and he ended up as his vice-president.

Deutsch was very helpful to us. He was a soft-spoken, gentle man, with a lot of wisdom about a lot of things. And sometimes, if we didn't want to go to the president, why, we would go to Deutsch, who was a very easy man to talk to, and sit down with, and relate our problem.

Riess: That leads me to ask you what kinds of situations you observed where Sproul was really hot under the collar about something?

Frederick: I think the cross that Sproul had to bear was Regent John Francis Neylan.

Riess: But that's much later.

Frederick: Well, it started in the thirties. Remember, the regents then were appointed for sixteen years, and Neylan had two terms, 1928-1960. Neylan was always difficult. As I remember it, Sproul said once

Frederick: that life would be so much more pleasant if it wasn't for a certain regent. And of course we knew he was alluding to Neylan. It was said in our office or from various other sources that no matter what report Sproul made in regents meetings, Neylan could usually find some small part of it to pick apart. So, he was a very difficult man for the president. And of course later on in the loyalty oath he was extremely difficult.

The president relied on Deutsch for many things, but also, putting in the days that he did, he would get in touch with other faculty, and he would get in touch with a variety of people. One of his close advisors was Joel Hildebrand, who held a number of administrative positions. Hildebrand lived to be, what, over a hundred years old. Just died in recent years.

Riess: Was somebody from the University News Service assigned to cover the regents' meetings during the thirties? Or how did you get regents meetings news?

Frederick: If we didn't cover it ourselves, and usually Ellis would go, we would get information from someone like Jim Corley, who we were very close to, and who eventually was made comptroller. We were on a very close basis, particularly with Corley, who later lobbied for the university in Sacramento, and was a classmate of Pettitt's. I had known him as a student, briefly, as a hurdler on the track team.

Riess: Were routine meetings of the regents considered to be news?

Frederick: There wasn't really much reporting on regents meetings the way they're reported today. Although the newspapers would send someone to attend the meetings, there wasn't that much that came out of the regents' meetings.

#### "Mario Savio Days"

Frederick: This is just a small anecdote that I think is interesting: During the late sixties, during the difficult times that the university had, "Mario Savio days" as we called them, I was sitting with a group of faculty at the senior table in The Faculty Club.

Riess: What's the senior table?

Frederick: The senior table, as I called it, was a table that held eight or ten. Faculty Club members often sat at tables by departments, but the senior table seemed to represent the people like Hildebrand, and some of the top ranking people in the university. I was occasionally invited to sit there, I'd walk up to the club with someone, and they'd ask me to sit there.

On this particular day they were talking about student difficulties, and I told them the story about starting with the university, and the president telling me that if I wanted to continue working at the university I better find out everything that went on. Soon after, another faculty member arrived, and they insisted that I repeat the story. By this time they told me that they were incredulous that Sproul, who they knew chiefly by reputation, could have been as authoritarian as that appeared to be. I think in the thirties he could be very authoritarian with his staff. He gave the directions, and his word was law. No doubt about that.

At this same table some time later a Nobel laureate, Melvin Calvin, brought up the matter of what should be done if students took over your class. He said he thought it a very real thing, that the way things were going that one day, in one of his classes, the members of that class might decide to take over the class. And he felt that it was good time to discuss exactly what you did in such a case. That was the other end of the pole, after my story about the way Sproul ran the university in those earlier days.

Now, I've got one other thing I want to say: After the troubled sixties I was often asked, with my background with Sproul, how would President Sproul have handled the uprising in the sixties? And my reply has usually been something like this: I feel it would have been handled much better than it was. I remember rushing to Sproul Plaza when I heard that the police car with the student who'd been arrested was surrounded by bodies, bodies of the hard core of the Free Speech Movement students.

Leaning against one of the plane trees in Sproul Plaza was the dean of the School of Criminology. His name was [Joseph D.] Lohman. I said to him, "Why aren't you at the meeting called by the president on planning how to handle this?" The dean of criminology said, "I wasn't invited, but I do understand that there are a lot of social scientists meeting there, probably discussing and arguing theory instead of action." I said to the dean, "What would you do?" He said, "Why, I would be up on the balcony, there, in the middle of Sproul Hall, on the second floor with a great

Frederick: bullhorn, and tell the students that they were on the property of the university regents, private property, and they'd be arrested unless they dispersed in such and such a time. After half an hour, or an hour, or whenever, if they didn't move, why, I'd then call in every police department in the area, and haul those prone figures away." To me this sounded more in the direction of the way Sproul would have moved.

Riess: And then talk later, presumably.

Frederick: Yes. I have a strong feeling that President Sproul would have made the decision himself. He wouldn't sit down with a group of faculty discussing the matter, he would move very fast. He was very decisive in cases like that, made up his mind, and I'm sure he would have moved very quickly.

Sproul: Moving Quickly on Campus Issues, Problems

Riess: What are parallel cases? Where he did move quickly?

Frederick: Well, for example he hadn't been president too long, I think just a few months, when the Berkeley team went to Los Angeles and was beaten by an enormous score, something like 64 to nothing by USC. There had always been a strong feeling that USC went to extreme ends in recruiting their players, and possibly did things that weren't within the rules.

Well, the editor of the Daily Californian, a chap named Arthur Arlett, immediately wrote a story saying, in effect, that USC was a semi-professional team. The following day, the word reached President von Klein Smid of USC. von Klein Smid, very angry, got in touch with the president, and the president called in the editor, Arlett, asked him if he could substantiate these charges. Arlett said no, but everybody seemed to know that that was happening, and the president said, "You're fired. You are no longer editor of the Daily Californian."

Riess: Oh!

Frederick: Just like that.

And then, as I remember it, we had some left wing groups on the campus in the thirties, and they started small demonstrations, but they were soon dispersed on Sproul's orders. He wouldn't stand for anything not within the rules on the campus.

Riess: There were various other publications that incurred his wrath in one way or another.

Frederick: Yes. For example, the Raspberry Press was brought out each semester, and that was put out by the editors of the Daily Californian. One year their headline article on the front page related that they had unearthed a scandal, the fact that a certain dean [Walter Morris Hart] on the University of California campus had purchased land on Piedmont Avenue, and some months later sold it to the Rockefeller interests for the building of International House. In that case the student editor was called in by Campbell and that editor [Fred Foy] was fired as the editor of the Daily Californian.

Riess: Were you on the staff then of the Raspberry?

Frederick: Yes, I worked on the Raspberry, on some student stories, projected romances, stories like "A young William Randolph Hearst, and his romance with an extraordinary young lady named 'Pineapples McFarland,' who came from the Hawaiian Islands, had a Scottish father, McFarland, and a Hawaiian mother, and was a very beautiful young lady." It was mostly student, semi-scandal oriented.

Riess: How did Sproul deal with problems with the campus press?

Frederick: I think Sproul started out by moving very quickly on the USC football story and dismissing Arthur Arlett--I think that was in the fall of 1930--but after that he relied a great deal on Professor Charles Raymond. It was worked out that Raymond was given an office in the publications building (now Moses Hall) and he held late afternoon office hours almost every day to confer with members of the Daily Californian staff. If there was any problem that they were concerned about, they would go to Raymond.

Charles Raymond, ASUC News Bureau, Journalism Department

Frederick: That was exceedingly helpful to the president, because Raymond would outline for the staff what might happen if the Daily Cal printed the controversial story that they had showed him. He would make suggestions as to how to write it in the manner of a top rate newspaper. This meant that often the stories that students wanted to run were toned down and in some cases not even run, and in some cases a lot more research was done before the story was printed. So that was a very helpful adjunct for the president.

Frederick: Raymond had the ability to get along with the students. They all liked him, and they all conferred with him. There was a good, friendly atmosphere between Professor Raymond and the students.

Riess: How did Fred Fischer fit into this?

Frederick: He was director of student publications, and I succeeded him, afterwards. No, there was a chap named Bob Law who followed Fischer.

Riess: After 1937 you moved over to the ASUC?

Frederick: Yes, in late 1936 I moved over to the ASUC. This was following in the footsteps of Kenneth Priestley. I had taken Kenneth Priestley's position with the university, and he had gone up to take over the ASUC News Bureau, which curiously enough was a one man and secretary operation, with thirty or forty students working on an activity called News Service and Public Relations.

Eshleman Hall was devoted to publications. There was lots of room for the students to come in and be assigned material to write, particularly about student activities for home town newspapers, and the like. Priestley was made graduate manager--the term was interchangeable--either graduate manager or sometimes general manager--of the associated student organization. That position included serving as athletic director for all the sports, plus running the affairs of the association. He brought me up to run the news bureau.

Incidentally, going back a step, one time Sproul had said to me, after I started with the university, "You ought to get your union card." I said, "Sir, union card?" "Yes, Ph.D." This was interesting, considering the fact that Sproul had earned a bachelor's degree and nothing else, and he became president. He said, "If you're going to stay here, why, I think that's a good thing." Both George Pettitt and I started academic studies.

I spent three years part-time getting a master's degree in American history under a famous man, Frederic Logan Paxson, a prize winner in many directions who had been recruited and brought out from the University of Wisconsin. And then I started on my Ph.D., but about the time I started on that, my bride said, "You know, you are gone during the day-time, and then you have to go back to the library at night. You didn't tell me about this before we were married." So I gave up my aspirations for a Ph.D. I used to urge George Pettitt to go on, which he did, and he did get his Ph.D.

Frederick: Well, I started in late '36, and I was a little restless in my new job, and in the summer of 1939 the president, who as I've noted had a lot of pressure from publishing interests, journalistic interests, decided that the university should have a department of journalism. Despite what the English department felt, a small department was started. They recruited a man who'd gotten his Ph.D. from the University of London, Dr. Robert Desmond.

He came to the Berkeley campus, and I met him right after he got on the campus. He came back to me and said, "You know, it's going to be difficult recruiting on short notice. Would you be willing to teach some courses?" That interested me very much. I went to Priestley, and I had to convince him that I could handle that as well as the News Bureau, and I did.

Before I knew it, I was teaching news writing, copy editing, and at one time editorial writing. It was a job that kept me up nights keeping ahead of the students. We used the Daily Californian offices in Eshleman Hall, which were very commodious, a big office with twenty or twenty-five desks and typewriters--bolted down, otherwise the typewriters would disappear. We would give practical courses in writing, have the students do their writing assignments in the Daily Cal offices when they were not in use. I enjoyed that very much and did that until war broke out.

Frederick: Navy Years, and the Return to Direct Publications

Frederick: I had obtained a commission in the navy, in part because of two strong and beautiful letters written by President Sproul, and former president David Prescott Barrows. (I found from others that I was being investigated by the navy, over a period of about a year and a half.) I was called to active duty one week before Pearl Harbor for intelligence training. So I had to take a leave from the university. The intelligence training course lasted one week because Pearl Harbor broke out and I went right to work with an intelligence group in San Francisco.

This has nothing much to do with the university, but I will say that I always felt that I didn't know any reserve officer that was more fortunate than I, because after a little over a year in San Francisco I was shipped to Washington, and while I was awaiting assignment one day, my commanding officer came in and said I was to go to the White House, and I'd be the liaison officer between the White House and the navy department. At the end of each day

Frederick: I had to write a report, which I dictated on what was happening in the executive arm of government. I sat in on conferences with Roosevelt, and that was an exciting period.

Then after that I was shipped out to Pearl Harbor on the staff of Admiral Chester Nimitz. A curious little anecdote about that is I had been there just a short time and was given an assignment to convene a meeting with all the top officers in the area, and not overlook anything. Admiral Nimitz stepped out and asked who had put the meeting together. I said I had, sir, and he said, "One thing I want today is a recorder." That was the one thing I had overlooked on a list of twenty or thirty things, and he said, "Step in here."

I sat there wondering what demotion I would get, while he waited for an aide to find a recorder or a crack stenographer. He started querying me, my name and my background, and he said, "From Berkeley? Did you ever hear of a man named Robert Gordon Sproul, who I admire very much?" I said, "Know him? I've worked for him," knew him intimately. He said, "Come up to dinner tonight."

The rest of my office group kept saying, "Well, you're going to be in trouble for that error." I said, "No, Admiral Nimitz invited me to dinner tonight." [laughs] And it was all because of knowing Sproul. It was the beginning of a fine friendship.

Well, I've gotten side-tracked. When I came home, and got out of the navy, after those three experiences, intelligence in San Francisco, the White House, and then Nimitz's staff, I went to see Sproul.

When I called, still in my shining uniform, Agnes Robb, who protected the president, said he was at UCLA. So I had a conversation with Miss Robb, whom I always enjoyed and admired, and as I was talking to her the president walked down the aisle in back of her. I said, "Miss Robb, he's flown back, he's here." She looked around and without a trace of embarrassment said, "Oh! He must have come in when I didn't see him." Well, of course there was no way he was coming in without Agnes knowing it, but that was the way she covered for the president.

Then I had a session with the president. It was at the north end of the second floor of Sproul Hall, and I remember more than anything else that he sat behind an enormous desk on a small elevated platform, and I sat on a chair that was almost on the floor so that you had to tilt your head back to look at the

Frederick: president. It wasn't long after that that I read a Fortune article about how great executives always were advised to have whoever they were interviewing look up to them. And you certainly had to look up to Sproul.

I don't know if this story should be included or not. But at any rate, I had a good talk with him, told him that I'd been an escort officer for Henry Luce--Henry Luce of Time, Life, Fortune--in the Pacific. I'd been assigned to him, and I struck up a wonderful relationship with Luce, and he said I could have a job with his organization. I said I was considering that.

Sproul's old recruiting instinct came back. He convinced me that the university was the place for me. I remember calling up Luce about this. He said, "You made just the choice I would make if I were in your position." He said, "I can't think of anything nicer than university life, and you were going to have to start in some place like Indianapolis if you came with us."

Riess: What slot did you go back into at the university?

Frederick: It turned out that one person, Richard Kelly, had taken over the News Bureau and the publications office during the war, because of the shortage of people and the shortage of activities, too. I was offered either job, take my pick. I thought, well, I'd love to have a new job, and I took over the job of director of publications in the spring of 1946 which was often confused with the agricultural publications or university publications. It never did have the title of student publications. On all the letterhead and all the material that was circulated, it was director of publications, but it was student publications.

Riess: The ASUC News Bureau sounds like a step down from the importance of the University News Service.

Frederick: I suppose one consideration was that it paid more. It paid more, and I found out, through Priestley, who recruited me, that it was more exciting in many ways because you had all these trips and were essentially on your own. For example, during the fall of the year, wherever you went, you always went at least a week ahead of a football game or an alumni meeting--usually all the time you could afford to take--to Seattle, or Pullman, Washington, or Los Angeles, or Atlanta and did radio and newspaper work in whatever city you went to. Also I had wonderful trips to Atlanta, Georgia, which included going to Mexico afterwards. Three week trips. I guess part of it was the glamour of being associated closely with the athletic teams, football, basketball, track, etc.

Riess: Was your office a censor bureau?

Frederick: No, there was no censorship. Without any great authority, it was up to you to lead, in whatever manner you could, the direction of the daily student newspaper, the magazines, the Pelican magazine, which was often in difficulty with the administration, the literary magazine, the Occident and the California Engineer, a monthly magazine, and the Blue and Gold, the year book.

Riess: Exactly what did your job entail?

Frederick: My office in effect served as the publishing arm for the five student publications as well as for football and other athletic programs along with some occasional publications. I negotiated the contracts with the various printing companies, contracts with engravers and the professional photographers, with the paper companies, both newsprint and magazine and book stock. I contracted for daily teletype news service from either Associated Press or United Press. Our office handled both the daily classified advertising and all national advertising. We had contractual arrangements with five New York advertising representatives and I occasionally made trips to New York for contract adjustments and advertising rate schedules. Incidentally we always obtained top ad rates because of the university's size and prestige. I can't quote figures for that period but I do know that the present off-campus Daily Cal with less circulation (we used to print as many as 32,000 papers daily) has advertising revenue of over a million dollars yearly. And when I say yearly, that amounts to 150 to 175 issues, equivalent to approximately half a year.

We worked up budgets for each of the publications with the student managers and editors and believe it or not they were usually maintained. On my staff I had an assistant director who generally was also an artist and skilled in layout, an accountant who also was the budget officer, an advertising specialist and a secretary.

We worked very closely with the editors and managers and these were usually fairly good relationships. Sometimes there was a difficult relationship, but most of the time it was a very good relationship, and the background I had in teaching journalism came into play. You had to work with the students on advertising because advertising always turned a good profit for the Daily Californian, and the profit from the newspaper helped underwrite the budgeted losses of the magazines. My concern was that the students had a worthwhile learning experience while working on the various publications.

Frederick: There were a lot of wonderful students who came through publications. For example, I can think of people like Joan Didion, who's now acclaimed one of the great prose writers in America. A number of people from publications went out and did very well in one field or another.

Riess: Were you the person who would receive notice of the displeasure of the state of California, or the university governance?

Frederick: Oh, yes. Very much so. Very much so. Often it would be the dean of students who would get in touch with me. Sproul once or twice got in touch with me, but mostly it would be from the president to the dean of students. We would often hold hearings. I used a device called the publications board composed of the editor and manager of each of those five publications. This turned out to be a very good device. When the dean was very upset about something we would often convene the student publications board and all sit down and try to talk it out.

Riess: When was that instituted?

Frederick: I think that had been instituted before my time. Often the dean would start out wanting to expel someone for an article, or material say in the humor magazine and end up compromising by removing him or her from office or putting the student on probation for a semester. That sort of thing.

Riess: Was your job seen as a way of preventing any of these things if you had done ideally well?

Frederick: That's right. If I had cooperative editors and managers who worked with me to that degree, why, we would talk over problems, and we would talk over something that might offend the university officers very much. Often there would be a compromise. Occasionally Sproul was upset about things that were printed.

The person who used to get in touch with me as much as anybody was the comptroller, James Corley, because the Daily Californian seemed to go everywhere, and some of the state legislature got copies of it, or heard about it, or knew about it, or read it. Corley was always concerned about the effect in Sacramento.

It was a post that, in some institutions, had a good deal of authority. But Sproul, when it came right down to defining what student editors could do, had ambivalent feelings. In fact, he gave out a statement once that said, "Students learn by making mistakes, and if the mistakes aren't too great, I guess we can live with them." I suppose that indicated he mellowed with time.

Riess: Verne Stadtman said that, unlike Campbell, Sproul preferred working through student government in handling the discipline of editors who overstepped the bounds.\*

Frederick: Yes, mostly through the student publications board. Sometimes, of course, the matter would go first of all to the student "executive committee," as it was called at first--that was changed to the "student senate." But yes, I think Sproul did like to work through student organizations, and of course he looked toward the dean of students a great deal, Dean Hurford Stone. I had many sessions with Stone, I remember.

Riess: I have a number of questions left, and we can't deal with them, sad to say.

Frederick: Yes, and I am sure I have strayed from the main subject, Sproul, too many times. One day I plan to write the story of the Pelican Building. This is the episode concerning a 1903 graduate, Earle C. Anthony, who told President Sproul he would leave the university his entire estate (70 million was the first appraisal) on condition that he be given approval to construct a building on campus for the Pelican humor magazine, which he founded on-campus when he was an undergraduate at the turn of the century. Anthony wanted the building in Faculty Glade to the consternation of all, but the site chosen was on the banks of Strawberry Creek, hidden by trees and foliage looking south from Wheeler Hall steps. Anthony made many, many demands during construction which President Sproul handled adroitly and skillfully and of course I was involved for many months in the entire project. It was my first venture in an unusual form of fund raising, which later became my second career. Yes, the university got the building along with Anthony's large estate.

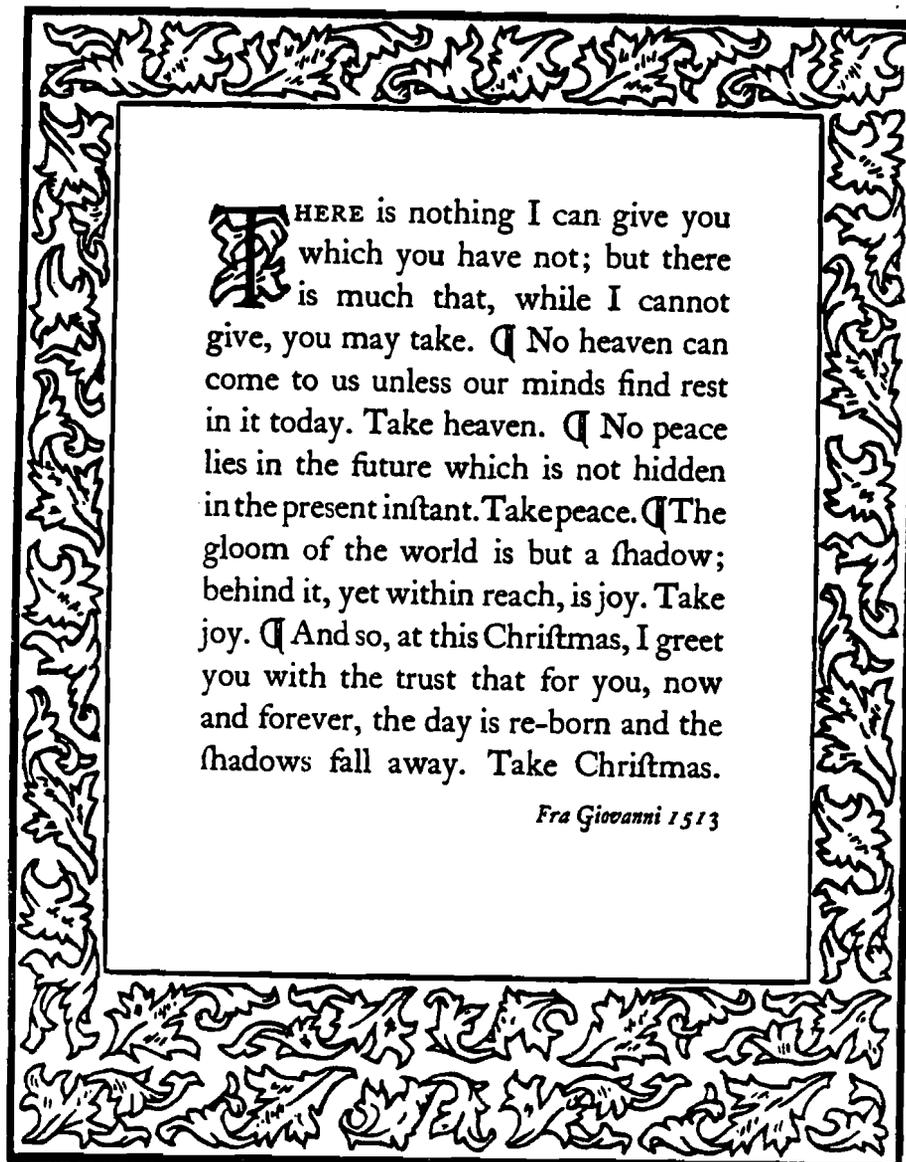
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\*Verne A. Stadtman, The University of California, 1868 to 1968, McGraw-Hill, 1970, p. 286.

A Letter from President Sproul

President Sproul was a person with a remarkable capacity for work. At the end of the day he would normally be seen leaving his office in California Hall carrying his briefcase so he could review material he hadn't been able to get to during the day. He headed for the President's House on campus, just a short walk from his office. The briefcase he carried was no ordinary one; besides being oversized it bulged to such an extent that it resembled a small suitcase. In addition to the heavy workload of university business, the president saw to it that personal correspondence was not neglected. If the spirit moved him he even wrote letters he wasn't obligated to write, particularly if something struck him as unusual or intellectually stimulating.

