BAY AREA FOUNDATION HISTORY

Volume III

Daniel E. Koshland

Responding to the Flow of New Ideas in the Community

Philip S. Ehrlich, Sr.

An Attorney's Twenty-five Years of Philanthropic Service

Josephine Whitney Duveneck

Working for a Real Democracy with Children and other Minority Groups

Marjorie Doran Elkus


Dorothy W. Erskine

Environmental Quality and Planning: Continuity of Volunteer Leadership

Florence Richardson Wyckoff

A Volunteer Career, from the Arts and Education to Public Health Issues

Emmett Gamaliel Solomon

A Corporate Citizen's Concern for the Effectiveness of a Community Foundation

Bill Somerville

A Foundation Executive in Training, 1961-1974

Interviews Conducted by
Gabrielle Morris

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This five-volume Bay Area Foundation History Series, a special project of the Regional Oral History Office, was first discussed in late 1973. Ruth Chance and John May were then preparing to retire as executive directors, respectively, of the Rosenberg Foundation and the San Francisco Foundation, and a group of their colleagues wished to express their appreciation for the guidance and inspiration these two have provided in developing the art of philanthropic grant-making.

In addition to documenting the part Ruth Chance and John May have had in encouraging activities for the betterment of life in the Bay Area and California, it was decided to record an account of significant trends and events in the foundation community of the Bay Area. The resultant project includes twenty-four interviews of varying length with board members, staff, and grantees of a variety of Bay Area foundations representing both traditional and contemporary views of philanthropy. The series as a whole presents a picture of close to half a century of organized philanthropy in the Bay Area, including the processes of foundations and the development of community attitudes and organizations which mirror the evolution of issues of concern not only to foundations but to society in the West and nationally.

The Office wishes to express its sincere thanks to the Zellerbach Family Fund, van Loben Sels Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, and Rosenberg Foundation, whose joint grants made this project possible. We also deeply appreciate the encouragement, interest, and research assistance of the staffs of these foundations and other interested observers throughout the course of this project. Special thanks are due to the participants in the interviews for their willingness to discuss their experience with foundations and for their patience in reviewing their transcripts. It is hoped that readers now and in the future will find these manuscripts as informative and thought-provoking as has the staff who prepared them.

The interviews stimulated the deposit, by interviewees and others, of a number of letters, speeches, pamphlets, grant proposals, and other materials related to philanthropy dating back to 1926. This Bay Area Foundation History collection is being added to The Bancroft Library's extensive holdings in twentieth century Californiana.

The Regional Oral History Office was established in 1954 to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons prominent in the history of California and the West. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library.

26 May 1976
Regional Oral History Office
Room 486 The Bancroft Library
University of California
Berkeley, California

Gabrielle Morris, Interviewer-Editor
Bay Area Foundation History Series

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Department Head
Regional Oral History Office
Daniel E. Koshland

RESPONDING TO THE FLOW OF NEW IDEAS
IN THE COMMUNITY

An Interview Conducted by
Gabrielle Morris

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

A study of grant-making foundations in the Bay Area would not be complete without a word from Daniel E. Koshland, who was not only present at the creation of the first community trust in the Bay Area, the San Francisco Foundation, but also served continuously on its board for over twenty-five years. Chairman of the Distribution Committee during its first four years, 1948-1952, Mr. Koshland retired in December, 1974, a decision he had already made when this brief interview was recorded on August 26, 1974.

He is, therefore, the only person who participated in the selection of both of the two executive directors in the Foundation's history, John May and Martin Paley. As he indicates, these two men fill different roles at different stages in the life of the organization and, with supporting staff, are "there to represent the entire community, really."

In The Principle of Sharing, the full-length memoir Mr. Koshland recorded in 1968, he has described a remarkable variety of experience as organizer and leader of voluntary associations to meet Bay Area social and cultural needs. Undoubtedly, this experience was a factor in the decision, by Mr. Koshland and fellow leaders, to establish a broader-based mechanism for insuring a continuing source of funds for new community efforts as they emerged.

Realistic about the inevitability of change both in the Bay Area and the Foundation with the passage of years and organizational growth, he recalls wryly, "the pleasantest days were when we didn't have any money." He refers briefly to the gradual development of the Foundation's policies, and recent public concerns about the financial side of foundations in general, and concludes that "all of these things may undergo a change." His comments approve of continuity, noting that John May is available for consultation, and of innovation, suggesting that Martin Paley, who was appointed executive director in 1974, may have ideas of his own as to where the San Francisco Foundation may provide most effective support.

In this interview, in The Principle of Sharing, and in comments on his business career for the Levi Strauss company history, Mr. Koshland refers repeatedly to the importance of the people involved to the success of any venture. Of the Foundation, he says, "I think we have an excellent staff..."
we are inclined to follow the recommendations of staff, but not necessarily," and, "the board tends to rely a good deal on staff." And of the community, perhaps only Dan Koshland could say with gentle humor, after watching the flow of civic and cultural activity for a quarter of a century, "You'd think by this time we'd covered everything in the Bay Area, but we haven't—they keep coming" and affirm his belief in the vitality and creativity of the Bay Area by adding, "there are always people who have ideas," and "I think it's good to have some youth" serving on the grant-making Distribution Committee.

Interviewer-Editor

19 February 1975
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California/Berkeley
Daniel E. Koshland, as Chairman of the Exploratory Committee, helped to design, build and launch The San Francisco Foundation.

As first Chairman of the Foundation, Daniel E. Koshland provided leadership and guidance of an extraordinary brilliance for four years.

As a member of the Distribution Committee for twenty-six years, Daniel E. Koshland has given unstintingly of his wisdom, his patience, his strong views—always expressed with perfect understanding of the point of view of others—and by his example has helped more than any other to bring The San Francisco Foundation to its present position of respect and trust in this community, and leadership on the national scene.

For these reasons, and many others, on the occasion of Daniel E. Koshland’s retirement from the governing body of The San Francisco Foundation, his fellow members of the Distribution Committee unanimously and affectionately thank him on behalf of the community for his statesmanship, love of mankind, keen judgement and wisdom, and for having helped so greatly over the years to make The San Francisco Foundation a community institution which we all take pride in serving.

January 9, 1975

[Signatures]
[Date of Interview: 26 August, 1974]

1. FOUNDERS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION

Koshland: Have you seen our foundation directory?*

Morris: Yes; it's been a great help in this project. I wondered if that might have been done in response to requests for funds from the San Francisco Foundation.

Koshland: They asked for funds, it's true; the Young Adult Project and Common College. I don't think the college has gotten very far. There's a very fine young woman. Do you know her? Jean Wirth; a tall woman.

Morris: I knew that the directory was a project--

Koshland: I think the San Francisco Foundation gave five hundred dollars for the production of this.

Morris: It doesn't help to do all the research if you can't print it and get it out to people.

Koshland: Right.

Morris: I wanted to talk to you for some background on the early days of the San Francisco Foundation, and to try out some of the questions I will be talking to other board people about.

Koshland: A lot of that is in our twenty-fifth anniversary report.

Morris: I have that, and I have also read what you said about foundations in your long memoir, The Principle of Sharing.**

Koshland: I talked right off the top of my head and I said a lot of unkind things, but I was able to eliminate them; I re-read it.

Morris: What's left are, I think, some very useful observations. One that I really was interested in: you said that you all had dinner at Mrs. [Emma Moffat] McLaughlin's one night, and that was where the idea of starting a community foundation was first mentioned.

Koshland: I don't think so. It was first mentioned by Mrs. Marjorie Elkus, who used to work for the Community Chest. She had the idea and she broached it to me. We might have talked about it at Mrs. McLaughlin's, where I had dinner occasionally. But the foundation idea was pushed by Mrs. Elkus; she got Mrs. Ganyard of the Rosenberg interested, and the two foundations [Rosenberg Foundation and Columbia Foundation] paid the primary expenses for the first couple of years.

Morris: Since the Rosenberg and Columbia foundations were working away, why did you feel the need for a community foundation in addition?

Koshland: I think that we heard from banks whose trust departments came into funds to go to charitable organizations, that they had really no way of knowing where those funds should go. Bank officers are not particularly cognizant of the various needs of the community. They expressed this to different people; and Mrs. Elkus and the executive of the Rosenberg Foundation, Leslie Ganyard--these two people got together and rather pushed me into calling a meeting of a group that was called the Exploratory Committee in the early days.

That ended up in the unanimous conclusion that there should be such a foundation. At least two foundations--Rosenberg and Columbia--advanced the money for the first two years of operation. We hired John May; have you talked to him?

Morris: I have talked to him.

Koshland: He was the first person and only person we hired as executive, until he retired recently.

Morris: Were there a number of candidates for that job?

Koshland: No. I think I was told about Mr. May by Frank Sloss, who's been active in the Magnes Museum as well.

Morris: Yes, he has. I understand he's doing some research himself for some family history.

Koshland: I've heard that, too. I'm very dubious about family histories. The oral histories such as the Kingmans--that's a wonderful
Morris: One of the reasons our office exists is to help people get things like family history into perspective and do an objective job.

Another thing I'm interested in is how a board of directors, like the San Francisco Foundation's, when it's brand new, goes about determining what are the important things to do?

Koshland: When it was new, we didn't; we just received requests from a variety of organizations, and we had to muddle through as best we could without having any policies on what directions we were going. We generally responded to the urgent needs, which came mainly from charitable and health organizations.

Policies only developed quite a bit later, such as support of cultural requests. In the beginning, we never gave to museums or a musical or other organizations of that type; now we give quite a little money to cultural organizations. Of course, we get so many requests now that it's a matter of picking and choosing.

Morris: Yes, I can believe that. When you were reaching the point where you decided to have some specific policies, were there particular board members who had experience in some of these areas who brought ideas?

Koshland: Yes. I would say Mrs. McLaughlin had a lot to do with pushing the idea of helping cultural organizations, because we hadn't given them very much in the early days. I think now that she had quite an influence in furthering that policy, so that now we've broadened out.

I think with the new executive we'll broaden further; in fact, the Distribution Committee expects that.

Morris: You mentioned Mrs. McLaughlin. Who else amongst the board's Distribution Committee in those first years had an influence particularly on how things went?

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**See A Life in Community Service, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley, 1970.
Koshland: Mrs. Russell did; she was chairman for many years after me. I was the first chairman, and after that, Helen Crocker Russell. She was interested in a wide variety of organizations, cultural as well as humanitarian. She had a tremendous influence—more than anybody.

Mrs. McLaughlin was a great woman and very fearless; she wasn't influenced by emotional and prejudicial opinions.

Morris: Can you remember a fearless crusade of hers that brought the board around to her view?

Koshland: No, not anything particularly. I think generally music and museums were the things that she pushed first. It took some time before we gave money to museums particularly, and now we have been quite a bit in that field.

Morris: Many of the big museums in San Francisco were originally founded by the gifts of single families, weren't they?

Koshland: That's right. But they didn't get into this general field until quite a bit later. The people who started the Oakes Foundation were very much interested in museums, particularly the DeYoung Museum. They left, in their will, directions so that now, not only do we give a certain amount of money that we have to by their will to the DeYoung Museum, but we also appropriate funds for the purchase of fine works of art.

Of course, the DeYoung Museum has a famous Asian art collection, which is known throughout the world; it's supposed to be the second-best Asian art exhibit in the world. I don't know what the first is.

Morris: Second is not a bad spot.

Koshland: No—pretty good for a little town like San Francisco.
2. EVALUATING GRANT REQUESTS

Morris: I wonder if you could tell me how the board goes about making its decisions.

Koshland: The board depends a good deal on staff; the staff, which originally was only Mr. John May, now consists of the executive director and two assistants--Llewellyn White and Rudy Glover. They're the main investigators and they write up most of the reports. Of course, now they get so many requests that they have to make a selection, but they report to the Distribution Committee on all requests received, separate those they don't consider are worthy of primary consideration.

We meet every other month on grants, and they may pick out forty to fifty requests which they recommend, either for or against them, those that they figure are of sufficient importance to be submitted to the Distribution Committee. The Distribution Committee includes people who are pretty well versed in the things that are going on in San Francisco; we are inclined to follow the recommendations of the staff, but not necessarily. We're pretty generally unanimous in our opinions, but not always.

Morris: In that case, does it take just a majority vote to approve things?

Koshland: It takes five votes to approve it, out of seven people.

Morris: I'm interested that sometimes you turn down their recommendations.

Koshland: Yes, for reasons that one or more members on the Committee think are valid.

Morris: I'm also interested that sometimes the staff presents proposals that they don't think are the thing for the San Francisco Foundation to fund at the time.

Koshland: Yes. They use separate lists. They cut out a lot of extraneous things. For example, a student at the University of California asking for a grant from us—we don't give individual grants at all.
Koshland: Then they make a separate list of those that should be considered by the Distribution Committee, and those which they do not favor—by "they" I mean the one staff person who makes the study. The other two staff people either agree with the first person or state why they do not agree; very often they disagree and it's up to us to decide whether we want to consider them favorably or unfavorably.

So there is a list of those; we also have the consent and advise fund. For example, if somebody wants to give from his own funds to an organization like UBAC, he can so indicate it, and we are inclined to go along. But that's not Foundation funds; that's their own funds put into the Foundation.

Morris: And you just act as an administrator.

Koshland: Yes, and we usually approve what people want to do with their own money. But we have the last word; if we disapprove of something someone wants to do with his own money, we say so, and then it doesn't go through.

That raises some questions, not as to the amount. If somebody wants to give any amount of money to UBAC, it's pretty much approved, or many of the UBAC organizations.

Morris: I remember Mr. May commented in some of the early annual reports that, when the Foundation started, it seemed as if it was almost an arm of the United Crusade.

Koshland: No, not so; it never was, and we had differences right along. Even though members of the Distribution Committee were active workers in various capacities for the crusade, we considered ourselves a distinct organization. It doesn't mean we didn't occasionally help out one of the crusade agencies, or the crusade itself. But that was rare.

Morris: Would that be on some of the big survey kinds of things, to determine what a problem was and what might be done about it?

Koshland: Sometimes, yes. Of course, UBAC has a huge organization itself; it has its own social planning. We always have been very sympathetic to any suggestions they make. The social planning committee does not actually ask us for money for any project; the application has to come to us from the individual agency.

Morris: That is a part of UBAC?

Koshland: A part of one of the agencies of UBAC. We give a lot of money to non-UBAC agencies.
Morris: Would you say that most of the money goes to non-UBAC agencies?

Koshland: Yes, I think so. More money goes to non-UBAC agencies. It's not easy to become a member of UBAC.

Morris: You first have to demonstrate that you can raise a certain amount of money yourself, don't you?

Koshland: Yes, that's the general practice, and it's correct. I've always been interested, for example, in the multiple sclerosis society, which is a member of UBAC. We were smart enough not to apply for UBAC support until we had a certain amount of strength. We can now get appropriations from UBAC for the counties.

Morris: In the whole Bay Area.

Koshland: Yes, for multiple sclerosis.

Morris: Why did you think it was a good idea to wait a while before joining UBAC?

Koshland: Because some wise people on our board (I'm talking now about multiple sclerosis) figured we'd get a pittance unless we showed that we were important in the community and could raise money.

I happen to have been particularly interested in multiple sclerosis because my first wife died of that disease. She was a sufferer for many, many years, so I knew a good deal about it. In fact, I was one of those that started the multiple sclerosis society here; I had a particular interest.

Other people did not have that kind of a relationship and still were interested in this disease. UBAC does not give an awful lot of money to diseases like heart and cancer and so forth. At the San Francisco Foundation, we have a large fund that was left to us for the purpose of cancer treatment, and we have stuck to that. This money is quite a sum, and is used for cancer patients. Cancer is not in UBAC at all, as you may know.

Morris: Several people have mentioned an emergency fund.

Koshland: Yes. Last year when the government started to cut down, a great many requests came to us for emergencies, where organizations had depended on government funds and they were not forthcoming. We couldn't deal with all of them, but we set up an emergency fund, really started by Mr. May, under the prodding of Eddie Nathan.*

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*Mr. Nathan was executive director of the Zellerbach Family Fund in 1974.
Koshland: It was particularly with respect to the child care program--child care centers--which were doomed at the time.

Morris: I remember reading about that.

Koshland: Through the efforts of the foundations--those that we've mentioned: Rosenberg and San Francisco and Zellerbach and van Loben Sels--we created a fund, a good deal of which has been spent. Right now, we're considering whether it should be continued.

Morris: Was this fund money that could be expended very quickly, rather than waiting to go through the board?

Koshland: Yes. The emergency fund authority was given to our executives who really decided where to spend it.

Morris: Was there an earlier emergency fund?

Koshland: No, not that I know of. People applied to foundations for emergencies, and they were dealt with by the various foundation boards.
3. DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE POLICY DISCUSSIONS

Koshland: We met for many years monthly; now we do it bi-monthly. We discuss policies in one month and then grant-making the alternate month. Our next meeting, for example, is in October; that will be devoted to making grants.

Morris: What kinds of topics are discussed at the policy meetings?

Koshland: It varies a great deal. For example, one that we've discussed a good deal is whether a board member—a Distribution Committee member—should absent himself from a meeting in which his agency (an agency in which he's very much concerned) is involved. For example, Mr. Orrick (who's been a member of our board but is no longer because he's been selected as a federal judge, and so he's no longer a member of the board) is president of the Opera Association, and so we had discussions, for example, of whether a member of a board that is applying—whether he should vote or whether he should step out of the room. I was a minority that felt nobody should step out of the room or refrain from voting because I thought we were all seven picked citizens and we could discuss anything very objectively in front of all the others.

However, we ran into a snag in that, when one of the members of our Distribution Committee was the executive of an agency that applied—we're still in the process of straightening that out.

Morris: Yes. That would really be a little different from some of the general board service which most Distribution Committee members do.

Koshland: Yes, because I felt at the time that, no matter what the project subject, one member of this committee was familiar with it; would we be stepping out of the meeting or not voting? On the whole, it's a pretty good committee and can usually reach agreement without too much argument.

Morris: On these policy discussions, do various members of the Distribution Committee suggest that they'd like this kind of subject chewed over?
Koshland: Oh, yes. For instance, we are disinclined to give money for bricks and mortar, for a new branch of a hospital or an agency, but that doesn't mean we don't make exceptions. We don't give much money to religious organizations; there also we make exceptions.

Morris: And you will talk about the exceptions in a policy meeting, before these kinds of things come to the grant-making state?

Koshland: Yes. I'm trying to think of other things that come up; of course, there are others, too. And then there's how much we should give out every year, how much we should expend. I think San Francisco Foundation ranks rather high in the proportion of its funds that are expended every year, if you compare it with other foundations throughout the country, particularly with community foundations.

I think maybe Cleveland and Cincinnati, which are very old and very good foundations, may give a greater proportion; I'm not sure of that. New York Community Trust, for example, is one of the biggest; I don't think it gives out tremendous amounts of its total resources. The New York Community Trust is a little different; it's made up of so many different funds established for a particular purpose or a particular agency.

All of these things may undergo a change. We have a new executive now who may have ideas of his own, and although Mr. May stands by to give advice, Mr. Paley is now the boss.

Morris: With his background in health services and the United Crusade, is this primarily where his expertise and interest may lie?

Koshland: That remains to be seen. He's very new at it; I can't say. I'm sure that he has an interest in health and health services and hospital administration. Maybe he will influence us, because he's there to represent the entire community, really.

In the early days, we didn't have any grants on racial minority matters; now we have many of them.

Morris: That was going to be my next question. Did this require some policy discussions early in the 1960s?

Koshland: No, I think it just grew. Urban League and organizations like that would naturally ask for money, and gradually we gave more to minority organizations; now a great deal of our money—I don't know what percent, maybe a third of all of it—goes to minority causes.

Morris: When you begin to make grants in a new area, such as to the minority community, have you found that, then, increases the number of applications you get from that kind of group?
Koshland: Oh, tremendous—yes. I would wager that we get at least a couple of hundred applications a month; you'd think by this time we'd covered everything in the Bay Area, but we haven't—they keep coming.

When UBAC ran on lean days, and they said, "It will bust; it won't last," I said, "Well, if UBAC fails and goes out of business, there'll be a new UBAC the day after tomorrow," because there are always human beings who have ideas, don't they?

Morris: I think you're right; I think you're right. That's an interesting idea. Does that relate to the idea of seed money and creative innovation?

Koshland: Yes, certainly. We have been very partial in favor of giving seed money to new organizations. Now we're getting a little backwash; we're giving too much to new organizations and neglecting the old ones. All organizations have financial problems now, and maybe we've gone too far in innovation and neglected helping existing organizations that are doing good work.

Morris: So it's a matter of keeping a balance.

Koshland: Yes, that's right—keeping a balance. Of course, our big money only came in the last fifteen years. In the early years, it was quite a crunch, the whole thing. As I've said to John May quite often—and he agrees with me—the pleasantest days were when we didn't have any money; now it's more difficult, when we have money, to respond affirmatively to the greatest needs. What is the greatest need?

Morris: What do you use as your criteria for determining what's the greatest need?

Koshland: It comes first from the staff, and then the judgment of the majority of the Distribution Committee. As I have indicated, we usually agree; it's usually unanimous, but not necessarily. There are "no" votes quite frequently on individual applications.

Morris: So that the board decision is based on debate after the staff presents its information?

Koshland: Sure; yes. I am one who is very inclined to follow staff recommendations; I think we have an excellent staff. But even so, I occasionally will ask questions and vote contrary to the recommendations of the staff.

Morris: Do the board members have many questions for the staff after they've made their presentation?
Koshland: Yes, they do. Our docket, which covers the applications, is a very voluminous affair. For me, it takes a weekend to read it and make up my mind. I think the same happens to the other members of the committee, who are pretty conscientious people. The applications are well presented by the staff, but as I say, it doesn't always mean that we follow the staff.
4. APPOINTMENTS TO THE DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

Morris: Each of the board members of the Distribution Committee has been appointed by a different agency?

Koshland: A different agency. And no government office holder can become a member of the Distribution Committee; that's why Mr. Orrick is now off—because he's been appointed a judge. One of the appointing officers is a judge, a federal judge of the ninth circuit court; he appoints one of the members. You know the others.

Morris: Yes, I do have a list of the different organizations; it's an interesting group.

Koshland: Yes. My term runs out at the end of this year, and the president of the Chamber of Commerce appoints my successor.

Morris: Would he be likely to consult with you?

Koshland: I don't know; I'm waiting to see whether he will consult with me. Recently, when Mr. Orrick went off, the president of the University of California (who had appointed him and had the power for appointing Mr. Orrick's successor) asked us—the staff and the Distribution Committee—for suggestions. We gave him three or four suggestions, and then he made his choice. Generally the appointing officer is very inclined to ask us; he doesn't have to. The president of the University of California does not have to appoint a California graduate; he can appoint anybody in the state—any good citizen. The same is true of the Stanford president, who is one of the appointing officers. They have unlimited scope in their appointments, and they've all been good, I think.

Morris: That's a remarkable collection of people, looking over the individuals who have served in the past.

Koshland: And they're fair and they're not prejudiced, I would say, in favor of any particular type of activity or any particular organization.

Morris: I wonder if, having served on the Distribution Committee for years,
Morris: you keep an eye out for people who might make likely members of the Committee if anybody asks you.

Koshland: Well, yes, sure. I'm ready now; if the president of the Chamber of Commerce asks me, I have a couple of people that I would suggest to him.* But he has to ask me, because he makes the appointments and I don't want to influence him.

Morris: I understand. But it's interesting, in a community like the Bay Area, how your acquaintance does increase, and the more people you know involved in social affairs--

Koshland: Yes, sure. For example, I'm not too knowledgeable about people outside of San Francisco; when I think of across the Bay, I always think of the Kaisers, who are the big factor in Oakland. I know one or two of the people there whom I admire greatly. But Contra Costa County I don't know very well, even though I have a son living there.

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*Mr. Koshland did retire from the Foundation board shortly after this interview. Asked about his successor, he noted that the Chamber president did not consult him before appointing Hamilton Budge, "a leading lawyer, interested in the problems of the general community." Ed.
5. OTHER COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

Morris: I wonder if this leads the San Francisco Foundation, at all, to stay in touch with other community foundations in the area?

Koshland: Yes, we do. The foundation executives have a loose organization of their own, which meets occasionally; I don't know what it's called.

Morris: Is this the "brown-bag group?"

Koshland: Could be.

Morris: I assume that means they bring their lunch in a brown paper bag and have a working luncheon together.

Koshland: Yes, that's right. They can't decide anything, but they can agree amongst themselves on certain policies they'd like to forward. If it hadn't have been for this organization, you wouldn't have had this emergency fund, because they all had to agree if something was desirable and so was recommended to their board.

Morris: Did the other community foundations in the area put in money to this emergency fund, or start their own?

Koshland: The only one I know of is the one across the bay, and that I don't think participated at all. Yes, there is another--my brother is the chairman of the San Mateo Foundation.

They have just received enough money in a gift to hire a full-time executive; they never had one before. When you talk about other community foundations, the San Mateo Foundation is making its first bid by now having an executive.

Morris: It's just beginning to get itself going, then?

Koshland: Well, it's been going; it's been limping.

Morris: My notes tell me that the Alameda County Foundation goes back to
Morris: the late 1940s, just like the San Francisco Foundation.*

Koshland: Yes, but I don't know what they've done.

Morris: That's puzzling.

Koshland: I've never seen a report of theirs. As of now, with the new law in relation to foundations, they must publish a report; I have never seen one. I don't know what they do. I don't even know what the Los Angeles Community Foundation does. The Los Angeles Foundation, until recently, anyway, centered in one bank. Here we have almost all the banks participating. I don't know if it's changed in Los Angeles, but practically all the banks here are part of what we call the trustees' committee, who appoint one member to the Distribution Committee.

Morris: When you were writing the charter for the Foundation, was that done on purpose—bringing in all the banks?

Koshland: Yes, it was. The charter was mainly written by Mr. Harold McKinnon, who is still alive; he retired some years ago. We did have that very much in mind, because that's what they'd done in the Eastern foundations. We followed a good deal Cleveland, Cincinnati, New York, St. Louis, Kansas City, and others.

Morris: And your group decided to bring in a staff person right from the beginning?

Koshland: Yes. We felt we couldn't function without a staff person. Mr. May, as I say, was recommended. He was a businessman at the time. He had been in the OPA at the time of World War II; he decided to cast his lot with us, and I don't think he's regretted it.

Morris: No, I don't think he has.

Koshland: He's been very outstanding. A very remarkable person.

*Reorganized in 1974 as the Alameda-Contra Costa Community Foundation, and later renamed the East Bay Community Foundation.
6. FUTURE LEADERSHIP: STAFF AND BOARD

Koshland: I think it's a good idea that the Bancroft Library is going to have an oral history of some of these executives, including Mr. May and Ruth Chance.

Morris: Who else would you say it should include in the executive area?

Koshland: I couldn't say. I think it's important to have the observations of Ruth Chance and John May. I say maybe Eddie Nathan, who's had experience with the university. Offhand, I can't think of others.

Morris: He says he's just getting his feet under him in this particular part of his career.

Koshland: I know, but he's done a lot. For example, this emergency committee was his idea. He has a great deal of understanding—a very fine young man, I think. (I call him young man because he's the age of my children, who are all in their fifties.)

Morris: His training is considerably different than Ruth Chance's and John May's.