In the 1950s, my wife and I were very impressed with a Christmas card we received from friends in England. The card was not copyrighted, so we had a local printer do a similar card with added adornment carrying the famous Christmas message written in 1513, over four centuries before, by Fra Giovanni. It follows:



President Sproul took mandatory retirement in 1958 after a record twenty-eight years of leadership. Still an active and vigorous man, within months he was involved as a director, chairman or member of a host of organizations, regional, state and national. In late 1959, during the holiday recess, he was in his office as usual and wrote the following letter in response to our Christmas card:

ROBERT GORDON SPROUL

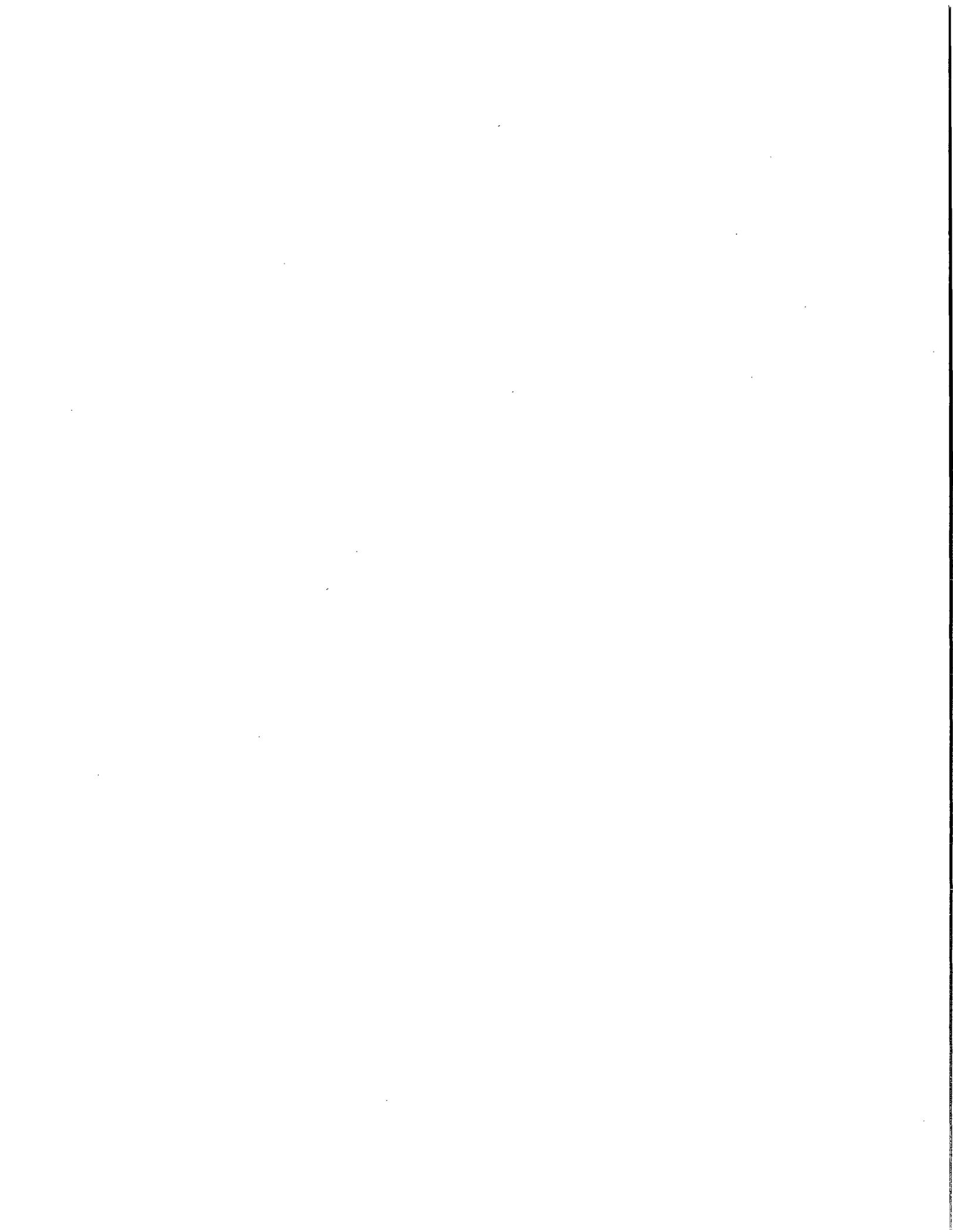
Berkeley, California  
December 29, 1959

Dear Wally & Christine: This is a most unusual letter, for it is a response to a Christmas card - the one you sent this year to the Sprouls and, I presume, to other friends as well. I know as well as you do, that it is socially aberrant, to say the least, to acknowledge a Christmas card but I cannot refrain from telling you how much I (we) enjoyed reading the <sup>1513</sup> Christmas greeting of Fra Giovanni. I had never <sup>before</sup> come across this bit of wisdom superbly expressed, and I want you to know that I feel it is the 1959 gift that I shall remember longest and treasure most. If this be hyperbole, make of it what you will!

Happy New Year to you!

Robert Sproul





Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

May Dornin

BERKELEY'S ARCHIVIST EMERITUS RECALLS THE SPROUL YEARS

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

May Dornin was archivist of the University of California from 1946 to 1964, and before that, from 1926 to 1946, senior cataloguer in the library. She came back from retirement to be a writer and research associate for the office of centennial publications, 1964-1968. From start to finish she has been a Cal Berkeley sports fan.

Miss Dornin lived through the Sproul years on campus and lived on to record them as historical consultant for the Centennial Record of the University of California (UC Press, 1968), and co-author of the University of California: A Pictorial History (UC Printing Dept., 1967). In 1983 she was interviewed for the Women's Faculty Club oral history--she was a resident there from 1947 to 1971--and now for the Sproul history. Her present home is The Sequoias, in San Francisco.

With her gift for organizing material in a sequential and helpful way, Miss Dornin's commitment as an interviewee was such that a question or a corroboration from me, the interviewer, or from Jim Kantor, my co-interviewer and Miss Dornin's successor as University Archivist, was really a breach of good manners. The interview opens with her stated wish that she had kept a notebook "about all the funny stories about Sproul that came in." She had assumed she would remember them, and many of them she did. But her hindsight does underscore the need for oral history to get down in writing the unwritten stories.

Robert Gordon Sproul's voice is a big part of the collective memories of the man. Miss Dornin at several points in the interview imitates its quality. Miss Dornin herself has a voice edged with the humor and irony of a situation, particularly in her "authentic" telling of the story of President Campbell overhearing his vice-president's calling Sacramento. Having heard that story so often, I "stopped before they started" several interviewees who were about to offer it to me. But who could resist the story as Miss Dornin introduced it?

Miss Dornin's unflagging devotion to the University of California and to exactitude is as strong today as it was in the years of her careful library work. Her editing of the interview was clear and helpful.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name May Dornin

Date of birth March 25, 1897 Place of birth Los Angeles, Calif.

Father's full name Oscar George Dornin

Birthplace New York, New York.

Occupation Treasurer, Pacific Board of Fire Underwriters, S.F.

Mother's full name Mary (Miller) Dornin

Birthplace Manzanita Hill, Nevada Co., Calif. (a small mining community near North Star from called destroyed by hydraulic mining)

Occupation Before marriage, an accountant Fireman's Fund Insurance Co. S.F.  
After marriage housewife

Where did you grow up? San Francisco to 1906; Berkeley, Calif. 1906-1911

Present community Since Oct. 1971 the Sequoias, retirement community S.F.

Education Berkeley, Calif. public schools. Graduated Berkeley

High School 1915. Univ. of Calif. Berkeley A.B. 1921, M.A. and certificate in Library Science 1922

Occupation(s) Librarian, Eureka High School, Eureka, Calif. 1922/23;

Asst. Librarian, Fresno State College, Fresno, Calif. 1923/1926;

Senior Cataloguer, Univ. Library, Univ. of Calif. 1926-1946;

University Archivist, " " " " 1946-1964

Writer and Research Asst. Office of Centennial Pubs. Univ. of Calif. 1964-1968

Special interests or activities

1. Environmentalist (Member Sierra Club, Audubon Soc., Coast Range Soc., Save S.F. Bay, etc.)
2. Amateur, nature photography
3. Reading and collecting of books particularly western U.S., California and San Francisco

Berkeley's Archivist Emeritus Recalls the Sproul Years

[Date of Interview: April 25, 1984]

Dornin: What I wish I'd done as an archivist was to keep a notebook about all the funny stories about Sproul that came in. They used to come my way, and I'd think, "Well, I can remember that."

Reading over the various decades of Sproul's presidency (1930-1958), I realize what a difficult time the man had the whole time he was president, because when he was appointed, it was just the beginning of the Great Depression of 1930. Then right on top of that was World War II which lasted half way through the 1940s. Way back in the 1930s, the evil that was communism had begun to simmer, and then after the war that came back and all the rest of his career, right up through the loyalty oath controversy (1949-1953) it was a problem. It's amazing to think of how little really tranquil time he had.

Intermingled with all of this was this question of the other campuses, particularly UCLA, with all the jealousies. But he never let go of his big ambition, which was trying to keep one university. What a wonderful man he must have been, to have kept himself together, as well as the university, and not to have retired before he did. Other men would have given up after ten years. The things that he did to overcome all the difficulties that he had to meet made him the great man that he was.

Sproul was appointed as president by the regents in September of 1929, and then he asked for a six months leave to go east and talk with presidents of other universities. He had nine universities that he picked out, some state universities like Michigan, some private universities like Harvard.

Riess: [to J.R.K. Kantor, Dornin's successor as archivist at Berkeley] Is there a diary of that trip in the archives?

Kantor: I don't know, though of course there are files that go back to pre-presidential years.

Dornin: You see, his predecessor, President Campbell, wasn't going to leave his position for a year after Sproul was appointed, so that Sproul could do that, he wasn't leaving the university in the lurch. By July of 1930, when Campbell left, Sproul was back. I think this was also a time when he was able to talk with members of the faculty, and find out what they wanted. Sproul's was to be a long presidency, and of course it turned out it was even longer than Wheeler's. It followed the interim presidencies of Barrows, and Campbell too.

Sproul's appointment was very, very well received over the state of California because he had worn so many hats on his way up to the presidency. He'd been all these various things, land agent, comptroller, vice-president. He had traveled so widely and talked with the farmers, the miners, people in the north and south. When the news of his appointment came out, people could say, "Well, I know who he is."

Certainly all of us on campus were delighted; they couldn't have picked anybody that we liked better than Sproul. He was always very close to the students, and you always had the sensation that he liked the students and wanted to be with them.

Riess: Did the students expect that the university would be a different place with this new, young president?

Dornin: Oh yes. President Campbell was sixty years old and he was already slowing down. His experience before his presidency had been up at Lick Observatory, Mount Hamilton. He didn't know the Berkeley campus; he came down there for Academic Senate meetings, but he didn't know it. The first thing he did, for instance, he said there were too many dogs on the campus, and so he ordered dogs off the campus!

He was a man who had been the top man, his word was law, and when it came to talking to the Academic Senate, when the Academic Senate would argue against something, he didn't like it.

Riess: That is interesting history. I do want to get back to what you experienced more directly of President Sproul.

Dornin: Well, there is one story I want to tell you, and everybody knows it, but they don't tell it right, they don't get the emphasis on the right words! This is the old telephone story: When he was vice-president, he had an office next to President Campbell. One day his voice began coming through the wall and it went on and got louder and

Dornin: louder, and finally President Campbell could not stand it any longer and he said to his secretary, "Do go and see what Sproul is doing." She was back very quickly and said, "Mr. Sproul is talking to Sacramento." "Well," said Campbell exasperatedly, "why doesn't he use the telephone?" [laughter] You know, Campbell was a Scotsman, and Scotsmen are noted for their humor.

When President Sproul called me up and wanted to know something, I always tried, if I couldn't answer him immediately, never to keep him waiting. I knew he was writing a speech--he would tell me that. Usually, he would say, "I'm writing a speech to give at the Commonwealth Club, for instance, and I want to talk about something that happened back in the 1890s, and I think I know the date, but I'm not positive of it, and you know I have to be very careful in my speeches to get things right because there is always an alumnus somewhere in the audience who was there at the time of the incident of which I am trying to talk, and if I don't get it right, he writes me a letter and tells me so!"

If it was some date I could remember instantly, and I agreed with what he thought it was, I'd say, "Yes." But if I had to look it up, I always told him I would call him back, so that he could go on with another part of his speech. If I had a copy of whatever it was that he needed, I would then hurry over with it to Miss Robb, so that he could get the speech, or whatever it was, and read it for himself.

I got the most marvelous letter from him once. I meant to bring it. When his own class had its 50th reunion on the campus in 1963, one of the things that they did was to have buses take the alumni all around the campus to see what had happened since they were there in 1913. They had students trained to go with the bus to explain about the buildings and what they replaced, for instance. Well, I got a call from Agnes Robb, and she asked me, "Could you take an hour off from the archives and come over here and be in one of these buses to talk, because the student who was supposed to come hasn't shown up and we haven't got anybody else to put in." I called the librarian, Mr. Coney, and asked him, and he said, "Oh, sure, go ahead."

I had been a student at Berkeley High in 1913, and I'd lived in Berkeley ever since the earthquake and fire in San Francisco in 1906, and I knew that campus of 1913 as well as the alumni did! So we had quite a tour. The next day or two I got a letter from President Sproul, and he said that all the people that were in my bus had had the most wonderful trip. The others were jealous. He said, "I knew I could rely on you. Thank you very much." Oh, he wrote me a dear letter.

Dornin: That was the kind of thing that he did. I have another letter from him too. He wrote this when he went back East to attend a convention of some sort, college presidents or something like that. He wrote it from his hotel. Apparently he had fifteen minutes to spare, and he sat down, and again, he wrote me a letter of thanks for the fact that anybody who wanted to take the trouble to come upstairs to Room 303 in the library and ask me for something always got help; that I was willing to help, or tried to help. He just sat down and wrote that with a few spare minutes he had in the midst of a convention. You wouldn't expect him to be even thinking about that. It was things like that that made him so well liked.

He was always thinking about others. An example came at the beginning of his presidency in 1930. The budget for 1929-30 had already been passed by the state legislature and the money was in the bank. So, although the depression was beginning, the university was not too badly affected until it was time to determine the 1932-33 budget. Money was getting very tight by then, and everyone knew the university's allotment would be cut by the state legislature.

One day, everyone on the campus payroll received a letter from President Sproul to the effect that the budget was about to be made up, and something would have to be done about salaries. Two things could be done: one, we could keep our present salaries and go on, but it would then be necessary to reduce the faculty and cut the staff; two, we could take a 25 percent cut right across the board, beginning with the president of the university. He had four people in his family to take care of, it was going to be hard on him to take a cut, but he wasn't going to keep his salary, and let other people suffer.

So, we had these two choices, and we were to mark our choice and send it back to the president's office, unsigned in an unmarked envelope. Again, who was going to say, "I'll keep my salary, and let somebody else go off." That would take an awfully selfish person. I never got the statistics on that, but we got the cut in salary. And we accepted it.

On May 31, 1929, the Southern Branch of the University (then so-called) moved to Westwood and became UCLA. Their big football enemy was USC, the University of Southern California. But now, they began wanting to play with Cal. Sproul could sense that there would be a lot of animosity between the two campuses in a football game. He gave that a lot of serious thought. I don't know that he could absolutely have stopped UCLA joining the Pacific Coast Conference, but he gave a great deal of thought as to how this was going to be managed.

Dornin: Anyway, UCLA joined the Pacific Coast Conference in 1933, and that's when they had the first game with Berkeley, down at Los Angeles, in the Coliseum. The score was 0 to 0. It couldn't have been better! [laughter]

Then in 1934 UCLA came up to Berkeley, and this time the score was Cal 3 to UCLA 0. We won the second game, and the third game, in 1935, 14 to 0. Then they began getting good men. UCLA had been in existence since 1919, and they were beginning to get some rich alumni, and they weren't having Berkeley getting ahead of them, so they began to get good football players into UCLA. In 1936, at UCLA, they beat Cal 17 to 6. And they beat us many times thereafter.

One of the things that President Sproul did, in trying to think how he could ease the animosity, was to decide to sit one half of the game on one side of the field, and the other half of the game on the other side of the field. That must have been so difficult, to sit on the UCLA side and cheer for their touchdowns. But then he would come over to the Cal side, so he could root for them and cheer their touchdowns in the second half.

Riess: You think his heart was really always with Berkeley?

Dornin: Oh, I do. He was an alumnus of Berkeley.

What he did was, in the middle of the half-time break, after the band had played and so forth, the student body president from the UCLA side would escort him down to the center of the field, and the president of the Berkeley student body would go out to the center of the field, receive him and escort him back.

I used to sit in the top row of the 47th section of the stadium, year after year, and watch him come across. And I used to think, "How do you do it?"

Riess: I believe Berkeley used to recruit its good players from southern California. The idea was that they "grew them bigger" down there.

Dornin: Well, they were out of doors more there, they were all athletes, they were always swimming. Of course, when you come right down to it, the famous "Wonder Team" was about half southern California boys. They all came from San Diego with "Nibs" Price who was their coach down in San Diego. When "Nibs" came up to Cal to be the assistant coach here, he brought the boys with him.

Riess: Did President Sproul, or Miss Robb, ever have to call and check with you about traditions, and how things were done in the past?

- Dornin: Oh no, he knew, he had a phenomenal memory. Not for anything like that, unless it was something that happened before he came to college.
- Riess: What percentage of the campus population went to those football games?
- Dornin: Very large, at least when they were at Cal. A lot of them used to go down to UCLA too. The trains would be overloaded. You could sleep on the train overnight, so that was the easy way to go. I don't think many students had cars in the 1930s. But the stadium was always filled up here in Berkeley.
- Riess: Sproul's sport as a student was track, wasn't it?
- Dornin: Yes, and before he was president he was a timekeeper at the track meets, but I don't think he kept that up after he was president, partly because as president you can't do things you could do when you weren't so high up.
- Riess: Where did he sit in the basketball games?
- Dornin: After he became president he sat where he could watch the Cal rooting section and talk across to them. I don't think he sat on that side as the side of the opposition, but that he wanted to be where he could talk to the Cal rooters. He would call right across the whole gymnasium.
- Riess: What do you mean, "talk to them?"
- Dornin: Well, in between the halves. Or if there was some particularly fine play by Cal, he'd get up and say, "Yell, fellows, yell!"

This business of the very loud voice. I always knew where he was on the campus if he was anywhere away from inside a building. Say it was twelve o'clock and I was going out to lunch, coming down towards Sather Gate, if I heard a big voice, I'd think, "Well, President Sproul must be coming." I'd look in all directions, and I'd find he was on the north steps of Sproul Hall, and I had heard him way up by Wheeler Hall!

You know, his mother said she thought he ought to be a lawyer, because he had such a good voice. Allan Sproul was the one who came nearer that, he became a banker. I could say something about him. When I went down to Berkeley High in the fall of 1912, Allan Sproul was also a student there. He was then president of the junior class, and the next year he was president of the student body.

Kantor: I thought the Sprouls lived in San Francisco. Robert Gordon Sproul had gone to school in San Francisco.

Dornin: I guess when Robert came to college they must have moved to Berkeley.

Allan was a true Sproul: he was goodlooking and very popular, active in the student body affairs, a good student, a good athlete. I used to admire him, oh, boy, did I admire him! From a distance! We all at Berkeley High knew who Robert Gordon Sproul was, because he was the big track man at Cal, you see. Now and again he would come to Berkeley High; when Allan was going to be in a track meet, or was going to give a speech before the student body or something, then here would come this big, long, lanky brother to see how little brother was getting along. I don't think there was a student at Berkeley who didn't know who Robert Gordon Sproul was, or what he looked like.

Kantor: Allan was a couple of years ahead of you at Berkeley High?

Dornin: He was one year ahead. Agnes Robb was with Allan Sproul's class also.

Kantor: You were in the class with Ella Hagar, and with Thornton Wilder, too.

Dornin: Yes, 1915, Thornton, and Ella Hagar and Katherine Towle. We were also in class with Herbert Eugene Bolton's children--the two older of the five daughters were in high school at the same time I was. Elizabeth Nutting, daughter of Professor Nutting in Latin, a number of the faculty children were in Berkeley High School, and that's how we knew how miserable the U.C. faculty salaries were, because the unfortunate children were so badly dressed. The faculty salaries were shameful. There was the idea, somehow, that to be on the staff of the University of California was worth a great deal of money to a man.

When I came back onto the library staff, in 1926, the head of the catalog department got \$3,600 a year. And the head librarian was only getting \$5,000 a year.

Kantor: Do you remember what you got per hour at that time?

Dornin: Per hour for student assistant--twenty-five cents. Then if you stayed the next year in the same job, you went up three cents.

Now, in the midst of all the internal troubles and money troubles in the 1930s, Provost Ernest Moore retired from UCLA in 1936, and then President Sproul went south with Mrs. Sproul and the children and stayed there for a year. The regents didn't try to put anyone

Dornin: into Moore's place because Sproul wanted to get to understand what southern California was like, what the people were like, in comparison to northern California. Also, what the faculty was like, and what differences there were that had to be reconciled. So he stayed there and Professor Monroe Deutsch was made the provost and vice-president at Berkeley and did a good deal of the work, but of course they communicated by phone, and I think Sproul came back once or twice.

He also wanted the people in southern California to see him. The way he put it, his words, was that he wanted them to see him as "the visible symbol." "To make my person the visible symbol of the unity of the university." He knew he had to do it; it was the only way he could do it. This business of disunity was growing, growing, gradually, not a lot of fuss, but it was there. The faculty at UCLA, for instance, thought that the university at Berkeley didn't want the faculty at UCLA to have any privileges at all, and felt the Berkeley faculty was just being mean. They then found out the Berkeley faculty disagreed among themselves just as much as they disagreed with UCLA! [laughter] It was just their habit.

Anyway, they didn't have a new head at UCLA for three years; they had an interim business when they had a group of deans as head of the campus. Sproul would come back to Berkeley and UCLA communicated with him what they wanted done.

There was also a good deal of muttering among the normal schools that they wanted to be universities, at least they wanted to be colleges. This was another thing that needed to be straightened out. Eventually, that ended up in the junior colleges, which was not Sproul's idea, but another man's.

There was one axiom that Sproul held onto tightly all through his whole administration, and that is--and I'm quoting on this-- "I believe that with proper organization, with ideals, with intelligent standards of admission and graduation, with enlightened progressive ideas of education, a very large number of students may receive an excellent education on a single campus." He held to that, right along.

He also believed that intelligent people who were well brought up, but who had different ideas on a certain subject, if they were brought together in a friendly atmosphere and without formality and became friends of each other, that they could solve their differences. He held that, and that was another thing that he applied to the university over and over again.

Dornin: He did this in the 1930s by having the students from both UCLA and Berkeley get together. The Cal Club was formed in 1934. The officers of each student association and other students, I think twenty-three from each campus, came together, and they lived on the campus for a weekend in a dormitory where they ate together and talked together informally. The meetings of the club alternated between Berkeley and Los Angeles. When a coed from UCLA became engaged and married the chairman of the Berkeley group, the club was decided to be a success.

In 1937 work was begun towards centralized administration on the two campuses so that each campus had exactly the same requirements and qualifications, and so that classes were conducted in about the same style, or rather that they dealt with the same amount of subject material, and that the two campuses were fairly close together in what was taught, so that students could transfer from one college to another without any trouble.

By 1945 Clarence Dykstra became the provost down at UCLA. He and Sproul had been friends for quite a long time before, and so they got on together beautifully. Both Sproul and Dykstra were of the opinion, and this is another quotation from Sproul, that "the student that goes to a university where there are no great teachers has been given a gold brick." Dykstra and Sproul were joined together in trying to get faculty members of particularly good ability, both to teach and to do research.

I liked basketball, and I used to go to the basketball games. After I went to live in the Women's Faculty Club, and that was in the 1940s, there were some people in the club there who liked basketball and I used to go with them regularly. Before that, I used to go with the people from the library--Wilma Waite was among them. We used to sit underneath the clock, down at the south end of the court, way up on the top row, where you could look down and see the plays develop.

Well, President Sproul and Mrs. Sproul attended those games too, and they would come in quite late. I guess Mrs. Sproul had to have dinner first, or something like that. They would come in usually just as the game was about to start. They sat opposite the Cal rooting section, on the east side, in the middle, halfway up. They would come in--and you could hear Sproul talking as he came along. The minute they came in the Straw Hat Band would strike up. As the Sprouls got into place, just before they sat down, there would be a big yell from the band, "Good Evening President and Mrs. Sproul." Sproul would wave his hand, and she would wave her hand. (That got to be "Bob and Ida Sproul," after he retired. But as long as he was president, it was "President Sproul.")

Dornin: As time went on, their three children grew up and got married, and the babies began coming around, and the elder Sprouls began bringing in little tow-headed boys. Mrs. Sproul would always come first, and she'd have the youngest with her, and she'd come in and sit down, and he'd come in and sit down. First it was one youngster, and then two, and then three and then four and then five. Always boys. I only saw a girl with them once. That time was when Marion Sproul Goodin, their daughter, came in with her daughter. But eventually here were Grandpa and Grandma Sproul with all these young fry in between. At halftime, when the ice cream man and the popcorn man came around, President Sproul would get up and reach deep into his pocket, and they would all have something to eat. That was so great. We just watched for that, kind of a circus. [laughter]

That decade, 1930, was really a very active time for things. In 1939 there is another thing that comes up. Sproul was offered a position as head of a bank in San Francisco, at a very high salary. Well, at that time I was secretary of the alumni association for the library school, and so I had come back in the evening to my desk in the library to do some work for the alumni association, and I heard all this noise outside, and I thought, "My gosh, what are these students up to now?" Yelling.

They came down right in front of the library, so I poked my head out the window and here was this mob of students in a torch light parade with banners, and big posters, saying "Sproul is our hobby." "We want you, Sproul." "Don't go." They were all shouting and coming along, heading for University House where the Sprouls lived.

I had read in the paper that Sproul had been offered an invitation to this bank, and I wondered what he was going to tell them. Then I heard his big voice boom out, and I thought, "He's come out of University House." (And the next morning's paper showed a picture of Sproul and Mrs. Sproul, and Mrs. Sproul, Sr., all three out on the front steps.) I opened the window and sat, listening intently, but I couldn't hear just what he was saying, because there were too many trees and buildings between me and University House! All of a sudden there was a great jubilant yell! And I thought, "Ah, he's going to stay!" [laughter]

The second time that came up was when Columbia University tried to get him as president, in 1947. Again there was a demonstration. Banners and torches. But this was held in the gymnasium, when Governor Earl Warren was there as the speaker. The students had a great big banner across the back of the stage: "Stay with us, Bob." I remember Sproul just sat there, relaxed, looking amused and pleased. Governor Warren was the one that was excited about the whole thing. He sat with clenched hands looking as though he wanted to get up and yell too.

Riess: Was that meeting just about convincing him to stay?

Dornin: No. It was to hear Warren, the governor, talk.

I remember those two events distinctly because we were so worried that he would be taken away from us, and we knew he was having so much trouble all through his administration. Everybody was terribly worried; somehow you trusted him so much, that everything he did was for the good of the university. You might not be too happy with it, but you knew it was for the best.

I had such sympathy for President Sproul. He went through so much with the Communists on campus in the 1930s. Then in the war the problems of getting materials. In the big laboratories, if something would break they just couldn't get a replacement.

Speaking of laboratories, that takes me back to 1939, when we got our first Nobel Prize winner. Getting a promotion for Associate Professor Ernest Lawrence, who was offered a top position at Northwestern University, was quite a story: the physics department didn't want it, but the chemistry department did. Sproul did too. It went to the Academic Senate and the decision there was that he shouldn't be given promotion. But Sproul then spoke up about how Lawrence was pulling the physics department out of the slump it was in, and so on, just on the strength of the research he was doing. So, he was promoted to full professor.

On the morning that we heard that Lawrence had received the Nobel Prize, the whole campus was alive with the excitement. It was tremendous. That time, and Sproul's appointment as president, and the time that we won the first Olympic championship for crew, those three times were the times I think that the campus just simply went wild, faculty as well as students.

In 1944 Sproul again had this idea of bringing his people together and getting them to talk, and that was when he formed the All-University Faculty Conference at Davis. Sproul chose the faculty that he wanted to get together to talk, men that he thought needed that sort of thing, and sent them up there to Davis for a weekend. One thing, the older men who were on the faculty and who were Sproul's friends because they had known him as a young man coming up, had retired by the middle forties. The new men coming in, who only knew him as a president, liked him but just didn't have the same feeling for him, the willingness to do what he wanted. He was having trouble then with the faculty. They wanted to do things on their own, the way they taught. So he started this annual get together to break that up.

Dornin: These men got together and they found out that what Sproul had to say had some sense to it. There were enough of them who were a little older and could say, "Well, look, President Sproul had a real reason for wanting to do this that way."

Riess: How do you actually know it worked?

Dornin: Because it was such a success. They all came home and said, "Let's do it again!" All the papers that were given at the meeting were published. Of course I would know it, because I subscribed to all the student and faculty publications, I had them in the archives. And I read publications from UCLA and from Santa Barbara and San Diego and Davis. When there was an eruption against what Sproul wanted to do and it was reported in any of those papers, I knew it. I was in a position to know a great many things that maybe other people didn't know.

I can remember when in the summer of 1949, the sheet of paper came around from President Sproul to the effect that a loyalty oath was going to be expected from all of us. I can remember being insulted to a certain extent, irritated at least, because for seven years we had been signing our yearly contracts; in ink we had signed a loyalty oath to the United States of America, the oath of allegiance. I felt hurt at being asked to sign an additional oath. The feeling that I had was that we were not trusted any more. I resented it. But I signed it, because I wasn't in a position to fight it, and moreover, fighting it would only hurt what President Sproul was trying to do against communism.

Kantor: Did you feel that forming the Robert Gordon Sproul Associates was a way to honor Sproul after all of these problems?

Dornin: David Gardner (President Gardner now) was head of that. He was the public relations man for the alumni association at the time. He came into the office and talked with Verne Stadtman--I was working with him in the Centennial Publications office then--and I asked Gardner about this new group, and he told me, "Don't you want to join?" And I said, "Yes, I do." I felt that that was little enough to do to honor him after all those years.

There's a funny story I must tell. Agnes Robb called me one day and she said, "What have you been doing? There's an FBI man in my office and he is asking a lot of questions about you. It seems that you are collecting a lot of Communist literature around the campus. He's coming over to see you, so hold your tongue and be careful of what you say." Well, he appeared and I took him and showed him this great stack of stuff I had piled up in the back of the

Dornin: archives, and I told him, "Someday, somebody is going to be writing a Ph.D. thesis about this period in the university. Those things tell everything that there is to know." All those Communists would be turning out these papers about their feelings and their ideas and what they're going to do and what they're not going to do. "These are going to be a prime source of knowledge." That's why I was going around every day picking up all these papers.

Kantor: What did the FBI man say to you then?

Dornin: You never saw a more embarrassed guy in your life than he was.  
[laughter]

But I guess it looked peculiar. I know Mr. Coney, our librarian, said to me, "What do you pick up all that stuff for? I came in today from lunch and you were way over there around Stiles Hall picking up papers. What are you doing?" I always tried to get more than one copy because some were better printed than others. Sometimes I was down on my hands and knees in the gutters. And I asked at the tables for things, too. Maybe they thought I was a Communist!

Riess: What access did you have to Sproul's papers? Had they started coming into the archives when you were there?

Dornin: That all came after I was out. You see, I left the archives in 1964. I was sixty-seven years old. At the point where I was retiring, the Office of Centennial Publications was established, and Kerr, who was then president, wanted me to be on it. I was expecting to retire from the archives that June, and this came in May. Kerr got the regents to keep me on until I was seventy, which was the state mandatory retirement age.

Kantor: Did you have Sproul's files in working on the Centennial Publications?

Dornin: Verne Stadtman, the chairman, was the one who had the access.

Kantor: But you had some early regents' files and records.

Dornin: Oh yes, for the early years. Yes, I used to help people.

Remember that man who came out from Harvard for the Sather Lectures and wrote on the fifty years of Sathers? Sterling Dow. I got him all the correspondence between the presidents of the universities on the Sather Lectures.

Kantor: Now in archives there are the official files of the president's office, and there are also the Robert Gordon Sproul files, which are considered the personal files, which Miss Robb kept until a number of years ago

Kantor: and then turned over. The personal files would include all his speeches and personal correspondence and correspondence relating to trips and non-university affairs.

Dornin: Anything, about anything he did when he was president should be in the archives. I used to say to Agnes Robb, after Sproul was emeritus and she had that little office in Sproul Hall, I used to say, "Agnes, what are you throwing out?"

Kantor: She didn't throw. She transferred about fifty cartons of stuff.

Dornin: All those women who had years and years of being secretaries, I had the same trouble with them, particularly the one who had been secretary in chemistry. They get such a loyalty to their head man, and they know there are things in those files that are not good things for other people to know about those head men--that they made mistakes perhaps.

Riess: Who else worked with him closely, other than Agnes Robb?

Dornin: George Pettitt. George Pettitt, lots of people used to say he was Sproul's speechwriter. I always denied that, because I said that Mr. Sproul was too much his own man to ever let anybody else write his speeches for him. Not only that, but as I've said I've been called up when Sproul was writing a speech.

I think what Pettitt did was to keep files of the reports of other universities, and the writing of other university presidents. His office was near Sproul's, but it was just filled with these bookcases, and that's what he had. When I wanted to know something, like the statistics of another university, I always went to him. I think that what he did was to supply Sproul with statistics of, say, what they were doing at the University of Michigan, about a certain problem. That's where he helped with the speeches, but I don't think he ever wrote a word of the speech itself.

Riess: We're nearly at the end of the tape. Let's do some summing up. You have spoken about Sproul's strengths. Have you anything to say about any weaknesses you think he had?

Dornin: When you are the president of a state university with five general campuses (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Davis, and Riverside) plus various research stations scattered about this large western state, when you as the president of this "empire" are constantly striving to keep it as one university, when contending factors within the state are working to divide it into two states, north and south, weakness in any direction is something you can't afford. Personally, I never encountered nor knew of any.

Transcriber: Suzanne Riess  
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University of California  
Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Eleanor L. van Horn

OBSERVATIONS OF UNIVERSITY COMPTROLLER ROBERT GORDON SPROUL, 1925

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1982



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Eleanor van Horn began working at the University of California in 1925. She had "two or three temporary secretarial assignments," one with Professor of Botany Willis Jepson, one with Professor of Geology George D. Louderback, and one with University Comptroller Robert Gordon Sproul.

To come into contact with two such renowned scholars and a future president was just what Mrs. van Horn enjoyed from the start as a secretary. As she says, although she did not have a university degree, she had an excellent education in private schools, and "ultimately Lowell High School, which was the academic high school in those days. [But] I was ready for more learning."

After a year working in the comptroller's office on the university bond campaign of 1926, Mrs. van Horn was transferred to the Department of Political Science--once again a temporary assignment. That became a permanent position within a year, and forty years later, in 1966, Mrs. van Horn retired, from a job she loved in a university with which she is still actively involved.

Mrs. van Horn was interviewed in her home on Rose Walk, Berkeley, in June 1982, by the Regional Oral History Office. As a prominent member of the Women's Faculty Club, she was a participant in the club oral history project. In the course of the interview, background questions revealed a story of an interesting university career, and that material was set aside for the anticipated Robert Gordon Sproul oral history series. Mrs. van Horn agreed to the arrangement, and edited her transcript carefully for future use. The interview includes introductory material repeating the first pages of the Women's Faculty Club memoir, tying it to the material reserved for this series. Further material on the Department of Political Science is deposited in The Bancroft Library.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

Regional Oral History Office  
Room 486 The Bancroft Library .

University of California  
Berkeley, California 94720

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name Eleanor Lacey van Horn

Date of birth Dec. 9, 1900 Place of birth Berkeley, California

Father's full name Edward Elnathan Osborn

Birthplace New York City

Occupation Patent Attorney

Mother's full name Florence Gay Osborn

Birthplace New Orleans, La

Occupation English Teacher

Where did you grow up ? Berkeley, and San Francisco

Present community Berkeley

Education Miss Head's School, Berkeley; Sarah Dix Hamlin School, SF; Lowell High School, SF; Munson School for Private Secretaries, SF; UCB University Extension (various courses and seminars) and some auditing of UCB classes.

Occupation(s) Secretary, Pacific Coast Hdqs. National YWCA, SF; Secty. to Manager, Methodist Book Concern, SF; UCB Comptroller's Office (Secty for University Building Campaign under Robert G. Sproul); Secretary/Administrative Assistant, Department of Political Science (1926-66)

Special interests or activities Music, Art, foreign travel; "creative" writing (member, University Section Club-Writers' Workshop). Participant in English in Action Program under U.C. Y-House (English conversation with visiting foreign scholars). Member, Women's Faculty Club, University Art Museum, Museum Society, SF.

The Comptroller's Office

[Date of Interview: June 17, 1982]

Riess: I started all these interviews by asking a little bit about the professional history of the person I'm talking to. Are you a University of California graduate?

Van Horn: No, no, I am not. I came to the university in 1925 as a, I won't say "shy," young secretary--but at least I was in the beginning.

Riess: Who hired you and in what department?

Van Horn: It was Miss Vera Christie. She was a remarkable woman, a wonderful administrator, and she gave me two or three temporary secretarial assignments. The first was with old Professor [Willis L.] Jepson, who was a botanist, a wonderful gentleman who taught me much. Then I went temporarily to the chairman of the geology department in old Bacon Hall, and Dean of the College of Letters and Science, Professor [George D.] Louderback. He had a fascinating office, surrounded by specimens of rock, which the citizens of California kept sending to him for analysis.

Then I think about that time, the university's building bond campaign had been undertaken in 1926. There was quite an extended building program that was under [Robert Gordon] Sproul, I mean Dr. Sproul; he was Mr. Sproul then. He was the university comptroller and director for the project, which ran about six to nine months. He needed a secretary for that bond campaign project, so Miss Christie sent me to him and I worked in California Hall in the same office with Miss [Agnes] Robb, who was, of course, Mr. Sproul's right-hand Girl Friday. It was wonderful to see her functioning, really, in that office.

I had a close association with Mr. Sproul in that I took his dictation separately for the building campaign, and learned much from him! I remember his saying once, "Mrs. Van Horn, never presume!"

Van Horn: I had assumed something or other and he asked why a certain action hadn't taken place. I explained my part in it. Then he said, in that commanding voice of his, "Never presume," which I've never forgotten. [chuckles]

Riess: Was that a little bit of his wish always to be consulted about everything?

Van Horn: No, just that I had not made every effort to determine a certain piece of information. I had assumed something, when I should have investigated a little further. He was absolutely right, which was a very valuable lesson to learn from someone of his calibre. He was really marvelous.

The comptroller's office was a very good office. The girls were conscientious, serious.

Riess: With business school training? What kind of training would you say the secretaries had?

Van Horn: I would say probably not, as I recall. I think the girls with whom I was associated (because my desk was there), I would say that they were not university-trained, as I was not. I went to a very good business school, the Munson School for Private Secretaries. Did you ever hear of it, in San Francisco?

Riess: Munson? No.

Van Horn: It was an excellent school then, I think the best there was. And I had had a little post-graduate work after high school at Polytechnic High School in San Francisco. But I had never, for family reasons, I had never attended the university. After I came here, I had the feeling, "This is where I want to be." And so I started auditing courses and took some University Extension work.

But to go back to the comptroller's office--this really is an interesting part of a lower level personnel development; it also shows one can well believe in miracles. I've had many of them happen! While I was associated with Mr. Sproul (as I say, he was then Mr. Sproul), he had a call one day from Professor [David Prescott] Barrows, the chairman of the political science department, whom we always called General Barrows because he did have a military title. Are you familiar with his name at all?

Riess: Yes.

Van Horn: I was Professor Barrows's secretary (as well as secretary of the department) until he retired. But the evolution of it was that one day he phoned Mr. Sproul saying that his secretary was ill and could Mr. Sproul spare anyone to help him for a couple of weeks. So I was assigned to do this and went to the political science department office, which was on the second floor of beautiful South Hall. And I just fell in love with it.

Riess: When you were on that bond campaign project, was Miss Robb the executive secretary over all of you?

Van Horn: Oh, yes! In that office, it was the comptroller's office, and I was physically right in the office; she had her separate office, but I was in close communication with her. I would have to turn to her in many instances.

Riess: You said it was wonderful to see her function. Would you expand on that?

Van Horn: In that I saw how efficient she was, how quick she was. She always seemed to be on the phone or moving in and out of the office, of Mr. Sproul's office, always with stacks of paper, and I was just impressed by her management of masses of material and numerous phone calls and maintaining her poise. Because she was responsible for the remainder of the office. To what degree I'm not quite sure.

There was a woman, a Miss [Helen] Junor, who was in charge of some of the ancillary details, who was responsible for managing registration. Registration was a frantic upheaval in those days. There would be lines and lines of students, standing for hours, waiting to be registered. And to prepare for this the machines, the registers, all had to be organized and set in place. Miss Junor, who was responsible, had to see that everything was set up physically; she was responsible for carrying out the setup for registering these thousands of students, a setup with not nearly the degree of efficiency that ultimately developed, of course.

The registrar at that time was a distinguished administrator, Mr. Thomas B. Steel. Some seemed to feel that he was well-named. [chuckles] A rather austere, quiet man, but very nice, very nice. And of course the registrar's office then was in South Hall. It was called the recorder's office, at that time, and was in the north end of the first floor of South Hall.

Van Horn: Registration was in Harmon Hall, the old gymnasium. As I recall, it was in a field without much planting around it at that time, and it was about where--it wasn't very far from the powerhouse--it must have been about where the cafeteria is now, or part of Dwinelle Hall. This big Harmon Gym was the only place where large musical programs could be offered on the campus. It was a big, barn-like structure, an old-fashioned building.

Riess: This registration was managed by a woman, but Thomas B. Steel was in charge, was the actual registrar?

Van Horn: At that time. But Helen Junor was also the manager of the ancillary part of the comptroller's office, and handled matters that Miss Robb was not concerned with generally. I'm not sure of the extent of Miss Junor's duties then, but it seemed to me she had wide responsibility for certain financial reporting. Operating details, not high finance of the university. She was a very efficient woman.

Riess: Was that campaign you were working on supposed to raise money from private donors in the state?

Van Horn: Oh, no, it was a bond campaign. But it covered the state. We had much correspondence with other, shall we say, "agents" throughout the state who assisted in launching the campaign. And Mr. Sibley, Robert Sibley, you know, who was then the executive manager of the alumni association was very active also in the bond campaign. I think he managed many of the, perhaps not the correspondence necessarily, but many contacts, about which I was unfamiliar.

Riess: It's interesting that Mr. Sproul hadn't been comptroller that long and yet that was a responsibility that involved a network of contacts.

Van Horn: Network, exactly; you've put your finger on it. It was.

Riess: I'd like your observations of how he conducted that, and how important it was, maybe, in his later success.

Van Horn: Well, I'm sure that it must have contributed to his advancement.

He had a very commanding presence; he was very tall. As a student--I believe he was an economics major--he was a track man. He was a marvelous organizer. He had a very winning way, but a very commanding way. I'm sure that he probably did some arm-twisting at times. [chuckles] But his rhetoric was very impressive; he made wonderful speeches. There's a joke that must still be alive somewhere.

Riess: Oh, I know the one--

Van Horn: Have you heard about that?

Riess: Oh yes, about the telephone call to Sacramento.

Van Horn: Yes, exactly. [laughter] I'm glad that it has not faded away. He really did boom.

To finish one point that I think is very revealing, he read a great deal in many fields, so I understand, outside of his own field. When he became president I remember one of the members of our department, a professor who had relatively close relations with President Sproul as I recall, saying once how impressed he was by the fact that Mr. Sproul was so well-read in areas in which you might not expect him to be so completely informed.

At one time I believe there was a policy of making more frequent visits to the other campuses [alumni tours]. This would have come about in about 1949 or '50, because Professor Odegard, Peter Odegard, was brought here in 1948, in the fall, to assume the chairmanship of the political science department. It was that next spring I believe when President Sproul made a tour by car and invited Professor Odegard, along with others, I believe, to accompany him.

Professor Odegard was an excellent speaker, by the way. I remember his sending me a postcard from Fresno, I think it was, and making some cute little reference to his "shining in the reflected glory of President Sproul." I've never forgotten that, "reflected glory." [chuckles] The two of them, I think, must have had a lovely time, because they both were wonderful raconteurs and had a wealth of experience in similar or very dissimilar situations to share. The conversations that went on in that car should have been recorded, or maybe they shouldn't. [laughs]

Political Science Department: History, Depression Era, and Move to Barrows Hall

Riess: Was the political science department started by Barrows?

Van Horn: No. The history and political science departments were joint at one time, in the early part of the century, and in 1903 they were separated. The department used to be called "political economy." One of the first professors in political science then was

Van Horn: Professor Bernard Moses, for whom Moses Hall was named. A marvelous gentleman. He had not yet died by the time I came. He was very old, but still living in the area. I think in Orinda someplace. He did a great deal to develop the department, and also the social sciences themselves.

There is a very good doctoral thesis which was written by a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education by the name of James Watson. His thesis, his dissertation, covers the background of the development of the social sciences here and the political science department. A copy of it is in the library, and there is also a copy in the political science department. It presents a great deal of very informing data including some of the personnel, the people, the faculty who were brought here.

Dr. Barrows came--I'm ashamed to think I can't recall exactly when he was first brought here, in 1911 or 1912? But he came as dean of the faculty from the Philippines. I'm sure you know about all of his Philippine background. He was very close to President Wheeler, Benjamin Ide Wheeler, and then, of course, ultimately became president, as you know, for four years, and then resigned.

But during that time, the department kept expanding its curriculum, adding fields, so that by 1926, if you were to look in the catalogue and compare it to the present day catalogue, it was a totally different organism. As you might expect. It had a small faculty of maybe ten or twelve, I think at most, when I came. The subject matter of the field was divided into four sections: political theory; international relations; government and politics; and public administration. And by 1950 it had expanded to seven sections, because new areas were introduced: communications, international politics, and I've forgotten what the seventh one was.

When I retired, in 1966, the faculty had increased to between forty-five and fifty, some of whom were part-time lecturers or maybe a visiting professor not on a permanent appointment.

Riess: Did the new President Sproul consult a lot with ex-President Barrows?

Van Horn: I do not know; I had no way of knowing. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he did--I'd be surprised if he did not. Professor Barrows wouldn't have mentioned it, unless it came out in telephone conversation or in dictation. But I don't know, I've never thought about it particularly.

Riess: Barrows wasn't president for long, but I did wonder.

Van Horn: It's very possible, but I would have no evidence.

The department had so many distinguished people from around the world. I think few people realize the visitors whom we had. We had Hannah Arendt. She was here for a year, or possibly a semester teaching. We had Adrienne Koch, a great theorist, now dead. We had Van Mook, who was the governor-general of what would've been the Dutch East Indies. Then there was the distinguished Professor William Robson from the London School of Economics in London, and George Catlin also from Great Britain. Also Denis Brogan. These English would come here because they had a feeling for the United States of America and the Americans. Denis Brogan was well-known as a student of North American politics.

Riess: Sounds like you learned that lesson well.

Van Horn: I have indeed. We are not the only Americans. I'm very careful to make this point, especially with Latin American visitors.

Riess: Were you taking classes in your department? [refers to mention of going on with education]

Van Horn: Well, I took a couple in the extension for credit. One was in Spanish, and I forget what the other one was. But the other courses, audited, were just cultural. I arranged the time, perhaps I'd take my lunch hour actually. I audited several in political science. For Dr. Barrows's course on colonial dependencies, I took his lectures in shorthand. I audited two philosophy courses, and I forget the others for the moment. But here and there. It was very eclectic, whatever was available at the time and a subject that I really wanted to know.

Riess: Were there any women teaching in the department?

Van Horn: There were no women members of the department as regular appointees at that time, except Professor Adrienne Koch. Another was a visitor--Professor Hannah Arendt. Offhand, other than a few women teaching assistants, graduate students, I can't think of another woman at that period; that was a critical subject then in the university.

Subsequently, when Professor Odegard became the chairman, in addition to Professor Koch, he brought in Virginia Thompson Adloff, who was a lecturer in African studies, a distinguished scholar, who

Van Horn: was, with her husband, Richard Adloff, the author of, at that time, the definitive work on the administration of French West Africa. And she continued to lecture part-time for some years, retiring in 1971.

Riess: But you're dating this from Odegard's chairmanship. You said that it was a critical subject. Was it a critical subject in the years between Barrows and Odegard?

Van Horn: It was in some departments on the campus. I don't know how far it went. I didn't pay much attention in those tender years.\*

Riess: When did you retire?

Van Horn: In 1966, two years before I had to: I retired at sixty-five. I saw a new aspect of administration coming, and I had the feeling at the time--we'd gone through the explosion of conversion to the quarter system. I began to think then that "things are going to be changing very much." New developments required a new sort of operating structure, and I thought that it would be smarter if I retired then and let a new administrative assistant come in right at the beginning of a new wave or turn of the wheel. And I'm very glad I did; I don't regret it at all.

I stayed on, on a so-called "voluntary" basis, for quite a while, handling old records, disposing of a lot of materials, reorganizing some files. I was given a new office, upstairs. And there was an effort to develop a history of the department. I kept hanging onto old files, because I felt they had some value of continuity, and yet we were required to eliminate files--on a quarterly basis. You had to reduce your files, report on what you eliminated, measured by inches.

Riess: I didn't know that!

Van Horn: Oh, it became so onerous that we couldn't keep up with it. I said, "I can not accomplish this. I'll do the best I can." But we couldn't keep up with all that we had to do because we didn't have the staff.

Riess: Were you in Barrows Hall?

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\*This interview is continued in The Women's Faculty Club of the University of California, Berkeley, 1919-1982, an oral history conducted 1981, 1982, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1983, pp. 204-224. A further section, on the Political Science Department in the 1960s, is in the Donated Oral History Collection of The Bancroft Library.

Van Horn: Yes. We moved in 1964 from South Hall and that was--well, that was my job. I had to move the department, do everything, manage everything, and participate in the layout of the new area. This is how I met Norma Willer. She was our architect; she'd bring in her plans and she and I would sit down and work over the layout and the design. It was exciting! I enjoyed it very much. It was a pleasure to do it.