Koshland: Yes. He was involved in social work primarily at the university, and so he brings a fresh viewpoint. But he's energetic and very fair.

Morris: And Mr. Paley also; I assume that he has professional training in either administration or social work?

Koshland: Yes. He was with the health facilities organization, which I don't think exists anymore, although now there's a comprehensive health planning council.

Morris: Is it a matter, then, that the world has become so much more complicated that you need people with some professional skills in the actual day-to-day work of foundations?

Koshland: I would say that. We interviewed a great many people before we
Morris: Was the job-finding consultant useful?

Koshland: Yes—not indispensable at all. We were critical of some of his judgments, but we did interview everybody that he stressed that we should see. We had a lot of very good people, and Mr. Paley was only selected after we had narrowed it down gradually from, maybe, forty to ten, and then to five and then to two.

Morris: That's quite a compliment that so many people were interested in the job.

Koshland: They were interested in the field, and most everybody's interested in living on the Pacific Coast, too; it's attractive.

Morris: You think that's still a factor?

Koshland: Sure. It affects the university faculty, doesn't it?

Morris: That's supposed to be the case, yes.

The other part of this study is that I'm going to be interviewing some of the people who served with you on the Distribution Committee to get their perspectives.

Koshland: Yes. You'll get different perspectives. By all means, you should see Mrs. Kuhn and Mr. Walker. They will be chairmen of this organization within the years ahead. The other people are older.

Morris: How about Ira Hall?

Koshland: Yes. He's quite young and very good, very able.

Morris: Were there any problems with bringing a black man onto the board?

Koshland: No. I objected to Ira Hall, not because he was black, but because I didn't think he had enough experience to know the area. But, by golly, he does; he's very, very knowledgeable and very, very able. There were some members of the Committee, I think, who felt we weren't ready for a minority person as chief executive. He applied for that.

Morris: Mr. Hall did?
Koshland: Yes, even though he was a member of the Committee. But he cancelled that.

Morris: I have just one more question. I was interested in Clark Beise because he was chairman when your assets really went zooming up, and that must have been a chore to decide how to--

Koshland: He wanted to discontinue last year, but they asked him--particularly the trustees' committee; I think they appointed him--to serve another period while we were looking for the new executive (this was in the midst of that). He's been a very good man--excellent.

Morris: Do you suppose he could be talked into an interview?

Koshland: He would do anything he was asked by the Foundation if they thought it was very important.

He can be supplanted in time, as I can. In fact, I'm past my time. I'm too old; I really should be off this Foundation. I'm going on till the end of the year, which isn't very far away now.

But I'm stressing to you that Ira and Mrs. Kuhn and Brooks Walker are the future the Foundation has, and other people who will replace them.

Morris: Do you think it's in good hands?

Koshland: Yes, I do. I think the seven appointing people will only appoint good people; they have so far. The only objection is age. That's going to be cured; Clark Beise will go off pretty soon, I'm going off, Orrick is not old but he's going off for a different reason. I think it's good to have some youth.

Morris: New people.

Koshland: Yes, that's right.

Morris: Thank you very much.

[End of interview.]

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AN ATTORNEY'S TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
OF PHILANTHROPIC SERVICE

An Interview Conducted by
Gabrielle Morris

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Philip S. Ehrlich was interviewed in order to obtain his recollections of more than a quarter-century of distinguished legal service as a member of the board of a variety of leading humanitarian and cultural organizations in the Bay Area, including the Zellerbach Family Fund, a pacesetter in local grant-making, which he was instrumental in organizing in 1963.

Because of doctor's orders to Mr. Ehrlich to limit his activity after an extended illness, the interview is a short one, recorded on 24 April 1975. Mr. Ehrlich received the interviewer cheerfully in his handsomely-appointed penthouse atop the Fairmont Hotel; he had already attended a San Francisco Symphony board meeting that day. At 86, he was slight and ascetic of feature, and dapper in a velvet smoking jacket.

His brief remarks convey a sense of the interplay of professional, personal, and eleemosynary concerns in both the operation and purposes of philanthropic undertakings. He gives full credit to the friends who urged him to join them on the boards of Laguna Honda Hospital and the Symphony, and, in turn, has obviously enjoyed working out the legal details of incorporation papers and wrestling with unruly budgets. He has given considerable advice on the establishment of charitable trusts and kindly provided samples of trust documents which are in the appendix to this interview. For the operation of a grant-making trust, he is content to support the recommendations of a carefully chosen, able executive director.

Mr. Ehrlich's comments reflect a long, deep tradition of Jewish philanthropy, which has been remarkably valuable in American life. He explains his efforts very simply as, "America has been good to me."

In reviewing the edited transcript of the interview, he made minor revisions and also prepared the following foreword.

8 April 1976
Regional Oral History Office
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University of California/Berkeley
NARRATOR'S FOREWORD

I was born in Honolulu, Kingdom of Hawaii, in 1889. As is obvious from my opening statement, Hawaii was not part of the United States. I came to San Francisco in 1906 to attend the University of California and Boalt Hall Law School. After graduating from the University of California and Boalt Hall, I decided to practice law in San Francisco and I have been practicing in San Francisco since May, 1913—a little over sixty-two years.

My interest as a lawyer in philanthropic institutions was primarily motivated by the fact that the United States has given me every opportunity for development and has permitted me to live a very wholesome life and raise a family while living here. Furthermore, like most human beings, I enjoy great satisfaction from helping others.

During my legal career, I have represented the following institutions:

- Zellerbach Family Fund, a California corporation;
- Laguna Honda Hospital Volunteers, Inc., a California corporation;
- Mt. Zion Hospital and Medical Center, a California corporation;
- San Francisco Symphony Association, a California corporation; and
- Eva Heller Kohn Helping Fund, a California corporation.

I am not only the attorney for these institutions, but also a trustee and director for the corporations mentioned above.

The Zellerbach Family Fund and the Eva Heller Kohn Helping Fund are foundations devoted to philanthropic purposes; the Mt. Zion Hospital and Medical Center and the San Francisco Symphony Association carry on activities of the type indicated by their names; Laguna Honda Hospital Volunteers, Inc., is a nonprofit corporation devoted to aiding the poor and the sick in Laguna Honda Hospital, owned and operated by the City and County of San Francisco.

In addition to representing these corporations, I have created the Philip S. Ehrlich Legal Student Loan Fund at Boalt Hall, University of California, Berkeley.

I am setting forth herein in this interview certain phases of my legal activities for and on behalf of the institutions mentioned above. However, I am also setting forth certain philanthropic services which I have performed from time to time.

Philip S. Ehrlich
31 July 1975
[Date of Interview: 24 April 1975]

1. BONDS FOR ISRAEL

Morris: Will you please relate your activities in connection with the State of Israel and the Bank of America? I am of the opinion that this is a valuable situation to have on record.

Ehrlich: In 1948 I had a legal relationship with the Bank of America, handling legal matters for them from time to time. Sometime in 1949, Israel having been created in 1948, I received a request from the attorneys for the Jewish National Fund, which was in a very substantial degree responsible for the creation of the State of Israel, asking me if, because of my relationship with the bank and Mr. Giannini, I could arrange a fifteen million dollar loan for the Fund, as every bank in the world had turned Israel down.

Mr. Mario Giannini, son of A. P. Giannini, the founder of the bank, was in Palm Springs at the time. After giving it some thought, I rang him up and told him about the request for the fifteen million dollars and stated to him that I had a plan that the loan could be made with complete safety for the bank. I likewise advised him that this would probably heal relations between the Gianninis, the Bank of America, and the Jewish community, as it was rumored that they were anti-semitic.

Mr. Giannini advised me that he was coming up for his father's birthday and would call an executive committee meeting. He said I could present my thoughts to the executive committee, although he was of the opinion that any such loan was entirely unsound.

Morris: From a financial point of view?

Ehrlich: That is correct—-from a financial point of view. I presented to them the security they would get for every dollar they loaned. This would be achieved by pledging donations of the United Jewish Appeal, collected from the Jews of America to help Israel since its creation. I sold the idea to the executive committee and the deal was consummated. Since then the Bank of America and the State of Israel and other Israeli institutions have done a great deal of banking business together.
Morris: Was this the purchase of Israeli government bonds or a loan?

Ehrlich: There were no bonds involved. The security for the loan was philanthropic pledges which people in the United States made to the United Jewish Appeal. For every dollar loaned, the bank received two dollars in pledges. In other words, thirty million dollars of pledges were assigned to the Bank of America to secure the fifteen million dollar loan.

Morris: So, it was a straight loan to the State of Israel, in effect?

Ehrlich: To the Jewish National Fund, which in turn loaned it to the State of Israel. The State of Israel had just been created and I didn't want to go into the legality of its charter and its creation and the various legal ramifications involved. The Bank of America preferred to give it to an existing corporate institution, which had been properly organized.

Morris: It must have been very complicated to finance a government at its very beginning.

Ehrlich: That's why we did not loan the money to Israel, but to this corporation.

Morris: And, subsequently, the State of Israel did become a going financial operation?

Ehrlich: Yes. As you know, Israel at one time was a very flourishing economic entity; now it is in very bad financial condition due to the war and world conditions.

Morris: It certainly seems to have had more than its share of trouble. Once the Bank of America was willing to do business with Israel, did other financial institutions begin to deal with this government also?

Ehrlich: Indeed, they did. As a matter of fact, one of the great banking institutions in New York took part of the Bank of America loan.

Morris: I would say that this experience is a very fascinating combination of philanthropy and practical business.
2. LEGAL ASPECTS OF CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS

Laguna Honda Hospital Volunteers, Inc.

Morris: How did you first become involved in the philanthropic life of the San Francisco Bay Area?

Ehrlich: I first became involved through Dave Zellerbach. When he became president of the San Francisco Symphony some twenty-odd years ago, he made me attorney for the Symphony, and I have continued to act as such all these years. Further, when he became president of Mount Zion Hospital and Medical Center, he made me attorney for Mount Zion, and I have been attorney for Mt. Zion for some twenty-odd years. That's how I became interested. Harold Zellerbach became involved in creating a philanthropic institution at Laguna Honda Hospital to help the sick and the aged, and he asked me if I would act as attorney for that institution, which I did and organized the Laguna Honda Hospital Volunteers, Inc.

Morris: What is the attorney's role for a charitable institution?

Ehrlich: Same as for a commercial institution, although usually not as active; but there are matters which require attention from time to time. I will give you the example of the Laguna Honda Hospital Volunteers, Inc.

Morris: They're the fund-raising arm?

Ehrlich: No--they do volunteer work to help the inmates. It has been--up until recently--an insignificant institution living from hand to mouth. Then, about two years ago, a lawyer in San Jose rang me up and said that a man had died in San Jose and had left a strange will. The remainder of his estate, after giving a bequest to a stepdaughter and a couple of friends, was left to Laguna Honda Home--to be distributed as the volunteers may determine. Now, when he left it to Laguna Honda Home, technically, he may have left it to the City. However, besides Laguna Honda Hospital Volunteers,
Ehrlich: Inc., there are many other persons who volunteer for work at Laguna Honda Hospital, independently of our entity. The lawyer stated to me at the time that the court had directed him to send to me, as attorney for Laguna Honda Hospital Volunteers, Inc., a copy of the will to determine what rights, if any, my client might have under the will. I gave it a great deal of thought and I felt that the words, "I leave the remainder of my estate to Laguna Honda Home to be distributed as the volunteers see fit," could not have meant everyone who works voluntarily for the inmates, because there would be no unity or opportunity to get together. Accordingly, I came to the conclusion that he meant Laguna Honda Hospital Volunteers, Inc.

Morris: Which already existed.

Ehrlich: Which I had organized seventeen years ago. The estate was being probated in Santa Cruz county and the remainder after all administrative costs, debts and legacies were paid was between six and seven hundred thousand dollars.

Morris: That's a good piece of change.

Ehrlich: And Laguna Honda Hospital Volunteers, Inc., had about twenty cents in our till--possibly a little more. To make a long story short, I took on the City in the courts and I won the argument.

Morris: You went before the probate judge and argued this?

Ehrlich: We argued it in Santa Cruz county. The City Attorney argued against me; however, I won it. There was some talk of appealing, so I went to the City Attorney and said, "We won legitimately--we are doing great work out there. If you obtain the funds you would just put it into the general fund and it will then disappear. It would not likely benefit the Hospital at all. If you appeal, we will give the full facts to the public by appropriate newspaper publicity." I talked him out of appealing, so from an institution of very little financial significance, although it did great work through the volunteers, it has in its treasury now around $600,000.

Morris: That's marvelous--did you decide to spend the corpus or to invest it and use the income?

Ehrlich: It stayed invested and we use the income from time to time. We haven't spent more than the income--I don't think; if so, an insignificant amount. To illustrate the benefit of the bequest, the volunteers have a room for the youngsters in which to play. We are now repairing the chapel, which is used by all religious groups. We installed a soda fountain. We have remodelled the main hall, brought furniture, and have done a myriad of other similar activities.
Morris: Do you have any idea who the man was?

Ehrlich: His name was William Goetz. His will was written on dirty paper in his own handwriting with smears all over it. He left his stepdaughter five thousand dollars, and a friend ten thousand dollars, and "to my stepson, the contents of my septic tank."

Morris: Oh, dear--quite a bequest.

Ehrlich: He then went on to the paragraph which I related to you above. Nobody knew him at Laguna Honda Hospital, or how he got connected with it. I had not intended to go into this matter at such length, but you get a great thrill out of being able to effectuate an act of this kind.

Morris: Yes, and it sounds as if you did understand what was in his mind and made it possible.

Ehrlich: It is a matter of the greatest satisfaction to be able to get a sum of this magnitude for a philanthropic institution, which, of course, will prudently use the funds for the betterment of the inmates of the Laguna Honda Hospital. As I stated before, the use of the words 'Laguna Honda Home' by the testator meant the city, because the city owns it; but when he said to be distributed as the volunteers decide—then he meant the Volunteers who work in the hospital.

Morris: Preparing a trust agreement to set up a charity or to advise someone in drafting a will to set up a charitable trust must involve a number of problems.

Ehrlich: That's correct. However, in this particular case, Mr. Goetz wrote up a very short will on dirty foolscap paper that was all smeared up. Fortunately, we obtained the judgment in favor of Laguna Honda Hospital Volunteers, Inc., and the city did not appeal; accordingly, as I have said before, our little philanthropic institution has assets in excess of $600,000.
3. EVA HELLER KOHN HELPING FUND*

Ehrlich: I should also mention to you the Eva Heller Kohn Helping Fund. Mrs. Kohn, who was a client of mine, had been divorced from her husband, and had one son, who had no children. Mrs. Kohn asked me to outline a will for her, and I suggested that she leave her son a life estate with the right to invade the corpus for the necessities of life, and that she create by her will a fund to be known as the Eva Heller Kohn Helping Fund, restricted to Jewish philanthropies at her son's death. Possibly, I was wrong in the restriction, but this was the time when the persecution of the Jews in Germany was at its height and I was greatly influenced by this fact.

Mrs. Kohn did as I suggested. Her son has since passed away, and upon his death I created the Eva Heller Kohn Helping Fund, a non-profit philanthropic corporation. In the last ten years since her son's death, Jewish philanthropies, including Israel, have received approximately $500,000 from the income of the corporation. The income is solely distributed. The corpus remains intact. At the present time the market value of the securities in the corpus is $750,000.

*See Appendix A: Eva Heller Kohn Helping Fund, disbursements through 1975.
4. THE ZELLERBACH FAMILY FUND AND RELATED INTERESTS

Morris: Did you by any chance assist in writing the agreement that set up the Zellerbach Family Fund?

Ehrlich: As far as the Zellerbach Family Fund is concerned, I organized that during Mrs. Zellerbach's lifetime.

Morris: Now, this is the mother of Harold and Dave?

Ehrlich: Yes, and their sister, Clare, Mrs. Saroni. I organized the corporation, which is the Zellerbach Family Fund and to which Mrs. Zellerbach left half her estate. I was her attorney during her lifetime. And it's done a magnificent piece of work. As you know, we've given to your institution a million dollars for Zellerbach Hall.

Morris: Yes, and the auditorium, given by Harold Zellerbach personally, at the University of Pennsylvania.

Ehrlich: No doubt you have read in the papers that the Zellerbach Family Fund is making a gift of one million dollars for the proposed Performing Arts Center building in San Francisco.

Morris: Was Mrs. Zellerbach particularly interested in the arts?

Ehrlich: She was a very charitable person. I don't think she had any particular interest--Mrs. Zellerbach gave to everything.

Morris: She gave widely when she was alive?

Ehrlich: Yes--as I said before, usually at the suggestion of her children and to all types of philanthropic activities.

I drafted Clare Zellerbach Saroni's will and induced her to leave a certain amount to Mount Zion Hospital, which she did. It was the basis for the Clare Zellerbach Saroni Tumor Institute.

Morris: Is that for cancer research?
Ehrlich: To a degree; it is radiology, primarily. But it is conducting chemotherapy research, and indirectly surgery research. It is all under one roof, but it is primarily a radiology institute with all the radiology apparatus, including a linear accelerator. Mrs. Saroni gave $100,000, and Mrs. Zellerbach, who survived her daughter, gave $200,000. Dave and Harold Zellerbach each gave $100,000; and, as I recall, the three Saroni children gave $100,000. That was the basis for the erection at Mt. Zion of the Clare Zellerbach Saroni Tumor Institute.

Morris: That's quite a monument to the community and to the family.

Ehrlich: Yes.

Morris: So the original thinking was that some of the money should go directly to the hospitals and universities for ongoing programs and buildings. Was this involved with the Zellerbach Family Fund, as it developed?

Ehrlich: Zellerbach Family Fund played no part in the Mt. Zion situation.

Morris: It had nothing to do with the gifts to Mt. Zion?

Ehrlich: It did not. That was given by Mrs. Zellerbach directly, and, as I specified above, her two sons and the three Saroni children.

Morris: That's very nice that they all agreed that it would be a suitable gift to make.

Ehrlich: I represented Mt. Zion for over twenty-five years. You might be interested that I have just concluded on behalf of Mt. Zion Hospital the purchase of Unity Hospital, which is across the street from Mount Zion. It has approximately 125 rooms.

Morris: Will this enable Mt. Zion to expand?

Ehrlich: That is correct. The cost of acquiring the hospital was $2,750,000.

Morris: That's quite a lot for a dilapidated building.

I want to be clear on how you set up the Zellerbach Family Fund--first you start a corporation?

Ehrlich: The Zellerbach Family Fund is a corporation which was, of course, created during Mrs. Zellerbach's lifetime. When Mrs. Zellerbach died, we transferred to it one-half of the assets in Mrs. Zellerbach's estate.
Morris: Is that a more efficient thing to do as far as tax purposes are concerned?

Ehrlich: Well—with that amount of money, the appropriate method of handling it is to turn it all over to a corporate foundation. Although, as you probably know, foundations are being taxed, but in a relatively small amount.

Morris: Yes—and that becomes quite a subject of discussion.

Ehrlich: It has become very controversial.

Morris: What is your opinion on that?

Ehrlich: It is my opinion that foundations are very sound, but the abuses percolate into the minds of the public, which becomes quite aroused.

Morris: Do the abuses become acute?

Ehrlich: Yes—in some foundations.

Morris: There's even been talk that eventually it may be decided that foundations as a charitable-giving mechanism should be discontinued.

Ehrlich: That's correct—and then what is going to occur?

Morris: Do you think that is likely to happen?

Ehrlich: I think it would be a great blunder, because who is going to assume the responsibilities that the foundations now assume? Possibly, trusts—but these would not be as advantageous an instrument for giving as the charitable foundations. But, of course, if the foundations are continuously subject to increases in taxes, they will ultimately be abandoned.

You might be interested in the procedure we adopt at the Zellerbach Family Fund; I am one of the trustees. Before each meeting we get a brochure from Ed Nathan, who is the executive director, and it is usually twenty to thirty pages and lists a number of organizations suggested for gifts, which are discussed at the meetings. The applicants cover a myriad of activities: the arts, dance, music, medicine, health, and I could go on and on in the variety of applicants that are suggested. Since I have been a trustee of the Zellerbach Family Fund, I have been astounded at the great number of institutions that exist in the Bay Area that ask for funds—it is almost unbelievable.

Morris: Yes—Dan Koshland once said that he would have thought by now everything had been discovered and funded.
Ehrlich: The Zellerbach Family Fund meets four times a year, and I guess there must be twenty to twenty-five applicants at each of these meetings. Before the meeting Nathan also sends us a list of as many as thirty different activities which he has turned down.* This list shows the institution, what it does, what it wanted, and why he turned it down. This is not discussed at the meeting, unless someone objects to the executive director's denial of funds. He does this to let us know what is going on. Of course, we trustees should know, as we might be interested in one of the denials.

Morris: Does a denial come up for discussion at the meeting very often?

Ehrlich: No; Nathan does an excellent job.

Morris: Yes, he is a very able person.

Ehrlich: I agree.

Morris: When did Zellerbach Family Fund decide that it would be a good idea to have a staff to handle its activities?

Ehrlich: I would say even during Mrs. Zellerbach's lifetime, the Zellerbach Family Fund used a person versed in these matters to manage its charitable activities. Of course, when Mrs. Zellerbach died, we trustees got together and appointed Ed Nathan. This was, as I recall, in 1963. He was the first director of the Fund, and he has been there ever since.

Morris: Is it included in the description of how the Fund will work that it will have a major interest in the arts?

Ehrlich: No, not specifically. I will furnish you with a copy of the Articles of Incorporation and if you deem it advisable, it can be attached to the appendix of this interview.**

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*See Appendix B for a summary of the Fund's program concerns and grants for 1974, by executive director Ed Nathan.

**See Appendix C.
5. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BOALT HALL SCHOOL OF LAW

Philip S. Ehrlich Legal Student Loan Fund

Ehrlich: I graduated from the University of California (BA) in 1911 and graduated from Boalt Hall, the law school, in 1913. At that time we were permitted to take first year of law in our fourth year of college. At the present time all colleges require four years of academic work and three years of law school.

Morris: I am impressed by the long and distinguished careers of so many of your graduates of those years.

Ehrlich: I don't say this egotistically, but I have established the Philip S. Ehrlich Legal Student Loan Fund, and it now has a value of about $132,000.

Morris: Am I correct in that it is a revolving fund?

Ehrlich: The legal student loan fund is not loaned until the Boalt Hall student gets through his first year, because I am of the opinion that if a student goes through the first year, he is likely to complete his education; whereas, in the first year, you are not so certain. The fund was given, of course, to the Regents of the University of California, but it is managed by the law school faculty, who have full and complete control of making the loans, and any terms and conditions they see fit, including whether or not to charge interest.

Morris: The law school faculty makes the loans?

Ehrlich: Yes; as of March 31, 1975, they had loaned over $650,000.

Morris: What about the repayment?

Ehrlich: That's up to the faculty to fix the terms and conditions of repayment, and, as I have said above, the same holds true with the charge of interest.
Morris: Have the students paid their loans back pretty well?

Ehrlich: Yes; for your information, they have repaid $556,054; loans outstanding, as of March 31, $102,567.91; and amount available for additional loans, $29,818.44. Losses have been practically non-existent.

Morris: That's very satisfying; that means it will be continuously revolving so that student after student can take advantage of it.

Ehrlich: That's correct. I don't believe too much in scholarships.

Morris: I see. What's your theory on that?

Ehrlich: My theory on scholarships is that they use up the money and it is gone. Let a person who gets the advantage of the money repay it, so that the next fellow can get a break and a chance at an education.

As I have said before, all details are in the hands of the regents, who have given it to the law school to administer. It has not been in existence too long, but in my opinion, it is an excellent showing on a fund of about $135,000, which was created over a period of years. The amount that has been loaned out and repaid since the creation of the fund is $658,622.

Morris: It has turned over approximately five times. That's pretty good.

Ehrlich: Yes.

Morris: Do you get any information back from the administering committee as to whether there are more students now requesting loans than before?

Ehrlich: I am right now waiting for a report which I get twice a year. The last report I have received I have transmitted to you; and, of course, you can, if you feel it advisable, make it a part of the appendix to this record. *

Morris: How about women participating in the loans? Are they making loans to women?

Ehrlich: Any student is qualified.

*See Appendix D.
Morris: Do you keep in touch with how the law school operates and any changes that are going on in the way they teach?

Ehrlich: I happen to be a trustee of the Boalt Hall Alumni Association. It is through that that I can be in touch. Although I haven't been up to snuff—due to my age. I tried to resign—and they would not let me.

Morris: You seem to have a number of activities to keep up with, sir.

Ehrlich: I do—even though I am very close to 86.

Morris: I am very much impressed by how many graduates of around your years are keeping California on the right track. Has the law school curriculum changed considerably since your days?

Ehrlich: Yes, tremendously. In my class there were eleven students. A couple of years ago, there were 5,700 applications to get into the first year at Boalt.

Public Interest Practice

Morris: There seem to be a number of students coming out of law school who are interested in public law. Is this a special branch of legal training?

Ehrlich: I would not say so; however, there is no doubt some degree of legal training required, but primarily you have to know the principles—torts, contracts, etc.; possibly a course or so might be required for this special practice. I don't visualize that this is a specialty. It is more a question of funding, as I see it, than anything else. I don't think that legal training would be affected by the fact that the student might go into so-called public law. By public law, I don't mean government—I mean working for the masses, who cannot afford to pay for legal fees.

Morris: I was thinking that there is an NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

Ehrlich: I don't think there is very much difference in the training—it is the financial phase that is significant.

Morris: Does this differ from the way lawyers of your generation felt when they went into practice?

Ehrlich: We had no conception of this. You might take a client and do his work free, and that was that. It wasn't a public conception of having a group who did nothing but take care of individuals who
Ehrlich: could not afford to pay their fees. That wasn't part of our training when I started practicing law in 1913. It is a very recent conception.

Morris: Does this come out of various court decisions?

Ehrlich: No--purely public relations. It is also a result of the activities of organizations throughout the land and the change in the public attitude and the creation of organizations like ACLU, NAACP, and others of similar character.
6. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BUSINESS AND PERSONAL FOUNDATIONS

Morris: There seem to be several Zellerbach foundations. Did you have anything to do with the Crown Zellerbach Foundation?

Ehrlich: No.

Morris: How does that differ from the Zellerbach Family Fund?

Ehrlich: It has nothing to do with it at all. Completely no relationship at all. Crown Zellerbach Foundation is the corporate foundation, and the family has no relationship to the corporation except to own stock in it. Richard Shephard runs the Crown Zellerbach Foundation, and the relationship is just as close as the relationship between the Ford Foundation and the Zellerbach Family Fund.

Morris: What does the Crown Zellerbach Foundation do?

Ehrlich: All I can tell you is that, as it is a foundation, you know as much about it as I do, in that it is created for philanthropic purposes. It has an executive director and a staff who handle its activities.

Morris: I wonder if, in general, there are differences from a legal point of view, for instance, from a foundation run by a corporation and one created by an individual.

Ehrlich: They have different objectives and different points of view. In the first place, the corporate foundation is usually given money year after year, whereas a private foundation does not necessarily receive annual funds. For example, the Zellerbach Family Fund will have no further donations. Its financial condition will depend upon the securities it owns and the gifts it makes.

Morris: In other words, it is primarily one single bequest of money?

Ehrlich: Yes--left by Mrs. Zellerbach. For your information, all of her children have their own foundations. As a matter of fact, Harold Zellerbach, the only child still alive, has his own foundation. It has nothing to do with the Zellerbach Family Fund.
Morris: If there is already a Zellerbach Family Fund, why did they decide to set up their own foundations?

Ehrlich: Because they want to create their own identity. The Zellerbach Family Fund represents three branches of the family; whereas, the Harold and Doris Zellerbach Foundation only represents the Harold Zellerbach and Doris Zellerbach point of view in giving. In other words, the best illustration is that Harold Zellerbach gave five hundred thousand dollars to the University of Pennsylvania, but the Zellerbach Family Fund would not do this, because it would favor one of Harold Zellerbach's charities, which would be unfair to the other two branches of the family.

However, let me explain to you and give you an example of what the Family Fund has at times done. I specifically mention the gift of a quarter of a million dollars to the University of Southern California for a medical building. This gift was made because Louis and Al Saroni, sons of Clare Zellerbach Saroni, graduated from the University of Southern California.

Morris: It is interesting that what looks like quite a few companies--business organizations--are setting up their own foundations.

Ehrlich: Yes; a substantial number of foundations have been created by business organizations.

Morris: Does that relate to that other discussion now going on about corporate social responsibility?

Ehrlich: I think it bears a relationship. However, keep separate and distinct such foundations as the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie, and the Rockefeller Foundation. They, like the Zellerbach Family Fund, have no relationship to any business activity. On the other hand, the Crown Zellerbach Foundation or the General Motors Foundation or dozens of others are part and parcel of a corporate business activity, although separate and distinct corporation entities.

Morris: Yes, I understand that. What interests me is that I thought the primary purpose of a business enterprise was to show a profit at the end of the year.

Ehrlich: I know; but industry has gotten beyond that.

Morris: Have we?

Ehrlich: Business has realized that they owe a duty to the public and must have the public welfare at heart.
Morris: How do the stockholders, in general, respond to that?

Ehrlich: They are reconciled to it.

Morris: Will a company foundation go into the same kinds of things that a family fund does?

Ehrlich: That all depends on who runs it. You can't lay down any particular guidelines to govern. For example, let us say that a corporate foundation owns a mill in Oregon or in any other state. They might very well use their corporate foundation to aid the community. For example, they might help some students to go to college purely because one of their mills is located there. This, indirectly, is a philanthropic act and helps the public relations of the corporation owning the mill in that community and state. It is also a way of creating good will.

Morris: Is that the kind of thing that the Levi Strauss Foundation is involved in?

Ehrlich: I don't know anything about the Strauss Foundation or what it is doing.

Morris: They seem to have an in-house philanthropic organization going. Your comment that we are beyond the point where companies are concerned only with making a profit--how do companies get to that point?

Ehrlich: The necessity for having good public relations--their standing in the community, in the state, and in the nation. Corporations rely upon the citizens--the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government. They need support from Congress and the nation, and it is one of the methods of cultivating good will.

Morris: Separate from a concern for the needs of the children, or the cultural life of the community?

Ehrlich: That's right. They want to cultivate good will on a national scale.

Morris: That's interesting--because the people who run the companies that want good will are also citizens of the community.

Ehrlich: They combine these objectives by handling activities in an appropriate manner. For example, I just thought of it because I was at the San Francisco Symphony Association committee meeting today. It came up that the Crocker National Bank gave the San Francisco Symphony Association funds to support its activities. As a further illustration, Standard Oil of California used to give the Symphony money for broadcasting concerts. The Bank of America helped the Symphony go to Europe last year.
Morris: Have any of the business organizations like Standard Oil or Bank of America been willing to give a grant—say, to some of the child abuse projects that the Zellerbach Family Fund has made grants to?

Ehrlich: I don't know.

Morris: I was just wondering, in discussing some of the work that the Rosenberg and the Zellerbach foundations have been doing in supporting organizations working in the child abuse area, if in talking about it, they would say where else the money was coming from.

Ehrlich: Zellerbach Family Fund supported—I think it is going to become a national movement—children of divorce, which is a very important situation in America today, with the prevalence of divorces.
7. DEFICIT AND CAPITAL FUNDING IN LARGER ORGANIZATIONS: THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY AND MT. ZION HOSPITAL

Ehrlich: You probably are unaware of the number of corporations throughout the United States that give symphony organizations funds. As you know, all symphony organizations are mostly deficit organizations—with very substantial deficits, but they receive from these corporations very substantial amounts of money.

Morris: Is this a general fund raising activity of the San Francisco Symphony Association?

Ehrlich: Yes—to which the corporations contribute substantially.

Morris: Why is it that there are so many cultural activities that operate on a deficit basis?

Ehrlich: That's difficult to answer. The answer which I will give you is a stupid one—to wit, the expenses are more than the receipts.

Morris: That is, of course, stating the facts, but is there something inherently different between a symphony, say, and a pants manufacturer—a pants manufacturer makes money and covers his expenses, and the symphony—?

Ehrlich: It's just that the expenses so far exceed the income. The symphony can only charge so much for their tickets, but the unions keep going up and up. There is nothing that can control them except a strike. On the other hand, the manufacturer's expenses can go up, but he can charge more. But—there is only so much you can get for a ticket from the public. You get to a point where the public won't—

Morris: Pay the higher price for the ticket or buy the painting, or whatnot?

Ehrlich: Yes.

Morris: So there will continually be a need for individual benefactors and corporate philanthropy to keep them solvent.
Ehrlich: I will show you in confidence the operating statement of the Symphony—the contributions required and the contributions received. [Looking at papers.]

Morris: At this point in the Symphony's fiscal year, they are about 40% short.

Ehrlich: That gives you some idea of what the Symphony is up against. The symphony's total expenses are over four million dollars.

Morris: It's a major investment to keep it operating.

Ehrlich: It could not charge ticket prices that absorb that.

Morris: Has there been an increase in people attending the Symphony and the Ballet and the other cultural activities?

Ehrlich: Yes.

Morris: Do you suppose any of the increase in attendance is because public and private donations call attention to the cultural activities?

Ehrlich: Perhaps.

Morris: It's as complicated as running a manufacturing plant to keep the charitable and cultural activities going in the community.

Ehrlich: Oh, yes. We have our battles.

Morris: Somewhere, Mr. Harold Zellerbach said that if all the corporations would chip in about two percent of their gross income, there would be enough money to fund all the private sector activities—the charities—

Ehrlich: In the United States?

Morris: Yes.

Ehrlich: I can't answer that—because I have no knowledge of the facts.

Morris: It sounded as if Mr. Zellerbach were hoping that more businessmen would get into philanthropic giving.

Ehrlich: I would agree with this.

Morris: Is this a subject that he puts time into—to talk his business friends into becoming involved in community activities?
Ehrlich: He tries to. You see, he leads the way by pledging one million dollars for the Performing Arts Building--that is to say, the Zellerbach Family Fund is pledging.

Morris: So there are pledges like that, which are long-term commitments of the income of the Fund.

Ehrlich: Over a period of five years.

Morris: And then there are, in addition, smaller grants for new agencies trying out new things?

Ehrlich: Now, for example, the Unity Hospital, which Mt. Zion bought--the money has to be paid for by public subscription.

Morris: Were there any large gifts to start that off?

Ehrlich: We borrowed the money to buy it. Before we're finished, it will cost four million dollars. We will have to raise that from the public.

Morris: Through the public use of the services that Mt. Zion provides?

Ehrlich: There will be a drive for the four million dollars.
8. PERSONAL SATISFACTIONS: FRIENDSHIP AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

Morris: It sounds as if you had this commitment to help community activities keep going all the way through your own business career as an attorney.

Ehrlich: Well, as I said, I have been the attorney for Mount Zion for about twenty-five years, the Symphony for twenty-odd, and Laguna Honda for about seventeen years. Those have been my three local daily philanthropic activities.

Morris: And how do you schedule the time for those in a busy legal practice?

Ehrlich: They are not too cumbersome, and I have associates who undertake the work with me. After all's said and done, America has been good to me, and this is one way I can reciprocate and show my appreciation.

Morris: That's a nice note to end on, unless there are some other details of how philanthropy works in the Bay Area that you'd like to share for people starting their careers.

Ehrlich: I'm not discussing with you personal charities, because what my wife and I have given is relatively peanuts. I mean, it's these activities that I've indulged in that are more of a significant part of philanthropy.

Morris: Well--I think the word is "leverage." Your efforts may spread a little further if you're working through an organization, sometimes. You say you "indulged" in these. It sounds as if they've been a form of recreation for you--a personal satisfaction.

Ehrlich: Yes, that's right. For example--and I don't know if I told you--I was able to settle a will contest a few years ago for Mount Zion and Children's Hospital in which I picked up two hundred thousand dollars. That was a matter of great satisfaction. Some of the organizations require continuous work and others don't--like Laguna Honda Hospital Volunteers, Inc., requires very little, except for that one big deal. It was really remarkable to have had that opportunity.
Morris: I should say so.
Ehrlich: You do that once in a lifetime.
Morris: Yes.
Ehrlich: So the work they require is not significant; the Symphony does not require too much, but Mount Zion is continuous activity.
Morris: It has grown into rather a sizeable medical center.
Ehrlich: Yes.
Morris: Twenty-five years ago it was a much smaller kind of an organization.
Ehrlich: Yes; it's growing by leaps and bounds. You see, I don't want credit. I think if I hadn't known Dave Zellerbach as well as I did, I don't know if I would have been in all these things. He took me by the neck and said--
Morris: "We need you?"
Ehrlich: Of course, they gave me a great deal of work on the institution. But I think they've been responsible for my devoting a good deal to, let's say, "the philanthropic phase of my life."
Morris: Was David Zellerbach particularly involved in community concerns?
Ehrlich: He was president of Mount Zion, president of the Symphony. He was in all these philanthropic activities and a very charitable man, as is Harold Zellerbach. Of course, Dave was in it because he was older. Naturally, being older, perhaps he was chosen.
Morris: Earlier than his brother?
Ehrlich: Right; and when he passed away, Harold came into the picture.
Morris: That's really remarkable for a city to have two brothers who take so much time to get involved--
Ehrlich: That's right, and the Zellerbach family has been a very constructive influence in this town. I owe them a great deal, business-wise and philanthropic-wise.
Morris: Do you see this concern for the community going on into the next generation?
Ehrlich: Not to the same degree.
Morris: That's interesting.

Ehrlich: My son, for example, is president of Sacred Heart, the girls' school, so he has to a degree started.

Morris: Is it something people take up after they have established a business or a professional career?

Ehrlich: Not necessarily; it's part of it. Because, you see, I'm talking about twenty-five years ago or more. I am into my sixty-third year in the law.

Morris: That's quite an accomplishment.

Ehrlich: That's quite a siege, yes. The accomplishment is living that long. That's quite an achievement.

Morris: Yes, it is. I think that covers all my questions. I don't want to wear you out when you're recovering from an illness.

Ehrlich: I hope I've given you something of value.

Morris: I think your own personal experiences have been very interesting, and you've given me some light on the legal side of getting philanthropic things moving.

Ehrlich: Yes, when you're asked to take over, it's like taking over a client, whether it's a charity, a philanthropy, a symphony, or whatnot, although the problems are entirely different. But there's still legal work to be done.

Morris: Yes, I think this is a good caution. Sometimes the newer organizations have a little trouble working out some of the details to get themselves on a sound business footing.

Ehrlich: Tell me again what you're doing.

Morris: Your comments, and those of the others who are being interviewed in this project, will be available as research manuscripts in The Bancroft Library that will be very valuable for people wishing to understand how local foundations and concerned individuals keep the humanitarian and cultural life of the community going. Thank you.

[End of Interview]

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B. Council for Civic Unity Proposal to Columbia Foundation, 1948
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Josephine Whitney Duveneck was interviewed in order to obtain an overview of her forty years of leadership in philanthropic ventures dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. They also demonstrate the effectiveness of a woman as fearless innovator.

As teacher and administrator, she pioneered in progressive education and interracial camping on the Peninsula south of San Francisco. As a member of the American Friends Service Committee, she participated in shaping a remarkable series of projects to offer self-help opportunities to successive minorities, from Jewish refugees in the 1930s through Mexican-Americans in the 1970s. Most of these efforts received, sooner rather than later, grants from Bay Area foundations, after they had started with small funds from a few individual benefactors.

A tall, handsome woman with great warmth and presence, Mrs. Duveneck took time from writing her memoirs and overseeing her current outdoor education program for an interview on February 26, 1975. We conversed in the comfortable sprawling living room of Hidden Villa Ranch, deep in a green canyon of the Coast Range near Los Altos. Again and again she commented on the importance of volunteers in starting grassroots programs: being able to take the time to sit quietly with Indians on a reservation and build a personal friendship, for instance, rather than being bound by the time and record-keeping requirements of being an agency staff person. The financial and moral support she consistently has received from other members of the upper echelons of society are evidence of the sense of social responsibility she considers unique in the kind of American philanthropy which has created not only foundations but forest reserves and national parks for the enjoyment of all citizens.

Mrs. Duveneck reviewed the transcript of the interview, adding a few names and clarifying some points. Some personal papers will be deposited in The Bancroft Library when her memoir is completed.

Interviewer-Editor

26 March 1976
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California/Berkeley
Numerous civil rights and interracial causes were passionate and life-long concerns for Josephine: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the California Federation for Civic Unity, and the American Friends Service Committee in which she was especially active in enabling Native Americans and farm workers, helping to organize the California League for American Indians, and supporting Cesar Chavez in the beginnings of his work to organize farm workers, through the development of the Chicano-oriented Community Service Organization.

She served the Palo Alto Friends Meeting as Clerk and in many other capacities, and with her husband Frank utilized Hidden Villa, their ranch in Los Altos, as a place of retreat and refreshment for thousands as well as an interracial workcamp for young, an environmental program for elementary school children. She served the Palo Alto Friends Meeting as Clerk and in many other capacities, and with her husband Frank utilized Hidden Villa, their ranch in Los Altos, as a place of retreat and refreshment for thousands as well as an interracial workcamp for the young, an international hostel, and an environmental program for elementary school children.

Before her death, Josephine
completed her autobiography, *Living On Two Levels*, in which her quiet times of contemplation are revealed as the source of energy for her unflagging work to transform the world.

Excerpts which follow are from the chapter of a book she planned to write about the AFSC which grew out of her strong leadership in the Bay Area, to meet the needs of migrant workers, European refugees fleeing Hitler and the holocaust, and displaced Japanese citizens.

"The origins of the Northern California branch of the Service Committee are intertwined with the crisis years 1937-1942, and an intricate and fascinating maze of proposals and endeavors stirred up by individuals or small groups in the area. There is at the present time a great emphasis on "grass roots" emergence for social concerns. As I attempt to delineate the motivation, ferment and cross-currents which swirled around previous discreet little Quaker meetings in the Bay Area and which resulted in the creation of the Northern California branch 25 years ago, I am impressed with the fact that here we are dealing with a bona-fide, indisputable grass roots phenomenon.

Beginning with the Depression in 1929, the California scene shifted from the backdrop of a land flowing with honey and orange blossoms where everybody lived happily to a comfortable, warm old age into that of a countryside disturbed by intruders arriving in ancient jalopies and "bundle stiffs" walking the roads in search of food and shelter. The presence of those homeless wanderers stirred the sympathies and consciences of many people. Some communities established temporary dormitories, and Friends in rural areas set up committees to provide relief of various kinds. This was the start of our concern for migrants.

**International Picture**

"During the Thirties, the international picture became more and more forbidding. The acceleration of the Fascist and the Nazi movements in Europe, and the increasing belligerence of Japan in the Pacific, aroused California residents to the need for the study of international problems.

"The pressure of the Nazi campaign against the Jews was first evident in San Francisco in 1937. The English and American Friends who had been living in Europe had already become involved in heartbreakingly efforts to alleviate the suffering of the despised people. The Philadelphia office was deeply involved in providing hospitality and reorientation for emigres. Hostels were being set up in many places, and all Meetings were being urged to provide affidavits and visas for displaced people. A special committee was set up by Bay Area meetings to deal with these problems. The California branch office of the Service Committee was located in Pasadena, for in that area there were many Friends. But it became apparent after 1933 that a closer contact was needed in the San Francisco area which would make it possible to deal more directly with problems than was possible through an office four hundred miles away.

"Bay Area Friends felt the need to create an organization to deal with displaced Germans and Austrians escaping from Central Europe. The Jewish organizations were overburdened. . . . In the spring of 1940, Gerda Isenberg, Dorothy Murray, and I (from the Palo Alto Meeting) began open houses on Wednesday evenings for those refugees. These were held at the Redwood Hill School on Washington Street in San Francisco. The following summer we established a hostel for displaced persons.

"**Enemy Aliens**

"With our entrance into World War II in 1941, activities at the Friends center increased enormously. Friends assisted those who were suddenly classified as "enemy aliens." Because of the removal of all Japanese from the Fillmore area, the Japanese YWCA building was left empty. The Y desired to have it used for community purposes. Friends were responding to increasing demands from conscientious objectors, refugees, and new residents from the Southern states coming to the Pacific Coast to work in the shipyards. The opportunity to obtain larger quarters in a central area appeared highly desirable. So beginning in September, 1942, the owners of the Baker Street house released us from our contract, and we moved the Center to 1830 Sutter Street. The building was admirably suited for our purposes. It had a large auditorium for meetings and sewing projects, a smaller reception room for Sunday morning worship, a four-bed dormitory and additional bedrooms for resident hostess, visiting Friends, C.P.S. men on furlough, office space and a large basement for clothing and storage. Cleaning the premises and moving the furniture from Baker Street was accomplished by the Hidden Villa Work Campers — a Herculean assignment.

Northern California AFSC

"During the summer of 1942, considerable attention was directed towards the establishment of a branch office of the AFSC. This was fortunately given us by the AFSC National Executive Committee which established the Northern California Branch Office in December, 1942, with Walter Homan as chairman and Joe Conrad as executive secretary. What we did henceforth had the benefit of the experience, organization and direction of the AFSC National Board. . . . The larger quarters at the new Center gave space for varied activities. Letter writing campaigns to C.O. boys in camp and to inmates of Relocation Centers, collection and preparation of clothing to be shipped to German and Russian refugees in Shanghai, the Japanese Student Relocation Project in which college age Japanese could continue their educations, re-settling Japanese citizens after the war who had been interned in camps, furnishing temporary housing, the planning and supervising of a hostel for returning Japanese families, the work of improving race relations and integrating Negroes into the professional and upgraded job positions and improving sub-standard housing in San Francisco. There was outreach into the Chinese community as well. C.P.S. boys returning from camps were housed temporarily at the center.

Thus the fledgling years of the Northern California Regional Office of AFSC are sketched by one whose compassion continued to support and shape much of its work. Friends everywhere are profoundly grateful for the life and nurturance of Josephine Duveneck who said of her life: "I just tried to find out what people really wanted, and then set them about getting it."
[Date of Interview: 26 February 1975]

1. QUAKER CONCERNS IN SAN FRANCISCO DURING WORLD WAR II

-European Emigrés-

Duveneck: Knowing that you were coming today to talk about foundations made me do some thinking about it, and I realized how important they are in American social life.

Morris: Good. This is one reason we took on this study; quite often people who are involved in the work of agencies and projects, as you say, don't stop to think about what the foundation participation has meant or what the process is. It seems to be a great mystery to those who had not been involved in it.

Duveneck: The directors have been so helpful in thinking about it ahead of time. I've had the opportunity quite a few times to talk to John May and to Mrs. Ganyard and Mrs. Chance. They've been very helpful steering one in the direction that they feel would be justifiable for the funding.

Morris: Had you and your husband known John May while he was a student at Stanford?

Duveneck: No. Oh, I guess perhaps he had been out here, but I didn't remember him. But my first encounter was when I went to him with--I forget which proposal.

Morris: [Laughs] Well, I've made some notes, so let's get back to John later. If we could go back a bit further, the Rosenberg Foundation printed a report of their first ten years of operation, and they summarized all the grants they had made in that first ten-year period, 1937 to 1946. In there, I found grants to five organizations that I believe you had a hand in, and I wonder if we could talk a little bit about each of those organizations.

The first one, in 1940, was a grant to the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association. Then, in 1944, there was a big grant to
Morris: the Council for Civic Unity—a big grant for those days, twenty thousand dollars. Then, in 1945, there was the grant to the Committee for Fair Play and American Principles; and that was the year of small grants for aid to returning Japanese-American college students. Then, in 1946 there was a grant for partial support of the western regional office of the American Council on Race Relations; and when we talked on the phone—

Duveneck: Larry Hewes. I think he was the one who represented the American Council on Race Relations.

Morris: How did you get involved in all those San Francisco-based activities, when you'd been down here on the peninsula—[phone rings; tape interruption]. Running a school and raising four kids is more than enough for most people.

Duveneck: Well, I' ll tell you: what happened was that I work for the American Friends Service Committee. I am a member of the Palo Alto Meeting. The Hitler era began about 1936; I was in Europe in 1935, and I saw the Hitler thing was already starting. Then, between '35 and '36 the Quakers in Philadelphia started to assist Jewish refugees being held in Germany. They had a lot of people coming, and they wanted to scatter them through the country. So they began writing letters to West Coast meetings to say, "Will you take so-and-so many people?"

There were several people in the Berkeley Meeting, particularly William and Anna James, James Kimber and his wife were very active, and also a special committee was formed, including other meetings. Other families and I got involved with this group.

It seemed to me that it was important to have a Friends' Center in San Francisco, because that's the place where everybody came. There was a center in Los Angeles, but that was so far away. There was no center in Northern California. And so, I got some of the people together and said, "Why don't we have a Friends' Center?"

At that time, I was principal of the Presidio Open Air School (later the Presidio Hill School); I was principal there for three years.

Morris: Your were, after you'd established a school down here?

Duveneck: No, I got involved in it before I finished up at Peninsula, because Presidio Open Air School was closing because they didn't have enough students. So they asked me if I'd come and try to help them. So I said I would, if they'd reorganize it as a parents' cooperative. They agreed, and then I said I'd come up three days a week for the next three years.
Duveneck: Well, you know, it's a little bit Machiavellian, maybe, but when you have several interests, sometimes you can put them together; and because I was principal of Presidio Hill, I got permission from the school board to turn the school into a hostel to receive any refugees from Europe, during the summer.

Morris: Marvelous. Very creative year-round use of the building.

Duveneck: Yes. So they said okay, I could do that; and in the summer of, I guess it was 1937, we gathered together a few cots and pots and pans and things, and we had a hostel there. Mrs. Mabel Adams, from the Sacramento Friends' Meeting, was the house mother. The first refugee we had came from Vienna via Australia. His name was Theodore Kann. Subsequently, he became a very well-known photographer in Oakland. But that's neither here nor there.

We took care of a number of cases in the summer, and then we started having Wednesday evening receptions for the emigrés at the school. It didn't bother anybody if we had them there in the evening.

Morris: To help them become acquainted with San Francisco?

Duveneck: Yes, that's right. Then we realized we couldn't do this during the wintertime because the school wanted to hold evening meetings. So we rented a house on Baker Street, and we opened that as the Friends' Center. The refugees used to come there every Wednesday evening, and I got involved as hostess because I speak German and French; so I could talk to these people. (I went to school in Germany when I was a girl.) We helped them in finding places to live, and so forth and so on.

We were there until 1942. I remember we were there in 1941, when Pearl Harbor—December 7, I think it was. When the war began, then the Japanese—that's a long story, too—had to leave California. Well, that left the YWCA building on Sutter Street, which had been the Japanese YWCA—

Morris: Oh, I see.

Duveneck: It left that vacant, and the YWCA board wanted it used for community purposes. So we asked them if they'd like to rent it to us (the Northern California Friends Service Committee). The people who owned the house on Baker Street released us from our contract of the house because they could easily get rid of that. So then we moved to 1830 Sutter Street. [Phone rings; tape interruption]

This, of course, was the center of a lot that went on, because as soon as the Japanese left what used to be called Little Tokyo,
Duveneck: then that whole Fillmore area was the only place where the Negroes—the black people who came up from the South to work in the ship-building—were able to find lodging. So this was a good place for us to be.

Morris: So you were right there in the neighborhood when the black population started—

Duveneck: Yes. Sutter Street's right on the corner of Buchanan. Somewhere in there, I don't know just when—and this wouldn't appear in your records—I got a thousand dollars from Mrs. Heller. That was the older Mrs. Heller, grandmother of Clarence. I had known her because of Peninsula School. All her grandchildren went to Peninsula School. She liked the Friends program and was very friendly to me.

Morris: I wondered about that, because there are so many people down the peninsula who do have San Francisco connections, besides their families.

Duveneck: The older Mrs. Heller was such a strong, vital person. She had an unusual capacity of perceiving the kernel of a problem, wasting no time with irrelevancies. She was liberal and broad minded, and she was easy to talk to. You felt she was really interested in your project. Once, after I had told her about a new scheme I was trying to launch, she said, "All right. How much do you need?" I told her. She went upstairs and brought me a check for one thousand dollars—just like that! She felt it was very important to have an agency that wasn't Jewish working for some of these incoming Jewish people.

Morris: Was this for the European refugees?

Duveneck: Yes, these were from Germany and Austria. She knew about the work of Friends, and so she was very happy to give me that money. I forget just when I got it and just what we did with it, but it was for work with these people. Many of them would come to us for jobs and for places to live, and general orientation, and that's how I happened to get into the work, because I could talk to them.

Morris: Why did Mrs. Heller feel it was important for a non-Jewish agency to help with it?

Duveneck: This shouldn't go on the record, but I'm going to say what I think. She was not a Zionist. She was not very sympathetic with the idea of the Zionist development there, and I think she felt that it would be a mistake to keep the Jews concentrated together—I mean, more than they were already in San Francisco—and the Friends, of course, had good connections outside of the Jewish community; and she thought it would be a good thing for them to be able to spread out. And, of course, it was very interesting, because many of the people may have been Jewish racially, but they were not Jewish religiously.
Morris: In this group that came in?

Duveneck: Yes, because, for instance, from Austria, the majority of the people were Catholic, and those from southern Germany were also apt to be Catholics; from northern Germany they were Lutherans, and many of the intellectuals weren't anything, and they didn't want to be entirely immersed in a Jewish community.

Morris: That's interesting. Weren't there also a number of psychiatrists, some of the original people who worked with Dr. Freud?

Duveneck: Yes. A great many doctors. This hasn't any bearing right on this, but this was one of the difficulties. Right in the beginning we had no trouble at all getting doctors into hospitals because they were short of doctors in the hospitals; but then the medical association got the idea there were too many of these people coming in and getting too many good jobs. So they got a law passed, through the state legislature, that no doctors could have licenses who hadn't served two years as interns in a California hospital.

So when these doctors came, some of them had been practicing for years and were tops in their profession, and they had no money. So how could they afford to be interns in a hospital? This stopped that flow, but we used to send them to other states that as yet did not have those laws. We had the benefit of the Friends' national relationships to open up places in other states.

Morris: Was it the sudden influx of, first, Europeans and then blacks from the South that led to the forming of the Council on Civic Unity?

Duveneck: I don't think so, no, because I think the heaviest Jewish immigration happened in the late thirties, and the blacks didn't start coming until 1942. But the work of the Friends' office up there, beginning with the Jewish people—and we kept that on for quite a while—tapered off.