That big upheaval, moving, all of our faculty, all of their possessions, and how it was done. I was fascinated. A chute was installed from the second floor of South Hall down to the trucks and the workmen would slide everything down. And then settling into Barrows Hall--I became a building manager! It was lots of fun, because we had to assign all the offices (after consultations, of course) and see to it that everybody got everything and that not too many boxes were lost! Our chairman couldn't be involved in a lot of ancillary details, so I had to assume responsibility for making some decisions that might not please some individuals. But the move worked out very well on the whole, I think.

Riess: And so then came this whole new "feeling" in 1966, the future.

Van Horn: Yes. I felt that, because it was becoming more mechanized. I guess maybe I was prophesying the computerized era!

Riess: I think it's interesting that you're saying that. That's exactly the same time that the students were saying, "This place is much too impersonal, let's bring it down."

Van Horn: Exactly, exactly. We felt this. Just the papers that we had to work with; they became formidable, a totally different physical arrangement. We just had more to cope with. And in retrospect, it was a very enlightening experience--to see how an organization changes in its performance technologically.

Of course, just after we moved from South Hall to Barrows Hall, we got into the Free Speech Movement and our department was very much involved. Our faculty was naturally involved in what was going on. Our then chairman, Professor Robert Scalapino, met with some of the student representatives. I remember especially that Professor John Schaar would have sessions with groups of the protesting students who would come into the office for discussion in our conference room. Mario Savio would come in.

One day, when things were most tense, a police officer was stationed at the office door. We had to keep it locked on one occasion. Some of our students--we had one or two part-time student

Van Horn: employees, who would come in in the afternoon for a few hours' work--were so upset because they didn't want to protest, but their fellow classmates were protesting--some of whom had been dragged down the stairs at Sproul Hall during the "sit-in."  
 "Here we're torn, we don't want to protest; but when your friend is being bloodied, how do you feel?"

We came that close to a practical experience of confrontation. I remember looking out the window of our office and seeing, oh, somebody said five hundred of the Alameda County sheriff's office men with their riot sticks massed in Barrows Lane. And, of course, we'd hear the bombs and once in a while we'd smell some tear gas. So that we really felt we were close to the sideline.

Riess: It's very appropriate that political science would be paying a lot of attention.

Van Horn: It should be, it should be.

Riess: So you stayed upstairs and sorted the records.

Van Horn: Yes. Then I moved to still another office and gradually reached the point where I had done as much as I could on the files. But I had to be involved with the new administrative assistant. I couldn't take all the responsibility of removing too much, so she had to be drawn in on some disposition and to carry on with what we were doing. It got to the point that each successive administrative assistant had less and less time to do this, understandably, and the effort just began to dwindle away.

Riess: What about the history of the department?

Van Horn: That just went into abeyance. I set up some files and began to think about the organization of the archives. The faculty member who was being responsible for it was Professor Charles Aikin, who had also been chairman of the department. He and I worked together a little on the task, but we really didn't get very far. He became ill and subsequently died. So there was nobody to take it on, really, and there didn't seem to be much more that I could do without cooperation, which I understood completely. But I did keep pressing successive chairmen, "Please, read this thesis of Dr. Watson's."

Professor Rosberg, Carl Rosberg, became chairman (he was vice-chairman at the time I retired). We had worked well together and I admired him very much. He had a feeling for the effort, too, so I begged him, "Please, read this thing; nobody's paying any

Van Horn: attention to this thesis!" The only other person who did know about the dissertation was Professor Eric Bellquist. As a matter of fact Mr. Watson, as a candidate, had interviewed Professor Bellquist and myself, and also I think he interviewed Professor Peter Odegard, the former chairman, a little. Though I'm not quite sure how extensively. But this is reflected in some of the material that appears in the thesis.

I recently had luncheon with the current chairman, Professor William [Sandy] Muir, and I said to him, "If you haven't read that thesis, will you please get it out and read it." And he did. He read it and he agreed that something more should be done about the history of the department, and asked if I would participate in the effort as much as I could and that he would find someone to be responsible for carrying on the history. So I'm hoping. Has anything been done?

Riess: No. Have you been interviewed about it?

Van Horn: No. But then I didn't expect to be for quite some time.

There is a period of the history of the department that I think is really fascinating, but I'm sure there's nobody around who remembers it very well. And that was during the depression, the effect of the depression on the department in terms of cooperation with governmental instructions. It was under the NRA, the WPA, and the SERA, and I held onto these records; they're still in the department's back files, if they haven't been disposed of. I'm afraid that a lot of files have been thrown out.

The department cooperated very well with official directives as we were required to do. This was under Professor Barrows, then chairman. We employed, under the NYA, some 150 students over the period. They were assigned to individual faculty members, they worked twenty hours a week as I remember, they were paid 50¢ an hour--which is what we paid readers at that time; can you believe it? Fifty cents an hour!

Riess: What kind of projects were the NYA students working on?

Van Horn: A variety. For instance, one would be put on library research, digging up references and setting up card references for a particular faculty [member]. Professor Barrows had a very interesting project. He put a young woman who read Russian--was maybe of Russian origin, but at least she was a Russian scholar--to translating issues of Izvestia and Pravda, which weren't available in English in our department; I don't remember whether they did exist elsewhere in the university.

Van Horn: And at the time--this was very interesting--the criminology program was under political science as one of its divisions. August Vollmer, surely you know his name, was a full professor of criminology and responsible for the curriculum in criminology per se.\* We later had one of his students, O.W. Wilson (subsequently the great chief of police of Chicago) whom I remember well, who succeeded Professor Vollmer and ultimately became dean of the new School of Criminology. At that time Professor Vollmer had either one or two translators of works from the Italian of the great criminologist, Lombroso.

Riess: In order to get one of the NYA students, did the professor have to have a project in mind?

Van Horn: Yes. They (the students) were used not just to go to the library to get books. They weren't used as little messengers. Maybe some were, but I wouldn't have known; I didn't know what every one of them did in particular. And these were successive groups--we didn't have 150 at one time; they would be forty or fifty or so. They would come in to report their hours every week to a timekeeper and I would see to it that they were all paid. But they had to make little written reports.

Riess: So that was a whole separate fund.

Van Horn: Yes. I don't remember the machinery of the office from which the payments were made. There was some criticism of this work, I might say.

Riess: Do you mean within the university?

Van Horn: Yes, yes. I remember some observations being made that this was pretty trivial stuff. It's the general criticism that was forever made of WPA, that men were paid for leaning on their hoes, leaning on their rakes, and doing practically nothing. I remember one criticism being directed towards Professor Vollmer's translations. And it was a great deal of work! I mean I saw, physically, the products, the manuscripts produced and was responsible for seeing that they were organized and ultimately reached the university library. But the criticism was that the work was not of university level. But the argument was made, it's better than not having the translations, especially in the field of criminology. Professor Vollmer defended the work--that it was preferable to have this much, not as a superior document, than not at all.

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\*See August Vollmer; Pioneer in Police Professionalism, Two vols., an oral history interview conducted 1971-1976, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1972, and 1983.

Van Horn: And there were editors. We had two women, one a French woman, the other a very nice elderly woman who had seen better days. They were on WPA, and I think it was pretty demeaning for them. And they were brought into our office, stuffed into corners, as it were. We had to make space, put in desks for these people. One woman was really a darling. You knew she was suffering from this experience, but she carried on nobly. Another one was used as an assistant librarian, and I remember we had a problem with her which ended up in a court trial. I was subpoenaed to be a witness to the fact that she was too ill to do certain work.

Riess: So you had some of them under the WPA program and some under the NYA?

Van Horn: NYA, yes. And the SERA, which was the state. I think the SERA (State Emergency Relief Administration) was the first, and I forget the details because the program ultimately became nationalized, which was the Works Progress Administration.

Other translations, outside the criminology field, in international relations, also were made.

But the impact was not only the added load on the staff, but the presence of these people. You felt that you wanted to be sensitive to their sensitivity and not let them feel, "Oh, well, we'll find a place for you." That sort of thing. There was every effort made to make them feel as comfortable and welcome as they could be working in a difficult situation. Everyone was really very nice to them, and I became rather friendly with the French woman who had been a teacher. She once told me, "You know, the best place for French food in San Francisco is Des Alpes Restaurant."

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Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Robert Gordon Sproul Oral History

Robert S. Johnson

A VIEW FROM THE ATHLETICS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SIDE

An Interview Conducted by  
Suzanne Riess  
in 1984



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Bob Sproul, in the early memoirs in this oral history project, is remembered as a "track man"--which epithet serves the multiple purposes of reminding us that he was a competitor, a good sport, and a physical presence. When the Sproul Oral History Project was in the planning stages, Jim Kantor, university archivist emeritus, aware of how important athletics are in the collective memory of the greatness of the great university, felt strongly that Robert S. Johnson should be interviewed. Jim knew that Bob Johnson sat right in the middle of the history of intercollegiate athletics in the Sproul years.

"Skinny" (a nickname earned as a twelve year old, eighty pound high school freshman) Johnson, Class of 1928, was a track man too, in junior college, and he was a Modesto High School friend of Jim Corley's. Corley, then a senior, and president of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity (later vice-president-business affairs under Robert Gordon Sproul), brought his protégé Bob Johnson up to Berkeley, where he ran the hurdles for the University of California. Bob Johnson found his niche, and eventually his career in university athletics and administration.

Johnson's positions at the University of California ranged from the extremes of book and hat check attendant in Stephens Union when he was a poor undergraduate, grateful for the 35¢ an hour toward his house bills, to administrative analyst in the office of the president, when President Sproul needed a man he could trust to make judicious recommendations for action on any one of the many problematic policy decisions confronting him as president. Robert S. Johnson retired from the university in 1972 but has remained active in the service of the university. With Winifred Bell, the team of "Skinny and Winnie" spearheaded the drive for thirty-six additional bells for the Campanile, the Fiftieth Anniversary gift to the university from the Class of 1928. He also helped our office as a fund raiser and advisor to the Walter Gordon Oral History Project, a series of twenty-four interviews with friends and colleagues of the University of California's famed black football player, judge, and governor of the Virgin Islands.

Our interview with Mr. Johnson, held at his Berkeley home one April morning in the first months of the project, was congenial, but somewhat frustrating for Mr. Johnson, and for Jim Kantor and me. While the history of early athletic recruitment was worth recounting, I felt impelled to tie it into Robert Gordon Sproul, thus derailing Mr. Johnson's account. I wished for more of the very useful material Mr. Johnson gave us on the president's office staff and how it was governed by President Sproul. Mr. Johnson's response to the transcript, when he received it many months later, was carefully and conscientiously

to make of it the interview he wished to have given. Indeed he wrote a third section, in interview format, on the Council of University Presidents of the Pacific Coast Conference, probably the best summary to date of the agonizing decisions called for by Sproul in honestly distinguishing academic from athletic and monetary goals.

Robert Johnson, ever the analyst, and respectful of the memories of President Sproul as well as respectful of the goals of the Regional Oral History Project, was not willing just to approve the transcript and give up on fully developing his thoughts. Instead he gave it his very best, and it's to Mr. Johnson's great credit that it is a considerable and informative piece of work.

Suzanne Riess  
Interviewer-Editor

December 1985  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please print or write clearly)

Your full name ROBERT S. JOHNSON

Date of birth July 12, 1904 Place of birth South Bend, Indiana

Father's full name William Herbert Johnson

Birthplace Hebron, Ohio

Occupation Carpenter - Building Contractor

Mother's full name Elizabeth Susan (Danger) Johnson

Birthplace Bridgewater, Virginia

Occupation Housewife

Where did you grow up? Empire (near Modesto), California

Present community Berkeley, Calif

Education AB (UC Berkeley), 1928; General Secondary and Junior College Credential, 1939-40; MS (Ph.D.) 1943

Occupation(s) Newspaper reporter (before coming to U.S.); U.S. Secy of Reg C

Society directing athletic recruiting after graduation; UC Extension Secy of Vis. Ed. Dept; Field Secy, Alumni Assn; Securities & Loans; Jr. College Teacher; Grad. Student; Admin. Analyst, Asst. to Vice President of the Univ. (1946-7) Church, Clubs

Special interests or activities Reading, Lawn Bowling - at present

Ex-Secy. Track & in Univ, also Football, Basketball, Baseball in H.S. + J.C., - later; Fishing, Camping

University of California Athletics Policies

[Date of Interview: April 16, 1984]

Jim Corley, A Loyal Friend

Johnson: Jim Corley and I were classmates in Modesto High School. He came up to the university ahead. I couldn't afford it. I was the oldest of six children in a family of modest means, so I went to the new junior college instead. So did Al Ragan, and so did another and more famous athlete, Elmer Gerken, who later was to win the shot and place in the discus in the IC4A (Intercollegiate Amateur Athletic Association of America) several times.

Walter Christie, the track coach here at that time, took no interest in recruitment. He was only hired to coach. The recruitment was entirely voluntary, not organized in any way as far as track was concerned--just students talking to other students, and alumni encouraging local students to come up. And then there were the fraternities on the campus. The fraternities had a lot to do with recruitment of athletes and other students at that time.

Jim had brought Elmer and Al to Berkeley the year before me. I was still in Modesto and had been working as a cub reporter on the paper, the News-Herald, that summer. The spring before that, I had gone back to junior college and established three or four conference [Pacific Coast Conference] records. We were the only junior college in our conference. The other members were College of the Pacific, San Jose State, Fresno State, Chico State, and Davis.

That spring, I beat "Lank" Talbot in our meet with Cal freshmen, and Lank had won the state high school meet the year before, and I actually ran faster in the low hurdles than any one on the varsity at the university.

Johnson: Jim knew that. He knew that he would have been the best hurdler in the university except that he had brought up two others, Al Ragan and me, who would beat him. But that was typically Jim--the university was everything.

Well, in August, one Saturday, Jim stopped by our house. We had made preliminary arrangements, and he said, "Well, Skinny, I'm all ready to go, get your things." "Jim," I said, "I'm sorry. I've had to help the family and I don't have any money." He asked, "How much do you have?" "I've got thirty dollars." "That's enough," he said, "It only costs twenty-seven and a half dollars to register." He said, "If you come up there and trust me, we'll move you into the house, the fraternity house." They pledged in those days before you even came on the campus, and I had pledged that summer. Jim said, "You can pay your house bill at the end of the month, and I'll help you to get a job."

So then I talked to my dad and mother, and they urged me to come, said that they would make out without me. Well, we packed my suitcase and I said goodbye, and rode away with Jim, up to Berkeley.

On Monday, Jim took me over to Stephens Union and introduced me to "Curley" Cortelyou, the assistant graduate manager of the ASUC. Curley sent me to Dave Boucher who was in charge of a little checking room counter and, next to it, a candy and cigarette counter, in the men's club rooms in Stephens Union. He had been crippled with polio and sat in a wheel chair. I got employment at 35¢ an hour checking books and hats and coats thirteen or fourteen hours a week.

We played St. Mary's football team those days. Slip Madigan had recruited quite a team and began to give us a bad time, so the athletic department put a fence around the practice field west of Hilgard Hall. It was an open field, so they put guards around the fence to keep St. Mary's scouts or any other curious people from looking in on practice. So, after a couple of weeks, when practice started, I got one of those assignments at 35¢ an hour for ten or twelve hours a week.

This still wasn't enough to pay my fraternity house bills, which were about \$55 a month, so I used to go over to the Bureau of Occupations to pick up other odd jobs on Saturdays and Sundays.

Riess: You and Sproul were both track men. Did that figure in those days?

Johnson: I doubt if he'd ever heard of me at that time. But he attended track meets and must have seen me run the next spring.

Riess: When Corley recruited you, was he already working with Sproul?

Johnson: No, no, he was still a student. I don't think he'd ever talked to Sproul except, perhaps, to say hello when they passed. Jim knew Lute [Luther] Nichols quite well. Lute had been graduate manager of the ASUC during my first year, and then Sproul had brought him over to the university to be assistant comptroller. When Jim graduated that year, 1926, he and Mike Gibbons, another fraternity brother, went to work for a large corporation in San Francisco. They both quit after six months or so and started looking around. Lute put Jim on in the cashier's office as a clerk.

Another thing, I will tell you about his leadership. In high school Jim was president of the student body, the colonel of the cadet corps, captain of two teams--everything.

Probably the greatest period in the history of our fraternity house was when Jim was president, because of his enormous loyalty and the affection everyone had for him. He was a good but not outstanding student, but he was an Irishman, he knew people, he loved people. It was the same way with him and the legislature. And he was absolutely honest. The legislature knew when they asked Jim about the university, Jim would give them an honest answer. And Jim and Sproul were very close. Sproul trusted Jim, and Jim tried to follow his instructions, but if there wasn't time to check, Jim went ahead on his own and Sproul backed him up.

#### Jobs on Campus for Student Athletes

Johnson: But you asked about me. That first year on the campus was tough financially. I was in debt. I had no money or time for dates except for our own fraternity dances. I mailed my clothes home to be washed. Our trousers were corduroys in those days, and we never cleaned them. We used to say we wore them until they were so dirty we could stand them up in a corner, then we threw them away.

Then I was named to go on the team to the IC4A. That was at Harvard after the end of our spring semester. Our expenses were paid but the trip would take about three weeks out of vacation working time, and I was sure I'd have to drop out of school that fall to catch up with my debt to the fraternity house. Then the breaks began to come my way. I'd applied to the scholarship committee for a scholarship, and I was notified that I'd been awarded one for \$200.

Johnson: When I came back from the East, I got on with a contractor who was painting the seats in the stadium and earned good wages for three or four weeks.

Also, that spring I'd taken the best job I was to have while I was in college. It had been on the "Help Wanted" board in the Bureau of Occupations for some time. Leslie Ganyard, who was manager of the bureau, said, "Why don't you try it?" It was selling Caswell Coffee on a commission. What I did was to go around before school and sign up the managers of fraternities and sororities and boarding houses. I got a dollar a month for everyone I signed up. The drivers took care of all the rest, deliveries, collections and so on. That year my checks amounted to \$15 or \$20 a month. The second year I got more accounts and was paid \$35 or \$40 a month. And this took up practically none of my time after classes began. It was like getting money from home.

After I became acquainted, I discovered that there were jobs for students everywhere, all of them paying better than the two ASUC jobs I'd held the first semester. I worked in the Graduate Division office, in a men's clothing store on Telegraph Avenue, on Saturdays on the San Francisco waterfront, and on gardening and other odd jobs, in a clothing store in Modesto during Christmas holidays, in a cement pipe factory, and as house manager during vacation, to mention some. They were all honest jobs.

Riess: What do you mean by "honest jobs"?

Johnson: Well, I mean it was work that had to be done, the pay was at the going student rate for part-time jobs. I never felt they were a hand-out, I knew that I was doing the work.

We had so many more student jobs on the campus then. We didn't have labor unions. Students were given preference on part-time jobs on the campus and off the campus. On some jobs, such as in the evenings, athletes, I think, may have been given preference over other students by the employers, since they had to practice at times when others could work.

In my senior year, I was making about \$80 or \$90 a month, so I'd take the girls dancing over to San Francisco now and then, and I felt I was getting as much money as most other students were from home.

Riess: You sound also very busy.

Johnson: I was awfully busy. That's why I have no sympathy for the conference rules, today, that allow free tuition, room and board, and allowance for books to track men. You see, track practice came at a time when most of the other kids had their recreation hours, four to six. A few of them stayed in the library, but that used to be the time when most students knocked off and relaxed. I never felt that track interfered particularly with my studies. I didn't have enough time to do all the assigned outside reading, but I religiously attended all the lectures and I took good notes. I got all A's and B's and graduated with honors. I do like to think that if I hadn't worked so much and had had more time for study, I might have made Phi Beta Kappa. I wish I had.

I could only take twelve units of work a semester, instead of sixteen. So it took three years after junior college, instead of two, to get my degree.

One day, a couple of weeks before commencement in 1928, I met Jack McKenzie on the campus. Jack was the athletic director then, under Bill Monahan, the ASUC graduate manager. Jack asked, "What are you going to do, Skinny, after you graduate?" Well, I hadn't thought very much about it, I'd been too busy getting through school, and I told him so.

Jack said, "Bill and I have been talking, and we've wondered if you'd be interested in a job this summer. And it might work into something after that." Then he went on, "Now, here is USC getting all of the best athletes, and we've got to do something. Bob Sibley has refused to help, even though his alumni association's been built up by ticket privileges." At that time, if you were an alumnus you had to join the California Alumni Association to apply for Big Game tickets.

Jack went on, "Would you go down to southern California, see what's around, and stir up some interest among our alumni in the situation?" I said I'd think it over and let him know. And a day or two later, I told him I'd give it a try.

#### Recruiting Athletes in the Southland

Johnson: Now, I think I should give you a little background. In those days, Pacific Coast Conference [PCC] rules prohibited recruitment of athletes by university and athletic association employees, including coaches. California respected those rules. We had only three full-time

Johnson: football coaches, Nibs Price, Clint Evans, and Brick Mitchell, and they also coached in other sports. So they were fully occupied with just coaching. Alumni would write in to tell them about promising athletes and they would reply to the letters but not to the boys. This all was very unorganized. The coaches did not have either the time or means to develop any proselytizing organization, much less to go around recruiting athletes personally.

"Well," you may ask, "how about the Wonder Teams between 1920 and 1924?" That was a special situation. It was a little before my time, but I learned something about it. Stanford had continued to play rugby throughout the world war and did not return to American football until 1919. Then, it did not really get underway before 1922 when Andy Kerr came out to prepare the way for Pop Warner. USC was still a small liberal arts college and didn't enter the PCC until 1922. So the high school kids playing football naturally thought of coming to Berkeley.

Also, Nibs Price had developed a state high school championship team at San Diego. Seven of them came up to Berkeley, and Andy Smith built his great teams around them. Several more came from Pomona, where Clint Evans had coached another great team.

Then, in 1921, USC got a new president, Rufus von Klein Smid. He was a promoter type. He decided to make the little college into a large university and, to do that, to go "big time" in athletics, which would get the whole community behind him. In 1922, USC joined the Pacific Coast Conference. California and Stanford agreed to play USC each year.

The physical education department at USC was expanded and concentrated upon training high school coaches. The athletes were encouraged to enroll in physical education skills courses. Then they were placed out in the high schools by the coaching staff, instead of by the university's central placement agency. And, of course, in return they encouraged their best athletes to go to USC.

Also, the USC General Alumni Association sponsored Trojan Clubs of alumni and other backers to recruit athletes. They hired and paid a man, "Tiny" Leonard, to tour around the southern end of the state, to visit them in their schools and homes, and sign them up for USC. (Tiny, by the way, was an Occidental alumnus, not a USC graduate.)

Well, none of these activities appeared to violate the letter of the conference code, but they sure had a devastating impact on the traditional flow of athletes from that area and other parts of

Johnson: the state to Berkeley. Other students continued to come up, but not varsity-type athletes. They were going to USC instead. And this was showing up in the scores of our games and meets. Our alumni began to grumble and blame Nibs Price. The student body was even more upset. The rooting section would sing the tune of the Trojan marching song, but our words were "Time out for old SC. The half-back wants his salary!"

We talked about our problem at our Big C meetings and what could be done about it. In those days the Big C society was an undergraduate society of men who had won their letters. We would wear our Big C sweaters every Friday and meet for lunch at one of the fraternity houses.

That spring--that was in 1928--the society held its Big C "Sirkus." It had become a traditional event, held every four years. Everybody on the campus looked forward to it. We rented a huge circus tent and the fraternities and societies rented booths, and put on stunts and side-shows.

In the afternoon before, there was a parade. Most of the organizations entered floats--sort of a take-off on the Rose Bowl Parade. And they put the dean of women out there at the beginning of the parade as a censor, but some of the floats kind of avoided her and joined the line at the next block. The sororities entered rather beautiful floats with flowers and girls, but the fraternities went crazy. A favorite theme was outhouses. And one float had a big pile of books with a guy sitting on them, with a sign "Behind on his books." All of this was intended to be very funny and risqué and bait the good dean.

Well, we filled the tent on Friday and Saturday and charged admission to everything, and the society ended up with a big profit in its treasury. So when Jack McKenzie talked to me about a job that summer, he suggested we could use some of that money to get me started, and if that worked out all right we might start a dues-paying alumni Big C organization to keep things going after that.