Japanese Relocation

Duveneck: And then we worked a lot with the Japanese. We worked in San Francisco at the time they were removed, in the spring of 1942. That also continued during the time that they were away, and also when they came back. The black people started to come when they got the shipbuilding organized in 1942, after the Japanese left. So, in a way, these things are related, but they're really separate.

The Committee for Fair Play and American Principles, of course, was organized right away after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.
Morris: Again, it was a new committee, but there had been a continuing committee for easing up on the Asian immigration laws, going back--

Duveneck: Yes, but I think that committee was--I got something from Ruth Kingman [pulls out a piece of paper] the other day.

Morris: Oh, good.

Duveneck: I think she's talked to you.

Morris: Yes, we have done an interview with her and with Harry.

Duveneck: Yes. Well, of course, they can tell you all about that, but [searches through papers] I think I might be able to get the actual date on that. Now, this is '47.

Morris: I think we probably have the actual date of the organization in Ruth's interview.

Duveneck: You must have that, yes. Anyway, Galen Fisher was the chairman of that group. He had lived in Japan. He represented the Council of Churches and he had lived in Japan a long time. He was head of the committee, and the Kingmans were on it, and a lot of other people. I'm sure you have the list of people for that. Of course, that lasted for quite a while. I think it covered the period when they came back.

Certainly they did a lot of work. They had a lobbyist in Washington to try and arrange so that they could come back and be recompensed for their losses. They did a lot of work on that, which didn't come about for quite a while, but they worked on it. And then, of course, the Japanese-American Citizens' League had some very able young men working for them. I might just add that I didn't fit in here, but when they organized the relocation of the Japanese, they had some very fine people. I think the head of that government office was--

Morris: Are you thinking of Dillon Meyer?

Duveneck: Yes, it was Dillon Meyer, and he was very good. The job was very well done. They didn't have enough people, but the people they had were just great; I can tell you about that later [laughs], but all these things overlap.

Morris: They do. I think that's one of the interesting things, particularly when we have a chance to talk to somebody like you, who was around in all of these different organizations that did work together. What's interesting, in terms of the foundations, is that I don't find any grants to the Friends Service Committee until about 1950.
Morris: Prior to then, were you working with other organizations or finding your money through private gifts?

Duveneck: A lot of the money came from the Friends' national office. They raised funds for the refugees. At first, it was mostly volunteer work, really, in Baker Street and so forth. I'm not sure where this came from, but there was quite a lot of money given for the student relocation—that is, the Japanese student relocation.

Morris: The ones who went to Chicago and other places.

Duveneck: Well, yes. This was organized originally in Berkeley.

Morris: Yes, Samuel May had quite a lot to do with that, I believe, and other people on the faculty at the university.

Duveneck: I think so, yes, because—what's the name of the past president?

Morris: Robert Sproul.

Duveneck: Sproul, and also Wilbur here at Stanford, were both very concerned about what happened to students.

Morris: It's interesting that they'd make a distinction between the parents and their children.

Duveneck: Well, they didn't. I mean, they were against the removal of the Japanese.

Morris: I see.

Duveneck: They came out against it. But that was too late. I mean, I don't think people had any idea that there would be—you see, right away, after Pearl Harbor, Biddle, who was the attorney general, made a very reassuring statement that Americans of Japanese ancestry would be respected, that nothing would happen to them. I have that somewhere, which I can get if you want it. And then all kinds of people came out, upholding the Japanese; but, you see, there'd been a lot of opposition to Japanese before the war. They had aroused the—

Morris: Primarily here in California?

Duveneck: Yes, in the state of California. They aroused the ire of big farmers, Associated Farmers, and the American Legion, and a whole lot of people who were bigots about nationalities. So they were all ready, and when this opportunity came along, why, they started to put the pressure on right away. This committee of Galen Fisher's and the Kingmans' didn't get going in time to stop it. It was already on the skids.
Morris: Wasn't it General DeWitt who was the western regional commander?

Duveneck: He was appointed, but this thing had to have the okay of Franklin Roosevelt--this business of sending the Japanese away. I don't know why he did it, but I guess the pressures were so great that he couldn't resist. So they had to find somebody to head it up, and apparently (this shouldn't go in any public statement) DeWitt was a stupid old guy, whom nobody knew what to do with. So they stuck him out here to be head of whatever that was called (the military restrictive West Coast district).

Morris: I've always thought it very interesting that the military hospital, which was later turned over to the State of California up in Auburn, became known as DeWitt State Hospital. Was it named after General DeWitt?

Duveneck: Yes.

Morris: I think that's a marvelous irony. I've always wondered who was responsible for that.

Duveneck: Well, I'll tell you something that happened up there that I know about. When the boys started coming home wounded, coming back from Europe, a lot of them went to Auburn Hospital, and among them were a lot of Japanese boys, who had been in the Italian campaign. I went up to visit a young man in the hospital. He was an aviator, and he was smashed up.

Well, I went to Auburn, and in all the stores there, there would be signs, "No Japs Wanted," "Japs Go Home," "The Only Good Jap is a Dead Jap." Well, I thought, my God, these boys who'd been wounded and had been fighting for the United States go out, when they get a little better, and see those signs. So I thought, well, what can I do about it?

I talked to my young friend, who was a white boy, and I said, "I think that you boys in the hospital are the ones who can fix this." He was in bed, but he talked to some of his buddies, and they organized a little committee, and they went around to all the stores in Auburn. They said, "If you don't take that sign out of your window, we won't trade here."

Morris: [Laughs] That's the economic imperative.

Duveneck: And the signs were gone within a week. But that was the kind of thing that, especially in the little towns, we knew we had to overcome.
Duveneck: Going back to DeWitt and so forth, I was kind of amused because the man in charge of the San Francisco area was a Colonel Bonesteel [laughs].

Morris: That's a classic name for a military officer.

Duveneck: Yes [laughs].

Morris: Oh, dear. At what point did the Friends put some staff to work in the San Francisco office?

Duveneck: Oh, I was going to tell you about student relocation. It started in Berkeley, and I had the notes on how it got started. It was in school, I think, and then the work was transferred to the Friends' office in San Francisco. Some of the money for that came from the Friends, but there was some other money that I think came from a foundation; and whether that was a national foundation or where, I don't know. But this was quite a major operation because what you had to do—and I worked on that, too—was to get the list of all the college-age kids from all the camps where the Japanese were. You could get these lists from the government.

Morris: Did you have good cooperation from the people running the camps?

Duveneck: Yes, they gave the names. And then you wrote letters to all the different camps and presented the idea that college-age young people would be accepted in colleges outside of California. It was really quite a process, because the boy or the girl would write back to our office and say what their education had been and what they wanted to study, where they would like to go. Then you had a list of the colleges all over the country, who said, "We'll take two." Besides just the tuition and the going to college, it also included a place where they could live. In most cases, these were private families. Then you had to match the kid with the college with the possibility of living conditions, and this took a heck of a lot of correspondence back and forth. I don't remember the numbers now, but they got a tremendous number out.

You know, I've always thought that this was really a Godsend for the Japanese—the young people—because you know how tightly they live together in Japanese communities, both in San Francisco and in small towns. You had Japanese—

Morris: Japanese towns?

Duveneck: Yes. And it would have taken them a long time to become as integrated as they did through this process, because they went all over the United States, and they met all kinds of people, and many of them stayed. After they got out of college, they got jobs and remained.
Duveneck: So that it meant, really, that it was a great opportunity for those kids. It was terribly tough on the old people.

Morris: To have the bright youngsters leave?

Duveneck: Yes, and I think that's why they have made such a comeback. I mean, of all the minority groups, I think there's least discrimination towards the Japanese. When you think of it, that's amazing, because they were enemies.

Morris: Considering what happened to them when they were moved out.

Duveneck: Yes.

Morris: That's an interesting sidelight.

Duveneck: But that was a big, big job. We had two people working full-time in our office. I think they were not paid by our office. They were paid from the national office, but the national office got those funds from somewhere. If you wanted to know, I could probably find out.

Morris: Red Stephenson commented that Quakers in general were very expert at liberating other people from their money to go into various causes the Committee wanted to advance.

Duveneck: [Laughs] Yes.

Morris: Is this the process of raising general funds, or usually does the Committee go to individuals for a given amount of money to do a given job?

Duveneck: Both.

Morris: Were you aware of Leslie Ganyard and Marjorie Elkus, the people staffing the Rosenberg and the Columbia foundations, as possible sources of money?

Duveneck: I suppose so. I don't know. Let me answer that a little bit later.

Influx of Negroes

Duveneck: Shall we move from the Japanese business now to when the blacks came in?

Morris: Fine.
Duveneck: When that happened, you know, San Francisco had never had very many black people. The black people who were there were very unobtrusive and accepted, and their jobs—for instance, the doorman at Shreve's was a marvelous Negro, and there was a major domo at one of the hotels; they were people who had responsibility of that kind. So when people started coming up from the South in such numbers, the old residents were not at all enthusiastic about it.

Morris: I understand that.

Duveneck: You can understand why. Now, the situation was pretty bad when they started coming, and Johanna Volkmann, who was a member of the board of the YWCA in San Francisco, gave, I think, a thousand dollars—it may be more—for Dr. Charles Johnson to come and make a survey of San Francisco in 1942.* So he came with Dr. Herman Long, who afterwards became a very distinguished sociologist.

Morris: These were not Californians? They came from the East?

Duveneck: They came from Washington, D.C. Dr. Charles Johnson was at Howard University, a very distinguished Negro writer and sociologist and so forth.

Morris: That's an interesting person to put in charge of a survey like that.

Duveneck: Yes. So we offered the Friends' center there as a place where the organization could be done, and this was really a tremendously interesting thing. I have this written up in—I'm supposed to be writing some memoirs, you know.

Morris: Yes, I understand. The things that we can't go into in detail today, I hope are going to be in your memoir.

Duveneck: Anyway, the way they organized this I think was nifty. The YWCA called a meeting, and of course they had prestige, and they could—and did—call together the socialites and all the prominent people in San Francisco. They had a meeting at which the need for a survey was explained, and their participation—not financial participation, but human participation—was asked for.

Morris: As sponsors and committee—?

Duveneck: Yes.

*See appendix to Florence Wyckoff memoir in this series for background material for another study of San Francisco racial minorities in low income groups, prepared by the California Conference of Social Workers in November, 1937. Ed.
Duveneck: Yes.

Morris: Was this where Dorothy Erskine became involved?

Duveneck: Well, of course, you always think of her with housing.

Morris: Yes.

Duveneck: I don't remember her being in that. Mrs. Oliver Wyman, sort of a younger socialite—was chairman of it. I guess she was on the board of the YWCA, too.

Well, then, the way he organized this was that there were about ten groups of, we'll say, twenty people each. I'm not sure that these are the right figures, but something like this. And then he had printed sheets for his survey, which had questions on them to fill out. Say there were ten groups—maybe there weren't so many; maybe it was five groups—and there was a chairman of each group, and then twenty people in a group. Each of these twenty people agreed to do a certain amount of work—so many hours. Then they had these sheets, and when they got them filled out they were to give them to the chairmen, and the chairman would take them to Dr. Johnson with the other chairmen's reports.

Well, what these people did [laughs]—each group was assigned a certain area. For instance, the area around the Friends I knew most about because I participated in that; but you went into these houses and explained who you were and that you were doing a survey. And then you went up to all the different apartments in those places, and you noted, for instance, whether the stairs were rickety and dangerous; whether the paint was coming off the walls; how many people used one bathroom, was there a tub, did the toilets work; what about garbage—all signs of attrition like this.

Morris: And you also talked to the residents in the building?

Duveneck: You had to talk to the residents, and you had these really prominent women, who'd always lived in luxury, going into those places and seeing with their own eyes what went on. I felt this was just great.

Morris: A remarkable learning situation.

Duveneck: It was really one of the best things I've ever known to arouse public opinion. Then at the end of the time, all this stuff was brought together and classified, and a report was drawn up. Then there were recommendations.

After it was all done, Mrs. Wyman was through, and everybody was through. It was all done, and, like so many of these surveys,
Duveneck: you know what happens to them—they're made and they're stuck into a file; nobody ever looks at them again. So this was the thing that bothered me, and I said, "Well, look, you can't do that with this. Here are all these recommendations. Whatever will we do with them?"

And they said, "Well, we don't know." So they made an "interim committee," and they put me [laughs] on as chairman.

Organizations and Funds for Civic Unity

Duveneck: So there I was. This is one of the things, at least, that led to the establishment of the Council for Civic Unity. Also, the Fair Play Council had sort of shoved it—they got out of the picture, and they wanted the Council for Civic Unity created.

Morris: This is Ruth Kingman's council?

Duveneck: Yes. So that's the way it got started. The American Council on Race Relations—the Chicago thing that Dr. Embry was chairman of—came into the picture somewhere. Just where they came in, I don't really know.

I don't know if this belongs there, but anyway, at 101 Post Street, on the third floor, I guess it was, we had some time—and coincidental, probably—the Council for Civic Unity; we had the NAACP, with Frank Williams there; we had somebody representing the National Council on Race Relations; and then, later on, the Federation for Civic Unity.

Morris: The state-wide organization?

Duveneck: Yes, the state-wide one, and they were all on that floor. So we could all run over and talk to each other. We had several prima donnas, who used to get into [laughs] hassles every so often, but it worked out. It was really a very thrilling experience, because they were all willing to compare notes.

Morris: Did it help get things going on some of the projects you were working on?

Duveneck: I think so, yes, because it insured us of cooperation from these different phases, and you could tell them right away, "We have a chance to do this. What do you think about it?" It was very nice.

Morris: Maybe the landlord was a friendly soul who was on some of the boards?
Duveneck: I don't remember that. I know we all paid rent.

Morris: Was Bill Roth a member of the Council on Civic Unity at that point?

Duveneck: Yes.

Morris: Did he have time to be very active?

Duveneck: Well, I know he was present at meetings and always had good things—there were a lot of people very active in that. [Pauses] I have trouble with names, sometimes. I guess it's a sign of senility.

Morris: I think of Mr. Roth because he also went on when the San Francisco housing group became SPUR, and has been active on that.

Duveneck: Yes, he's been on there right along. The head of the Jewish Community Council, Eugene Block, was very active.

Morris: How long did it take you to get a program and some principles going with the Council on Civic Unity? Was that its purpose?

Duveneck: [Sorts through some papers] This seems to be—there's no date on that.

Morris: Is that a by-law? Oh, "Suggested Plan for Program Committee." Yes, 1948 was the date on the back page.*

Duveneck: Yes. Apparently, here's a letter from me and from Ruth Kingman to Marjorie Elkus.**

Morris: Oh, good! Oh, that's marvelous. Could we copy this for our records?

Duveneck: Yes. and I may have some other stuff like that, if I knew what you wanted.

Morris: Yes, this is dated, "February, 1948," and it's "covering the problems facing the California federation." On page three there's a discussion of the financial position; that sounds like a background material for them to go and talk to her about where there might be some money.

Duveneck: Here's something from 1947.

Morris: Oh, good. This has your board of directors on it.

*See Foundation Series papers.
**See Foundation Series papers for copy of this early grant application.
Duveneck: Yes.

Morris: Eugene Block was treasurer of that, then.

Duveneck: Yes. [Sounds of papers rustling] Let's see what else I've got here [laughs].

[Tape turned over.]

Morris: When a businessman takes the time to chair a committee, I'm always interested to know whether or not they have the time to do the kind of dickering with people and sitting down with staff to figure out what's going to happen next.

Duveneck: [Sorting through papers] Here's something—oh, this is '53. This is later. I have so many of these things—

Morris: Was Civic Unity primarily an educational and informational kind of a body, rather than action?

Duveneck: No, it was action, and also education. We had some very wonderful conferences for a good many years at Asilomar, which were very thrilling. [Picks out paper] There's the '53 program of the conference.*

Morris: "Nineteen fifty-forward;" that's a nice title.

Duveneck: Here's where we got involved in supporting the Chinese.

Morris: This is again for public housing.

Duveneck: Yes, a really big mess-up in South San Francisco.

Morris: After the war, in the housing—was it all Negro at that point?

Duveneck: Well, I don't know. Edward Howden, our executive director, was very active in that, and I have the date somewhere when he was employed.

Morris: He was still director in '53, when Bill Roth was president.

Duveneck: Yes. Well, I can really look up a lot of other things for you, if I knew some of the things you wanted to know.

Morris: I think the correspondence may be the most interesting, when you're both summarizing conversations and establishing things for the next meeting, or minutes of board meetings.

*See Foundation Series papers.
2. A WOMAN OF MANY TALENTS

Shelter for New Ideas and Leadership: Mexican-Americans since the 1930s

Duveneck: Something else that comes in here, too, is the farm labor business.

Morris: You were involved in that as early as the forties?

Duveneck: Oh, yes. I had my fingers in all these interesting pies.

Morris: How far back does that go?

Duveneck: Well, that's what I was trying to think. Do you remember the date of the draft law?

Morris: I don't, but I can look it up.*

Duveneck: That would help me, because both my sons were conscientious objectors. The older one had graduated from Stanford, and he worked for about six months in one of those camps that they had, which were run by the Farm Security Administration. And then my daughter worked for the Farm Security Administration in the architectural department. She's an architect. The Friends were very active in that, too.

Morris: As far back as the thirties?

Duveneck: Yes.

Morris: That's valuable to know. Would you or your son at that point, in the late thirties or early forties, have come in contact with Ernesto Galarza, who was doing some organizing then?**

*The Selective Service Act was passed September 16, 1940. Ed.
**Interviewer's error; Dr. Galarza did not become active in farm labor organizing in California until late 1947.
Duveneck: Yes, I had him speak here.

Morris: Here at the ranch?

Duveneck: Yes, at this house, to a group of people.

Morris: On his work—organizing?

Duveneck: Yes, and one thing that I don't think should be made public—the initial committee organizing the DiGiorgio strike in Bakersfield met at our hostel.

Dr. Galarza was not at that conference. This was a conference of actual workers, and they wanted a place where nobody would know they were meeting. So they asked if they could come up here. I've had minority groups coming to the hostel for a long time. I started the hostel back in 1925.

Morris: So from the beginning, it's been interracial groups and international groups coming here, of all ages?

Duveneck: Yes. Then, later on, I started a summer camp, but the hostel started back then. During the thirties Japanese, Mexican-Americans, and all these people used to come here.

Morris: When your son was working in the Farm Security camp, were the people there mostly Mexican-Americans?

Duveneck: I think so. Of course, there were some Okies and Arkies, too, but I think there were a great many Mexican-Americans. He was in charge of recreation in the camps. I knew Walter Packard very well, who was one of the key people in the Farm Security Administration.

We were very intimate with them. It started out because I had their child at Peninsula School, and then we had a great friendship for many years. His wife is now in a rest home.

Morris: Oh, that's too bad.

Duveneck: I don't think so. She's all alone, and it's a very nice place. Emmy Lou, her daughter, is very active. You know, she's the artist.

Morris: I've talked with her. When you had some of these groups here talking about social issues, did any of the staff people from the Whitney Fund ever stop in to hear what was going on?

Duveneck: No, I've never had very much connection with them. I think I've sent a couple of people to them for scholarships—the Jock Whitney Foundation—and I've sent a couple of Negroes, I think, but I never
Duveneck: was very intimate with them, because, of course, I came to California when I was very young; as a child, I visited my New York relatives, but never was very intimate.

I'll always regret that I didn't know William C. Whitney's daughter, Mrs. Elmhirst, because I think she and I both, in our separate families, were sort of black sheep. [Laughter] We were first cousins.

Morris: Do you really think of yourself as the black sheep for coming to California?

Duveneck: I don't think of myself that way, but I think some people did.

Morris: I think that gives the background for this group of enterprises, that you seem to have supervised pretty closely, with the black community. I've talked a bit with Red Stephenson and also Orville Luster about what was going on in North Richmond and in San Francisco.

The Volunteer Ethic: Dedication, Friendship, and Work

Duveneck: Of course, I really had a great advantage because I didn't have to earn my living. My husband had enough money so that I could afford to have somebody help me in the house, and I could really work almost as a professional—I mean, full-time.

Morris: In organizing?

Duveneck: In various things of this kind. Well, not only in organizing, but of course, I had personal contacts with a lot of these people. This is the difference between a paid worker—for instance, if I had been a professional in the welfare department, I could go just so far with somebody, and then I'd have to cut them off because I wouldn't have time to go on. Whereas I could come in contact with somebody and I could follow them through, and they often became my friends.

Of course, I've found that in working with blacks and with Indians, the fact that I had really close friendships with some of them made a lot of difference. For instance, when I went into a reservation (this comes later) [laughs] to find out about Indians, what I used to say to explain why I was there, was, "I don't represent the Indian Bureau, and I'm not making a survey"—I really was, but in a sense I wasn't doing it for an official—"and I'm not trying to convert you to any religion," because these were the three things that they were pestered with, you see.

Morris: That's an interesting combination.
Duveneck: Yes. So then, "Why are you here?"

And I said, "Well, I'm just interested. I'm interested in the California Indian and what your problems are, and so forth."

So then they'd say, "Well, come on in. Will you have a cup of coffee?"

"Yes, I will." Horrible coffee, but I had it. Then it also didn't make any difference—being a Quaker, I don't mind silence; and talking to some minority group people, you have to give them time, and particularly Indians. I mean, you sit for a couple of minutes, maybe, and you don't say anything. And then they'd say something about, "Kind of nice weather today, ain't it?"

"It is." And from then, you'd go into a very folksy, simple kind of conversation. Your professional worker can't do that because she has so and so many cases to finish up on in a certain length of time, and she can't tell her boss that [laughs] she sat for five minutes without asking any questions.

I think I've been very fortunate in that way because I've gotten to know people personally and have had them here and have been invited to their homes. (I got to know quite a few blacks, and I'll tell you how that happened when you get around to that.) So then, if you go to start on a project, why, you can say, "Mr. So-and-so and So-and-so," told me to come to see you. This makes an entering wedge. They're open to you instead of putting up their barriers.

Morris: If they know you're already a friend of Mr. So-and-so--

Duveneck: Yes, and if you do it in a very—just a plain human being attitude. And this is fun. I mean, this is so tremendously interesting; and in doing all these various things, I think I've been very lucky, because I've been able to really talk to people and find out the basic things that are impediments to their integration. For instance, there were so many meetings, "What do we do about integration? How do you orient people and so forth?" So you have these big meetings, and have a lot of people speak objectively, and you'd learn something (not much); and then you'd go home and you wouldn't do anything about it.

I got awfully fed up with that, and that is one reason I started the interracial children's camp [1946]—because I wanted to do something that was concrete to help alleviate the problem. I could do that because I lived here on the ranch and I knew about children. So that's how I got that started, and that paid off tremendously. I got some Negro people to come and help me do it. I gave them all
Duveneck: responsibility and was there to help out, but I let them do it. This gives you a chance to talk to people. If I had had one professional job, I would have had to be stuck in one of these organizations. I wouldn't have been able to chase around the country and stick my finger in all of them.

Morris: That's interesting in terms of "woman's role."

Lady Bountiful vs. Do-it-yourself Models

Morris: I wonder if this kind of volunteer entrepreneuring is something that women can do well because their role in most families involves constant shifting of gears to do a variety of tasks?

Duveneck: I think they can. I don't see why, just because you're a volunteer, you can't work just as hard as somebody who is paid. I think that your standard of work should be the same, and that we should get rid of the "Lady Bountiful" idea, which is the past idea of the woman with resources—that she sort of went in [snaps fingers] and gracefully presented things.

When I was a child, growing up in Boston, when girls got through their debutante life, then they went "slumming." Have you ever heard that term?

Morris: Yes, I have.

Duveneck: That meant that you went down to Neighborhood House, or whatever it was, and you did something for them. Like me—I worked for a year after I was married, in Lowell, Massachusetts, and I had the idea that I should give something to these poor, benighted mill workers. So [laughs] I hate to admit it now, but I started a class for the history of art, at the YWCA, in the mill town; and I had mill girls, about twenty of them, who used to come one evening a week, and I'd tell them about the great painters and show them pictures and everything.

Morris: How did they receive that?

Duveneck: Well, I thought it was all right. I wasn't very perspicacious then, I don't think.

Morris: You have to start somewhere.

Duveneck: They came; I imagine that anything in those dull lives perhaps would have attracted them. But I had a baby after a while, and then I
Duveneck: couldn't go any more [laughs]. But, I mean, that was carrying on the idea of what the society girl did in order to justify her existence.

Morris: The idea of somebody doing something for somebody else.

Duveneck: Yes. For the "lower classes"!

Morris: When you got to California, and one thing began leading to another, was it primarily integration that you were concerned with, or was it more the kinds of things you'd learned in working with children, about developing individuals?

Duveneck: I guess working with children is really part of the integration process, isn't it? Because if you get kids young enough, then they don't have any sense of discrimination. When people are grown up and have fixed ideas, then it's much harder to change them. But if you can start out and arrange for kids to have an experience of a mixed group, and they make friends—which they do, of course—then they won't ever have a feeling of superiority over somebody else. So that was one of the facets of—and, of course, I like kids, and I enjoyed the work with the kids; but it started, really, because of my desire to have the United States be a real democracy.

Morris: Economically, politically, and socially—the whole thing?

Duveneck: Yes. And I still feel that way, but I think that the ways of doing it have shifted a lot.

Morris: In what way?

Duveneck: I think for so many years we worked to build people up so they would help themselves, but when it started to happen, some of us felt—

Morris: Threatened?

Duveneck: Our nose was out of joint because they were doing these things themselves and they didn't want any advice. They didn't want our help. They wanted to do it themselves. As a matter of fact, this is what we tried to do all those years, but to let go—

Morris: And let them do it on their own.

Duveneck: Let them do it on their own, and if they wanted to ask your advice, okay; but let them go ahead, even if they made mistakes.

Morris: This is hard for the establishment to accept.

Duveneck: Yes, very hard.
3. AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE MOVES INTO THE FIELDS IN THE 1950s

Testing the Idea

Morris: Did you find the issue of independence to be a problem in some of the Quaker projects? I was thinking particularly of down in the Valley.

Duveneck: Yes. Of course, I think that the blacks and the Indians have succeeded in arriving at this point. I mean, this is a generalization, of course. I don't think the Mexican-Americans have quite reached it yet, and the reason for that is that Mexico is so close.

Morris: They still feel ties with Mexico?

Duveneck: Yes, I think so. They can go back, and people can visit them. So there's a constant connection with Mexico.

Morris: That keeps the Mexican community in America from developing its own independent skills?

Duveneck: I think so.

Morris: That's a very interesting idea.

Duveneck: Of course, in certain places they have. For instance, in Los Angeles they have a very strong CSO [Community Service Organization].

[Phone rings; tape interruption]

You know, I told you that there was a report of that thing. Well, I told you wrong. This is a report of segregation in Washington, which I have an extra copy of, and if you want it, you can have it. Do you have one of those?

Morris: I do not, no.
Duveneck: Well, then you should have that.*

Morris: Good; thank you. Specifically, then, at what point did you begin to have some contact with Leslie Ganyard when she was executive of the Rosenberg? She was there until 1958.

Duveneck: I'm sure I did. I seem to remember having talked to her about farm labor and the education of some of the kids that didn't speak English. Let's see [turns over paper], Rosenberg gave--of course, we had that farm labor project.**

Morris: The one that was staffed by Bard McAllister?

Duveneck: Yes. I did the preliminary work on that.

Morris: What did that involve?

Duveneck: It involved, in the first place, getting the funds to do it; and this was quite interesting, because we had somebody on our board in San Francisco who belonged to the Associated Farmers.

Morris: That's a major conflict of interest, isn't it?

Duveneck: Yes. There were at least a couple of people on the board who were very much agin' the idea of a farm workers' union. When we started out, it was to be educational; we did some sort of preliminary looking around, and it soon became evident that, really, the thing that they needed most was organization, unionization.

For quite a long time we couldn't persuade anybody in the Friends to do this thing, but eventually we got it through the national office. They had been thinking about doing a "migrant" study--and they hadn't come to the point where they could. When, finally, they were persuaded, they decided that the national office would fund the California work with migrants, and that was the first official work that the American Friends Service Committee did with migrants. This was the sort of "trial balloon," and it was to be carried out here in California.

Morris: Did you also go around with questionnaires?

*See Foundation Series papers.
**Do you know Steve Thiermann's book, Welcome to the World, published in 1968? It describes "discoveries of AFSC on the Frontiers of Social Change" and is obtainable at the San Francisco office. J.D.
Duveneck: When we found that we were going to be able to do it, Steve Thiermann, who was the executive secretary of the Friends at that time—

Morris: National?

Duveneck: No, the Northern California office. We got in an automobile, and we went down the Valley to call at various places to see where this project should be located and where the headquarters of the project should be. We had quite an interesting time, because, for one thing, we decided we'd visit the Friends churches. You know, Friends have two sects. There are the unprogrammed people who have silent meeting, and then there are the church people who have church, just like any other church. They have a minister and choirs and all that sort of thing, and in the Valley there are a good many of those churches—not so many silent meetings, but they're supposed to support the American Friends Service Committee, too. And they do, to a certain extent.

So we went into the churches, and we didn't get a very warm reception. One, in particular, I remember we arrived at about lunchtime, and so they sort of were compelled to invite us to attend the lunch. But Steve and I had the feeling that they couldn't shove us out of the door fast enough, because, of course, members of their congregation were Associated Farmers, and they were not at all interested in getting involved in the—[phone rings]

Self-Help in Tulare County

Morris: It was in Tulare County, wasn't it, that you settled on?

Duveneck: Yes, Tulare. That seemed to be the county that—I forget now—it produces the most fruit and vegetables of any county in the United States, I think.

Morris: Did it also mean that you found more people receptive to what you wanted to start?

Duveneck: No, but the worker—Bard McAllister—had a family of three boys, and a very strong-minded wife, and they really didn't want to live in a place like Madera or Los Banos or some of these dismal places, but Visalia was quite possible. We decided that that was available for Tulare County and Kern County, and also up towards Fresno. So that's where we decided to locate.

Morris: How did you select Bard as the person to send there?
Duveneck: We waited quite a while before we picked him, and he had been in a CPS camp. Do you know what that is--Civilian Public Service?

Morris: I knew roughly what it meant, but not what the initials stood for.

Duveneck: Well, that was where the conscientious objectors went in the war. My son was in the camp, and Red knew him very well. He was working, I think, in Philadelphia, and after the war he wrote to one of the departments there. I'm not sure which one. He was a Southerner and a great person; we interviewed a lot, but we felt he was the best.

Morris: Is it a kind of a missionary service that the Friends' field workers--?

Duveneck: No. No, we're against propaganda. We don't do any religious propaganda.

Morris: But these field workers are all Quakers?

Duveneck: It's possible, because our approach is what we approve of. Once in a while, we take a worker who is very much in sympathy with Friends, but usually, if we possibly can, we get Quakers. I mean, they had great quality, these people--Red and Steve Thiermam, and Bob and Phil Buskirk.

Morris: The Rosenberg annual reports say that Bard moved into the community and just made himself acquainted with people, rather than going in with an idea of what it was he was going to do.

Duveneck: That's right, because nobody knew how to do this, you know? So he spent about six months getting acquainted and finding out what was going on, and meeting people and really trying to understand the relationship between the Associated Farmers and the worker, and the churches and the worker, and the civic organizations and these migrant people.

He's a very folksy person himself, and, having been a poor boy in the South, he understood what they were talking about. And, then, as he grasped the nature of the community, both in Visalia and the counties 'round, he began to see certain things that could be done. He would come to the Committee and tell what he thought, and then we'd say what we thought, and then we'd encourage him to go ahead. I think I probably have minutes of those committee meetings, which, if anybody wanted to take the time to follow through, would show the process.

Morris: I think it would be fascinating. I hope somebody does a book on the Friends and these work projects and what the process is. It would be very helpful, and fascinating, also.
Morris: You said earlier that the Committee decided that what the migrant communities needed was to organize. In what sense do you mean "organize"?

Duveneck: No, we didn't have that idea in the beginning. Of course, there had been strikes—the fear of the Associated Farmers was that if the workers were in a community, that they might be inveigled into building up a union. And, of course, that was true. I mean, their fears were correct, because all you had to do was to start to examine the yearly wages that these people got to see that there were some very bad discrepancies there.

It's just like in the days of slavery—they weren't in favor of educating the slaves because they thought when the slaves were educated, then they were not going to be willing workers any more. It was the same thing. The farmers had this force of workers that they weren't responsible for. They could employ them, and then, if they didn't behave, they could send them away.

And, of course, they were very enthusiastic about the people that came up from Mexico, often illegally. You see, this is what happened in the war, when there weren't any white workers any more because they were all in war industries. Then they could import chicanos from Mexico to work in the fields and they arranged with the overseer—the manager—what the wages should be, and then agreed to feed them. Then they set up company stores, where they bought their stuff, and then if anybody objected or complained that the sanitary facilities weren't good or any of the food was rotten, "All right, you go back to Mexico." This happened a great deal, you know.

This was a wonderful work force that they could control completely. They were smart enough to know that the minute you lift the educational and social level of these workers that they'd be in trouble.

Morris: But Bard McAllister and the Friends were able to get started a number of self-help projects?

Duveneck: Yes. And for a long time we side-stepped the union business, mostly because of that one member on our board who was so set against it. We never could persuade him.

Community Development Questions

Morris: I gather that this question of community development became quite controversial. Did the Quakers get involved in that at all?
Duveneck: Yes, I think they did. For instance, I remember down in Tulare County, we ran into considerable difficulty with the health authorities and the hospital. For instance, if somebody was hurt and they would go to the county hospital, unless they could bring somebody with them who would give a pint of blood, they wouldn't treat them. There was quite a bit of controversy about that, and that was what made Cesar Chavez start his own hospital there in Delano. Then, of course, the Associated Farmers thoroughly hated Bard McAllister, and they didn't like the Friends very much, either.

Morris: Then, a few years later, Mr. Saul Alinsky sent some of his people out, both in the Valley and in some of the urban areas. I'm unclear as to how that related to the work of the AFSC.

Duveneck: Fred Ross, who worked with the Industrial Areas Foundation in Los Angeles, came there after the riots in Los Angeles--after, I think it was called, "the Bloody Christmas," when a lot of the boys were beaten up terribly.

We had quite a lot to do with helping the Community Service Organization get started (that's the Mexican-American group, you know). The first time we did that was at one of the conferences at Asilomar, which was a conference where we'd asked some of the boys to come up. One of them was Herman Gallegos, and Antony Rios, and they told about these beatings-up and the efforts of Mexican-Americans to live a decent life in Los Angeles; and we helped them with advice and every way we could to get started.

Fred came out originally because he'd worked with Japanese. All these things get--

Morris: Interrelated?

Duveneck: Yes. I think he was in San Francisco for a while in the interest of the relocation of the Japanese, and then he went down and worked with the CSO in Los Angeles, organizing there. Then, one time, he was up here and we got some money from somebody for that, because we organized a voter's registration project in San Jose, among the chicanos there. Here is a little book, Sal si Puede, written about that project. Fred lived here; he used to go down to San Jose around suppertime, and stay until about one o'clock, because that's the only time you could see the people. He'd come here and sleep, and at breakfast he'd tell me about it. You can have the book because I've read it--

Morris: Oh, wonderful; I haven't had a chance to read it.
Duveneck: Doesn't that say--

Morris: It says, "Fred Ross, Executive Director." Oh, this is the California Federation for Civic Unity.

Duveneck: Yes, but doesn't it say something about where the money came from?

Morris: Not on the front page.

Duveneck: Now, what's this page?

Morris: This says it would never have reached the printed page without the help of the CSO leaders and Josephine Duveneck, who inspired it; Ruth Kaiser and William Watson edited it; Kay Watson illustrated. And it says, "Prepared by the California Federation for Civic Unity."

Duveneck: Well, I don't know where the federation got the money to do it. It's rather interesting that we gave Cesar Chavez his first job.

Morris: Did you?

Duveneck: Yes.

Morris: In a CSO?

Duveneck: No, in this. Fred came to us for, I don't know, a few months to do this thing. Then he had to go back for Saul Alinsky, down in Los Angeles or somewhere else. I don't know where. So when he left, we weren't quite through. We were doing something over in Milpitas, trying to get voter registration there, and he said, "I have to leave, but there's a young fellow, a young Mexican-American in San Jose, who I think has a lot of ability, and I think he could carry on." So we employed him for, oh, not more than two months, to organize a community over there.

Morris: Was this in between union kinds of organizing, or--

Duveneck: Well, it was just--

Morris: This says 1952.

Duveneck: That's when it was, then. It was either late '52 or early '53.

Morris: That would be after he had left the Alinsky organization, too.

Duveneck: Who?

Morris: Didn't Chavez spend some time in the Alinsky group?
Duveneck: I think that he was with us before he went with them. I'm not sure. He may have done a little something beforehand, but he had this paid job, you know, succeeding Fred. And I think that after he finished with us, he went down and worked with Fred in Los Angeles. I'm not quite sure of the dates on that.

Morris: When the Friends got involved in voter registration, did anybody challenge this in terms of the non-profit status of the organization?

Duveneck: No, I don't think so, because, you see, we were just getting people to register, which was a non-partisan thing. It was political in a sense to get people to vote, but it was not trying to get some bill through. We did that, too, but that was kind of done on the sidelines.

Morris: That's the Friends Committee on Legislation, isn't it?

Duveneck: Yes.

Morris: This point seems to be causing considerable concern, in relation to the 1969 Tax Reform Act sections about foundations not being involved in political activity. I'm very unclear about what is permissible political activity.

Duveneck: Yes. I wouldn't know the answer to that, but it seems to me that voting would come in the line of civil rights, rather than political activity, because when a person registers to vote, he isn't actively engaged in trying to change—he's not actively, I suppose, but subconsciously, he is; but--

Morris: Depending on who he votes for once he's registered, I guess.

Duveneck: Yes. And, of course, you're pretty sure of the kind of legislation most of the Mexican-Americans would vote for, but that seems to me to come after the actual registration, because part of getting your civil rights—one of the things you do is to get the right to vote, and then you get the right to eat in any restaurant, and you get to ride where you want to in any streetcar. But I don't know. I'm not legally able to--

Morris: Nor I, but it's on this area of social change that the foundations express interest; and then there's a debate as to what is social change, and do the foundations promote it by the grants they give.

Duveneck: Well, it's like the NAACP. They got into trouble, and then they broke off the legislative activity. There were two divisions there, and you'd give to whichever one you wanted to give to. The same thing happened with the Sierra Club. You'd belong to the Sierra Club, and then you'd contribute to the legislative committee, as
Duveneck: they're probably known. They keep their accounts separate, and one account pays taxes. The other one doesn't.

Morris: The Rosenberg board approved grants for several self-help projects, first through AFSC sponsorship and later when the groups developed their own leadership. Then in 1963 they did put a grant into the Center for Community Development. I wondered if you ever had any conversation with any of the people on the Rosenberg board as to whether they had any difficulties--

Duveneck: I don't think I did, no. Of course, they also funded some educational experiments. Not through us--through the schools, which were very important.

The Importance of Individuals

Morris: Did you get involved at all with the county schools people? There seemed to be several who were interested in the same kinds of things.

Duveneck: Bard did. I don't think I did. Well, yes, I did, too. I knew Mrs.--

Morris: Florence Wyckoff?

Duveneck: Yes, I knew her, and then I knew this teacher. She's retired now--Helen Heffernan in the State Department of Education.

Mrs. Wyckoff was in that--there was an organization that she was chairman of.

Morris: She has spent a lot of time on the health aspect of things, and then she worked with the Governor's Advisory Committee on Youth, that did a number of things that seemed to--

Duveneck: Yes. That's very recent.

Morris: The youth advisory committee goes back to 1943, but the migrant health committee would be later.

Duveneck: It must have been in the sixties, I think.

Morris: Did you ever talk with Ruth Chance about when things in the Valley began to reach the stage where there were a number of different organizations doing different kinds of community--

Duveneck: I think I did, but I don't specifically--I know I talked to her because I have a very definite impression of her.
Morris: What's your impression?

Duveneck: Well, I mean that she was a very enlightened person and very able, and you could talk to her and tell her what you thought, and she'd tell you what she thought. She'd tell you just where the line was where she couldn't go beyond and that you ought to confine your proposal to children and youth, perhaps, or something like that, which was all to the good.

[Child comes into the room] Hello, hi!

Child: I want to go to the toilet.

Duveneck: All right, go ahead. [To another person who has entered the room] Hi, Ron. You can leave him there if you want to, or are you just going right out?

Ron: No, I'm going to go back out.

Duveneck: Oh, yes. All right. [To Morris] I have a children's corner there. And I have drawers with toys in it.

Morris: Every house should have one.

A couple of times you've mentioned that things got started because an individual that you had made contact with or already knew--

Duveneck: [To child] Goodbye.

[To Morris] Well, yes, I think I've been impressed, too, with the importance of the individual, either for good or for bad.
4. OBSERVATIONS ON PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND RESULTS

Seeking Funds: An Outdoor Education Model at Hidden Villa Ranch

Morris: Is there some kind of rule of thumb in an organization or a new project, where you stop looking and decide it's time to go to a foundation or a more general funding?

Duveneck: I don't know that there is any regular rule. I never thought about it; perhaps. I think maybe there is. We're doing something here now that we've done as a sort of individual thing, and now we're presenting a proposal to the county superintendent of schools to see whether this could be continued and funded and so forth. We've carried it for about four years. That's three teachers—Eric, who runs the hostel, and Mary Halley, who is a teacher, and Jim Black, who has been a teacher. This is an environmental education project.

Morris: Great.

Duveneck: We do it here on the ranch.

Morris: And bring the kids from the public schools out?

Duveneck: You probably saw some kids this morning.

Morris: I did. They were having a lovely time talking to a goat.

Duveneck: This is part of it. This is the first day of a three-day project that we run through the schools. So I just finished writing a proposal for funds for that, and I hope to get it through the school because there are funds now, both federal and state, that are interested in outdoor education. So I think we might get money through the school, and then the school would pay us for carrying it out here.*

*We did not get this funding. J.D.
Morris: In other words, you think you've demonstrated that it does work, and that the kids and the teachers benefit from it?

Duveneck: Yes. I don't know; we may not get it through the school district. We only may get part of it, and then I would feel that we should go to one of the foundations to supplement it. But I think we were in a position to ask for the funds because we had done it here, and this is growing out of the sort of thing we've done over the years, with kids coming and looking at things.

Last year I had over seven thousand kids from the primary groups, the pre-school and kindergarten, coming to look at animals. They were coming in their school buses. When it started, there was no charge for it, and then a couple of years it got so—I had a guide take them around. So now I make a small charge if the school has funds. I won't let them dun the children for it, but if the school doesn't have the funds, they can come free. Like East Palo Alto, for instance—I wouldn't charge them.

It must work, because I have all April and May filled up, with groups coming every single morning.

Morris: I should think so. It's the kind of farm that people don't have a chance to see very much any more.

Duveneck: Yes, you don't get to see more than one kind of animal at any one farm.

[Tape ends. Lunch break. New tape starts.]

Establishing Independence: American Indians in Oakland

Morris: What I'd like to start off with this afternoon is your comment that the Quakers are one of the few organizations that have a sense of when to quit and withdraw from a project.

Duveneck: That's true, and in presenting projects to foundations, we usually try to suggest who would carry it on when that particular fund ran out. You could say you hope that this will be taken over by the community, or—well, a good example of that is Friendship House in Oakland, which was started for the Indians, and which after a few years got on to the Community Chest. I guess that happened to Neighborhood House, too.

Morris: Yes, it did. And also to Youth for Service in San Francisco.
Duveneck: Yes, that's right. So one of the things that Quakers think about is the continuity. They set the ball rolling, and then they hope that it'll be picked up and carried on by the community or whatever forces there are.

Morris: What are the signs that an organization is ready to take on running its own program?

Duveneck: [Laughs] Well, when the funds start to run out, then the Friends can't keep it on any more. They know that. For instance, the San Francisco Foundation sponsored the Indian program, and we asked originally for three years. I think it went on for about seven, because we weren't through, and we asked for continuance.

Before we finish up, we start trying to get other groups responsible for it, and I know that in Friendship House we hung on there; but we tried for two years to get it onto the rolls of the Community Chest. At first they wouldn't take it; then we went back again, and they took it. Then the people themselves said, "Well, our money's running out. We can't continue it." So they started trying to get it themselves, and it happened--they got it.

Of course, sometimes the thing cuts off entirely. A good example of that is some funds we got through the American Camping Association for training for minority group counselors, that wasn't altogether successful. So we worked on that for several years, and then it was carried on somewhat by some of the camps themselves; but it wasn't too successful because the kids that were trained often felt that they couldn't get enough financial remuneration from working in camps. They were black kids, and they really didn't have funds to go to school, and the summer camp salaries were not high enough to enable them to go to college for the rest of the year. If they did something else, like working in a factory or in a cannery, they could make enough money in two months to carry them through the year.

Morris: Even though the counselor experience might be more useful to them in the end?

Duveneck: Yes. But still, their immediate problem was--

Morris: Cash, yes. Wasn't it camping programs that first brought you in contact with John May at the San Francisco Foundation?

Duveneck: No, I think he did the Indian program. I'm not sure. The Columbia Foundation sort of dissolved itself into the San Francisco Foundation.

Morris: Yes, it became a separate fund administered by the San Francisco Foundation for a while.
Duveneck: Yes, and I guess the start of the Indian program was through Marjorie Elkus—I think.

Morris: Could you tell me about Marjorie Elkus?

Duveneck: Oh, she's a nice person. You should talk to her, because she's very dynamic, a very nice person. Very good judgment, very able person, with a lot of imagination.

Morris: Do I understand that her father-in-law, Charles Elkus, Sr., was interested himself in American Indians?

Duveneck: Yes.

Morris: Did you work with him at all on any of these—?

Duveneck: He was chairman of the California League for a little while, and then he sloughed it on me. You know, that was interesting, because a long time ago—way back, about 1910, or something like that—he started this organization called the Indian Defense Association of Central and Northern California.

Morris: Did he?

Duveneck: He and Mr. Raymond Armsby had this organization, which was very interested in the Southwest Indians, too. So they did a lot of work about legislation for Indians, protecting their rights. They were very, very active for about fifteen years, I guess. Then, I don't know—I guess other organizations, like the Indian rights or some organizations—national Indian fund organizations—took up the slack there. But they had some money in the bank; there were some funds left over from the Indian Defense Association.

So, towards the end of the time the Friends were working in the Indian program, we decided that there should be another organization, separate from the Friends, and that's the time we started the California League for American Indians.

Morris: I see.

Duveneck: And then we persuaded Mr. Elkus and Mr. Armsby to take the funds that had been sitting in the bank and give the funds to the California League.

Morris: Very good idea.

Duveneck: And they did, and then we made Mr. Elkus president. The first two or three months he said he’d do it, and that way brought along all the people who had been subscribers to the Indian Defense fund before, you see. Then he got out of it. He was still on the board.
Morris: This would be when?

Duveneck: I guess it was in the fifties.

Morris: He was also chairman of the Rosenberg trustees for a number of years, and I believe had helped Mr. Rosenberg write the will to establish it. Did you and he ever talk about what the Rosenberg Foundation might undertake?

Duveneck: I don't know if they ever gave us any money for Indians or not.

Morris: I don't find a single Indian grant in those first ten years, which I find curious, since Mr. Elkus was known as a friend of the Indians.

Duveneck: Well, we certainly got grants from the Columbia and the San Francisco foundations. I talked this over with--I don't know whether Mrs. Ganyard or Mrs. Chance--and it seems to me she said, "Now we are centering down mostly on children, and so I think you better take this over to John May and talk to him about it."

I think that happened. I think we appealed to her first, and then I think she was sympathetic with it, thought it was a great idea, but--. She did ask me about the Ricklefs, whom I had known for years.

They did, however, finance the building of a hospital at Hoopa, and a Quaker work camp helped with the construction.

Morris: Rosenberg?

Duveneck: I think so. I had something to do with that because I knew Dr. Ricklefs and Elsie, his wife, who was an Indian, who lived in Hoopa. I didn't really have anything to do with it, but sort of set them to go to working on it. I'm not sure what it would've been called, but it was for health work, either hospital or a health clinic. The names of Dr. Ricklefs and maybe Ernie Marshall, who was the chairman of the tribal council--I don't think it was given to the county.

Dr. Ricklefs was a white man, but his wife was a native Indian of Hoopa.

Equivocal Experience: Interracial Camping

Morris: You were telling me about a conversation you had with John May when you were having trouble getting scholarships for campers.
Duveneck: I decided that the summer camps were missing a great opportunity, because it seemed to me that integration with kids is a very easy way to break down discrimination. What was happening was that the kids were going to camp, but you'd have a camp from Booker Washington Center that would be all Negro, and you'd have a group from Chinatown that would be all Chinese. I decided it was too bad that you couldn't mix them up a little bit. I had done it here, and it had worked, and some people sent their kids because they would meet Negro children. So I decided that the camping association should respond to this idea very warmly.

I got busy trying to do something about this, and I got a few camp directors whom I knew already, and we made ourselves a little committee to discuss integration in camping. We had some really great meetings, and they thought it was a good idea; and they tried to get scholarship money, or else they gave scholarships from their own camp so that they could get kids. I introduced them to some Negro leaders who talked about their children, and so forth.

So then the time came when we needed some money. This is an awfully complicated situation, but—there was something started in the East, called Fund for the Advancement of Camping.

Morris: That's very impressive.

Duveneck: This is in Chicago. This was another example of the efforts of one dynamic woman. I have some of that correspondence. I have to dig this out for you. So she was very excited, and she was out here. I presented this idea at a camping association meeting in Asilomar, and [laughs] I didn't get very much response, but I did get it from her. Mrs. Eels, that's her name.

So she thought this was a great idea, and she took it back to Chicago, and they did some of this business back there—of getting funds to get minority group kids to camp. I think somebody in New York did, too.

So the thing was that this committee really had no standing. It wasn't a non-profit thing. My camp, I had sense enough to organize that as a non-profit corporation. So I've been able to do a lot of things here just because of that.

Morris: Very good.

Duveneck: It's called Hidden Villa Camp, Incorporated. So that helps me here quite a lot. Then the thing was that some of the kids we sent didn't have a very good experience at some of the camps, because the people in charge didn't know enough about minority group children, and their counselors were not sufficiently educated. I mean, they even used
Duveneck: the word "nigger" sometimes, you know. So it wasn't very successful, because we didn't really have the cooperation of the non-minority camp directors and campers, with the exception of a few camps.

Then we decided that we needed to train minority group kids (that would be older, high school kids) so that they could be employed by summer camps, which would make it better for minority group kids and be good for regular kids to have a minority group counselor. We started this, and this is where John May gave us some money. He gave us a small amount first, and then we wanted to work out a scheme whereby we'd have three or four--I guess four--training sessions over weekends for a group of non-white counselors.

We got a couple of camps to cooperate and take them. In order to get the kids there, we had to pay their transportation to the camps. We had to pay someone to help them, and we sometimes had to equip them with boots and sleeping bags and things like that.

They were going to have a meeting of the Northern California board of the American Camping Association. So I went to John and told him that I was going to this meeting, and if he could possibly give me some more money and let me take the check with me, it might help a lot.

Morris: Oh, good strategy!

Duveneck: So, good for him! He gave it to me. He handed me a check for $2,500, and we went to that committee. They'd already been sounded out ahead of time, and there was quite a good feeling, we thought, but some of those people who had the good feeling didn't go to the meeting. I asked for permission to present the idea at the board meeting, and they couldn't very well refuse me. So they let me talk, and I told them that the idea was that we'd train some minority group counselors, and then the camps would cooperate in employing them. Only two people who were there said that this was a fine idea, and the other people said, "Oh, I don't know. We don't do this kind of thing. This isn't what the American Camping Association is for." It looked as if they'd turn it down. They said they would take it under consideration.

Then I told them about the check, but these people were a little hazy about foundations. I asked them if they would take money from a foundation. They'd say, "Well, we don't do that sort of thing." I mean, they were incredibly unaware of the need.

Morris: And yet they were in the business of running camps, which is quite a complicated process.
Duveneck: But, of course, the snag is that that's their business. That's the way they make their money to live on the rest of the year.

So towards the end of my little speech, when they started to ask questions, I said, "I'm very happy to say that I have a check in my purse for $2,500, for the cause of integration in camping."

Well, you know, they couldn't turn it down. They were kind of nonplused, but it was made out to them, you see. It wasn't made out to me. So they took it, and we put the program through, but they would not appoint a committee of their organization to run it, and they never let us be anything but a committee for the study of integration in camping." We never had any official status.

By the end of that grant money, it seemed to be such a sort of losing cause.

Morris: That's too bad.

Duveneck: And, you see, there were only two non-profit private camps--one was my camp, and the other was Camp Unalayee, that I helped get started with the Friends. Maybe we got some foundation funds for that; I think we did. Those were the only two that are basically non-profit, non-agency camps. They are not run by an agency. See, all the other camps are camps where they have to make their money, and then fees are so very high--I mean, $250 or more for two weeks. They were not by way of feeling that the contribution they could make to American democracy was important enough to--and, you know, it's no good to have one Negro child in your group of forty white children.

Morris: It's hard on that one.

Duveneck: Yes. And so you've got to have more than one. And it's good for the white children. I mean, it's not all just for the black kids.

So we had to drop that, and I don't have too much to do with the American Camping Association, because right now they're so much up against finances, how are they to keep going? They're against the idea of an eleven-month school year, because that cuts down their time, and now people can't afford to go to those camps, unless they have a lot of money.

Morris: I wonder if, having gotten to know you, John would come and check either people or programs that came in to the San Francisco Foundation, knowing of all your experience with people and activities all over Northern California.

Duveneck: I think once or twice he's asked me about somebody, but not very much.
5. THE UNIQUENESS OF AMERICAN PHILANTHROPY

Morris: We've talked about a number of the projects that you've been involved in, moving things around in the world. Are there some things that I've missed to ask you about, and where other Bay Area foundations or national foundations have been helpful, either with people giving you advice, or--?

Duveneck: Lots of them! [Laughs] I mean, I'm sure, over a while, I've talked to all kinds of people. I talked to that man who used to be at the Giannini Foundation.* I talked to him about migrant labor. An awful lot of people. I think I've talked to--[long pause]--way back in the early days, I talked to Bishop Parsons about something [laughs].

Morris: Was there a diocesan fund?

Duveneck: No, it was just he as a person. I don't know; there're so many people along the way that I've talked to, that I'd have to stop and count them up, I think. I couldn't tell you them right off the bat--Howard Thurman, Martin Luther King, Ralph Bunche.