So, in June I rented an old Model T Ford and started out for Los Angeles. Clint Evans and Bill Monahan had given me names of alumni to look up, and written ahead. On the way, I stopped at Fresno, where Earl Fenstermacher had gathered a bunch together for lunch. (Earl, by the way, afterward shortened his name to Fenston, and later was appointed a regent by his old friend, Earl Warren.) Quite a number of good athletes like Roy Niswander, Bert Schwarz, and Hal Breakenridge had come from Fresno in the past, but there were no good prospects in the local high schools at that time. But

Johnson: everybody at the lunch promised to stay on the look-out and to let us up in Berkeley know about any summer jobs for our athletes that they might hear of.

When I got to Los Angeles I called upon Preston Hotchkis and he arranged a meeting of active Berkeley graduates. And he referred me to Frank Storment, a life insurance man and Cal grad who had been trying, without very much success, to recruit athletes for Berkeley.

I told the meeting about our problem and that I had been sent down to see what we could do about it. I said that during the next month or so, I'd be calling on the high schools in southern California, looking for the names of good prospects who had the grades to get into the university. And I asked for their help. Well, I got some names and also some offers to help dig up summer jobs.

I guess that was the beginning of the Southern Seas (C's), although it was formed as a dues-paying organization and took on the name several years later. The members called it a "one-way travel organization," since its purpose was to send good prospects up to Berkeley. As far as I know, it operated within the conference rules for quite a time. After the war some of the fellows apparently got carried away trying to meet USC's and UCLA's offers to local athletes. However, in the president's office we never heard more than rumors and unproved charges from alumni of the other schools. When we asked for particular cases, we could never get them.

Jim, is there anything about the Southern Seas in the university archives?

Kantor: I don't remember the Southern Seas, no. This would be after you graduated?

Johnson: I first went down to Los Angeles right after I graduated in 1928. But I'll swear on my honor that my sole job when I talked to the high school athletes was to emphasize the university, to sell them on the university. If they asked what I could do for them, I'd say what was done for me, help in getting an honest job.

Well, we lost some great athletes. I remember one, Aaron Rosenberg, who became an all-time All American at USC. He said he wanted to come to Berkeley, and his teacher, who sat with us, said he was a brilliant student. He asked me what Cal could do for him. I said, "Well, Rosie, I can't promise you anything because the Pacific Coast Conference doesn't allow it under the rules, and we adhere to the rules."

Johnson: He said, "Well, gosh, I'm sorry but I've been offered a job at USC." "How much will you get," I asked. "Forty dollars a month for winding the campus clock or something," and he laughed.

Well, as I look back, Rosenberg may have made the right decision from his point of view. His athletic fame gave him contacts in Hollywood. And I read some years ago, that he had become a very successful movie producer.

I toured around southern California for five or six weeks visiting athletes and alumni. I'll admit that I didn't have very much immediate success, but I like to think that I'd started something. Within a year or two, more good athletes began to come to Berkeley from the Southland and this was reflected in the scores during Bill Ingram's last coaching years and during the time of Stub Allison, who followed him.

I reported back to Berkeley in late July (this was in 1928). Bill Monahan and Clint Evans were quite happy, and they decided that we should go ahead with a permanent Big C organization. So, at their suggestion I sent out letters to all of the Big C alumni, telling them of our plan, which called for annual dues of \$5, as I recall. The response was tremendous. Four or five hundred men sent in their dues, which gave us enough to pay my salary--I believe it was \$125 a month--and travel expenses and stationery. Then I was given a desk and phone in the assistant coaches' room. And I began to line up on-campus and off-campus jobs for the new boys who would be coming in and whose families could not entirely support them financially.

Also, Bill and Clint called up five men who agreed to serve on the new club's board of directors. They were Cort Majors, Bob Mulvaney, Russell (Pat) O'Hara, Eddie Beeson, and Johnny Stroud. Cort was elected chairman and I was appointed permanent secretary. We held monthly dinner meetings, and Bill and Clint also attended. My main job continued to be to keep in touch with our active alumni and with prospective athletes and to try to find as many school year and summer jobs for the athletes as possible.

Riess: This was the very beginning of recruitment according to the oral histories.

Johnson: I was here at the very beginning of organized recruitment, if you want to know.

## The Presidential Stance

Riess: At this point, had you been talking to Sproul?

Johnson: No, I don't think I'd ever met Mr. Sproul. And I don't think anybody consulted him before we started to organize the alumni Big C Society. Miss Robb has told me that he didn't know anything about it at the start. But he must have learned a month or so later when we sent out letters to all the Big C men. He was on the list. There was nothing to hide. All of our directors were close friends of his.

I doubt if he knew anything about the formation of the Southern Seas. I know that I didn't until many years later. I'd resigned my Big C office by the time the group was organized and began to collect its own dues, although I'd known the men who started it.

I'll tell you one thing about Sproul. He loved athletics and he was a great supporter of our athletic program and he insisted that it be honest.

Nibs Price told me that when Sproul became president, he called him in and he asked, "Nibs, are we doing anything wrong here?" and Nibs said, "Well, Bob, the only thing is we have a few jobs down on the street and around that are 'greased,' for the men who are most in need. Andy Smith started it but the kids, themselves, are never to know." Sproul asked, "What do you mean by 'greased'?" And Nibs said that when the other merchants didn't have a job to offer, they'd help those who did, so they could pay higher wages.

I hadn't known about this until Nibs told me years later. I did know that there were a few jobs that Nibs would say, "Skinny, I'll take care of those." And I supposed they were good jobs that Nibs wanted to save for the guys he knew needed them the most.

Riess: And so, when he told Sproul, then what?

Johnson: Sproul said, "Well, Nibs, cut it out." He said, "We're going to go clean and I'll protect your job and see that the others do the same." Nibs had told him what USC and others were doing.

Well, I felt sorry for our football players. Some of them had lost their jobs that year, the fall of 1929, but I thought it was because of the depression and I couldn't find enough others for them. I know that some of the fellows had rented a couple of cheap

Johnson: rooms some place and they lived off their training table evening meal and on milk they took home from the table for breakfast with cereal. They went without lunch.

The year before, Cal had beaten USC and gone to the Rose Bowl, but that fall our guys were so demoralized by it all that they lost 74-0. And they also lost by a big score to Stanford. After that, even Sproul couldn't save Nibs although he tried, and Nibs understood. It was charged that Nibs was too easy and couldn't control his players. But what I'm telling you has never been told before. Nibs told me in confidence, but he's dead and I think it should be in the record.

Riess: Did Sproul then get pressured by the alumni and the athletic department?

Johnson: I'm sure that he did. After those scores, there wasn't anything that Sproul could do to save Nibs. Nibs accepted that. Actually, in those days the ASUC's athletic council of students had the authority to hire and fire coaches. We who loved Nibs felt like hell about it, but we were helpless.

Things then were different from now. ASUC membership was optional but you had to join to participate in its activities. Athletes had to pay ASUC dues to play. Sproul believed there should be no exception for them.

He was very opposed to compulsory student body fees, though. He said to me, after a majority at Berkeley, in 1956 or 1957, had voted to make ASUC dues compulsory, "I think they're wrong. Sure, the present students voted for them, but students three or four years will resent having to pay them." Sproul said, "I want the students to go out each year and sell themselves." So there used to be ASUC ticket sales committees.

The only thing that the athletes were promised for participating was that if they won their Big C's they would be admitted to all the games for the rest of their lives by showing their medals, and the university and the ASUC have reneged on that. Today, in addition to buying a ticket, you have to contribute hundreds of dollars to subsidize the athletes in order to get a good seat in the stadium. Sproul's attitude was different.

If you ask me whether athletes were not subsidized by others than their own parents, I'm not naive enough to swear that there were not instances. But it could not have been very widespread. I know that there were at least ten Big C men in my fraternity in my

Johnson: day and that none of us were. Sometimes we, like other hard-pressed members, were allowed to postpone some of our house bills, but we had to pay up the following summer to get back into the house the next fall. I know very well that no member of the Cal track team was subsidized. And I doubt that many football players were. There were occasional rumors that a particular player was being given a "free ride" or partial free ride by his fraternity brothers or an alumnus, but there was no evidence and this was not in my bailiwick.

What makes me believe that such things were not common was that so many athletes were coming to me in finding jobs and were glad to get them even when they were poorly paid. Gerry Bueker, who ran the Alpine Company coal yard down around Shattuck Avenue, said, "Skinny, when your athletes get hard up, send them down here and I'll put them to work sacking coal at 50¢ an hour." Ted Beckett, who was an All-American, and Rusty Gill and other stars went down there quite often and were glad to get the work. Also, off-season, quite a few of the guys would work on the San Francisco waterfront stevedoring on Saturdays and Sundays. It was tough work but it paid well and they often could work overtime. That, of course, was before Harry Bridges organized his union.

The fraternities and sororities had a lot of jobs "hashing" (waiting on tables) and dishwashing. They'd usually give needy athletes a break on getting these jobs. They were really good jobs because they paid board and came at times that did not interfere with classes.

The fraternities also helped out in recruiting, because they were also interested in "rushing" for their houses. So I'd call meetings of the fraternity rushing committee chairmen and distribute lists of good prospects.

Riess: How did Sproul get his information on all of this?

Johnson: I think Sproul was pretty familiar with the general picture. He had been an athlete and fraternity man himself, you know. He'd been the university's representative to the conference in 1922. The coaches and athletic directors were his close friends and he got acquainted with a lot of the athletes. Our general situation was healthy. If anything had gone very far amiss, he would have learned about it.

Johnson: However, as soon as I got in his office, I realized that the last person to be able to get proof of particular violations in his own institution was the president. He might get warnings and hints, and complaints from other institutions, but very little evidence on which he could take action. And I found that my relationship was changed after I had gone into his office. When I met some of my old friends who were active in recruiting, a kind of hush would go over, and there was a certain restraint.

Sproul made as honest an effort as anybody could possibly make, and Kerr did the same thing, when he was chancellor and during his regime as president.

You asked me when was the first time I talked to Sproul about an athlete. That was back when he had just been elected president but was still in the comptroller's office. A dear friend of mine, Jum Morris, my old high school and junior college coach, and the head of the college, wrote me an indignant letter saying, "That stupid university of yours wants to run everything its own way." He said, "I had a boy here; he was ill, and unable to take final examinations, so we gave him an E, which to us meant incomplete. And as soon as he took the examination, we gave him his B's, C's, and so on, his regular grades." The university had a rule that an E could only be changed to a D. "That's their rule for their own students," he said. "It gives an 'incomplete' to students who, for good reason, can't complete their courses on time. The university insists that our E's mean what the university says it means, so he can't get in. Will you take it up with Bob Sproul? He knows me; we're old friends, and I'm sure he'll do the right thing if he can."

Jum was a Stanford track man and he had competed against Sproul back in 1912 or 1913. Al Novo was the boy Jum was writing about. He was a Mexican or some other minority, and he was also a good two miler.

I went over to Mr. Sproul's office and asked for him. We talked, and I gave him the letter. He said, "Leave it with me and I'll see what I can do about it." And the next thing I heard, Novo had been admitted and was in school. He made his Big C that year.

That was my first meeting with Mr. Sproul.

Riess: You knew that Sproul was someone you could take this to?

Johnson: No one at the university told me, but Jum had asked me to. I knew that Sproul loved athletics. Believe me, no one loved to win more than Robert Gordon Sproul. I don't think he ever missed a football

Johnson: game or track meet, and I doubt if he missed very many basketball games. He loved athletics. And, I also know that he was a man of honor, and we had made our commitment to the conference, and we lived up to that commitment.

Basically, as he said, he didn't want athletes who were playing at their studies; he wanted students who were playing at athletics. There was a proposal at one time to put all the athletes, as some institutions are doing, into an athletic training house during the season. He was absolutely opposed to it because, as he said, "If we do that, the athletes will become a separate entity, and we want the athletes to have normal student lives with normal associations with the other students. Not to have an athletic clique on the campus."

One morning in the spring of 1929, I received a telephone call. "President Campbell would like to see me in his home." I was puzzled. I had never met him, and I don't think many students had. We'd regarded him with more awe than affection. He was a distant figure, and had a reputation for being stern.

I hurried over to the President's House and rang the bell. The president answered it himself, dressed in a morning coat and pin-striped pants. He held out his hand. "Mr. Johnson?" "Yes, sir." "I'm informed that you are soliciting young athletes to come to the University of California." "Yes, sir." "Please, Mr. Johnson, don't do anything to harm the university." "I will not, sir."

He held out his hand in a friendly way. "I know that you won't," he said. "Good day, Mr. Johnson."

I walked back across the campus on air. The president knew what I was doing and he trusted me! It was one of the great events of my life.

#### Recruiting Students with Leadership Qualities

Riess: When did you go to work for Mr. Sproul?

Johnson: I think it was in the summer of 1946 that Maxene, my wife, was sitting in our apartment house. She said when she answered the phone that a huge voice roared, "Is Bob there?" [laughter] He said to me, "Bob, what are you doing?" "I'm working toward my doctorate, and I'm having a little difficulty now." He said, "Why?" I said, "Well,

Johnson: my wife is expecting a baby, and she's been helping me. I've had to drop off my work at times to take temporary teaching jobs in the high schools around here and so on. I don't know whether I'm going to make it now." He said, "Come on down to my office, I want to see you."

The next day I walked in. Interestingly enough, he had remembered my recruitment work. He said, "Many of the alumni are complaining that although the University of California does select from only the top group of high school graduates, we really don't get our share of the very best people. They tell me they're going to Stanford, and Harvard and those other places in the East." He said, "One thing we haven't done, because our admissions are mechanical, we haven't taken into account other important factors such as leadership as it's demonstrated in the high schools. We have a school relations office but they don't seem to get into this."

"Would you go out among the high schools in the state and tell them that we are certainly interested in anyone who is in the upper four or five percent of their class. But we are also interested in others who are academically well qualified and who, also, demonstrate leadership in student body offices or in journalism or athletics. We want academic and student leaders; we want a well-rounded campus." And that was to be my assignment once I started.

I went out to high schools throughout the state in much the same way that I once had done when I was looking for athletes. In each school, I told the principal what we were looking for. Then I said, "Will you select them and bring them in?" They would come in a group, sometimes with the principal or faculty advisor present, to a vacant office. I would tell them about what we were doing, that the University of California was big and tough and that they would be pretty much on their own. Then I talked of the greatness of the university. I told them about our scholarship program and all of the other services we provided. I said, "If you and your parents want to come for a visit, I'll show you around and we'll try to get a place for you, if you want, and try to find you a job, if you need it." And I'd come down to the office on Saturdays to meet them.

Well, a lot of students I'd talked to did come to Cal, and among them were two or three athletes, but I had no part in picking them. The conference commissioner, Vic Schmidt, later told me, at one of our conference meetings, that he had heard objections about my work. He had followed up and talked to the principals but he couldn't find that I had done anything that was wrong. [laughter]

Johnson: I kept a record of all my activities and of the students I'd talked to and helped. I'm very proud of that work. Some of the kids, especially those from little high schools remote from the campus, would come in after they had registered and write to me later on in life, thanking me and telling me that they had never dreamed of going to college until I talked to them. It was probably the most gratifying assignment I have ever been given in my life. I made case-by-case reports to President Sproul and he, also, appeared happy.

Riess: And what was your title when you had that job?

Johnson: I had no title, but I had a card that certainly impressed them when I went into some high school that had never seen anybody from the University of California before. It said, "Robert S. Johnson, Office of the President."

The trouble with our relations with schools office was that they used to put professors on its staff part-time, and when they had a free half-day they would take off, and get out to Walnut Creek and other places nearby. [laughter] Those high schools had been visited so often that they didn't want any more visits from the university for a while. But when you got to some little place like Nevada City or Ukiah, gee, they'd roll out the carpet for you.

I should explain that I didn't visit just northern California schools. When I visited southern California, I would emphasize UCLA. I'd made previous arrangements with the campus officers there, and I'd turn names over to them and to the local chapter of Cal Club, the all-campus organization that had been created by Sproul and was under Professor Garff Wilson's direction.\*

#### The Workings of the President's Office Staff

Kantor: Sproul's staff would have been Miss Robb and Josephine Smith and Frank Stevens?

Johnson: Well, a lot more than that. When I came into the office, Dr. Monroe Deutsch's office, as vice-president and provost of the university, was just across a private hall from Dr. Sproul's. He seemed to be

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\*After this interview was done, and Mr. Johnson had checked the transcript, he volunteered an additional section on the Council of University Presidents of the Pacific Coast Conference, of which Robert Gordon Sproul was a leading member. That review of PCC history, written by Mr. Johnson in interview format, follows this interview.

Johnson: a kind of junior partner and the two of them, together, were administering both the university, as a whole, and the Berkeley campus. Deutsch had his own part-time assistant, Professor Barr of the School of Forestry, and his own secretary.

Dr. George Pettitt had returned from the war and had been appointed assistant to the president with responsibility for public relations, for the news bureau and radio programs, and for replying to many letters over his own signature and preparing others for Sproul's.

Josephine Smith had, for many years, been the budget officer-- in fact the budget office, since she had very little staff, but I didn't see her very much, since she was on another floor. Frank Stevens had been President Wheeler's personal secretary, and Sproul, always considerate of other people's feelings, had kept him on and made Frank secretary of the university and assigned him all the official proclamations. In most cases, these were written by Sproul and signed by Stevens, which always amused us around the office. [laughter] Frank really was a nice person, an awfully nice person, but really not much help.

Mrs. Lynn, "Gracie" we called her, with her staff of typists in the outer office, was responsible for getting the monthly reports and other agenda items into shape for submission to the regents. At that time, the Board of Regents' standing orders required submission to them of a large mass of minutiae--budget transfers, hiring, promotions, and even salary changes of personnel (and these were not restricted to higher levels), purchases of equipment, etc. Of course, the regents' approval for most of these was pro forma, but they had to be approved if they were to be valid. So each month volumes of items had to be prepared accurately, fully, and promptly. This called for continuing consultation with Miss Robb and even with Mr. Sproul. I want to tell you about this, because I doubt if anyone outside the office appreciated the value of Mrs. Lynn's service, of how indispensable she was to the office's orderly functioning.

And, above all, there was Agnes Robb, who actually served as chief of staff. In those days, the highest title that a woman could aspire to be in university administration, or I suppose in any other administration, was secretary. Today, anyone with her responsibilities would hold a vice-presidential title.

Vice-president Deutsch retired in the summer of 1947, about a year after I had come into the office. Instead of replacing him and his staff, Mr. Sproul brought in Russell Barthell, who had been

Johnson: assistant director of the bureau of public administration under Professor Samuel May. He was given the title administrative assistant to the president. Today, one who carried his responsibilities would hold either a vice-presidential or assistant president title.

I'm sure that Sam May had in mind that Russell would succeed him when he retired. Russ had majored in public administration and been elected to Phi Beta Kappa, had secured a master's degree and gone to work in the state highway commission, and was an assistant professor of public administration at the University of Oregon when May persuaded him to come to Berkeley. Sproul, as usual with his new appointees, had checked Barthell's background. He talked to May and asked if he would lend Russ to the president's office. Sammy, of course, assented, but hated to lose his right-hand man. In fact afterwards, in a half-kidding way, he used to refer to our building as "the home of Bob, Robb, and Steel"--Thomas S. Steel was the registrar.

So Russ took over. He began to organize a staff of administrative analysts. Sproul called me in and said, "I'd kind of like to have you continue what you're doing. It's important to the university and you're doing a good job. But Russ has recommended that your duties really belong in the office of school relations." He asked, "Would you like to continue what you are doing, but under the director of school relations, or would you want to stay in the president's office?"

I said, "Well, President Sproul, I have a young baby at home now, and I don't think I should be away so much of the time traveling." He said, "I understand. You're right. You'll stay in my office, and I'll budget another full-time position to Hiram Edwards [director of school relations] with the understanding that it is to be filled with a young man to carry on the work you've started."

As the need for more assistance became evident, others were added: Richard Dingle, Richard Rice, Jay Livesey, Richard Hill and others. Kirk Rowlands started with us, and then after seven or eight months, went over to the budget office. They were all extremely competent and went on to important jobs. Livesey went to Santa Barbara as assistant to Chancellor Gould and then followed him to New York, where he became vice-chancellor of the State University of New York, Rich Dingle became assistant vice-chancellor in charge of the medical and other professional health schools in that system. Dick Hill became assistant to Chancellor Allen at UCLA and was succeeded there by Russ Barthell after Sproul's retirement.

Johnson: Dick Rice became professor of history and dean of liberal arts at Hayward State. I'd like to add, if I may, that I, too, enjoyed attractive job offers, but I declined them. There was too much Old Blue in my blood.

Russ Barthell, in addition to being extremely intelligent and wise, was a great leader. We soon got in the habit of eating lunch together at a table in the Hotel Durant. We discussed our assignments and projects informally. We dined in each other's homes. We went on camping and fishing trips together. We were like brothers. We seldom, any of us, went to The Faculty Club. We kept a low profile on the campus. We were extremely careful not to discuss confidential information with others outside our circle, or our relationships with the president. And that drew us closer to one another.

Riess: How did Sproul operate with his staff?

Johnson: Sproul and Miss Robb. I never separated the two when I was given an assignment.

Sproul was very cautious, believe me, in making a decision. He wanted all sides of the question and the considerations to be taken into account. He also wanted our recommendation for a course of action, with an accompanying draft for his signature. I want to emphasize this, that he asked for our judgment as to the best response he should make, rather than only for a set of alternatives for his decision. Other executives for whom I later worked preferred the latter, rather than to be "told what they should do."

If President Sproul endorsed our judgment, he would go over the draft carefully, and sometimes pencil in changes, then he'd initial it in pencil and send it on to Mrs. Lynn for final typing by one of her assistants. The edited draft and a copy of his letter would then be returned to the author of the draft.

When, on occasion, he did not accept a recommendation and draft and, instead, developed his own letter, our draft would be returned unsigned. None of us felt badly in that case. We had great faith in the man's judgment, and felt that he knew more than was revealed in the file, and was wiser than we.

Riess: Would he then follow up and discuss it more?

Johnson: Occasionally. He might return our memorandum with a question or further instructions. However, we tried very carefully in our memoranda to anticipate his questions so that this wouldn't be

Johnson: necessary. We felt it our job to conserve his time as much as possible. He read very rapidly and thoroughly, you know. So none of us, possibly excepting Russ, went in to talk often with the president.

We didn't mind. Each of us was in direct personal communication with him. We came to know him at least as well by this means and by reading the files as if we were repeatedly in his physical presence. I do remember and cherish the occasions, though, when he asked for me. When I walked in he'd say, "Bob, there's something I'd like to talk over with you. Sit down." And he'd draw up a chair next to him. Or he'd lead me over to the sofa at the side of the room and we'd sit down side by side. He'd never keep his desk between us. He would talk in a surprisingly low, soft voice. He'd listen carefully and meditate for a moment before responding. Sometimes we'd differ. I remember that once I felt strongly and raised my voice. Then I feared that I was being disrespectful and I apologized. Mr. Sproul said gently, "You don't have to do that, Bob. If I'm wrong, I want you to tell me. That's why I have you in my office. I could get lots of people to say yes to me, but I want to know."

My first assignment to a case, in 1947, had to do with disposition of property that had been willed to the regents by a Mr. Kearney of Fresno many years before. It was a large piece of property, and he had in mind that it would become a campus of the university at some time. However, after many years it was agreed by everybody that it was not the proper site for a campus of the university and never would be. Sproul wanted to hold the property, nevertheless. He was a great believer in real estate as an investment in this growing state.

Underhill, on the other hand, believed that there were better ways to take care of the university's assets than in real estate. Sproul handed the files to me and said, "Here, Bob Underhill and I disagree on this. I'm going to prepare my recommendation to the regents, and I'll write up my reasons. You go talk to Bob. You and he work out the other side of the question, and we'll present them both."

Sproul lost, which scared the life out of me because at that time I had had little experience with him. But it didn't bother him. He was even more friendly after that.

The point I'm trying to make is that he wanted to know both sides of a question, and, in this case, he wanted the regents to know.

Riess: I'm surprised that he didn't work it out with Underhill ahead of time.

Johnson: Normally Sproul did make only one recommendation to the regents, although at times he might inform them of an alternative. But this was a special case. Underhill, as well as Sproul, was an officer of the regents, and his title was secretary-treasurer and land agent. Sproul's and Underhill's difference over whether land or securities was the best kind of investment was so sharp that I doubt that they could work out an agreement. But Sproul believed, nevertheless, that Underhill was entitled to have his judgment presented to the regents.

Riess: You would be given assignments within what basic areas?

Johnson: There was a wide range. Our job was to save the president's time. I can't think of any kind of problem confronting the president that might not, at some time or other, be referred to our staff. But none of them came to us directly. We handled only those sent to us by either the president or by Miss Robb for the president. When there were recurrent problems she would have the files assembled and bound into a "Special Problems" folder. We called them "S.P.s." I don't know how in the world she ever knew which documents to keep like this. But they were very handy. For example, one might be on "Sabbatical Leave Policy," another on "Problems with the Daily Cal," another on "Departmental Chairmen: Powers and Responsibilities," and so forth. Interestingly enough, she had a good sense of those that might be needed soon, and she kept a lot of them spread around on the floor, and people would be astounded when they walked into her office.

She had them scattered around here, there, and every place, all over the office, but she knew the exact location of each, so the instant President Sproul would call for a certain file, she could walk in with it! She also had a room upstairs where she buried letters and files that were not urgent, to keep the president from getting upset before he could get at them.

Then Miss Robb had another system. She'd send us a file, and we'd put it at the bottom of our work to do, because before long there usually would be another with a red label printed "URGENT" clipped to it, but before we could complete work on that, we might get still another file with two "URGENT" labels. When we got one with three labels, boy, we knew it was time to call up the wife and tell her we wouldn't be home for dinner. Work on that file was to be on the president's desk on the following morning!

Riess: You wouldn't be given assignments in special areas?

Johnson: We were all generalists and competent to work on any problem, but then, as time went on, we became specialists, too. At first, the president and Miss Robb usually sent the work to Russ Barthell for assignment to members of the staff. But as time went on, the requests more and more came to us personally. Dick Rice became the specialist on academic personnel matters, Rich Dingle on problems with the medical schools, and I with problems concerning the students: intercollegiate athletics, student government, student newspapers, compulsory fees, student organizations, and so on. I also prepared the university case each year for faculty salary adjustments, and later I was assigned the responsibility of "ring master" for matters to come before the Board of Regents' Committee on Educational Policy. That meant that several weeks before the next regents' meeting, I would be given the agenda with the president's intended recommendations. I was then to draft the presentation of each item--background, explanation, etc. and "P.R." (president's recommendation) and forward the materials through Miss Robb to the president for final approval. The folder would then be turned over to Mrs. Lynn's group for typing and mailing.

Another thing about this--perhaps this should be on the record--anything he told us and anything we told him were strictly confidential. When he accepted advice from us or from anyone else, he did so because he considered it good advice, not because of the person giving it to him. Then it became his decision, and he assumed full responsibility for it. He was loyal to us as we were to him. If the recommendation turned out bad, he never publicly blamed his staff, as even presidents of the United States have done. As Russ Barthell once told us, Sproul might say privately and jokingly, with a chuckle, "How'd you happen to lead me down that dark alley?" but he assumed full responsibility. It was Sproul, not Barthell or Johnson.

I want to say one thing more. Sometimes a complaint would come signed by a chancellor or provost that we knew had been prepared for him by one of his staff members. We'd worry, How could an administrative analyst win an argument with a chancellor? Sproul reassured me once when he got a letter taking sharp exception to an action I had recommended, "Now listen, Bob, the chancellor has his team and I have mine." I understood. He did not mean he trusted my judgment more than the chancellor's. He did mean that he decided cases purely on the basis of the facts presented to him and that the status of persons involved was irrelevant. This same attitude also applied to his making exceptions. Sproul's policies,

Johnson: regardless of whether they were stated or reflected in decisions, were universal. He made no exceptions for individuals. If he discovered that strict application created unfairness, he amended it and his decision in that case created a new precedent. In a sense, we administrative analysts were case lawyers.

We, of course, were not the president's only advisers. Our knowledge was essentially restricted to information from the files, although we would use the telephones when we thought additional information would be helpful. And of course Sproul had many others, officers, faculty members, and committees, to whom he resorted for information and advice. He made the decisions.

Riess: It sounds like a coach and his team.

Johnson: I don't think that metaphor is very apt, although we analysts were a team, all right. I think it would be better to say that Mr. Sproul was the captain and we were part of his crew. Or better yet, that he was the father of a family. Agnes Robb used to refer to him as "Pop" [sic] and still does.

All of us looked forward to the annual Christmas party in the President's House, and no one enjoyed it more than he. It was far more than an office party, it was a family affair, and no one enjoyed it more than Bob Sproul. It was one of the few days of the year when he put all business aside. According to our household informants, he'd be up at four or five in the morning to take charge of preparations. First, there was the punch to be mixed to give it eight or ten hours to cure before we arrived. This was a kind of fish house punch improved by years of experimenting. He'd pour the brandy and rums into a huge bowl according to formula. Then he'd add the fruit juices and spices and other ingredients bit by bit, sipping as he went along until it finally suited his exacting taste. He was just as meticulous in selecting the cheeses, pastries, and other knick-knacks that crowded the extended dinner table.

The entire office staff and their spouses would be there: assistants, secretaries, typists, file clerks, and analysts, and of course Otto, the campus mailman, Sproul's old fishing partner back before he came to work eighty hours a week.

Mrs. Sproul would greet us at the door and direct us over to the punchbowl where the president, in high good humor, greeted each of us by first name and offered us a ladling into our cups. "Be careful," he'd warn us with a loud chuckle, "It has a lot of authority." That it did, and it also was very good and seductive.

Johnson: We filled the downstairs and mixed around and only an introduction, here and there, was called for. We had worked together for years. And we were fond of each other. After a while, some of us would move toward the Christmas tree and spontaneously begin singing Christmas carols. And Sproul would come over and join us. I tell you, once he pitched in, even my own voice began to sound pretty good to me. And then Sproul with a laugh would suggest, "Now, let's sing Dingle Bells." That, of course, was in honor of Rich Dingle, whose forebears and name had come over from western Ireland. And so we'd all sing, or rather roar, "Dingle Bells, Dingle Bells."

Those were merry, unforgettable, afternoons. It hurts to know that almost all of those who were there are gone.

The Public Administration Survey, 1948

Johnson: After it had been decided that my work in recruiting high school leaders would be transferred to the office of school relations, and I remain in the president's office, the first major assignment that was given me was to work with a public administration survey [P.A.S.] team that was making the first examination of the university's administrative organization ever made. This one only cost \$40,000 or \$50,000 out-of-pocket, yet its recommendations were repeated substantially in studies some fifteen years later that, to my amusement, cost the regents one or two million dollars. I've thought that one of the reasons for their acceptance, when most of the P.A.S. recommendations were made, was that they cost more and their report had more pages. Much of this as I read it was "boiler plate," rather pompous statements of the general principles underlying effective administrative organization that were well known to students of the subject and were repeated, with little change in formal reports, by the same incorporated group of consultants.

By contrast, the group to which I was attached was small, and sponsored as a non-profit service by the University of Chicago. And its report was modest and terse. The team was headed by Wes McClure, a recent graduate of Professor Sammy May's public administration on the campus. Wes was later appointed city manager of San Leandro and stayed there until he retired. He was the chief reason, I think, for that city's becoming a model for others throughout the country. Then there was Gene Lee, who'd recently been a student under May. Gene became a professor on the campus, a university vice-president under Clark Kerr, and for many years has

Johnson: been director of the Institute of Governmental Studies on the campus. And John Blanford was added to our P.A.S. survey group to examine, in particular, the functioning of the regents and of the president's office. John had retired from a high post in the federal budget office.

Riess: What precipitated this?

Johnson: The university was getting so big, its administration needed reorganization. It was too centralized. Both the regents and the president were making too many decisions that really were not worth their attention and that should have been made at a lower level. Jim Corley was the vice-president-business affairs and also the university's representative to the legislature, and in some respects his office was even more centralized than the president's. The campus business managers were reporting and referring problems to Corley's office rather than to the local chief administrative officer.

Provost Dykstra told me one time when I was talking to him-- when I went to any campus I always checked in at the provost's office to let him know I was there so they didn't think I was some spy from the president's office prowling around, so I checked in, and Dykstra invited me into his private office--he said, "You know, the trouble is that I can't even get a door painted here without someone having to call up Jim Corley's office to find out whether it could be done or not." I think he was exaggerating, but he was making a point.

Riess: It was in response to that kind of complaint that this study was made?

Johnson: I'm not sure, but I think so. The campuses were getting frustrated by delays, and our office by backlogs. The regents may have been part of the problem. In fact, I would say that the fundamental problem lay with the regents. John Neylan, in particular, had the lawyer's idea that, as the state constitution stated, the university was a "public trust" and that as trustees the Board of Regents had to administer it directly. This idea had come down from the early days of the university's history. In those days the regents committee on business and finance met weekly to approve the payment of all bills, regardless of size. The secretary of the regents was also the university business manager and secretary of the Academic Senate. He met with the regents' committee, and the president of the university seldom did. He was only president of the Academic Senate, with practically no real power.

Johnson: Well, Wheeler insisted on changing some of that before he would accept the presidency. He put the business management under him and was recognized as the sole channel of communication between the regents and the faculty and others on the campus. And his successors insisted on keeping that arrangement. Nevertheless, even down into Sproul's term the regents maintained that they had to give final approval to everything: all budget transfers, all new appointments and promotions and salary increases. And so, as I've said, each month the president would carry in bales of recommendations for their approval. In actual practice, this almost invariably was given pro forma. So, to keep the university going the administration had to take action that assumed regents' approval even though strictly speaking, they probably were not legal. In many instances, then the president was blamed unfairly for not delegating powers, when he did not have them himself. It was very difficult for Sproul to delegate when everything poured into the regents anyway.

So the P.A.S. recommendations for change started with the regents, who were told that they should devote their great talents and limited time to important questions of policy, rather than to so many purely administrative matters. And they didn't like it. And the report criticized the president for not leaving more matters to the local campus officers for decision and action, and he didn't like that. Sproul not only relished the exercise of power, but he was also fearful that too much decentralization of power would end in disintegration of the university. Sproul was determined to defend the integrity of the University of California, a single institution located on several campuses under a single chief executive reporting to a single governing board.

This concept was reflected in a suggestion for reorganization that he offered to the P.A.S. team. It was that, like the College of Agriculture which was then administered by a single university-wide vice-president, the other campus disciplines also be reorganized into university-wide divisions--letters and science, health sciences, engineering, etc., each under a vice-president.

Because as a member of his staff I had been assigned to the survey team by the president, I felt called upon to defend the Sproul proposal as best I could, but I got nowhere. The College of Agriculture was, of course, a special case. It had originated at Berkeley and developed there. More recently an experiment and demonstration farm had been created at Davis and an experiment station at Riverside. The agriculture program at Los Angeles administered directly from Berkeley was an awkward anomaly on the Westwood campus, and the same became true at Davis and Riverside when non-agricultural schools and colleges were created.

Johnson: Under the suggested Sproul scheme of reorganization, the campus heads would have been no more than coordinators attempting vainly to mediate between the competing claims of the various faculties for facilities and services. Student loyalties, particularly undergraduate loyalties, are attached more to campuses than to academic disciplines. Other insuperable difficulties were also pointed out, and I had to concede to the others for the survey team that the president's scheme would not work. I'm sure that he, too, came readily to agree.

As George Pettitt commented regarding his close friend, "Bob Sproul's problem is like the legendary Greek [wasn't it Ajax?] who grew stronger each day by lifting up his calf until it, unfortunately, grew so huge that even he couldn't lift it." Another one of George's metaphors was: "Berkeley's trouble is that it refuses to recognize that its daughter [UCLA] has become a sister."

Riess: Okay. So this first study didn't amount to a reorganization?

Johnson: No, that's not true. The P.A.S. study did lead to some immediate reforms, and more importantly, it started a process of decentralization which culminated during the next president's administration.

The regents, after the irritation of some of them had subsided, did delegate authority to the president to approve most of the appointments and promotions and salary increases, within a regent-approved budget and schedules. This included all university employees except major officers and faculty members in the tenure ranks. Also, the regents delegated authority to approve budget transfers within departments and transfers from contingency funds, provided these did not initiate new projects and did not amount to more than \$3,000 each. And authority was also delegated to make agreements for public lectures and concerts that did not exceed \$3,000.

On his part, President Sproul delegated or redelegated important powers to the chief campus officers. The most important action, I think, was to require local business managers to report to their local chief administrative officers, rather than directly to the central administration. In other words, authority was delegated to the campuses to administer, within approved policy, all business functions except purchasing, accounting, plant planning and construction, and the non-academic personnel offices. However, in practice this authority was not as great as it might appear on the surface. The trouble lay in the provision, "within approved policy." Because this was not always spelled out clearly, local

Johnson: officers would have, very often, to get in touch with the central administration to find out the policies and how they were to be interpreted. In effect, then, the central offices were still calling too many shots.

The regents felt that, with their additional responsibilities, the campus heads, at least at Berkeley and Los Angeles, should have a more prestigious title than "provost." The president asked me to suggest possible new titles. I discovered them all in a proclamation addressed by one of the English kings to the heads of Oxford University and its colleges, so I quoted the proclamation in my memorandum to Mr. Sproul. Those that I can still remember were: chancellor, dean, master, principal, president, provost, warden, rector. I suggested tongue-in-cheek that he consider, "Master, Los Angeles campus," "Warden, Berkeley campus."

Seriously, however, I pointed out that in a number of American states, the head of the system of public universities is called "chancellor." However, I had discovered that the reverse is true in North Carolina. There, the various public university and college heads are named "chancellor" and are under an over-all "president." Sproul chose the latter scheme and the regents approved it.

#### Sacramento and the University

Johnson: I'd like to say something about Sproul, or rather Sproul-Corley, because the two acted as one, and the state government. I began to learn quite a bit about this when I was asked to draft a memorandum supporting the university's request for faculty salary increases. I collected data showing that the University of California was rated by outside agencies with Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, and Chicago as having the best faculties in the country. Also, our own records showed that we had recruited more faculty members from those universities than from any others and that, in turn, they had recruited more from us. When our academic salaries were compared, rank by rank, with those of the others, they showed that ours were lower by at least five percent. The president approved the draft, and after securing regents' endorsement, sent the request and the data supporting it to Sacramento. We got our increases. We kept on using the same formula after that and the faculty continued to get general increases each year of five to ten percent. These were in addition to their individual merit and promotion salary increases.

Johnson: After that, Mr. Sproul asked me to prepare the university's case each year until he retired, and Mr. Corley took me to Sacramento as his expert witness on salary and faculty compensation.

Sproul, of course, was intimately acquainted with the operations of the state's government because as vice-president-comptroller, he had been the university's personal representative in Sacramento for over ten years. And an extremely effective one, too, as you'll find if you look up the record. I'm sure that he tutored Jim closely, at first, and paved the way for him.

After becoming president, Sproul rarely, if ever, visited the governor or the legislature on official business. I don't recall any time during my stay in his office that he did so. He stayed out of the day-to-day informal bargaining that is an inescapable part of the legislative process. He remained distant. Otherwise, he would have lowered Jim's status and, before long, his own effectiveness in Sacramento. Nevertheless, Sproul and Corley were in constant communication with each other. Jim took almost no stand and made no commitment on any important issue affecting the university without, as he put it, "checking in with the boss." Yes, there were rare exceptions, when something extremely urgent came up and Sproul was on a trip or at a party or otherwise could not be reached. Then Jim made a decision or commitment and, as soon as possible, reported it to the president, and Sproul always backed him up.

Sproul and Jim were extremely careful to avoid getting themselves involved in issues that did not affect the university. And they did not work with one political party more than the other. They classified legislators only as those who were friendly and those who were unfriendly to the university. By far the most of them were friends.

Sproul and Corley did not attack the legislature publicly, even when they were upset by one of its decisions. As Jim told me, "You might win if you do that, but you're bound to create enemies whose votes you'll need in the future." Not many votes, I learned, are changed by the debates on the floor of the house. Most of the real deliberations and decisions occur in the committees, and even there Jim would try to get his needed majority for important favorable decisions by having friendly conversations with the individual members ahead of time. Like Sproul, Jim understood and genuinely liked nearly all the senators and assemblymen, and they understood and liked him. They celebrated one of his birthdays by throwing a big party where everybody except Jim bought

Johnson: his own drinks and dinner (that, I know, is hard to believe), and they took up a collection, with a lot of laughs, to pay for his. Then they presented him with a large plaque, "James H. Corley, Chancellor of the Sacramento Campus, University of California."

Sproul's, and later Corley's, success was due not only to their personalities but to their titles. They were vice-presidents and officers of the Board of Regents, and in charge of much of the operation of the university. They were not regarded as in the same class with the professional lobbyists who crowded the hallways and anterooms in the capitol. I walked with Jim, one day, into a waiting room full of lobbyists. Jim had made no appointment. But the secretary said in a friendly voice, "Oh, yes, Mr. Corley, the senator's been waiting to see you. Walk right in."

Ellis Groff was high up in the governor's budget office and assigned to review the university's budget requests. He was very acute, and he gave Jim a bad time with his questions and comments on some of the items. The president was looking for someone to succeed Miss Josephine Smith as budget officer and head an embellished staff of budget analysts. Jim suggested that he try to get Ellis. Sproul was enthusiastic. He said, "Get him, by all means, Jim. I want him asking his questions in my office, not in Sacramento." So they persuaded Ellis to come to Berkeley. I think that was in 1948 or 1949. He was, and still is, a wonderful person with unshakable integrity. He was respected and liked so much in Sacramento that we had no further problems in Sacramento. In fact, the governor's administrative and budget staff used to get together with the president's staff for a hilarious joint dinner at least once a year in Sacramento, each of us paying his own way. And our administrative and budget analysts had our lunches together in the Hotel Durant which reserved a large table for us.

But Ellis and his staff were not appreciated by the chancellors and other campus officers, who complained to the president that their judgments and recommendations were being questioned too much. Sproul humored them but stuck by Ellis. He was well aware, as he said once, that good budget officers and personnel officers cannot make any friends, only enemies. And he went out of his way to defend them.

The president, himself, was the last one to review in detail the university budget before it went to the regents and Sacramento. He wanted to know not only the university's needs but the state's. He'd ask Jim to find out from his friends in the governor's office and in the legislature. If they told him it was going to be an

Johnson: unusually tight year, Jim would say, "All right, I'll report that to the president." Well, Sproul would then go over the budget, with Ellis' and Jim's advice, and he'd postpone some projects and reduce others. And Jim would report that to his powerful friends in Sacramento and say, "All right, we've played ball with you, we've made sacrifices and postponed maintenance and new projects and reduced our request by \$ \_\_\_ dollars. But we'll be back after them next year." And a year or two later, the legislative leaders and governor's advisors would play their part. They'd say, "Jim, it looks like it's going to be a pretty good year. So you can tell President Sproul to include some of that backlog in his budget."

Over the years of his administration, the university accrued a priceless amount of good will in Sacramento and throughout the state of California.

The citizens of the state and their government were proud that their university had become one of the great universities of the world. They trusted its administration implicitly. Those who, like me, were privileged to attend the university and roam over its campuses will never forget the era of Robert Gordon Sproul.

#### The Loyalty Oath

Riess: You were in the president's office during the loyalty oath period?

Johnson: Oh yes, but our analyst staff was not really involved. The president didn't ask for our analysis and recommendations. And we were very grateful. We felt he was protecting us. We read the newspapers, of course. And Russ gave me the verbatim minutes of the regents and the Academic Senate committee discussions to read. This was in case he and I should be called upon to do something for the president, but as far as I know we never were. The president and Russ may have had discussion on the problem. I doubt it. Russ wouldn't have said anything to us.

I do recall that one day I was suddenly asked by the president, on a memorandum, to present all the arguments I could against imposing a loyalty oath upon the faculty. This came out of the blue and I was given a deadline of five o'clock that afternoon. I was flabbergasted. I raced over to the library and skimmed through a half dozen or so treatises on the general subject in the library. I couldn't find any on loyalty oaths. I went back as far as John Milton and I boiled everything I'd learned to two or three pages.  
[laughter]

Kantor: This was after the regents' meeting that you had to do this?

Johnson: Yes, after the fat was in the fire. But I don't think I knew it at the time. And I don't think my memo would have been very helpful anyway. When Russ and I learned that the regents had acted, we were aghast. We said to each other that 90 or 95 percent of the faculty would sign the oath without any objection, but then they'd protect the rights of the few who did object. If there were any Communists on the faculty, and we doubted there were, they'd be the first to sign the oath, we said. The non-signers would be those conscientious, stubborn individuals who regarded the oath requirement as a personal insult and a threat to academic freedom. That's what I should have put in my memorandum to the president instead of my philosophical discourse. And of course that's what happened. It began when the northern section of the senate held its first meeting a day or two later.

I still believe President Sproul would never have made a move like that without consulting his academic advisors. In particular, I've always felt he would have talked to the Advisory Committee to the President that the Academic Senate had appointed on his recommendation. He'd always consulted it in the past before taking any important action affecting the faculty or university policy. I'll admit that I have no proof. If he did so and they offered him any advice, it would have been confidential and he would have protected them. That was his way.

Sproul protected Jim Corley, but Jim came out in the open. Jim said that he had reported to the president that a loyalty oath was sure to be passed by the legislature that would blanket in the faculty and other university people with all the other state employees. Jim had suggested that it might be better for the regents to create their own oath in a more acceptable form. Also, it would preserve the independent authority of the regents instead of giving the legislature an opportunity to establish a precedent for intervening in university affairs.

The Year of the Oath was written hastily by several authors, although it was attributed to George Stewart. It was rushed to print during the controversy and was a polemic supporting the more radical of the faculty points of view. It was not quite fair and, in some places, was inaccurate, very different from Stewart's other carefully researched writing. However, David Gardner's later book on the same subject is objective and thorough. I can't think of anything important that I could add to it.

Johnson: I've wondered, though, whether one discussion that occurred several months before Sproul made his recommendation to the regents might have had some influence on his decision to do that.

Dr. Bennett of the Cowell Hospital staff had suggested that California's water problem might be solved by converting sea water. Sproul held a luncheon to discuss the suggestion. He invited Bennett, Joel Hildebrand, Ernest Lawrence, Mike O'Brien and Will Dennes. And he asked me to go along with him to take notes. Well, all the scientists agreed that such a scheme could never be feasible except in special situations. It would require too much energy and be too expensive. I believe that the engineering college, though, did undertake studies, later, to reduce costs as far as possible.

Then, after lunch, when we were chatting, the president brought up the recent firing of an English professor at the University of Washington after he admitted that he was a member of the Communist party. Professor Hildebrand held very strongly that the university was right. He argued that only one who is dedicated to the search for truth and its exposition should be a faculty member and that those who join the Communist party commit themselves to give higher priority to its objectives than to their obligations as a faculty member. Hildebrand, at that time, was a member of the Academic Senate's Advisory Committee to the President, and his opinions on matters always carried a lot of weight with the president.

Sproul did not commit himself that day, but he did go around the table and ask each one for his opinion. All of them agreed with Hildebrand that Washington was right when it fired the professor. All of them except Dennes, who was dean of the graduate division and a professor of philosophy. He said that the professor should not have lost his position before he had been tried and convicted of breaking the law. When the president asked me, I expressed agreement with Dennes.

Of course, requiring our people to take an oath denying they were Communists was quite a different matter, but I feel that Sproul was convinced that our faculty members were strongly opposed to having Communists as colleagues and that, with our rigorous screening process before approving appointments, there were none on the faculty. His mistake was in assuming that everyone, then, would find it easy to sign the oath.

Riess: What was the effect on the little office team during those years? How disruptive was it?

Johnson: It didn't disrupt us at all. We went about our usual work. We felt sorry for Mr. Sproul and knew that he must be worried. But we had great faith in him and were sure that, somehow or other, he'd find a way out of the jam.

I've told you our staff wasn't involved in the oath problem. Well, I was once, indirectly. And it was entirely my own doing, my own damned foolishness. I was working in my office one day when Clive Johnson dropped by just before noon. Clive was a close friend and associate dean of undergraduates. He said, "A so-called academic assembly is holding an open meeting today in 10 Wheeler to discuss calling a strike." I said, "What in the world is that?" He said, "They're supposed to be the people who don't belong to the faculty. It might be interesting to go over and hear them." Then I remembered that the group, I'd been told, had several meetings already and that some of those in these meetings were not employed by the university. They had infiltrated the meetings. I was also told how they would act by someone conversant with this sort of business. Those slated to speak would sit in front and others would scatter throughout the audience to lead the applause.

Well, I decided to go along with Clive, and as I got up out of my chair I thought to myself, "Maybe I'll just see how many of those people aren't university employees." So I grabbed an "O and S" and took it along with me.

Riess: Your what?

Johnson: "Officers and Students." It was an annual directory that used to be published with the names, titles, and addresses of all the officers, academic appointees, and students with their titles, addresses, and phone numbers.

Well, Clive and I went over to 10 California Hall. It was an open meeting, all right, no one was at the door, and all kinds of people were pouring in. The chairman announced that we were there to consider going on strike against the regents' oath. She called on three or four people down in front and they made fiery speeches for a strike. Then she called for others to talk. She asked them, when she didn't know their names, to give them. I took down the names of the outsiders, and there were five or six.