Morris: When we started, you said you had done some thinking, and that it seemed to you that there were several aspects of American life, one of which was foundations, that you'd felt had been unique.

*The Giannini Foundation is an agricultural economics research institution, located at UC Berkeley. It's founding director (1928-30), Claude Hutchison, comments in his memoir in The Bancroft Library that the Foundation was "always interested in Labor" and "developed lots of labor-saving devices." A member of one of three committees that looked into the 1934 strikes in the Imperial Valley, Hutchison was concerned about the difficult living conditions for workers, and the fact that they were "always a good medium for agitators." Later directors have included: Harry Wellman, R. J. Bressler, G. L. Mehren, Loy Sammet, and D. A. Clarke. Ed.
Duveneck: They were unique, yes. I feel that very much about foundations, that they may have been made possible because of the large fortunes that individuals have been able to amass, and who had a sense of social responsibility. For instance, there is probably lots of difference between our country and some of the South American countries, where individuals who have enormous fortunes—I don’t think that they put them into organizations for social change the way they do in the United States.

I told you I thought that the same thing was true of our forest reserves and our national camps. These got an impetus, I think, at just the right times, when Theodore Roosevelt became President and John Muir was still alive.

Morris: He was moving and shaking in California, too.

Duveneck: Yes. And then Gifford Pinchot. This is not true in any other country that I know of.

Morris: And the libraries, weren’t they also—?

Duveneck: They, of course, got their impetus from Carnegie.

Morris: Yes.

Duveneck: It was interesting that Carnegie always refused to serve on any board administering his funds. I didn’t know that, but I saw a TV program about him, and it was mentioned. I thought that was very interesting.

Morris: If, as you said, foundations are an outgrowth of the capitalist system, and foundations themselves are in some part involved in innovation and change, do you suppose the organizations and ideas they fund are likely eventually to make any change in capitalism itself?

Duveneck: It might. I don’t know. Of course, it’s going on now. I mean, for instance, you take the TV programs, those financed by the Ford Foundation—

Morris: On Public Broadcasting?

Duveneck: Yes; a lot of the programs that you get on KQED are the results of foundation grants, which are enormously important, I think. Even oil companies are doing it—there’s a law that you have to give away a certain portion of your income, and you might as well give it away because you’ll be taxed for it otherwise. You’re not taxed for what you give to a non-profit corporation. So that’s one thing that works for a lot of these good ideas, because you can talk to
Duveneck: the people and say, "Well, you have to give--." All the corporations around here--I mean, Hewlitt-Packard and Philco and so forth and so on--are all amenable to being approached for community welfare organizations.

Morris: You've had good success when you've gone to the local corporate people?

Duveneck: Moderately so, but I know a lot of people have had success. I haven't tried them out too much.

Morris: Mr. Hewlitt and Mr. Packard, individually, both set up their own foundations, in addition to anything the corporation does.

Duveneck: Yes; now, Mrs. Packard helped me last year. I needed some money for camperships for kids, and so I wrote to a number of people. Mrs. Packard sent me two hundred dollars, and other people sent me some. I never had too much trouble getting money for something I really wanted it for.

Morris: That's because of your belief in your programs?

Duveneck: I think so, yes. John said to me once, when I asked him for some money, "You know, Mrs. Duveneck, you do more with a little bit of money than any of the rest of the people who come to the Foundation." [Laughs]

Morris: That's nice.

Duveneck: That was very sweet of him.

Morris: I think that's probably a good place to stop. I don't want to tire you, and I think we've covered--

Duveneck: I think you must be exhausted, too.

Morris: Not at all.

Duveneck: I wonder if there are things that I should try and look up in some of these endless files. I have sorted out my stuff so that I have all of Civic Unity in one box and Indians in another box, and farm labor in another box. But they're in there in a great mass, and they've not been put into any kind of order.

Morris: Why don't we wait until I send you the transcript of our conversation today, and then, if there's something that you want to add as an appendix, we can.

[End of Interview]
Marjorie Doran Elkus was interviewed for the Foundation History Series in order to obtain an account of the preparation and experience of a foundation executive in the 1940s.

Trained in social welfare at the University of Pennsylvania, Ms. Elkus applied her skills in the Children's Agency and the welfare department in San Francisco, broadening her knowledge of social needs as secretary of the Community Chest committee that undertook an extensive study of children's services in 1935-38, culminating in a comprehensive plan which includes many concepts that still seem relevant in 1976. Chairman of this committee was Charles Elkus, Sr., her then father-in-law, whose interest and leadership encouraged formation of a variety of charitable committees and organizations.

With this background, Marjorie Elkus was a likely candidate when the Columbia Foundation was established in 1943, and she soon became the director of the new family trust. Speaking of those days, she recaptures a sense of much less complicated procedures for making charitable grants and enthusiasm for the opportunity to do something helpful for society.

The single interview was recorded on 4 April 1975 in Ms. Elkus's handsome flat in a charming garden on Russian Hill in San Francisco. Attractive and comfortable in a smart pants suit, she spoke freely of her personal and professional life, occasionally shushed one of a pair of small fluffy dogs, and seemed to enjoy reminiscing about past events. The narrative includes comments that reflect a wide acquaintance with community agencies and individuals and a sharp eye in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of proposals.

Within a few years, the Columbia Foundation ceased to operate with its own director, but not before Ms. Elkus, working with Rosenberg Foundation executive Leslie Ganyard, had promoted the establishment of the San Francisco Foundation in 1948 which, she comments with affection, may be the most notable accomplishment of the Columbia Foundation.

Reviewing the transcript of the interview in the fall of 1975, it was agreed to summarize a few portions rather than to present specific details about various individuals.

12 May 1976
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California/Berkeley

Interviewer-Editor
# Interview History

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# Index
Marjorie Elkus

Marjorie Louise Doran Elkus, a nationally known San Francisco social worker and a founder of the San Francisco Foundation, died Monday in Houston, where she had been visiting her daughter.

A native of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., she took her training in social work at the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1930, she moved to California and became state director of the Emergency Relief Administration, later serving as secretary of the Children's Council of the San Francisco Community Chest.


From 1940 to 1950 Mrs. Elkus was executive director of the Columbia Foundation, which financed many social welfare programs and causes. At her retirement, that foundation provided the original money for the San Francisco Foundation, a community oriented philanthropic organization.

She was a member of the board of the San Francisco Diabetes Association, the California Heritage Council and National Conference of Social Workers.

She is survived by her daughter, Mrs. Robert Jewett of Houston, by two grandsons and by three great-grandchildren.

Private memorial services are pending.
1. ORIGINS OF THE COLUMBIA FOUNDATION

Morris: I'm so glad that you are willing to tell us about your experiences as director of the Columbia Foundation here in San Francisco. Were you with the Foundation from its very beginning?

Elkus: Well, I'll tell you what happened. There was a family here in town that was prepared to give away a generous amount of money. I think the main mover in the thing was their lawyer, John Altman, who suggested a foundation as the way to do it. There was a large sum to start with, and then after that they expected there would be more from time to time, depending on the tax structure.

So, anyhow, they established the Foundation and we gave most of the first amount in about ten years. They had heard about me through the Community Chest. I was a secretary for the Children's Council of the Community Chest, and I had sat on a few boards. They heard about me, and they asked me if I wanted the job; and I said, of course I did.

Morris: This would be about when?

Elkus: This was about 1940. I have all that material somewhere, but I didn't dig it out of my desk. I can get you more exact dates if you want them.

Morris: Fine.

Elkus: I dig into my desk as seldom as possible! So, anyhow, they decided we would not have a large board of directors. As I recall, there were about four, including their lawyer. He was a very fine lawyer here and his time was valuable, so he couldn't give very much time to it. But he said: If ever the time comes that you find a deadlock, I will come and sit on it--the board. It was a very close relationship between us all, since we were such a small group.

The program was up to me; I had to establish a program. What we did was to get together one night; and I, in the meantime, had
Elkus: looked over the material from lots of foundations here in the United States, brochures from Carnegie and from Rockefeller and from others. I made a list, and that night I said, "Would these be of your interest?" That's how we established what we wanted to do. After I went through about 150 different categories, they said, "We'll leave the rest of it up to you. Anything you want to do, you may do."

Morris: What an opportunity!

Elkus: Wasn't it great? Of course, it was going to be a terrific responsibility, because I would have to make so many decisions.

Between us, we finally decided on about twenty-five different categories that we felt we could handle with justice, with just me for staff. They didn't want to enlarge the staff; they wanted it to be very intimate, and I was it. What I could handle, it was up to me to take on.

We pointed out a few things that strayed from that beaten path of what we thought we were going to do with the money—the choices they had—but nothing spectacular. If there was something unusual, we would go into it and talk about it in detail. One of the things they weren't particularly anxious to do was scholarships, but all of a sudden we were doing lots of them.

As soon as we were written up in the paper, the office was crowded, of course, with applicants. They would come and ask me what our fields were, and I would give them as brief an outline as I could. We wanted to be very, very impersonal and we wanted to be very simple.

Morris: Did the board members take an active interest in the Foundation, research any of the applications or things like that?

Elkus: No, they didn't do research. What they would do is raise questions at our meetings. If it had any link at all to anything the family knew about, the application was turned down, because of the feeling that they didn't want their friends to know they were connected with the Foundation.

Morris: I see.

Elkus: You see, San Francisco is a very, very tightly knit little family, this little city, and everybody knows everybody. (For example, I knew many of their friends socially. At that time I was married to Charles deYoung Elkus, Jr., and you couldn't ask him about a family he didn't know about.)

Even so, we didn't clamp down on very many categories. There was one other thing that they didn't want to do. [Pauses] I'll have
Elkus: to look. We sort of got a little bit of everything, and there were just a very, very few categories that we would say no to.

Morris: Who chose the name Columbia?

Elkus: Well, the family just decided to give it an anonymous name, a name that really nobody will be able to trace back.

Morris: That must have been hard for you.

Elkus: It was very, very hard. I felt I had to be so careful that it was as if we were working under a blanket. And, of course, everyone was very anxious to know about this big fund that had just been established and how it happened and all this and that. To keep a balance there was some job, believe me, because I'm a very outgoing person. I tell everything I know. [Laughs]

Anyhow, we managed to get that well under control, I think, after a while. But in the meantime, the war broke out--World War II--and people had to go to war, which meant that our meetings were very sparse at that time.

Morris: Were the applications fewer, too?

Elkus: No, they came in bales full. We were just absolutely swamped. I had become interested in a project establishing fellowships and scholarships for Latin Americans. We started that. We dealt with Sumner Welles at the State Department on that one.

Morris: Did you?

Elkus: Yes. That was an interesting thing. We were all ready to go on that when the war broke out, and all our men had to go. I forget what the other circumstance was.

Morris: How had you gotten interested in Latin American--?

Elkus: Well, we had a lot of people who were trying to establish something that would be useful as a community venture. We thought that if we brought up so many students to the United States and taught them our agricultural methods, maybe they could go back to their own country and establish those methods down there.

Morris: Who was it in the Bay Area that thought this would be a useful community venture?

Elkus: Robert Sproul was very interested in it, and so was Ray Lyman Wilbur, and we were going to be the catalyst. My board had already established fifty scholarships when the thing fell through because then, I think,
Elkus: we got into war or something. I forget what the circumstance was there.

Then I began to feel that this business of giving money away was too darn ephemeral for me, because it seemed to me that at any minute someone might change his mind or something could happen to one of the board or—the thing would break up.

Morris: When you were getting the exploratory committee together in 1947, that then set up the San Francisco Foundation, did you think that this might be a way to solve your concerns about the Columbia Foundation?

Elkus: That's right. That's exactly why I did it.

Morris: You had that in mind?

Elkus: Yes. As a matter of fact, that's just what we did. We handed everything over to them. I decided to retire; what was left of the board didn't want to take it on. One of them was very sick and wasn't able to have very much to do with it. He said he thought we ought to retrench. He said something about, "Well, I think it's time to wind up. Any time, Marjorie, you want to, it's all right with us."

So we did; we established the San Francisco, and we gave over whatever was left in our funds to them. And we talked with John—you see, John had never had any experience in welfare at all.

Morris: This is John May?

Elkus: John May, yes. We brought him into our office and he worked with me for a couple of weeks and got a little familiar with the ropes.

As soon as we were able to, which was about three months after we decided to do this, we had them established in Sacramento as a granting fund. We announced the Foundation early in 1948, and it wasn't too long before I decided it was over.* So that's the story of it. San Francisco has come into its own through us.

By then I had married Charles Elkus, Jr., and I was finding it very difficult to run the house and—

Morris: Was it a full time job to run the Foundation?

---

Elkus: Oh, yes. It was full time and a half, really. I never had a Sunday off, ever. You'd be surprised at the interest this thing created. People from all over the country heard about us and wanted to know what we were doing and how we went about it. At the beginning, it was really a touch-and-go thing because I had so little experience as a money-giver.

I had been with the Community Chest, and I knew how they distributed money. I knew that money had to come from the public to do this thing. My whole background was social welfare, so the Foundation was like a great, big, beautiful gift in my hands—now what can I do for social welfare with it? It was perhaps one of the most ideal and painless situations, because my recommendations were sustained all the way through.
2. PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Social Welfare Training in Philadelphia

Morris: You had had some experience with giving away money?

Elkus: I come from a fairly wealthy family myself, and my father was a very generous man. I had many times sat in on the meetings that he had at the house, of people wanting money and having him listen to their plea and granting. So it wasn't foreign to me at all to do this, although it was completely out, organizationally speaking. I'd never had any experience. I was just the secretary of the Children's Council.

Morris: What kinds of things did your father look for in deciding whether or not--

Elkus: Well, he was a manufacturer of a large lace factory.

Morris: In California?

Elkus: No, no. In Philadelphia. And what he did was, every month he would have his board, and it would sit down and talk about their help.

Morris: The employees?

Elkus: Yes, the employees. He never set up a foundation or anything like that, but he was a chairman of this little group, and they would just hand out money as they saw it needed. It was a very informal setting. There was no name to it, even. There was just John Doran, that's all. That was his name--John W. Doran's money. He was a very generous man, and he had a very nice idea.

Morris: Was this to employees as individuals--someone who had a sick child, or something like that?
Elkus: Yes, that's right. Something that happened to the men in the group of his employees.

Morris: Did he get involved at all in any kind of community services?

Elkus: Oh, yes. First of all—the first thing he did was to join the Army; he became a captain in the Army. And, secondly, he was on every board that you could imagine—the Salvation Army, the hospitals, of course. His mill also produced cotton batting. He would supply these hospitals with big bales of cotton for them; that was the Saint Mary's Hospital, and this was in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

Morris: That's interesting. Wasn't the whole textile business on the East Coast fairly badly hit when there were economic hard times in the twenties?

Elkus: I wouldn't know, because my father died very early in the game. So I wouldn't know that. My money came from an entirely different source. It was all trust money. So I don't know what happened to the business.

Morris: So you had that experience as a child from your father?

Elkus: Yes. Father would have his meetings at home. He had his cronies, who'd come up to the house and sit around and chat, and then they'd decide what they wanted to do. He had his own little private fund. It was never formalized, but it was just something that he did on his own.

Morris: Did he ever talk to you about this and say, "This is a good thing to do with your money"?

Elkus: In the family, we'd hear about it—at the dinner table, you know. He'd say, "This family is having a hard time," or "That family's having a hard time, and we'll see that the little boy gets an operation," or something like that. So it was conversation, but nothing that I could—I was very young. I think I was seven or eight when Pop did that.

Morris: Then how did you come to be involved in the Children's Council?

Elkus: I had graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in social welfare, under Scott Nearing.

Morris: How did you get from Pennsylvania to San Francisco?

Elkus: My brother was out here. What happened was, I had gotten married while I was in college, to a Harvard man, and then taken a year off when I had a baby. My father insisted that I go back and finish my training, which I did. It was a stiff course, believe me. You had
Elkus: to do real, honest-to-God field work, but I managed fine. Then I decided to come out and visit my brother, who was first vice-president of Blake, Moffit and Towne, which was (and is) one of the largest paper companies in California.

I really came out to settle things in my own mind as to whether or not I wanted a divorce. My brother thought I should cut the East out of my life completely.

Morris: Your brother's name?

Elkus: Edward A. Doran. So, after I had been here about two weeks, I decided that I did want a divorce. My brother was all for it, and he had a big house over in Berkeley; so my daughter, Jane, and I lived with him over there. We've got lots of memories. I don't think I've ever reviewed my whole life before in this way.

San Francisco Agencies in the 1930s

Elkus: So, anyway, I decided that I would have to work. I went down to see Kitty Felton, who was the head of Children's Agency at that time. I had no experience whatsoever--

Morris: Had you known her previously?

Elkus: No. But somebody told me about her--I think my brother. My brother was on a couple of boards here. He suggested we go in to see her, and I did. You see, I had no experience at all. She just liked me, and she said, "All right, we'll put you on the staff as a caseworker."

Morris: Well, you had social welfare training.

Elkus: Yes, but it's like day and night.

Morris: Is it?

Elkus: That's right. Yes, it's very, very different. In those days we didn't keep records, even. I didn't even know how to write a file and keep a record.

So, anyhow, she gave me a try at it for two months and was very well pleased. Naturally, she gave me a girl who was well experienced. She was in charge of me. I wrote my records properly and got all the information they wanted.
Elkus: I was in that job about one month after I was doing case-work. She said, "You're not going to do case-work any more. I'm going to put you inside. You're material for a desk job."

Morris: She was quite a pioneer herself, wasn't she?

Elkus: She was a great person. She was the head of the Children's Agency. In those days, the government was helping them. The thing that she wanted me to do was to be in charge of employment, because there was a casual employment fee given out to the recipients of welfare at that time. So she set up an office of employment, and I was head of that. I wasn't able to do case-work then, of course, because I had a terrific job. I had eighteen on my staff at that time, and I'd never had any experience at all. I tell you, I was green, absolutely green.

In the meantime, the government moved in--I mean, the state was helping us then.

Morris: This was the State Relief Administration?

Elkus: Yes. Then, all of a sudden, the federal government moved in, which meant another change. So at that particular time, then, I was upped again, and this time they made me personnel director for the whole relief administration employment service.

My sister, you know, was in welfare, too, but she died very quickly after she came out to California. After I came out, then my sister came out. When my father and mother died, my brother Ned took over as head of our family.

Morris: The whole family kind of came West.

Elkus: Yes. My sister had a very big job with the SRA. She was an assistant administrator of SRA.

Morris: Did you bring her into that?

Elkus: Through my friendships, yes. I referred her to different people. I think that's how that happened. She had more training than I did in social work, because she was older than I was. She was about three or four years older than I was, and she had had her training long before I did.

Morris: Would Florence Wyckoff have been on your staff?

Elkus: No, she was in the federal government office.

Morris: That's right. She was working with the camps, traveling around the state.
Elkus: That's right. I knew her--not well, but I knew her. Then, after that, Mr. Wollenberg, who was a very famous social worker here in San Francisco, became the head of it.

Morris: Charles Wollenberg was in charge of all the work projects and relief payments programs here in San Francisco County?

Elkus: At the same time. We were taken over by the state; then state funds ran out. Then the federal government moved in. So it was a combination of the two. The state helped, and the federal government did, too. And he administered the whole program.

Then what happened after that? I stayed with that, I think, about three years; and then after that--

Morris: It was early in 1941 that the relief program, per se, came to an end because employment was picking up.

Elkus: Could be. I'm a little hazy on that. I left before then. Anyhow, I decided I would retire. I was tired, and I was going to retire. One day I was sitting at my desk, and the telephone rang; it was a lawyer who knew my husband's family, the Elkuses, very, very well. He said, "I'd like to talk with you about a job."

And I said, "Well, I've got all the job I can handle right now." [Laughs]

But he said, "I want to talk with you." I went over to see him, and he told me that there was this money going to be distributed by this private family, and that they wanted a director, and that my name had been suggested, and he'd like them to meet me. He said, "As far as I'm concerned, I know you. I know your family very well, and I'd like you to meet them."

So they invited me over for dinner, and I met the family. I went over there for dinner, and we had a talk, and they told me what they had in mind. It was to be secret; no one was to know anything about it.

And so, I agreed to become the director.
3. FAMILY FOUNDATION PROCEDURES IN THE 1940s

Scholarships and University Guidance

Morris: I'd like to ask you in more detail about how you went about making grants.

Elkus: What we did was, as the applications came in I noted each one, and at each meeting I'd go down the list and I'd say, "Now, these are the things that came in since the last meeting. Are you interested?" And if they were interested in it, we'd defer to the applicant and bring them in for interviews.

Pretty soon we found that we were overwhelmed with the number of applicants, because the universities had found out about us; and, of course, they'd go around to a new foundation like nobody's business. Robert Sproul and Ray Lyman Wilbur were very helpful to me. They were both a very, very great influence. They thought, "Here's a girl just floundering in the dark, not knowing where she was," and I didn't. They said, "Well, we will help you as best we can." Of course, it was all in the interest of the universities—scholarships.

So we started giving away scholarships like mad, and at one time we had about twenty-five applications per meeting.

Morris: How often did you meet?

Elkus: Once a month. Most of the time, they would take my suggestions, because they would wait for my recommendations. I, in the meantime, had to interview the people, and a lot depended on what my impression was of this person, as to whether or not we'd give them the money. It was a terrific responsibility, but it was a very, very laudable kind of thing to happen, because I didn't feel that my hands were tied at any time. So then we concentrated on—that's how we got affiliated with so many universities at that time.

Morris: Was this primarily in California that you did make the gifts?
Elkus: No, we were free to do any place we wanted to. We had a large latitude. Anything we wanted, we could do. It was the most beautifully set up thing. It was casual, and at the same time it was hard on the director, because we had no warning signs as to whether or not—so many times, interviews would happen, and all of a sudden a cold damper would come at the meeting, and that's how I'd know they didn't like it.

Morris: The way that you felt about them, rather than anything they said?

Elkus: That's right. I'd just know, "They're going to decline this one." I'd know that because their questions would lead me to that conclusion.

We were completely flexible in our choosing. Nothing was really turned down because of what it was. We were wide open to any kind of a good deal that we thought was going to be helpful. Travel grants we didn't give, or anything of that kind. Primarily, we supported the institutions around San Francisco. We gave money to the University of California—a great deal to California—and to Stanford and Menlo Park, and to every institution that was reliable.

Morris: People from the institutions would come to you and—

Elkus: Yes. Somebody would say, "I need money for a scholarship, and I don't know where to go for it." They'd talk with whomever the person was in charge of that at the university, and if this person thought we would happen to be interested, she'd say, "I'm going to try and get this money for you. I'll see if we can't do it," to a promising student. Then they would contact us. The university itself would contact us; or, if a student was well known and had a fine reputation, he would bring that as a reference to these people, and that's all we needed.

We were very, very—I would say—liberal in our views, in that we trusted so many people, and we never had what you would call a failure. The entire time we were in business we didn't have one disappointment, not one.

Morris: Isn't that marvelous.

Elkus: Yes, it's marvelous, because most of the people you know in the foundation business are very wary of the public because they've been imposed upon, like everyone else who has any money. We didn't have one question of that in the entire time we were in business—ten years.

Morris: This would be true for agencies and organizations that—

Elkus: Well, we avoided giving money to agencies that were receiving money from the public. We didn't do that. Sometimes they would come up with a special project. For example, a children's agency would say,
"We would like to make a study of foster homes," with a certain category. Well, if this sounded reasonable, and their committee was stable, we would give them money for that.

The institutions were the ones who got least. Stanford got a great deal, and so did Cal, but that was only because we knew so many people out there, and they all came to us.

For projects that the university wanted to take on?

Right--sponsor. And Robert Sproul was marvelous. He would send me personal reports on all these, and then he'd say, "I'll take care of this, and you don't have to worry. The reports will be in on time."

For example, if we gave a three-year grant, the report would come in the moment it was due, with the accomplishments of the project up to that point.

How very efficient.

He was a very, very fine--in my book, he was great.

That's all you can go on, your own personal experience.

Yes. And, of course, Ray Lyman Wilbur was also fine. He would come in and sit down at my desk, and he'd say, "Now, I know you're not going to give us any money for this, but this is what I'd like to see done." And before he was finished, I was so enthusiastic I was ready to write up the project then.

Can you recall some of those things he came in to talk to you about?

That would have to take some thinking. He was always so constructive. I will tell you a little aside that was funny. I came down with a cold one time, and Ray Lyman came in. (My whole office was as large as this rug, and I had a desk and two chairs in it.) I was coughing and I couldn't stop it, and I was so irritated because I always liked to talk with him. So I said, "There's a drug store at the fifth floor upstairs. I'll go up and get some cough medicine."

So he said, "All right. I'll take all the calls that come in." [Laughter] When I came down, he had the phone over his desk and was writing down messages for me. He was just a great man.

I thought you were going to say he took your temperature and prescribed some medication. He was a physician, wasn't he?

Yes, he was. No, he didn't. I said, "I'll get some cough pills"--you know, those lozenges--"upstairs." He was such a darling man. I had
Elkus: such confidence in him. I mean, I could go to him and say, "I wonder about this. What do you think?" Or my philosophy would get sort of wrinkled up in spots, you know, and I'd say, "If you were doing this, how would you do it?" And he was always so helpful. Well, Sproul was, too.

Morris: In other words, you'd go to them to get another reading on a--

Elkus: If I had a question, and I wanted to have it settled in my own mind--because, you see, the responsibility was getting pretty hard on me at this time.

When we first started, we had ten applications, for the first meeting. The next, it jumped from ten to forty the next month. So you can imagine how we had gotten to be well known.

Evaluating Applicants and Proposals

Morris: What do you think are the important things to look for in distributing funds?

Elkus: First of all, you have to know your people very well. You have to know their spirit. You just don't know them as people; you have to know their spirit because, I'll tell you the truth, there are so many angles to giving away money and so many people--they think that money's going to cure all, and they haven't thought out their projects very well. In other words, it could be a self-interested kind of thing. It has happened in many, many cases.

So you have to be a discerner of character, and I think you have to almost be a psychiatrist to try and find out what the actual motives of people are who come and ask for money. Because sometimes they come to ask for money lightly. They just know that they'd like to have twenty thousand dollars, or they'd like to have fifty thousand dollars, and they haven't the details of why or what they want it for--haven't even thought it out. I don't think there were lots of people who were just looking for money for themselves.

Morris: Did people at that point write a proposal? You know, proposal writing has become a fine art.

Elkus: Yes, that's right.

Morris: And they did at that point?
Elkus: That's right.* Well, first of all, they'd ask for an interview. They'd try and find whether or not they were eligible. They'd come in, we'd have a talk, and if it sounded reasonable at all, I would give them an application blank. It was all very informal. It was on a sheet of paper which said something about, "Tell me a little of your background and what your purposes are, and why do you want to do this, and what your references are." Then, after that, I would take it on, and I would do the investigating. I had pretty good contacts. I knew the city pretty well, and I'd go to this or that one and the next one and say, "Let's have lunch, and we'll talk it over."

I'd note down the references and tell my board about--if I liked it. If it sounded phony to me, the board never saw it. I reported at the board that so many applications had been received, and "this is what they were and what they were for, and this is why they were turned down."

But we'd shuffle the list up, and then we'd have terrific agendas--my gosh, twenty, twenty-five requests every meeting.