All at once, a chap near the other end of our row stood up and announced that someone was taking notes and that he should be asked to leave the room. He kept staring at me and there was a big uproar and shouts of "spy." I was bewildered. "What had I done

Johnson: wrong?" But as I got up to leave and reached the aisle, two or three fellows grabbed me and pushed me out the door. But worse was to come. Someone had identified me by name and as working in the president's office. The next day the Daily Cal had a big headline and article about Sproul sending a spy to the meeting.

Riess: They thought that's what you were.

Johnson: Well, as I look back at it, I may have been, but Sproul didn't send me. And, at the time, I sure didn't think of myself as a spy. It was an open meeting and I had a right to attend and, in fact, to take notes, even though, as it turned out it wasn't very smart. Doesn't one who attends a meeting on the campus have a right to take notes?

Riess: Did Sproul remonstrate with you?

Johnson: No. I didn't sleep a wink that night, but only because I was afraid that the incident would embarrass President Sproul, who already had enough worries. When I told Russ Barthell the next morning, he said, "I've got an assignment for you down in Los Angeles." [laughter] I went down for a couple of days on this special assignment. When I got back, I got a call from the president, and he said, "Bob, did I know anything about that, or send you over to that meeting?"

I said, "No, sir, you did not. It was my own idea." He said, "That's all I wanted to know. Fine. I told some people that I didn't and I just wanted to confirm that." I've thought about that many times. Maybe that was his kind, tactful way of telling me I'd been foolish, but to forget it, we all make mistakes. I don't know. He never mentioned the subject again.

Several days later, Professor [Frank] Kidner and two other faculty members on a special committee from the Academic Senate called me in for a talk. I told them just what I've been telling you. They thanked me, and I felt they were satisfied. At least I never heard from them. And, later, Frank became a very good friend.

I don't know if this little story adds anything.

Riess: I guess it adds to my picture of what I'm trying to get of Sproul.

Johnson: I thought I should tell you this. Otherwise, some future biographer or historian might look at that Daily Cal story and get the idea that President Sproul sent his staff to spy on meetings on the campus. I assure you, he never did.

Sproul's Qualities of Leadership

Riess: Your feeling was that Sproul was always considered the leader among these men.\* Why?

Johnson: I've often asked myself that question. Why? I'm going to tell you that I had the rare opportunity of knowing one of the great men in this country. I am sure that he would have been a great president of the United States. There would be a group of ten people and Sproul would be the leader. There would be twenty of them, and Sproul would still be the recognized leader of the group, and this always astonished me.

Riess: I would really like to know more about how that worked? Doesn't it make any difference what group of people it was, what kind of men?

Johnson: No. I asked one of our professors that question. He'd been employed by the government during the great war [WW I] to make a study of the components of leadership. As you know, among all other social animals, one becomes the leader of the group. Sometimes it seems to be purely physical superiority. In our human society, there are other components. Leaders appear to have a rather high order of general intelligence, but that isn't all of it.

Riess: When you were around him, what were your feelings? It doesn't seem as if you were in awe of him.

Johnson: Yes, I was. But not because he made me feel insecure. I was in awe of his greatness. As you know, he had that loud voice that was natural to him, and I think that helped on some occasions. And that loud laugh that made the others join in. They helped when he was in a large crowd or meeting strangers. But in smaller groups his voice was usually soft. He didn't speak often, but when he did he had something to say. And the others listened. He assumed and the others accepted his leadership. I wondered why.

He was, of course, very secure, very sure of himself. He was always gracious with a deep respect for the points of view and feelings of others. I think the word is empathy. And that helped to make wise decisions. He never tried to win an argument. He was self-controlled. When he agreed with you or with them, he'd

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\*Referring to Sproul and the Council of University Presidents of the Pacific Coast Conference.

Johnson: say so emphatically. When he disagreed, he'd either remain silent or say something like, "You have a point. Let me think about it."

He was very careful to avoid giving offense. He told me or maybe it was Russ Barthell, "There are two things that are very precious to men in this university: their rooms and their secretaries. I always try, if I possibly can, to avoid taking either away from them." He was never, never vindictive. He once told me, or perhaps it was Barthell, "Remember, it's always easier to make and keep an enemy than a friend." He had a genuine affection for others, as they had for him.

Well, I've been musing aloud and trying to answer your question. Please forgive me if I've been repeating myself.

Oh yes, there's another thing. President Sproul had a deep respect for his office, as did the great presidents of the United States. He recognized the value of ceremony. On public occasions he was dignified and commanding. At university meetings he ordered the students to "Stick around for 'All Hail'." There were some who did not understand and thought him vain and pompous because of this. He was not. He was protecting the stature of the office of president and its effective powers.

Well, I've tried hard to answer your question, Mrs. Riess, but I'm afraid it can't be answered in words. One has to have experienced Robert Gordon Sproul's leadership, and the mystery remains.

Transcriber: Jean Teague  
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Council of Pacific Coast Conference University Presidents

[This material on the Council of University Presidents of the Pacific Coast Conference, of which Robert Gordon Sproul was a leading member, was written by Robert Johnson in interview format, after his review of the original transcript, and is appended here for the valuable additional information it sheds on that troubled period in college football and on Robert Gordon Sproul's key role in its resolution.]

Riess: Do you think that Sproul was influenced by Ivy League traditions in his attitude toward athletics?

Johnson: Yes, and beyond that the tradition can be traced back to Oxford and Cambridge, the tradition that students play for enjoyment and not for pay. And then this was carried over to our colonial colleges. Later, it spread all over this country. It was expressed in all the athletic conference codes, in the American Amateur Union code, and, in fact, in the Olympic Games code. It certainly was the accepted standard at the University of California from the very first days. Like every other student in my time, I thought it morally wrong to accept pay for not working. And since all of the members of the Pacific Coast Conference had agreed not to subsidize their athletes, it seemed dishonorable to violate the agreement. Sproul had been an athlete himself, and I know that he felt this very deeply.

Kantor: Since this was Sproul's strong feeling about athletics, is it safe to say that he never considered establishing a department of athletics?

Johnson: You're absolutely right. He wanted to keep athletics a student-operated activity, a competition basically between student teams representing student bodies. At UCLA, unfortunately, power over athletics had been seized from the associated students [ASUCLA] by a board of control. This had only a minority student representation; it was actually controlled by alumni. For example, the board of control over-rode an ASUCLA executive committee decision not to pay John Wooden the large salary he demanded to stay as basketball coach.

Riess: Why did Sproul decide to form the Council of Presidents?

Johnson: Because he thought the athletic situation was getting out of hand. While I was touring the state, I'd quite often get into friendly conversations with the high school principals and student advisers.

Johnson: Some of them told me about visits from other universities. I think most of these were alumni, but the school people didn't distinguish them from the officials of the universities. They were probably right. What I learned was that the visitors were not interested in the best pupils. They were asking about the athletic stars, and when they saw them, they were not only trying to persuade the players to come to their schools, they were offering subsidies.

Well, I included some of these conversations in a report to President Sproul, and he asked me to find out as much as I could about what was going on in the state. I talked not only to the principals, particularly those who were our graduates, but to some of our players and coaches at Berkeley, and others. And some time in 1948 I gave Mr. Sproul a documented report on some fifteen or twenty cases, with names and amounts offered and paid, and the names of my informants.

I could not find any evidence of overt activity by Cal supporters, and only scattered instances by those backing Stanford. I was told there had been violations before Donald Tressider became president of Stanford, and quite an outburst during the acting regime following his death, but that Wally Sterling had clamped down on this kind of thing when he became president.

I felt that, if there was any wrongful activity at all, this was being done without the knowledge or encouragement of the coaches and athletic directors of the two institutions. Right after the war, the veterans were getting benefits from the government to take care of their tuition, board and room, and incidental expenses, books. These were older fellows and they were serious about getting the best education possible. So a lot of them, including the best athletes, decided to come to California or Stanford. Pappy Waldorf built his great Rose Bowl teams almost entirely with these veterans.

Of course, as I told you before, it was harder to get information about Pacific Coast Conference code violations by Berkeley alumni than by others, because they knew me and that I was in the president's office. However, I had long conversations with "Pappy" and with Brutus Hamilton. Brutus was both track coach and athletic director at that time. They were both honorable men, candid, and strongly opposed to paying athletes to play.

When Pappy came to Berkeley he'd called California a "sleeping giant," and during the spring and summer months he'd gone all over the state talking to alumni groups to stir them up to action. He'd

Johnson: warned them about conference rules and told them it was our policy to respect them. He asked our alumni to look out for outstanding prospects who had the grades and family financial support. He said it was impossible for a football player to make enough during the playing season to pay for his college expenses. So Pappy asked for help in finding summer jobs that would pay enough to tide the needy fellows over until spring. But even these jobs were limited, Pappy warned, so he told the alumni not to make promises that couldn't be kept. Brutus was also very firm. He held that if a student couldn't afford to go out for athletics he shouldn't.

In my report, I told Sproul that the worst offenders against the conference code I'd discovered were USC and UCLA, and of these two the worst was UCLA.

As I've told you before, USC's system had been in existence since the 1920s and it hadn't improved. Ways had been developed to avoid the spirit of the code and getting caught. While recruitment was directed by someone in the USC General Alumni Association through the Trojan Clubs, contacts were between individual alumni and the prospects. Confidential arrangements were made, and whenever the commissioner investigated, they were denied by both parties. The coaching staff, of course, indicated the men they would like, but they did not make the offers, in fact they rarely made any direct contacts with them.

UCLA's violations were more brazen. And there was a close tie-in between the athletic staff and the activities of the two "booster" clubs, the "Bruin Bench" and the "Westwood Young Men's Club." Funds were raised and channeled through these organizations to the athletes. Promising high school and junior college athletes were solicited with offers of fixed amounts, regardless of need. Phony "jobs" were created, on-campus and off-campus, that required little or no real work. Coaches of several other universities, I reported to Mr. Sproul, had expressed surprise that the two University of California campuses should have such different practices.

Riess: What would you tell us about how Sproul had to deal differently when he was trying to make things work at UCLA?

Johnson: Well, the two campus attitudes toward athletics were very different. Most of the leaders of the Berkeley alumni were older men. They'd been brought up in the campus tradition that studies were more important than athletics. They were more proud of the University of California's high standing in the academic world than of its rating in athletics. And they boasted of the achievements of their

Johnson: athletes in the real world after graduation. Take the Wonder Teams, for example. There were leading attorneys Stan Barnes and Don Nichols, and Drs. Brick Muller, Fat Clark, and Brodie Stephens, and successful stock brokers Jack Witter and Archie Nisbet, and Dan McMillan, and top corporation executive executives like Cort Majors. I could go on and on.

Now all of our alumni leaders were intimate friends of Bob Sproul. So when he felt that things might be getting out of hand a little in the recruitment picture, he'd talk it over with several of them. He'd remind them of his policy and ask them to help him. And they'd say, "Well, Bob, I'm not sure I agree with you, but if that's what you want you can count on me." And, of course, he could.

But at UCLA the situation was very different. It was new and hadn't yet gained a high standing in the academic world. The alumni leaders were still young and only a few had made their marks in the outside world. But they were full of ambition for themselves and for their alma mater. And nearly all of them lived in southern California where success in sports was more important than in the north. In fact, it still is. In that respect, it's more like Arizona and Texas and Oklahoma, and Alabama and Georgia.

Well, UCLA, as soon as it became more than a state normal school and southern branch of the university, wanted to go "big time," so it applied in 1927 for admission to the Pacific Coast Conference. Sproul, I'm told, was secretly unhappy about that. He didn't think they were ready. But he went along. UCLA was humiliated by USC in their first games by terrible scores like 76-0 and 52-0, so USC dropped them off its schedule. As you can well imagine, getting a team good enough to play and then beat the Trojans became one of the most important goals in life for these young alumni, and in order to compete successfully for good athletic material they began to copy some of USC's methods.

Mr. Sproul, you should know, had been deeply involved in the development of the institution since 1919 when the old two-year normal school training elementary teachers became the southern branch of the university and he served on the commission that developed a new two-year general curriculum. After that he was very active in increasing this to a three-year and then a four-year curriculum and in changing the name to the University of California at Los Angeles. He did this before he became president and when he was alone in the administration at Berkeley in looking forward to another full-fledged university campus.

Johnson: Like Dr. Ernest Carroll Moore and Regent Dickson, both loyal Cal alumni, he realized that the creation of a large public institution in southern California was needed and inevitable. And the three of them were convinced that it would be far better for all concerned to have this development inside the university than as a separate university. So Sproul participated in choosing a site for the new campus and then in moving out to it. He looked forward to creating two sister campuses at Berkeley and Los Angeles, with other smaller campuses, all parts of one University of California. It was an ambitious concept. It had never been achieved successfully in any other state. He said that probably the Los Angeles campus would become larger than Berkeley's.

Then this country entered into the big depression, and the university's budget was cut by one-third. Some very grim decisions had to be made. I was on the Berkeley campus at the time and I'd been promised a salary increase, but instead, like the other non-academic employees, I had to accept a large cut. Many people were laid off, as well as many of the faculty members who were not on tenure, and programs were eliminated. The people at UCLA were impatient to get ahead, but Sproul warned them that he would not destroy Berkeley just to speed up UCLA's development. While he was waiting, he and his staff started planning, and then as soon as the war ended and the university could get more funds, the president recommended and the regents authorized and financed an enormous development at Los Angeles, with new buildings all over the campus and additional Ph.D. programs and professional schools and colleges in law, medicine, engineering, business administration, and others.

Anyone who enjoys the opportunity to read through the president's files, as I did, will be impressed by how much Robert Gordon Sproul cared for his Los Angeles campus and how much thought and effort he devoted to nurturing its growth and promoting its welfare. And yet, most of the UCLA students and alumni didn't realize or appreciate this, that, in fact, he was their best friend. They carped about that man up there in Berkeley who, as they charged, was always favoring Berkeley and holding them back. I'm sure that Sproul sensed this and it must have hurt even if he understood the reason for it. He knew that the athletic situation needed correction, but it posed a very sensitive problem that he'd have to handle very carefully.

When I gave him my report he asked me what I thought he should do about the evidence I'd uncovered. I recommended that he discuss it with Provost Dykstra. I think he probably did. It may have been

Johnson: more than coincidence that the head football coach left soon afterward. Unfortunately, the change was for the worse. The replacement was Red Sanders from Vanderbilt in a conference that allowed room, board, and tuition to be provided to the athletes. Sanders proved to be an excellent coach but a strong-willed and unscrupulous man. He installed the Vanderbilt system at UCLA--room, board, and tuition.

Next, Sproul wanted to learn the attitude of our Berkeley alumni. So he requested that I develop a questionnaire. I consulted Professor Edwin Ghiselli of the psychology department and we phrased the questions so they wouldn't beg answers. I mailed them out to a random sample of 1,000 alumni divided into three categories. These were secondary school administrators, Big C men, and other alumni. There was no significant difference between the three in the patterns of replies. Over 90 percent believed that the university entrance requirements should be the same for athletes as for non-athletes. The same high proportions believed that athletes and non-athletes should be held to the same scholastic standards, and also that the university should remain in the Pacific Coast Conference. Practically no one, even the Big C group, believed that athletes should be paid for playing. However, a large majority in all three of the categories I'd questioned answered that athletes in real financial need of assistance should be helped when participation deprived them of opportunity to work.

The president and I next met with the athletic advisory board at Berkeley and then at Los Angeles to discuss the problem. Both gave him the same answers as we'd received from the questionnaires. Athletes should not be paid to play. Those who were not in financial need should not be paid. Those who had real need should be helped to the extent of their need.

Then early in January, 1951 Mr. Sproul called the presidents of all the conference universities to gather at a meeting in the Mission Inn at Riverside. He asked me to go along and take notes. All of the presidents agreed that conference matters were getting out of hand and they discussed various ways to reduce the pressures. One was the Rose Bowl, with its publicity and huge cash prize to the university selected to represent the conference. The presidents agreed tentatively to abstain from participating. However, when the newspapers reported this it aroused such a storm of protest from all over California that this idea had to be given up.

On the next day, the presidents met with the faculty representatives to discuss permitting financial assistance in genuine need, but no conclusion was reached. So the presidents agreed to another

Johnson: early meeting. In fact, they were to meet twenty times over the next eight years, including three meetings with the presidents of the Big Ten universities and five with our own P.C.C. faculty representatives. President Sproul continued as chairman and I as secretary. And the group became known as the Council of Presidents.

Riess: Why, with all these presidents meeting on the Pacific Coast Conference issues, were they never able to effect their idealistic policies?

Johnson: That's a difficult question. It was a long and involved story. However, if I were to generalize, I'd say that the basic causes, I think, were money, alumni and community pressures, the constitutional weakness of the conference, and the failure of certain university administrators to take courageous, decisive action in time and at the time.

No other kind of business enterprise in this country gets as much profit from its total income as do the athletic departments of large universities from intercollegiate football and basketball. And the institutions that enjoy the largest profits are, of course, those that have winning teams. Football profits enabled the University of Southern California to grow large. In fact, they were a large part of the general university budget that provided for faculty salaries. The other conference universities used football gate receipts to finance the construction of new stadiums and other sports facilities and to subsidize their unprofitable sports.

At that time, most of the alumni of the conference universities wanted their alma maters to live up to their commitments to each other and play by the rules, even if this meant losing games. The pressures to win and to hell with the rules came from a small minority in each institution. But these minorities included the most active and the largest financial contributors, the most highly vocal. They were powerful minorities. Some of them were top business executives, political leaders, even presidents of alumni associations and members of university governing boards. Their demands could not be ignored by coaches, athletic directors, or even university presidents. These alumni and synthetic alumni were organized into booster clubs that were almost impossible for the university administration to control and, at worst, worked hand in glove with the coaches and athletic directors.

The characteristics and conditions of the nine universities represented in the conference varied widely. In size they varied from Idaho's to California's student population. Four or five were

Johnson: in urban locations, the others in much smaller centers. The institutions varied in admission requirements, in grading standards, in degree requirements, in amounts of tuition, in local cost of living, in wage rates, in part-time employment opportunities. Each of these created an awkward dilemma for conference authorities.

Let me give you an example. The tuitions charged students at Stanford and USC were far above the student fees of the seven public institutions. The difference severely handicapped the two private universities in the competition for star athletes. To eliminate these differences, then, athletes were allowed to receive tuition grants-in-aid. So, they would be favored over the other students. And the far larger "athletic scholarships" offered by the two private institutions gave them a psychological advantage over the others when competing for athletic prospects.

In brief, the Pacific Coast Conference could never escape the ultimate dilemma created by two contradictory objectives: to equalize intercollegiate athletic competition or to preserve the historic amateurism of this competition.

The Pacific Coast Conference, as described in its constitution, was not composed of the institutions or their responsible heads, but of so-called "faculty representatives," although the faculties had no part in their selection. They were on indefinite tenure and often outlasted the presidents who had appointed them. Hugh Willetts was USC's representative for more than thirty years, and was also its admissions officer. Orlando Hollis was Oregon's representative for eighteen years. William Owens had been Stanford's for fourteen years. Some of the representatives were in direct contact with their governing boards and, in athletic matters, actually enjoyed more influence than their own presidents.

As a body, the faculty representatives were the "conference," with independent, final authority over the universities in intercollegiate athletic matters. It met with the Council of Athletic Directors, with the coaches also present. And the conference was quite prone, at times, to accept the "practical" advice of the athletic directors and coaches, rather than the "idealistic" judgment of the university presidents.

Riess: Then the real power was with the athletic directors?

Johnson: And with the coaches. That is probably an exaggeration, but it was true at critical times. The Council of Presidents was not an official body under the conference constitution. It could request the faculty representatives to take certain actions and usually they would respond, but on several critical occasions they did not. In

Johnson: fact, some faculty representatives on occasion voted contrary to the votes of their own presidents, because they believed they knew better. Sometimes I got the impression that several faculty representatives actually resented the council since it reflected lack of confidence in them.

They probably were correct. If President Sproul hadn't feared that the athletic situation under conference supervision was becoming unhealthy, he wouldn't have invited the other universities to a meeting, and if they hadn't shared his fear they wouldn't have responded. Actually, as subsequent events were to reveal, the situation was already well out of hand at UCLA and USC when he called the first meeting on January 2, 1951, and was approaching that point at Washington.

In 1938, the conference had employed Edwin Atherton, a former FBI agent. It had given him extensive powers of investigation and enforcement. He could grant immunity to get information. He'd discovered, as he told the newspaper reporters, a "cesspool of corruption." His full report to the conference has never been published. He was the first commissioner in the history of the conference. Like the commissioners of the Big Ten and most other athletic conferences, Atherton, when he discovered an infraction of the code, could make a judgment and impose a penalty immediately, subject to appeal. During his time in office he imposed more than sixty penalties, and of these only one was appealed to the conference and reversed. During his six years, Atherton was very successful in enforcing the code, but he aroused a storm of protest from powerful alumni and booster groups. He was accused of being arbitrary and callous.

Atherton died in 1944 and was succeeded by his assistant, Vic Schmidt. The new commissioner was shorn of all powers except to investigate. He must show his evidence to the local conference faculty representative. After that, he could present it to the conference with his comment, but he could not make a recommendation or even a statement of opinion. And, of course, his statement was subject to rebuttal by the faculty representative. This usually happened, since the accused almost invariably denied the charge against them.

Because the conference constitution had not provided for an independent tribunal, there was a conflict of interest in the roles played by the faculty representatives. They were legislators creating and amending code provisions. They were defense attorneys for their particular institutions. Then they became judges and jurors when they voted upon the possible infractions and prescribed penalties.

Johnson: Since nearly all of the universities were involved in infractions of varying seriousness, a large backlog accumulated between conference meetings. No one was ever found guilty of giving or receiving an illegal subsidy. The athletes who lost eligibility were for minor or technical reasons. The penalties were usually fines against the institutions and were not large enough to cause any change in behavior. Since they were all announced to the press at the same time, the whole thing became a matter of keeping score of the relative fine totals, institution by institution. These were published in the newspapers to the cynical amusement of the sports writers and general public. The conference was becoming a laughing stock.

So, although the presidents of the conference universities were, of course, busy men, they stepped in, with Sproul their continuing leader. All of the meetings were ad hoc, the time and place of the next one usually determined by agreement. However, they became so frequent that the group became known as the Council of Presidents. At Sproul's request I continued to act as secretary. A more accurate word would probably be as "rapporteur," for I took down only hand-written notes and, after each meeting I drafted a summary of the discussions and of the agreements and actions that followed. Then I'd send the draft out to the presidents for comment before writing the final report. When the final crisis developed in 1956 and 1957, I brought along a court reporter once, with President's Sproul's approval, to make a verbatim record. On the basis of unfinished business and of suggestions offered by the presidents, I'd prepare the agenda for the next meeting. Also, I'd summarize the background of each item for President Sproul's personal benefit.

At the first several meetings, Sproul represented both of the university campuses. Of course, he had the over-all responsibility for them, but he was well aware of the different attitudes of the two and, I presume, he was reluctant to have these differences exposed before the other presidents without a private opportunity to reconcile them beforehand. Before long, both chancellors asked to attend, so, early in 1953, Sproul gained the unanimous consent of the other presidents to include them. After that, Sproul continued to preside and to take part in the discussions, but he refrained from voting.

The meetings were mostly held in San Francisco, but some were in Portland, Seattle, and Los Angeles, and the president and I flew to them together. It's always been my practice never to talk "shop" with my superiors outside the office unless they brought up the subject first. So we rode along and chatted easily about other

Johnson: matters. We'd both run on the track and officiated at the meets and we'd followed the sport closely. We were both ardent fly fishermen and we'd fished a number of the same streams and we had a lot to talk about. He was a great companion.

The meetings normally began at around nine in the morning, and after a short luncheon in the same room continued until around 4:30 to 5:00 p.m., when the presidents in the northwest would have to leave to catch a plane home. On at least three or four occasions the meetings lasted for two days.

Although some of the presidents hadn't known each other before, they developed into a congenial group after a few meetings, and they generously made me feel a part of it. For me it was a treasured experience. The two who stood out as the leaders were Wallace Sterling of Stanford and Robert Gordon Sproul. They were the ones the others listened to most intently and who had the most influence. Wally was a large bear of a man, amiable but decisive, forceful, convincing. He spoke directly to the point. Sproul was urbane, persuasive, masterful at resolving differences and guiding the discussion toward agreement upon the end he wished to achieve. But the other presidents were their own men too, and the discussions were multi-faceted and exhaustive.

The purpose of the council was to make the conference more effective in reversing the unhealthy trend toward professionalism that already had developed. Let me give you a few examples of the Council of Presidents' many suggestions and recommendations to the conference.

One of the excuses given by those who participated in subsidizing athletes was that the pressures on them were so great that they left too little time for studies and work. So the Council of Presidents recommended and the faculty representatives moved to eliminate off-season practice, shorten playing seasons, restrict practice hours, and drastically reduce freshman competition. But then the coaches and athletic directors complained that this would handicap them in the Rose Bowl and other inter-sectional games. So, after determining that the Big Ten Conference was not prepared to change its policies, our own conference reversed its decisions.

The commissioner complained that while he was aware of code infractions, he couldn't develop proof. So the Council of Presidents recommended and the conference authorized him to employ under-cover assistants. Also, at the council's suggestion, the conference established a special three-member tribunal to hold hearings on

Johnson: evidence presented by the commission and report its findings to the next conference meeting. Unfortunately, this was created too late to save the conference. In response to a unanimous vote, the council instructed its member institutions to get the financial records of their booster clubs and turn them over to the commissioner. But there was no response until, again, it was too late to save the conference.

The presidents and chancellors each agreed to sign individual letters in a common form prepared by the commissioner. These letters notified each member of the athletic staff that if he offered or was otherwise involved in an unauthorized subsidy to an athlete, the president would discipline him to the full extent of his authority, even to dismissal.

Also, in response to the council's unanimous recommendation, the conference and commissioner developed an annual questionnaire for each athlete to complete and sign. This called upon him, first, to state he was aware that to give false answers would automatically make him ineligible for further athletic competition. Then he was asked some twenty "yes" or "no" questions regarding each kind of possible income and to name the source of each payment to him. He was also asked about any offers to pay him that might have been made.

The council received various schemes to allow athletic subsidization without regard to financial need. These came from alumni groups and from conference committees of athletic directors. Sterling and Sproul remained determined to allow no more than assistance to student athletes to the extent of their financial need. And they led their fellow presidents and chancellors, in each instance, to reject the proposals.

Sproul made it clear that even when such assistance was provided, this must be approved by the regular faculty scholarship committee or by an independent conference agency. He was unwilling, he said, for the coaches and athletic officers to determine "need." A majority of the conference faculty athletic representatives said that they accepted the principle but were skeptical that it could be put into practice. However, both the council and the conference went to work on the proposal, and it began to appear as if a solution would be found.

And then the lid blew off the mess. Early in 1956 a Seattle newspaper reported that a secret fund had been paying University of Washington athletes. This fund, it asserted, had recently been augmented by \$25,000 from the receipts of an exhibition professional football game staged in the campus stadium.

Johnson: On March 1, a disgruntled former UCLA football player revealed in the Oakland Tribune the details of an extensive subsidization scheme at UCLA. Also in March, the Berkeley administration discovered that a fund of about \$2,000 had been sent by the San Francisco Grid Club to the Cal coaching staff to help some of the football players pay their compulsory university fees and meet other small university expenses. And in May, a UCLA alumnus discovered and published in the Los Angeles newspapers the details of a so-called charitable foundation with the names of its beneficiaries, some thirty or forty members of the USC football team.

Between early May and early July all four universities were placed on probation and more than 120 athletes were declared ineligible for further competition. The four universities were excluded from competing in the Rose Bowl and from sharing in the Rose Bowl receipts during their probation.

You can imagine how much this disappointed and embarrassed President Sproul. For more than six years he'd been leading the council and conference in fighting off professionalism. Now the only two head coaches identified as participating in illegally paying their athletes were at his two campuses.

At Berkeley the total payments were somewhat less than \$2,000. All of the twenty-nine payments were small and all but five were either in the form of loans covered by signed notes or to pay university fees that would have been allowable under the Pacific Coast Conference code if they'd been administered by the university loan committee.

At UCLA the coaches, since at least 1949 or 1950, had been keeping a list of about fifty players who, regardless of need, were each to be paid \$1,260 a year to cover room, board, and university fees. Of this, \$75, the maximum the code allowed for on-campus work, was paid by the ASUCLA, regardless of the amount of the time actually put in, and often there was very little. Also, the coaches directed the athletes to an office off the campus that paid them \$40 a month and the amount of their university required fees. These payments were made in cash and no work was required in exchange. The coaches or pay masters advised them to answer falsely the questionnaire the conference required them to sign each year.

When the commissioner informed Professor Kaplan, UCLA's faculty advisor, of the mass code violations, Kaplan tried to get the names of the athletes involved and when he couldn't, he found himself obliged

Johnson: by the code to disqualify the entire varsity and freshmen football squads. And at the same time he appealed to the conference to either remit or reduce the penalties. Later the commissioner tried to interview some seventeen named coaches and players. Coach Sanders ordered them to refuse to be interviewed. Two days later, Chancellor Allen refused to allow the commissioner on the campus until, as he said, he'd made and completed his own investigation. Then he telephoned President Sproul to inform him.

Sproul tried his best to help the chancellor out of the jam he'd got himself into by defying the conference. He told Allen he'd back him up but urged that he finish the inquiry as soon as possible and send the report to him. At the same time, although the Berkeley campus hadn't been under suspicion, Sproul asked Chancellor Kerr to conduct an investigation there and report to him. He did this to anticipate any charge of favoritism by UCLA interests.

Kerr and Professor Seaborg, Berkeley's faculty representative, went to work immediately and a week later submitted a long report to the president. This covered ASUC and university employment, off-campus employment, campus representative jobs, and the activities of all the booster clubs. The coaches had also been personally interviewed and, as the report stated, had revealed the secret emergency fund they administered. It was this information that, when passed on to the commissioner, provoked the penalties by the conference.

Chancellor Allen was much slower in making his report. After waiting nearly eight weeks. President Sproul sent me down to get it. I got a glum reception and was handed the current financial summary reports of the Bruin Bench and the Young Business Men's Club of Westwood. Each was a one or two page summary. By combining the two it could be deduced that they had granted \$50,000 in "scholarships" during the past year through the Westwood Club but there was no indication of the number or individual amounts. The chancellor submitted no evidence that he or his staff had interviewed the coaches or athletes.

I waited while a formal letter of transmittal was prepared and signed by the chancellor. That was on April 28. I returned to Berkeley with the documents. Two weeks later, and with the conference hearing on the UCLA case only one week away, Allen called the commissioner to say that he might now conduct his hearings. It was too late. He had already completed his report to the conference after securing from outside sources all the damning evidence he needed. Actually, the chancellor's report to Sproul would have added nothing of any consequence.

Johnson: A special conference meeting had been called for May 5 and 6 to hear the University of Washington case. There'd been rumors of tie-ins between the illegal activities of booster clubs and athletic staffs before. But this was the first time since at least the war and the Commissioner Atherton era that such a case had been exposed publicly and fully. Not only the newspapers but even national magazines like Sports Illustrated had published long articles describing the Washington case in detail.

A number of the university presidents, referring to the coming conference meeting, wrote to Sproul suggesting a joint meeting between the Council of Presidents and the Pacific Coast Conference. So we arranged such a meeting for May 7. Unfortunately, this was too late. The conference had gone ahead and taken final action on the Washington case the day before. The UCLA case was to be heard two weeks later.

The conference determined that the secret Greater Washington Fund had been in existence for at least five years, that university officials had known or should have known of its existence, and that the football coaches had been referring athletes to the fund for assistance. The conference placed Washington on probation for at least two years. During this period it was to be ineligible for the Rose Bowl and for participating in the division of Rose Bowl receipts. It was not to be eligible for championship listing and was not to appear on a nationally televised event in any sport. And it was required to give to the conference meeting in August a satisfactory report on the steps it had taken to identify the athletes who'd received payments from the fund. These, according to the code, must then be declared ineligible for further competition by the Washington faculty representative.

These were obviously very severe penalties and they established precedents for judging the UCLA case and all other similar cases in the future. I doubt that those who voted for them fully realized the momentous impact that their actions were to have upon the future of the Pacific Coast Conference. I'm sure that President Sproul did when he learned of them.

The joint meeting began around nine in the morning and lasted for at least four hours. Everyone took part. Then, after a short interval for lunch, the presidents and chancellors met alone until around six o'clock. I don't remember all of the details but here are a few highlights.

Johnson: Most of the morning was filled with argument over the conference actions a day earlier. Presidents Sterling and Wilson (Oregon) argued that the council should endorse them [the actions] and commend the conference; they said that the faculty representatives and the Council of Presidents had been urging [such actions] upon them for some years. Fagg (USC) and Schmitz (Washington) and Allen (UCLA) strongly disagreed. They held that the penalties had been entirely too harsh. Sproul said that, in his judgment, actions of such consequence should have been discussed with the Council of Presidents first. He advised that the actions on both the Washington case and the impending UCLA case be suspended until the complete conference-wide picture was laid out before them.

In the afternoon council session Sterling and Wilson reversed their earlier position and it was decided to let the conference actions stand without either endorsement or repudiation. It was also agreed unanimously not to preempt the case involving UCLA.

Allen then informed the others that he'd received the cooperation of the UCLA booster clubs only with the understanding that he not report the information they'd given him until all the other university heads had investigated their campuses. All the reports, he said it was understood, were then to be reported and considered at the same time.

This attitude upset all the others present. Fagg recalled that he'd informally endorsed the substitution of an institutional for a conference investigation when Allen had phoned him. However, he said, he wouldn't have approved if he'd known of the promises made to the UCLA booster clubs or of the conditions now attached to divulging the information to the conference. Under the circumstances, he said, he now felt that the UCLA case should stand or fall on its own merit.

Sterling and Wilson were angered by the implied reflection upon their integrity as presidents. Sterling said he'd told his athletes he regarded the conference code as part of the Stanford Honor Code. He said he'd personally disqualified from all further competition three athletes when he learned they were taking illegal payments. Wilson recalled that Oregon had "fired" its head coach when it discovered him involved in serious violation of the conference code. French (Washington State), Theophilus (Idaho), and Strand (Oregon State) also joined in denouncing the UCLA attitude. All of them refused to undertake special investigations in response to such compulsion.

Johnson: Sproul asked the others to excuse him and Chancellors Allen and Kerr for a short time. When they returned, Sproul announced that the chancellors had given him permission to transmit their reports to the conference immediately and unconditionally. Then all the presidents except Fagg volunteered to undertake a careful self-investigation of their campuses in cooperation with the president and to report their findings to the conference at an early date. Sproul released the reports from Berkeley and Los Angeles to the commissioner for follow-up.

The conference considered the UCLA case at its regular meeting on May 19. Commissioner Schmidt reported the information I've already given you. He'd also found that illegal payments were being made by the Westwood Young Men's Club to prospects still in junior college as well as to football players on UCLA's teams. UCLA's faculty representative made no effort to accept [sic] the evidence presented by the commissioner.

In general, the conference patterned the penalties it now imposed upon those it had imposed in the Washington case, but it judged UCLA's violations to be even more flagrant. So UCLA's probation was extended until July 1, 1959. Then several more restrictions during this period were made than those upon Washington. The athletic staff and athletes were directed to discontinue all contacts with the Bruin Bench and the Westwood club and their officers and members. UCLA alumni were denied the privilege of bringing athletes to visit the campus. None of its teams were to participate in any NCAA sport. Probably the most humiliating of all the penalties was a \$15,000 fine for the chancellor's action in denying the commissioner timely opportunity to interview members of the football team and coaching staff.

The conference did believe that the total ineligibility for all further competition already declared by the UCLA faculty representative was too harsh and so it reduced the penalty to one year and restricted it to one sport. Likewise, the conference ameliorated the ineligibility for the University of Washington athletes.

As President Sproul had anticipated, the reaction in Los Angeles was furious and defiant. The Daily Bruin charged that it "was a raw deal," that the faculty representatives had accomplished what their [sic] athletes hadn't been able to do for many years--beat UCLA in football. The Los Angeles newspapers were filled with recriminations and threats. They reported rumors that UCLA might withdraw from the conference and there might even be an attempt to change UCLA into an institution independent from the University of California.

Johnson: In interviews Coach Sanders said he didn't feel even a bit wicked and that UCLA was fined because Dr Allen had been forthright and honest. And the chancellor, himself, explained in the current Faculty Bulletin that the conference action had been based upon the materials he furnished it. Actually, according to the conference, the only information added to the proof already developed and presented by the commissioner was the approximate total "booster club" amounts involved. This had not affected the conference judgment at all.

On May 23, the Los Angeles Examiner reported that an assistant coach at UCLA had told the football players to "sit tight," that in forty-eight hours the situation would "blow up" in their favor, that "UCLA had a gimmick to save its team." Specifically, it was implied, there was evidence of illegal recruiting by Southern California, California, and Stanford that would result in making the conference "completely unworkable." On the afternoon of that same day, May 23, 1956, J. Miller Leavey, a member of the Athletic Advisory Board released to the press the evidence of large-scale violations by USC I've told you about.

Also, a member of the UCLA Athletic Advisory Board secured depositions from unnamed persons involving five California and Stanford athletes. These were presented to the conference, which found that this information had already been presented by the commissioner and acted upon or that the alleged offers hadn't been by a university employee and hadn't been accepted by the athlete to whom they were supposedly made.

On May 28, President Sproul called a meeting of the officials of Berkeley and Los Angeles--the chancellors, faculty representatives, and athletic directors. They agreed unanimously that neither Berkeley nor Los Angeles would leave the conference and that both of them would accept the penalties imposed on them by the conference.

Yet Allen and Sanders continued a barrage of public attacks on the conference. In a speech before the San Francisco Commonwealth Club, Allen said that he'd been after Commissioner Schmidt for years to do something about "the stinking mess." But, Allen said, "He paid no attention to my pleas." "My program is to save this conference. But if this cannot be done, then we have to create a new conference along more realistic lines." And Sanders was quoted as saying that the conference "must either abandon its hypocritical, unworkable code or abandon football." And in another interview he said, "the whole situation is phony and we need a realistic code. I don't blame the coaches."

Johnson: It had been shrewd of UCLA to drag USC into the picture. Of course, this brought the wrath of the Trojans down upon its head but this was only temporary. It gained an ally from now on in its battles against the other conference members. Now the two were in the same boat trying to rescue their athletes from ineligibility and to protect their subsidization schemes from destruction. And USC, because it was older, had the stronger body of alumni and other supporters, both in numbers and in their positions of power in the community.

On July 8, the conference considered the USC and California cases. It found that the Southern California Educational Foundation had been making unsanctioned payments to Trojan athletes since 1952. An employee of the association associated with the alumni was involved. The coaches were not. The commissioner's requests, beginning on May 2, to interview athletes and athletic staff members, had been postponed a week until the end of final examinations in the university. During this time, the university conducted its own investigation and identified forty-four athletes--forty-two in football and two in track--who had received monthly payments of about \$45 each from the foundation. Professor Willetts, USC's faculty representative, had immediately declared the athletes ineligible from further competition and turned their names over to the commissioner and the conference. As in the Washington and UCLA cases similar to these, the conference reduced total ineligibility to one year. The university was put on probation until July 1, 1958. During this period it was to suffer the restraints upon its athletic program similar to those that had been placed on Washington and UCLA and their booster clubs.

The University of California, in its self-examination, which I've already mentioned, had discovered and reported to the commissioner a small fund provided to the coaches by the San Francisco Gird Club. About \$1,700 had been disbursed from this during the 1955-56 year to twenty-nine athletes, or an average of about \$69 each for the year. Most of these payments were made to pay university fees. This would have been permissible within the conference code if it had been administered by the university's loan fund committee instead of by the coaches.

The conference, at its hearing, permitted those who had signed notes for the loans they'd received and those who hadn't received more than the amount of the university fees to regain their eligibility by repaying the amount before the next September 1. The others, like the offending athletes at the other universities, were to lose one year of eligibility. The university was put on probation for one year, that is, until July 1, 1957, and during this

Johnson: period was to cut off all contacts with the Grid Club. But it did not suffer loss of eligibility to play in the Rose Bowl or to share in Rose Bowl receipts. It was fined \$25,000 for Pappy Waldorf's admitted participation in administering the fund.

The governing boards of the University of California and the University of Southern California were now getting into the act. Sproul's southern regents tried to get the Board of Regents to take over. They failed for the time being, but the board did ask its Committee on Educational Policy to keep abreast of the situation and Sproul felt obliged to make monthly reports thereafter. The USC trustees asked President Fagg to submit their proposals to the Council of Presidents. The council met on five successive months into September. Two or three were joint meetings with the conference. Fagg and Allen made repeated efforts to regain eligibility for their athletes but failed, in each instance, to get more than their own votes. The presidents and chancellors did agree to expedite the self-investigations they'd promised so that these could be reviewed by the conference in early August.

The summaries of the institutional reports prepared by the commissioner for the conference meeting gave evidence that USC, California, Stanford, and Oregon had conducted exhaustive investigations. USC identified and penalized three more than the original forty-four athletes. California found no more than it had discovered earlier. Stanford identified six cases of possible code violations, Oregon found none. Washington had obviously made a vigorous but not wholly successful attempt to identify more cases than it had earlier reported. It reported from six to twenty cases of possible violation. The reports of Oregon State, Washington State, and Idaho had given no assurance of their thoroughness or, on the other hand, any reason to question this. None of the three had discovered any cases of code violation.

The only clearly unsatisfactory report was UCLA's. It added nothing to the earlier commissioner's report and its own unsatisfactory report two months before. UCLA had yet to identify a single offender.

The conference now reviewed at the same time all the cases before it, including the new ones as well as those it had previously judged. Each penalty was assessed to make sure that all were treated equitably.

Any athlete who had been wrongfully penalized when the UCLA faculty representative declared all members of the varsity and freshman football teams ineligible was allowed an opportunity to

Johnson: have his eligibility restored. He had only to produce evidence that, in fact, he had not received illegal subsidies. Four ASUC athletes took advantage of this opportunity successfully.

The conference realized that to suffer a one-year ineligibility was tantamount to losing total remaining eligibility for senior athletes. So it reduced their penalties to one-half of the next season.

Finally, by a vote of 8-1 (only UCLA against), the conference gave notice that any institution would be subject to automatic expulsion on July 1, 1957 if it failed to bring its program for supporting its athletes within the conference code or it failed to discharge any coach or other athletic staff member who continued to violate the code. This action by the conference clearly had at least UCLA and Coach Sanders in mind.

President Fagg and Chancellor Allen tried time after time to regain eligibility for their penalized athletes and to get the conference rules changed so that their schemes for paying their athletes might be saved.

As the other presidents continued to respond to Sproul's requests for still another early meeting, they became increasingly reluctant to do so. I sensed their frustration when I telephoned them on his behalf. I am sure that Sterling expressed their attitude when I telephoned him. He asked me to tell Mr. Sproul that (and I quote): "The guilty have assumed the guise of the persecuted. The present so-called Pacific Coast Conference problem is essentially a problem of the University of California with its two campuses and their divergent standards of morality. Until the University of California determines its own policy the conference differences cannot be resolved."

I should like to tell you about the important events that occurred during the next two tragic years, but I do not have the time. President Sproul tried to formulate a policy acceptable to both campuses. But he continued to insist that students participating in athletics might receive financial assistance only to the extent of their demonstrated need. This, of course, was not acceptable to Coach Sanders who, in athletic matters, was by far the most powerful person at UCLA. After all, he had won all

Johnson: but three conference games in the last three years and these three losses were by only small margins. He had become the idol of the campus and everyone from the chancellor on down bowed to his will. He was openly defiant.

He would continue his system, he boasted, regardless of what the presidents and faculty representatives of the other universities declared, even if this meant taking UCLA to another conference. And, rushing to his support, resolutions to leave the Pacific Coast Conference were adopted by the Athletic Advisory Board, the Associated Students Legislative Council, the Alumni Association Past Presidents, and even the southern division of the Academic Senate.

President Sproul called several meetings again that fall (1956) between officials of the two campuses--chancellors, faculty representatives, athletic directors, and alumni association presidents, and I was again asked to take notes. The two delegations tried to reach agreement on a common athletic policy for the two campuses and on their attitude toward the conference, but they failed. In fact, they found themselves viewing the key questions from diametrically opposite points. They could agree only that UCLA, if it wished to leave the conference, should be permitted to do so, while Berkeley, if it wished, should be allowed to remain. The president, as a kindly friend, warned UCLA of its folly and described the problems it would encounter with the NCAA and in scheduling opponents. The UCLA group replied that they had already taken those problems into account and remained determined to leave. Sproul finally threw up his hands and gave permission. As was later to be revealed, UCLA wanted more than that.

President Sproul, I think, had some sympathy with UCLA's attack upon the then existing conference rules. At his request, I'd made some study of the job situation there and had concluded that the UCLA campus and immediate vicinity offered fewer real opportunities for student part-time employment than at Berkeley. Berkeley, for example, had a stadium to maintain and that provided a large number of jobs to the football players, particularly in picking up litter and other cleaning up on Sundays after the games. Sproul asked me to compare the stadium costs with those at Kezar Stadium where the professional games were then being played. Using part-time help, mostly at less than organized labor rates, the costs at Berkeley were substantially less. All of the Pacific Coast's major universities except UCLA had stadiums nearby to maintain. All the universities employ students part-time. Outdoor labor is particularly suitable for athletes. The state universities, especially, with their state funding and audited expenditures, cannot pay for work

Johnson: not fully performed. Although probably less than at Berkeley, there were many such jobs at UCLA until the Sanders scheme destroyed them. They were replaced by artificially created jobs that actually were little more than subterfuges for illegal subsidy and so had to be paid out of ASUCLA funds. In attempting to support its football players, UCLA suffered other natural and self-created disadvantages. I could point them out if I had time.

Why, then, you may ask, were Sproul, Sterling, and the other presidents so opposed to acceptance of the Sanders scheme by the conference? Because the football players, in the eyes of the other students, would no longer be part of the student body but a separate caste of hired gladiators in touch only with each other. They would not be accepted and respected as fellow students. Sure the students would watch and, when they're winning, cheer for them, but in the same way that the fans in San Francisco root for the 49'ers. The Sanders scheme has been in effect at Berkeley now for over a quarter of a century and I can remind you that the fears of Sproul and his colleagues have been realized. I've talked to many athletes on the campus, and on that they agree.

Soon after the last joint meeting between the two campuses, President Fagg, heading a special committee of four presidents, presented to the council a proposed statement of conference policy. It was accepted unanimously. And it included the Sproul-Sterling principle that athletes should be provided financial assistance to the extent, as with other students, of their demonstrated need. This had now become the Sproul-Sterling-Fagg principle and I think every one sighed with relief as it was sent on, with the council's recommendation, to the conference for adoption.

You may ask, "But how could 'need' be determined equitably by the various universities?" These questions had been raised by the conference faculty representatives. The answer to the first question is that a standard formula would have been used by all the conference universities. It would have used, or have been modeled after, the formula that had been worked out very carefully by the College Scholarship Service. This was in use by the scholarship committees of more than a hundred American colleges and universities in making their awards. It was in use by the Big Ten Conference. It was, and still is being used by the Ivy League in determining the amount of their assistance to athletes.

The answer to the second question is, as Sproul explained, that it could have been administered by the commissioner's office or some other central agency. All athletes, including the prospects,

Johnson: regardless of their university, who wanted help would have completed and mailed in their applications to this agency for processing. The various recruiters would not have been able to bid against one another by offering fixed amounts. They could, however, have assured their prospects that they would receive all they needed to get through college. I am informed that the Ivy League still uses this scheme for both the student athletes and non-athletes who wish to attend or continue to attend their member universities.

A simpler scheme would have been for the plan to be administered, using a common formula for determining need, by the regular scholarship committee of each university. To insure that the formula was being interpreted and applied uniformly throughout the conference, copies of each application and committee action upon it would have been sent to the central office for review.

I've gone to some length to describe this so that you will realize that President Sproul had worked on it meticulously in consultation with others, and that it was not just "pie in the sky," as some of the athletic directors sneered at the time.

Sproul recommended the principle of the plan to the Board of Regents who included it in their official athletic policy for the campuses. It came as a shock and bitter disappointment then when he learned that at its special meeting on March 2, 1957, the conference, by a 5-4 vote, had rejected the council's recommendation. Particularly astounding was the news that, contrary to Sproul's wired request, not only the UCLA but the Berkeley faculty representative had voted with the majority. It had been Chancellor Kerr, actually, who had drafted the recommended paragraph in the Fagg report and who had moved its adoption by the council.

The conference considered, instead, a proposal by the Johns-Holcomb joint committee of athletic directors and faculty representatives. In substance it was the Sanders scheme that had been rejected by the Council of Presidents on three different occasions.

That action fatally impaired the president's continued defense of the conference before the regents. There were, to be sure, more meetings of the conference and the council, but after that they were insignificant, their discussions small talk. The conference was obviously and inescapably doomed.

On June 30, 1958 Robert Gordon Sproul retired as president of the University of California. On the following day, USC and UCLA and--this I've never understood--UC Berkeley withdrew from and destroyed the Pacific Coast Conference.