Morris: Yes. In talking with the people who came in for the first time, did you find that sometimes while talking to you they could clarify what it was they wanted to do, and--?

Elkus: In other words, you're asking if I made it eligible for acceptance--yes. That has happened many times. There are people who are inarticulate when they're asking for money, and a little bit embarrassed. You'd be surprised. And they just don't know, and they're thinking out loud. They want to come out and say, "Well, this is so-and-so." And, you know, I've made so many projects eligible by just giving the right word.

Morris: Yes. And say, "If you did this, then that might happen, and that--"

Elkus: That's right. I could see what was needed, because I knew every need in the community, believe me I did, firsthand. So if I saw a possibility of this little piece of machinery being moved into this spot, that other possibility would come to an effect, and maybe we could have something.

Morris: What did you see as the kinds of needs in the community?

*See 1945 proposal from the Council for Civic Unity in Foundation Series papers. Ed.
Elkus: My dear, that would take twenty-five years to tell you. There are so many things that are needed, and refinements of ongoing jobs—things that are being done now, but could be expanded and could reach so many more people. But that would take a long time; I'd have to do a lot of thinking about it, because there is an excuse why they don't do this; they don't do it because they haven't enough money, and if they did have enough money, they don't have personnel—something like that. So that's a whole new subject. [Laughs]

Morris: Well, I think you summarized it very well. That's a very interesting statement in itself. Were there community groups of minorities and women and the kind of groups that have emerged in the last five or six years?

Elkus: Not anything like there are today. We had some interracial groups, but we didn't make a hobby of it. We supported the Negro fund, the—

Morris: The NAACP?

Elkus: Yes. We sent them contributions. We never put them on our books as applicants, and it was—

Morris: An operating fund kind of a gift?

Elkus: That's right.

Morris: Were organizations like the NAACP coming in with a kind of specific application—?

Elkus: An application or just a plain contribution. They could say, "Could you send—" knowing that we'd know something about the organization because they were so well known. They'd ask if we'd send a contribution, and many times we did.

Morris: But there weren't committees of Negroes or Japanese-Americans looking for—

Elkus: No. I'll tell you, we made a study with the University of California, very interesting, for the internment of the Japanese during the war. We did a four-year study on that. It was very, very well done, and we supported that for four years. That was when they were throwing them into the internment camp willy-nilly—you know, some of them honest-to-God citizens.

Morris: Did this UC study involve students going around to the camps during the internment?

Elkus: No. It was all paid staff. It was a paid staff. This study was made in the camps around California, and this doctor—what's her name? (I have no memory for names.) She did the study, and she did a magnificent—
Elkus: I have the report somewhere in my files over there, but I don't know where they are. But that was a very interesting thing. We worked with the government on it towards the end, but everyone was very interested in that.

Morris: In other words, people on the staff went 'round to the camps during the years that the--

Elkus: I don't know what their method was; I really don't. We gave the money to the university, to this department, and she ran the study. I think we supported it for three or four years.

Morris: That should be in the files at the university.

Elkus: I would think so, yes.

Morris: Did you tend to find that there were organizations that you continued to support, who would finish one project and then come up with another interesting--

Elkus: Well, yes. We had that experience, but I'll tell you what we said to them. For example, if a project came in that looked as though it was for a long-term thing like three or four years, then what we would do would be to say, "We're not going to say that we'll give it to you for three years, but what we will do is at the end of the first year, you bring in your report. If we like it, we'll consider a second year," or a third year, whichever it happened to be, but we never went beyond three years.

Morris: What about if they came back a couple of years later with something else?

Elkus: Something else that was good? We would consider it. Because we did by this time have experience as to whether they were good administrators and whether they deserved a second grant or a second kind of grant. Yes, we've done that many times.

Morris: Did you ever talk to other foundations about each foundation putting up part of the money for--

Elkus: No, we never combined funds.

Morris: Were there other foundations in the Bay Area that were at all visible?

Elkus: No, I don't know one. There were only three--Rosenberg, San Francisco, and the Columbia. That's it.

Morris: There seems to have been a great spurt in the 1960s. Now there is a directory of California foundations.
Elkus: Yes, I know. Well, now, of course, their tax structure has changed so radically that it gives a lot of wealthy people an opportunity to do this—to put their money into a foundation if they want to—and I think this is on the up—that business is on the up.

Morris: Yes. It's interesting that for so long there were just a few, and I'm trying to put my finger on when the spurt came.

Elkus: I really can't—sorry.

Morris: If you don't remember it, then it was after you resigned and ceased to be active.

Site Visits and Other Opinions

Morris: I've been told that Mrs. Ganyard at the Rosenberg Foundation used to go out—not only interview people in her office, but she used to go out in the field and see what was going on in some of the--

Elkus: She did it. I did, too. You go to the home spot and see what's happening. I've done that many times. Leslie did, too. It gives you a warmer feeling. If you come back to your board and say, "I saw this with my own eyes"—because sometimes the boards are very, very reluctant to just give you a stock "yes" or "no." They'll say, "We'd like to know a little bit more"—if they're interested at all—"a little bit about the personnel connected with these things, and what was your impression of him as a person?" That carried a lot of weight with them.

Morris: Was it usually a staff person or somebody from the board that would come in to see whether or not they might be eligible?

Elkus: Oh, it was always the head, usually the president of the organization.

Morris: Of the board?

Elkus: Yes.

Morris: When you sent out on the spot, did you talk to the whole board, or did—?

Elkus: No, I'd talk to the person I had contact with. I never really dug into the if's, and's or but's, or getting the opinion of this one or that one. Sometimes you'd get a very different approach. I'm thinking in particular of a visit I made to Menlo Park, with the Shriners. They had a beautiful set-up down there, and the head of the Shriners department down there was very cooperative. She wouldn't ask for money. She would simply say, "These are things that we could do if we had the money." If you had the
Elkus: money and you felt inclined to do it that way, you'd give the money. But, unfortunately, we didn't ever give any money to them because we knew they were very rich.

Morris: So you would look more for things with less--

Elkus: Individuals, and who seemed to have a promise. If they had a promise, or if they seemed to, then what we'd do would be to simply—if we were not sure, we'd put it on ice for a while. Then we'd give some thought to it. I'd put it on ice and I'd think about it. Then I'd talk with different people who were affiliated in some way with it, and I'd ask their opinion as to what they thought, and I'd get as many opinions as I could before I'd go to my board. In other words, the applications that actually came to the board were well scrutinized and documented by very, very fine opinions. Because you can't be all-knowing for every project. So the ones that I wasn't sure about, I'd make an effort to see those different, surrounding people that the board had confidence in.

Morris: When you say "surrounding people," do you mean people involved in the organization?

Elkus: Well, yes, and who would probably know about--either were affiliated with it or at one time were affiliated with it, but would have some knowledge of it--some first-hand knowledge of it.

Grant Funds and Project Results

Elkus: You see, we felt that every cent we gave away—this was charity money, and it had to register something. It just wasn't flighty money. We wanted results. If the director would come in and say, "I think if we get this money, we can do such—and such a job, and this is what we're aiming for," then that was what we were aiming for, too. But if it was one of these rather casual kinds of things—that "it would be nice if I had fifty thousand dollars; I'd do this or that or the other," you know. [laughs]

Morris: One of the debates that seems to be going on now is whether or not a foundation with limited funds should put money into buildings—"bricks and mortar" they call it. Did this discussion—

Elkus: That never came up with us. We didn't build anything while we were there. You see, we had just so much a year to give away. Now, one year we had a very small budget. At the first of the year, I'd be told how much we're going to get this year; and one year, I think we had
$250,000, and that was all we were going to have to last us the whole year. Our budgets used to run $500,000—half a million, something like that. So we'd have to plan very, very carefully. We'd scrutinize everything that came in to us. Every cent had to count.

Morris: If you were given an indication in January that you were going to have so much money for the whole year, did you divide it by twelve and do so much a month?

Elkus: No, I didn't. It was all inspirational, and if it was something we knew we wanted to do that was more than we had money for, the board would give me the money for it.

Morris: They could go into capital and do that?

Elkus: Yes.

Morris: How often would they do that?

Elkus: Two or three times. We didn't do it too often. Projects usually stand on their own merits. If they couldn't get it from us they'd say: Would you mind if we went to another foundation to get the balance?

I'd say: No, go ahead.

Morris: Did you have any sense of how many of them continued as projects?

Elkus: I had a report on that, and I was so pleased about—I can't give you the exact figures, but I know that was a very, very enlightening kind of thing. Some of them, you see, are terminal to start with. They'll tell you.

Morris: They're set to do a specific job with a beginning and an end?

Elkus: That's right, and it'd be over. But those that we set up, I can't begin to tell you how many are still going.

Morris: Oh, that's interesting. Who did the study for you?

Elkus: Well, it was no study at all. I mean, if they're still in business, we know they're going on.

Morris: But you said that at one time there was a study, or you did this yourself?

Elkus: I think I have an outline of those that were still operating, but I don't know where that is, and I couldn't begin to tell you now.
Morris: Well, I'm interested in your deciding that it would be useful to see how many of these were still going.

Elkus: Yes, well, that's out of my line now. I don't know.

Morris: Do you recall how they went about continuing their funding so that they--

Elkus: Well, you see, most of the projects held within themselves the possibility of carrying on. When they'd say to us, "Now we want seed money for the first three years," we'd know that they're active. "This is what will happen. We're going to go out for memberships, we're going to go out for this, we're going to go out for that, and we think we will be self-sustaining at that point."

Morris: And your sense is that a good number of them were?

Elkus: Yes, a lot of them did. A lot of them were very successful. That was one of the requirements we'd ask them—what their possibilities were of being supported after we stopped; and they would make an effort to see that they were getting support.

Morris: We talked earlier about scholarships being an important part of the Columbia Foundation's work. Have you got any kind of guess as to how much of the granting was in scholarships and how much was program kinds of things?

Elkus: I'd have to look through the reports. No, I wouldn't have any idea, but I think that almost every meeting we gave a scholarship away. It seemed to me we did. I'm not sure. I'd rather not speculate.

Morris: And that continued all through the time that it was an active, independent operation?

Elkus: That's right.

Morris: Has the scholarship program continued since it's been part of the San Francisco Foundation?

Elkus: I don't know. It was turned over to San Francisco, the whole operation was. We gave them our last report of everything we had approved, and they could pick anything they wanted out of it. If they wanted to use any of our material, they could then. We'd turned over the files to them so that they'd see if they wanted to use any of it.

Morris: Did your board give any kind of instructions as to what they wanted done with the money?
Elkus: No, that whole administration was to go over—they liked the program of the San Francisco Foundation; they liked the grants that they gave and had full confidence that they would be able to use the money.

Do you know the new director of the San Francisco--?

Morris: Martin Paley. I've met him a couple of times.

Elkus: I don't know him.

Morris: He seems a very able young man. He's worked in community organizations, and he's had experience in management studies and this kind of thing.

Elkus: That's very good. I hope that goes, because that was my baby. [Laughter]

Morris: I should think he'd be pleased to meet you. You should call him up.

Elkus: I would want to go to see him one day.

Morris: My impression is that he has made a real effort to make himself known in the community and to pick up ideas from everyone he meets.

Elkus: One day I'll take my hat in my hand and I'll do that. John May and I are still very good friends, and I see him quite often, and I'll go with John one day. Maybe we'll have lunch downtown together.
4. STARTING THE SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION, 1947-8

Morris: Would you tell me a bit more about the beginning of the San Francisco Foundation? Its first press release [January 17, 1948] says the exploratory discussions went on for about a year.*

Elkus: I realized that there was a great deal of money in this town that was not being used. So I decided we should establish another foundation. This would be an entirely different one than ours. This would be more of a civic group, and we called that the San Francisco Foundation.

So I went out and I got myself a board together, of very, very fine people here. We'd meet for luncheon and we'd sit down and talk about what we would do if we had all this money—we had found out there were several million dollars sitting in banks, waiting to be distributed, to give away.

Morris: People had left this for community purposes?

Elkus: For charity purposes. So we asked ourselves: how are we going to get this money distributed, and what are the policies? Well, we sort of figured it out in our minds; I led the group in saying what I thought the administrative situation should be and how I thought the rules should run.

So then we had—Dan Koshland was on the board, and Parmer Fuller, and we had Leslie Ganyard, who was running Rosenberg at that time.

Morris: Leslie was on that first, exploratory committee?

Elkus: Yes.

Morris: Was Mrs. McLaughlin involved at that point?

*See Foundation Series papers.
Elkus: We asked her, but she couldn't take it. She was involved with something else that was going to be contrary to our views. So she couldn't take it. She wanted to be on it very badly, but we only had a very small--

I want to tell you about the man that we sent East, because we didn't have any community funds out here at that time. So we sent him back to Boston to check with their community trust. His name was—oh, gosh—Gardner Bulles. He went back East and we paid his expenses to explore the Cleveland and Boston. He came back with a glowing report. He said; "If you people don't do this, you're just missing out on a first rate chance, because," he said, "this is a marvelous thing to do." He even thought it was better than our foundation, because it was more liberal.

So we established it, and the first thing, we made Dan Koshland our chairman. Parmer Fuller had to resign before the thing was completed, but Dan was our chairman. Then it was time to get a director. So we got a very nice fellow by the name of John May. He became the director of the Foundation, and he established the rules. That is, we gave him an outline of what we thought it should be, and we were very liberal in our thinking. We thought: he'll have a wide range to do as he pleases on it. He'll take it to us for confirmation.

He worked out a very satisfactory—he's just recently resigned, but he babied it, right from the very beginning, and was very successful on it. Their recent report I read is—I think they have something like twelve million dollars in reserve. They have a terrific amount of money.

Morris: They have, yes.

Elkus: You see, the idea is that when people want to give away money, and they'd like it to be sort of personal, at the same time they don't care about it being so personal that their names will be connected with it; what they'll do is have a bank hold it in trust.

Morris: How did you discover that there were several million dollars sitting in the banks, waiting to be distributed?

Elkus: Well, of course, our whole board of directors was on the board of directors of banks. [Laughter] So they would know. They would come back and they'd tell me, "There's such, and we got a gift of so much in trust." They all agreed that it was no secret. Everyone knew there was so much money to be distributed in trust.

Morris: Did they have any ideas as to why, since the money had been left for public charities, it had never been distributed?
Elkus: Well, they didn't have a piece of machinery. See, we were the first piece of machinery that came out and opened the door. We opened the door, and then the banks fell in line. It was a very fine out for the banks.

Morris: Yes, I can see that. It's not their normal--they have plenty to do with running a bank.

Elkus: That's right. And they don't have any trained workers. In addition to being a social worker, you have to have a little experience in giving away money.

Morris: Were there other people considered when the San Francisco Foundation was looking for its first director?

Elkus: I really don't know.

Morris: Had you known John before then? He was a Stanford man.

Elkus: No, I didn't. No, I knew he was Stanford, but I forget which one of the Koshlands was interested in him.

I was surprised that he decided to retire, because he seemed so young to me always.

Morris: Perhaps working with young people and people with new ideas keeps the juices flowing.

Elkus: That's right.
5. CHARLES ELKUS, SR.: COMMUNITY LEADER'S INTERESTS AND INFLUENCE

1937 San Francisco Children's Study

Morris: At what point did you become acquainted with Charles Elkus, Sr.?

Elkus: I'd have to look at the records for that. I was married to his son for twenty-five years when we got our divorce [1961].

Morris: You knew him before you knew his son?

Elkus: Oh, yes. I was working on this committee I told you about--this very wonderful committee that was established on child welfare--and he was chairman of this committee. I used to meet out at his house with the full meetings, and that's how I got to know his son.

Morris: Now, this is different from the job you had, either with the Children's Agency or in the employment--?

Elkus: You see, I resigned from the Children's Agency to take the job with the state; that's when Wollenberg was my boss. I was the--oh, I know: Charlie Wollenberg went to Europe, and I was running the relief administration while he was gone [laughs].

Morris: That sounds like a story in itself.

Elkus: It was a terrific job. By then, I decided I'd had enough of all social work and that I wanted to go out of it completely. I heard of Charlie Elkus's committee, which was child welfare, and since this was my field, I thought that I would be very good at it.

So I went to Charlie, and became the secretary of this Community Plan for Children's Welfare. I became the secretary of that, and it was from the secretary of that that I married his son. And from that, the Columbia Foundation--

Morris: Evolved out of that.
Elkus: That's right.

Morris: What were the ideas of that Community Plan for Children's Welfare?

Elkus: The Community Chest decided that the children's program in this city was in bad shape, that the foster homes needed to be investigated, the adoption thing had to be investigated, and the thing for them to do was to get a committee of fine representative citizens of the community together. That committee wrote what was known as A Community Plan for Child Welfare. That was Mildred Prince, Ruth Turner, Dr. Langer, with a list of casual experts ex officio. And then Ruby Bacigalupi, whose husband was a lawyer in Charlie, Sr.'s office, and several other representative leaders.

We met every Monday night. After office, we'd all have dinner downtown. We met at the New City Club. We met for two and a half years and then finally wrote the report. I have the report of that somewhere around here.

Morris: I'd like to see that. [The introduction to that study, written by Charles Elkus, Sr., is in the Foundation Series papers.]

Elkus: Well, I think I can dig it out today. I'm not sure, but I think I can.

[Sounds of objects being moved around. Tape turned over; side 2 begins.]

Morris: I'm delighted that you could lay hands on this community plan because--let me just check and see. Katharine Felton was on that committee, too.

Elkus: Yes. She was the leader of the whole thing. She was the one who instigated the study. She knew Charlie, Sr.; he was on her board at one time, and he had a great faith in her. He wanted to discover what was wrong with our children's program. So she was very instrumental in having changes made here.

Morris: This community plan is dated 1937, which would be the year that the Rosenberg Foundation was making its first grants.

Elkus: Yes, that's right. It was towards that end of it. As a matter of fact, I was recommended for the job as director of the Rosenberg Foundation, but we weren't finished with this report, so I couldn't take the job.

Morris: That must have been a very hard decision to make.

Elkus: It was, because I've been very interested in fund distribution. I worked on lots of drives in the East where I was in college, and I've
Elkus: always had a special interest in it—the fairness of how they give away money.

Morris: Tell me a little more about Charles Elkus, Sr. What kind of a person was Mr. Elkus?

Elkus: He was the most liberal-minded man I've ever known in my life, and he was thoroughly good. Business during the depression was lousy in every—and the law business particularly, and he was still very, very active in the Community Chest, was always on committees of some kind or another. Then, when he got his ire up about the children, of course, that was just up his alley, because he loved children.

He went to Rae Smith, who was the head of the Community Chest at that time, and said that he thought a study should be made of the whole children's field. And, of course, having made the suggestion, he was it. [Laughter] He was chosen right then and there.

Morris: That seems to happen frequently!

Elkus: So the board of directors of the Chest took him on and said, Charlie, you can have support—I think for three years they gave him—

Morris: They funded it?

Elkus: They funded it, yes. We had several girls from the University of California who were secretaries before I took it on. Then there was a fight of some kind. I forget who the girl was who had—she was a very nice girl. Not Frances Kahn. Frances was also secretary at one time, but there was the one who had it when I got it. I don't know what her name was. Anyhow, she had got into a brawl with one of the members of the committee and told her off, and, of course, finally got fired. She was fired, and then I got the job as secretary.

Morris: You went through the whole field of children's services?

Elkus: I was the head of the Children's Council at that time, and so I was familiar with all the program, and I knew it needed repair.

Morris: Now, the Children's Council—was this agency executives who met together?

Elkus: The Council was a group of people who were in children's work—professional social workers, primarily, who were in social work and were interested in the program to see that it was always kept in order; and it was in very bad shape.

Morris: And kept contact between the agencies going, that kind of thing?
Elkus: That's right, yes. The Community Chest was the hub. There was a Children's Council and there was a Teenage Council, and there were eight or nine other recreation and group work councils. They were all within the Community Chest.

Morris: When the study was done, did you include education, the public schools and things like that?

Elkus: We got into that, yes. We had a representative from the school department on our committee, on Charlie, Sr.'s committee. So when we established this, the Chest put away $300,000, I believe, for the sponsoring of this committee, because it was a very large committee, and it was costing lots of money. Rae Smith was the head of the Chest at that time, and I think he was resentful because Charlie seemed to be such a planner, and he was always in conflict with him. There was a fight going on all the time between Rae and Charlie.

Morris: Was Rae the president of the Council, or was he the executive?

Elkus: He was the executive director.

Indians and Other Concerns

Morris: How did Mr. Elkus come to be interested in the American Indians and in the Mexican-Americans?

Elkus: Life was a personal thing with him from the time he was a little boy. He became very interested in Indians—I think the first trip he took to the Southwest was when he was about eighteen or nineteen years old. He went alone, and he lived with the Indians. He knew them very well, and he knew their culture and everything about them. You'd get Charlie talking about Indians, he wouldn't shut up. He would just go on and on and on. It was part of his life.

Morris: Isn't that interesting.

Elkus: Yes. He was a very great man.

Morris: Did he have a part in setting up the California Indian council?

Elkus: Yes, I think so. I think when business got going, when they started taking the younger boys in—Tad Bacigalupi and Charlie, Jr.—I think they decided to retrench their community activities because of their getting older and they couldn't give that amount of time to it.

Morris: In his law firm?
Elkus: Yes. I don't think that they used to be interested in it. He was interested in Indians. He did an awful lot for them, and he protested a lot of restrictive legislation that--I'll tell you who: Ickes was his best friend.

Morris: Harold Ickes?

Elkus: Harold Ickes, yes. He used to do private deals with Ickes. He thought, "Charlie, we ought to do this;" or, "We ought to do that." And they would do it.

Morris: [Laughs] That's marvelous. And he was also interested in the legislative side of these social issues?

Elkus: Oh, yes. He was very prominent in exercising his knowledge in that, too. He got a lot of things through law practice that you couldn't do otherwise, and he did it for free. He was a very, very great man.

Morris: Was he a Democrat, politically?

Elkus: No, he was a Republican.

Morris: He was? That's interesting, because Mr. Ickes was in Franklin Roosevelt's cabinet.

Elkus: Yes, I know, but I'm sure Pop was a Republican. I'm sure he was.

Morris: I'm interested in people's motivations for getting involved in community service at this level, and I wonder if he ever expressed this as a philosophy, or that with him it was a matter of this being what he liked to do?

Elkus: It was just a personal thing with him--very, very personal. He never got five cents' worth of any extra kind of interest, excepting for--well, to satisfy him, for children. He had no encompassing kind of love for children and what was right and wrong. He wasn't a pushover of any kind. He wasn't the kind that would say, "We'll give it to the children, just because they're children." He would go right into it. He'd say, "Let's figure this one out." He has spent hours and hours talking and debating about what was good practice and what wasn't good practice for children. He was the most marvelous man I've ever known.

#Mr. Elkus was chairman of the state Commission on Juvenile Justice in the 1940s, appointed by Governor Earl Warren. Ed.
Early Days of the Rosenberg Foundation

Morris: Do you think that the results of the children's study perhaps influenced Mr. Elkus in the kinds of grants he thought might be most effective, when he went on the board of the Rosenberg Foundation?

Elkus: Well, he was very interested in the children's phase of the Rosenberg Foundation. At one time, I think he was a little bit worried for fear that the rest of the board would think that he was biased, but he went on just the same, and anything he thought was needed he would talk to them about. He was very liberal in his thoughts about children. Anything that children wanted, he would think it out very, very well, and if it were in the cards, he would do it.

Morris: Did you and Mr. Elkus ever talk about the founding of the Rosenberg Foundation and what his idea--he wrote the document, didn't he, that set up--?

Elkus: Yes. I was named for that job, but I couldn't take it because I was in the midst of this study with Charlie, Sr. They asked a lot of my ideas. They asked me to send them an outline of what I thought the program should be. The Rosenberg--I forget what his name was.

Morris: Max.

Elkus: Max, that's right. Max.

Morris: The document that sets up the Foundation has a very broad outline. The emphasis on children and youth that has made their reputation didn't seem to emerge for some time, and I wondered if--

Elkus: It changed drastically towards the end, and Leslie Ganyard--did you know Leslie?

Morris: No; I wish I had.

Elkus: Oh, she was a marvelous person. She was the most sensible, down-to-earth person I know. She wasn't what you call a visionary. She didn't have very much in her inner visions, but she had such practical knowledge on how to do things. She knew exactly how to approach a project and what you'd need to make it successful; and she would never, never recommend a project unless she knew that it was going to be staffed properly. She was in personnel, you know, at the university at one time. She was very fond of that job at Rosenberg.

Morris: How did she and the Rosenbergs get together when the Foundation--?
Morris: Through Pop [Charles, Sr.]. Through the League of Women Voters. My mother-in-law was very prominent in the League of Women Voters when Leslie was a secretary down there. She got to know Leslie, and one night when Pop came and said that they were looking for a secretary, she said, "Well, what about Leslie Ganyard? She is so fine." And that's how she got the job.

Elkus: That's interesting that they thought of it as a secretary, rather than as an administrative job.

Morris: Yes. She was just a secretary. I happened to have the title of director. But she was just a secretary because Pop had it in his hands, and he was selfish on this. He wouldn't let anyone take anything away from him, and he was chairman of this Rosenberg—they put Pop on the board right after it was started. They didn't seem to be very interested—more as if: we have money to give away; let's give it the best way we know how. Charlie Elkus knows about it, so let him do it.

Charlie was the chairman of the board for so long. Then Mrs.—her husband's a lawyer here.

Morris: Caroline Charles? She went on the board in 1948.

Elkus: I believe it was Charles. She got terribly interested in it, and started setting up—and I think she was chairman at one time.

Morris: Yes. She was chairman just recently—1973, I think. Eleanor Sloss Anderson was the first woman to be chairman of that—president of that board.

Elkus: I didn't know Eleanor Sloss.

Morris: Then I think it sort of rotated for a while. Mr. Elkus was chairman for so long that I think after he was no longer around it took them a while for any one person to—

Elkus: Yes. I'm kind of vague on anything that happened at that particular point, because that's when I resigned from the Columbia Foundation, and that's when I was starting to have trouble with my husband, and I sort of withdrew from all activities.

Morris: Did you know Leslie before—?

Elkus: Oh, I knew her very well.

Morris: Before she went to Rosenberg?

Elkus: Yes. She's an old, old friend, and a good friend—was a good friend.
Morris: Did you and she ever talk about the kinds of applications that were coming across your desks?

Elkus: Oh, we swapped information all the time, all the time. If I had a question about a certain character who had come in, she'd say, "Lay off. Just take your hands off of it." [Laughs] And I'd do the same for her.

Morris: Were there many that you would feel this way about?

Elkus: No. We had very few. We had one in particular, who was a man in Chinatown—he was a Caucasian living in Chinatown—who wanted to develop a school for the training of the Chinese and the Japanese—an interracial school, or whatever you want to call it. But he was so phony. He was such a phony. The minute he opened his mouth, you knew the answer was "no." [Laughs]

Morris: Oh, dear. Did you find that many people sent applications to both the Columbia and the Rosenberg?

Elkus: We had an item on our application blank that asked the question: Have you applied with other foundations? If so, which ones? We always asked that because we wanted to know whether they were shopping around or not.

Morris: Does that help or hinder?

Elkus: If the answer came back that they'd applied to many, then we would give it back to them. We'd say that if they were already on file with so many other foundations, we couldn't take it; because we have so many active ones that have no other affiliation that we would just take care of them. So they could just regard themselves as out.

Morris: There was a young woman who was a member of the family on the Rosenberg board, too. Louise Rosenberg Bransten?

Elkus: Yes, that was—the family's money.

Morris: She was a niece of Max Rosenberg's, I believe.

Elkus: Yes, that's right. She had been raised at Smith College, and she had a very liberal point of view.

Morris: It's interesting that many families who make a lot of money also feel an obligation to turn some of it back to the community.

Elkus: That's right. Well, Pop was responsible for that—Charlie Elkus. He was their lawyer. And there was Emilie Oppenheimer. She was a sister-in-law of the Rosenbergs.
Morris: I wondered if she was Max's sister?

Elkus: That's right. Pop would interest her in a lot of things. They would just discuss things because he was so prominent in the Chest. He was on every committee in the Chest, and he'd come home and talk it over with the family. They'd always have company, every night, for dinner, and most of the time—like, Rosenbergs would be out there for dinner, and he would express himself; and he expressed himself so well, in terms of logic, you could understand exactly what he meant. I'll tell you, I can't get done talking about my father-in-law.

Morris: He sounds like he was a marvelous man to have known.

Elkus: He was just superb, absolutely. If Charlie had been alive, our personal differences would never have been allowed to go. Because he was the kind of man who could talk in such a vein that you'd say to yourself: Well, maybe I'm making a mistake in doing this.

Morris: He was good at helping people find common grounds?

Elkus: Yes. He was great.

Morris: One more question—about Ruth Chance, when she came to the Rosenberg Foundation in 1958. Had you known her?

Elkus: I had never met her. I've only seen her twice in my whole life. I was trying to think—when they were looking for someone—I asked Leslie, that's right. Leslie said a lot. Leslie said she was a good person. But I don't know much about her.

Morris: She doesn't talk about herself very much. However, she was on the State Board of Social Welfare.

Elkus: She was?

Morris: You mentioned Ruby Bacigalupi earlier, who was also on the State Board of Social Welfare. I wondered if, possibly, this had had some bearing on people's acquaintance with Mrs. Chance.

Elkus: I don't know, because Ruby isn't the kind who makes friends like that. She doesn't connect one with another. I wonder if she's still alive? I don't know.
Morris: I was going to ask the same question.

Elkus: I don't know whether she is or not. I know that her son, who is a partner in my husband's office, has been sick for a long, long time (I never hear from him)—that's Tad, Jr. That was the only contact I had.

Morris: Have you had any continuing contact with philanthropy or the foundations in the Bay Area since you retired?

Elkus: Well, the San Francisco. I'm very well informed on that one. Rosenberg, since Mrs. Chance was there, I don't know a thing about—since Leslie died, I'll put it that way, I don't.

Morris: In the foundation directory I found an Elkus Foundation, and I wondered if that was—

Elkus: That's just a little family thing that's very, very small. I've never even heard of it—I mean, any details of it.

Morris: It's more a personal thing, rather than grant-making?

Elkus: Yes. I think a lot of people are setting up these foundations because of the tax structure. I think a lot of them are doing it, although I hadn't heard about this until recently—the Elkus one.

Of course, there's a very wealthy branch of our family—we're not the wealthy Elkuses. But the wealthy Elkuses live down in Hillsborough. That's Dick and Eugene, and they're brothers. I think that they have set up something.

Morris: I think I've covered all my questions. You've been very patient with me. Are there things you'd like to add to this philanthropy story?

Elkus: Is this for a report that you're going to write?

Morris: The interview will be transcribed and then, after you've approved it, the manuscript is deposited in The Bancroft Library as a research document. Over the years, we hope to cover the important aspects of life in the Bay Area. So that people in the future, writing histories—

Elkus: I think that's needed here.

Morris: There are so many really fine people who have done so many things—

Elkus: In the East, it's all over the place. Everybody knows everything that's going on in every agency. They are lots more informed than they are out here.
Morris: Well, we're trying to catch up. [Laughs]

Elkus: That's fine.

Morris: I do thank you. You've added a lot to the story.

Elkus: Not at all. I hope I haven't confused you.

[End of Interview]

Interviewer-Editor: Gabrielle Morris
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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND PLANNING: CONTINUITY OF VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

An Interview Conducted by
John R. Jacobs

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Dorothy Erskine was interviewed on tape in 1971 by John Jacobs, then executive director of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association, to provide a narrative account of the history of SPUR for the organization's membership. These conversations with one of the founders of SPUR provided such a valuable citizen-eye view of the evolution of the concept and practice of public planning, from the advent of low-income subsidized housing in the late 1930s to regional organizations for maintaining a balance between environmental preservation and economic development in the 1970s, that the Regional Oral History Office obtained permission to include a transcript of them in its study of the impact of philanthropic foundations on the life of the Bay Area.

Although Mrs. Erskine did not discuss the financial side of these voluntary planning associations, the Rosenberg Foundation in 1940 had granted four thousand dollars to the Planning and Housing Association for "partial support of a new citizens' group to coordinate community planning and serve as a clearing house for information," and during the 1950s the San Francisco Foundation made a series of grants to SPUR for the development of neighborhood associations throughout the city to broaden the base of community decision-making. She did note, however, that in starting these planning and preservation organizations, the initial support was from individuals, including such notable philanthropists as Martha Gerbode and Caroline Livermore; and that the impetus for each successive stage of concern for the physical aspects of life in the Bay Area came from a small group of people, usually working closely with and receiving inspiration from talented professional planners.

Undaunted after more than thirty years as a consistent and dedicated advocate of informed citizen participation in city and regional planning, and a provider of leadership to grant-makers as well as elected officials, she insisted, "It's the crises that educate us... Fighting these battles you begin to develop a sense of a team with different new people willing to join." [p. 134]

Three short interviews were recorded in the spring of 1971 in SPUR's board meeting room. Following the Regional Oral History Office's request to include the interview in the Foundation Series, both Mr. Jacobs and Mrs. Erskine reviewed the transcript. Mrs. Erskine added several passages,
noted in the text, to bring some specifics of regional planning up to date and concluded, "This overview serves to strengthen our morale to go on to the next stage... Land use is a resource, not a commodity subject to speculation... Once again a case of David and Goliath."

Editor

15 March 1976
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California/Berkeley
[Date of Interview: 5 April 1971]

1. CITY PLANNING IN SAN FRANCISCO

1938 Survey of Chinatown Slums

Jacobs: Okay, Dorothy, let me just ask you some general questions. When did you first really develop a desire or an appreciation for preserving some of the open spaces that we have in San Francisco and, indeed, in the world?

Erskine: Well, actually, John, it never began with open space, you know. It began with slums, as far as I was concerned. That's where I began.

Jacobs: When did this occur?

Erskine: It was way, way back in 1938, when the national legislation for public housing had gone through in Washington, and they had to have—

Jacobs: The date is April 5, 1971. My name is John Jacobs. I'm executive director of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association, and we have with us this morning Mrs. Morse Erskine, known by perhaps ninety percent of San Franciscans as Dorothy Erskine, who has been with SFUR (the acronym of our organization) for many years.

We're going to discuss with Mrs. Erskine this morning, in a chronological sequence, the successes and failures (more success than failure, I'm certain) of individuals acting together to protect, shall we say, the livability of San Francisco, to make the task of just simply living in an urban environment a possibility in the face of an increasing population and environmental disadvantages that occur through this increase in population.

Jacobs: Dorothy, you've told me on a number of occasions that your first introduction to the San Francisco housing and planning scene began in 1938. Can you tell me specifically what happened then?
Erskine: Well, John, more than history, I think what is interesting here is the affect on certain individuals of working together. It not only, perhaps, benefits a city, but it certainly benefits each person taking part in this effort.

What I would like to do, in telling you about the history of what was then the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association, is to overcome this feeling that so many people have: "Well, what can I do? I am helpless and unimportant." I think that the result of the work over the last, let's say, twenty-five or thirty years proves how extraordinarily effective every single individual can be who takes part in a common purpose of this kind. That is what really interests me more than the sheer history, but the history points it up.

Now, give me a question, and we'll start from there.

Jacobs: As soon as you begin to mention people, then I guess you ought to name names and places and what brought you together and what the circumstances of being brought together resulted in. What did you do? Who were the people?

Erskine: Well, to begin at the beginning, then, Alexander Meiklejohn was in San Francisco in 1938, and a couple of people--

Jacobs: Who was he?

Erskine: He was a very noted educator, who had pioneered in certain forms of innovative college organization, in Wisconsin, I think. In any case, he was in San Francisco that winter, and formed a kind of economic study group. This was privately financed, but among the things that were done was a survey of Chinatown by about eighteen people who signed up.* Among those were Martha Gerbode. That is where I first met her, and it's interesting to know that she's still going strong and more than going strong in influencing the developments here in San Francisco. [1975 note: Martha has since died.]

However, in this survey of Chinatown, which was the first that--

Jacobs: Can you remember the names of anybody else who was involved?

Erskine: Of course, Miss Alice Griffith and Miss Elizabeth Ash had pioneered in the housing field for many years, and actually formed the San Francisco Housing Association and helped in passing the first

*See interviews with Josephine Duveneck and Florence Wyckoff for more on Professor Meiklejohn and this survey. Ed.
Erskine: legislation after the first earthquake of 1906, to prevent jerry-building in the reconstruction of San Francisco.

Jacobs: I think I've seen Miss Griffith's name as secretary, in some of the old records of the predecessor of SPUR, the San Francisco Housing Association. Is that correct?

Erskine: Yes, that's definitely correct. Several of these people, who had pioneered after the earthquake and fire, took part in that survey of Chinatown.

Jacobs: So these were people who had some expertise in taking housing surveys?

Erskine: Yes, indeed, and two or three of them were architects. At the end of this survey, we found that Chinatown was, of course, in a deplorable condition. Whole families would live in one room, seven or eight, and the children slept in little bunks—shelves. There'd be one bathroom for many, many families and one cold water faucet in the hall, where the water for the whole family would be carried back and forth in pitchers or buckets. The rate of tuberculosis was very, very high, indeed.

Jacobs: Because of these congested living conditions?

Erskine: True.

Jacobs: So you say there were eighteen of you who did this, then.

Erskine: Yes.

Jacobs: After you took the survey, what did you do? This was in 1938?

Erskine: Yes, I would say about 1938. When the first public housing legislation had passed in Washington and the California legislature had passed enabling legislation in order to receive the new federal subsidies for low-income housing.

Jacobs: The first housing act of the federal government was passed in 1937, and so you were taking a Chinatown housing survey to prove the need for public housing in San Francisco.

Erskine: That's right. And, of course, when the need to support this enabling legislation began in San Francisco, there was really no one to turn to except this small group of people who had been studying the situation. We were called upon so many times to make speeches in clubs and so forth, that we decided that it was better to have a little organization. Miss Griffith's San Francisco Housing Association was revived for that purpose, and that was the beginning.
Jacobs: in 1938. So this was entirely a voluntary effort of interested individuals who saw a need for society or for the community and decided to do something about it?

Erskine: Exactly.

Jacobs: What then happened after the survey, which cited these terrible conditions in Chinatown?

Erskine: We went to Sacramento, for instance, to back the legislation, and when it was passed, the San Francisco Housing Authority was established and--

Jacobs: So, one, you got enabling legislation in California, to take advantage of the federal financial aids that the housing act of '37 made possible.

Erskine: That's right.

Jacobs: I see.

Erskine: And Miss Griffith was appointed as one of the commissioners on this new Housing Authority. But there was still a great deal of resistance to this new form of social legislation. As the projects were planned and began to be built, there was resistance in every neighborhood involved, and we were constantly called upon to defend the program.

Jacobs: So for each new project, you'd have to go fight that fire again.

Erskine: Exactly.

Jacobs: So it was a constant activity.

Erskine: True.

[Tape interruption]

Getting a Planning Department

Jacobs: When did you become interested, and who stimulated the interest of this group, in city planning?

Erskine: Well, that is always a fascinating story. It happened to be a group of young students from the University of California who had just graduated. It was the end of the depression, and they didn't have jobs, but they were crusaders for planning. They felt that planning
Erskine: the city environment would answer many of the social problems that we had.

They banded together under the name of Telesis. Telesis never continued beyond this group, but it was extraordinarily effective in launching this whole idea of city planning.

Jacobs: What did Telesis stand for?

Erskine: Telesis comes from a Greek word with almost the same meaning as the environment: our earth surroundings and man's relation to these surroundings. Anyhow, there were about fifteen or twenty young graduates, and they put together an exhibit of city planning, which was shown at the San Francisco Museum.

Jacobs: When was this?

Erskine: Oh, I imagine this was about 1939 or 1940. Jack Kent and Fran Violich came to me to collect some money for this exhibit, and that's how I met them.

Jacobs: Did you give them some money for the exhibit?

Erskine: [Laughs] Well, everything in those days was extremely simple and modest. I don't know how much they collected, but it was enough to give the first exhibit of city planning in San Francisco and the Bay Area.

Jacobs: Were the San Francisco museums then in their present quarters?

Erskine: Right. And again, our housing group was the only susceptible group on the horizon. So these young men thought they'd educate us. They sat down, I remember, right around a table at one of our meetings, and they said: public housing is only a drop in the bucket. What you really need to do to improve society is planning, and you ought to add the name 'planning' to your title.

Which we promptly did. Henceforward we became known as the San Francisco Planning and Housing Association. They said San Francisco was the last big city without a city planning department, and that's what we had to do at once.

Jacobs: This was 1940, and San Francisco still did not have a planning department?

Erskine: No. There was a zoning department, but that was all.

Jacobs: How large was the zoning department?
Erskine: There was one man, Jorgenson, the head of it, and the budget for that department was fifteen thousand dollars, which was really just his salary. He had one room in the city hall.

So we went to the supervisors for an appropriation and a director of planning. We made our own leaflets and educated ourselves. The League of Women Voters was very important in this process. They had a course on city planning, and I was elected to do the research and give the course. [Laughs] Well, you can imagine how little I knew.

Jacobs: An instant process of self-education, however. Who was involved with you at that time in this organization?

Erskine: Oh, dear me. I must think back. I know it was the same group of people repeatedly, over and over again, but I would really have to go back over some of those records to--

Jacobs: I don't want to make it appear that you're unduly chauvinistic from the feminine side, but I keep hearing more ladies' names than I do men's.

Erskine: Well, there were plenty of men in the organization, but they didn't have the time to do some of these research jobs that some of the women were doing. They would make the decisions, of course, and really carry the political problems.

Jacobs: I think you're being too nice, but were they of assistance to you in getting some of your proposals carried out?

Erskine: I would say that these young men from the University of California were phenomenal. As it happened later, when the Second World War ended and they came home and got jobs as planners, they carried out a certain kind of regional planning just because they knew each other as friends and were enthusiastic about this program. They all became very effective people, and most of them later became directors of planning departments.

Jack Kent, as you know, was the director for a while of San Francisco's new City Planning Department. That was after the war, though. Most of them disappeared into the war during, say, 1941-45.* They were all away. So we just supported the appropriations and the education.

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*See interview with Julia Porter for more on the San Francisco City Planning Department. Ed.
Sewer Bonds and Charter Amendments

Erskine: Part of the education was carried on through a bond issue campaign that we had for sewers.

Jacobs: Was this before the war or just after the war?

Erskine: It was during the war. We passed that bond issue, and it was to educate the public on what a master plan was. Our slogan was "sewers come first," because the planning for sewers is part of the nine or ten different elements that make up a master plan.

Jacobs: So through the sewer issue, you were saying: this is part of a master plan, and this is what a master plan is.

Erskine: Yes, that's correct. And we got quite a few new people into the movement because it wasn't just public housing. That's when Jerd Sullivan and Morgan Gunst worked together to raise the funds for this bond issue. They raised something like $25,000, and the bond issue that had been turned down maybe five or six times went over seven to one.

Jacobs: My goodness! Who was Jerd Sullivan?

Erskine: He was one of the officials in the Crocker--it was then the Crocker National Bank.

Jacobs: He later became president of the bank and later became chairman of the board of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association [SPUR].

Erskine: True.

Jacobs: Who was Morgan Gunst?

Erskine: Morgan Gunst was a businessman here in San Francisco and a very effective man in raising money. For instance, it was he who was really responsible for organizing the Stanford Alumni Foundation which now almost supports the University.

Jacobs: I see. Did you not also tell me that he was the father of Marjorie Stern?

Erskine: Yes. She is very much like her father, most effective.

Jacobs: And Marjorie, again, is a member of SPUR's board.

Erskine: Yes, correct.
Jacobs: I just say this to point out the remarkable thread of continuity throughout all this. All right, I don't want to interrupt you, but what about these young individuals that were so great about educating the organizational hierarchy, shall we say? Whatever became of Jack Kent?

Erskine: Jack has had a very notable career, not only as a planner in the practical field—for instance, the head of San Francisco's planning department later on, after the war—but then he resigned and went to the University; he became head of the City and Regional Planning Department, which had just been established at that time. It was a completely new department. He ran for the council in Berkeley [and served from 1957-1965]. So that he had both an academic background and a practical background, in order, always, to carry forward the ideas of planning.

Jacobs: Yes. I first knew him when he was still a Berkeley city councilman. Then he later took a leave of absence from the University to become San Francisco's first Director of Development, under Mayor Shelley. And that was a job that was created at SPUR's insistence because we wanted more coordination within the city. I remember that one of his themes when he was in that office of director of development was, as you said, to push regional planning. He managed to induce Mayor Shelley to become an advocate of regional planning at that time, which was a remarkable feat.

Erskine: [Laughs] Yes.

Sustained Citizen Interest

Jacobs: Once you had the planning department created, what then became your interest and the interest of the group?

Erskine: Well, again, it was always edging forward to something effective. For instance, planning is only advisory. All right, you make these plans, and then how are you going to implement them?

Public housing was only for a very small segment of the population. It was valuable, but it didn't affect the general development of the city particularly. So the new thinking about redevelopment began to be discussed, and it was during the last World War that the legislation for redevelopment went through in Washington, and I think the enabling legislation that was necessary went through in California during the war, too. But there was no building permitted. So that, really, it couldn't be effectuated until after the war [1945].
Jacobs: So now we're up to the passage of renewal enabling legislation. But there's something missing in all of this recounting, and that is what, specifically, have individuals been able to do? How, for instance, were you able to get a planning department created in the city? I'm sure that you just didn't march up and make a speech before a supervisor's committee and have this come about. How did you bring this about?

Erskine: Well, it was by many appearances and just edging in a few thousand dollars a year for the department, and sometimes we got a good director and sometimes we didn't. We had several directors before we were really on our way, I can say.

Jacobs: As an example, what did you personally do in those years?

Erskine: Most of the time, I'm always doing the writing of pamphlets and the writing of letters and the licking of stamps and getting out notices and things of that kind. That's the day-by-day grind for any of these things. But I did notice, steadily, the development of individuals when they were willing to put their time and energy into this. They themselves developed in the most remarkable way. I wish I could tell you how people changed in the process of these campaigns that we had. That is the really exciting part. And the ideas that come out when people work together. They create new ideas and new ways to deal with them.

Jacobs: Getting back to the creation of the planning department, how was that finally effected? Was that a charter measure?

Erskine: There was a bill up at the legislature--it passed in 1932, I think--which made planning permissible, but it just never had been effectuated.

Jacobs: But there is a section detailing the planning commission and the planning department and creating the job of planning director in the city charter. Was your group one that supported that charter amendment?

Erskine: Right.

Jacobs: Did you have to have another campaign to raise money for that campaign?

Erskine: Well, we were always doing that. I don't remember that particular campaign, there are so many, but we were always in that process of raising the money and carrying these darn things out. It's so difficult.
Jacobs: So part of your activity—and I guess of everybody in the group—has been that very unpleasant process of raising money, going around and asking your friends and others for money?

Erskine: True.

Jacobs: It's necessary that one be committed to a cause before doing it, isn't it?

Erskine: Oh, is it!

Jacobs: Because it's an unpleasant task. All right, the planning department's been created, and as you said today, the city went through a number of planning directors before you really began to generate the activity, the authority and the educative process necessary to make that a strong municipal function, so that the other departments began looking to it for direction, rather than following behind the trend, shall we say.

Planning seems to stick with you. I see it in your activities more than anything else. Renewal, I think, you relegate to its proper place as being an arm to carry something out, but it should carry out only what planning says it should carry out.
2. DEVELOPING REGIONAL THINKING IN THE 1960s

Save-the-Bay and Citizens for Regional Parks

Jacobs: When did you begin to think regionally, or to become more active regionally, as opposed to simply within San Francisco, and what brought that about?

Erskine: Again, it was the same group of young people who graduated from the University of California way back in '39, I guess. They were always moving on and influencing and affecting my thinking. They began to say that there should be regional planning as well as planning for cities.

Jacobs: Who was the leader of that thought?

Erskine: Well, again, it was Jack Kent and Mel Scott and Fran Violich. All of them now were in positions of real responsibility. They could influence citizen groups more than ever and they were moving into this regional thing.

[Ms. Erskine revised the following section of the transcript, adding considerably more detail.]

They wanted citizen support. They urged the formation of a group to support regional planning. Rather than support it as a concept, we decided that we would form a group called Citizens for Regional Recreation and Parks. In trying to establish large regional parks out in the counties where urban sprawl was by this time rampant (with no provision for parks), you would get people to think regionally. So this organization came into being in 1958. It was a group drawn from already existing conservationists battling local issues in the nine Bay counties who were beginning to think along regional planning lines in seeking help.

Jacobs: What did you do then?
Erskine: The Extension Division of the University of California held three conferences in three succeeding years—1959, 1960, and 1961—which were all co-sponsored by Citizens for Regional Recreation and Parks. The first one was called Our Vanishing Open Space. The second, Now or Never; and the third, San Francisco Bay as a Recreational Resource.

It was in making a quick survey of the Bay for this last conference that Mel Scott discovered that most of the tidelands around the edges of the Bay were privately owned. The state had sold these water-covered acres for fifty cents an acre about 1870. He found that one third of the Bay had already been diked off and filled. Also, now that thousands of people were coming into the Bay Area after the war, that there were extensive plans underway for land fill throughout the whole region. The Corps of Engineers circulated a picture from their Bay study entitled 'Bay or River.' Mel Scott was aghast and horrified at this state of affairs. That third conference became a blast at and expose of environmental destruction. People suddenly woke up. This publicity led directly to the movement to save San Francisco Bay.

Jacobs: It looks as if things were beginning to come along with a rush—doesn't it? This is what we began to call the westward tilt, was it not?

Erskine: Oh, I think undoubtedly, yes. You were faced then with so many problems. In fact, that's the queer thing about planning. You say city planning: well, you don't begin city planning—at least we didn't here—until the city was almost completely built up. It's when you have a built-up city, and there are changes to be made and so many people are involved, that you have to get a common trouble-shooter—someone who will constantly be on the job just getting the facts of each crisis situation. If you don't have facts you can trust, you can't make decisions—take action.

So our planning departments in cities and counties became that. They furnished the facts and information leading to decisions.

What is fascinating about regional thinking is how the Bay came into it, and helped to clarify the concept. Mel Scott used to say to me: why can't we get a regional planning bill through the legislature? We can't seem to get even one councilman to write a letter or any citizen groups to support the idea.

I used to answer: Mel, you have to somehow show people what they are going to get out of it.

It was about this time, after the sensational third U.C. Extension conference, when people were aroused and alarmed, that a meeting was called to save the Bay. That night Mel Scott was there and Jack Kent and all of us again—the same group of people.
Jacobs: Who else was there?

Erskine: The meeting was called by Kay Kerr and Esther Gulick (it was at her house) and Sylvia McLaughlin. They were all connected with the University of California. They wanted to do something about saving the Bay because Berkeley at this time proposed to fill the tidelands for two or three miles out into the Bay and build a big industrial complex of one kind or another.*

So they called this meeting.

It became clear that very evening that you couldn't save the Bay just for the birds, or even one section of the shore. You couldn't save it in Marin and lose it to developers in San Mateo County. If it was to be saved at all, it would have to be saved by regional planning and regional thinking. The Bay was a regional resource. Suddenly regional planning and regional thinking became living concepts because of the passionate feelings that had been aroused over preserving the Bay.

Jacobs: How long ago did that meeting occur?

Erskine: I think it was in 1962.

Jacobs: But there was a nucleus again--and almost the same people were involved.

Erskine: Of course, it kept spreading out a bit, with each crisis. That's the amazing thing. It's only these crises that educate us, one after another. Fighting these battles you begin to develop a sense of a team with different new people willing to join. And the effect upon the individual in doing this is really extraordinary. Just take Kay Kerr alone. In fact, they called these three women the nut and raisin cookie set, or something like that. They had been involved, really, almost entirely with their children. Suddenly they developed this capacity to write leaflets, make speeches, and follow up in the legislature.

Jacobs: Well, we have permanent Save-the-Bay legislation now and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission [BCDC] as a direct result--

Erskine: Definitely.

*See interview with Bernice Hubbard May for an account of the Berkeley City Council's awareness of and participation in this regional planning process. Ed.
Jacobs: Of that initial meeting?

Erskine: Right.

Jacobs: So just a handful of people can save a bay of hundreds of shore miles for a population which some estimate will be fourteen million people. Just the smallest possible fraction can establish a theme that's acceptable to the majority of the people. It's fantastic! I can remember one of the historic meetings, Dorothy, as can you--of the Save-the-Bay campaign. It took place in the State Building, did it not, in 1969? You were there. Do you remember? Kay Kerr was there, and Joe Bodovitz, to make permanent that temporary state commission that was originally created by the late Senator Eugene McAteer.

Erskine: Yes, I remember.

Jacobs: That brings to mind another factor, then. You were involved, and this same group was involved both in housing and in the creation of a planning department—a housing authority. Who perceived these—let's call them crisis situations? How does a sort of an amorphous public condition crystallize? Who decides that there is need for government action?

Erskine: Usually you have to pin it down to something economic. That's about the only thing that you can legitimately go before a board of supervisors with, and urge something that involves loss of money or something of that kind.

In the case of slum clearance, say, and the new ideas of redevelopment—we carried out a survey, during the World War, of city costs which we called 'Elight and Taxes,' in which we compared a slum area with an area in the Marina in San Francisco. Both were the same number of blocks with about the same number of people. But one was a slum and the other was a prosperous, middle-class apartment house neighborhood.

We went down into the city hall files and records and found out what the city was paying in services in those two areas and what taxes each brought in.

The Marina taxes paid were $555,583, and services cost $86,659.
The Geary-Fillmore taxes were $386,020, and services cost $741,315.

That demonstrated that every city was losing vast sums of money in the slums—really subsidizing the slums. These figures were quoted in Congress and before our San Francisco supervisors in passing the redevelopment legislation. Our representatives had to be convinced that the slums were costing them money, and we proved that by our study.
Erskine: Now again, in the case of regional thinking and regional planning, we have to get down to the economics of it. And that is what we're trying to do today in our open space thinking.

Jacobs: You mentioned a meeting with Kay Kerr. Was she then the wife of the president? Was Clark Kerr president of the University of California?

Erskine: Yes, true.

Jacobs: Was Sylvia McLaughlin's husband a professor there?

Erskine: No, he was on the Board of Regents of the University of California. He's a mining engineer. He's now either the president or the chairman of the board of Homestake Mining Company.

Jacobs: Was he not at one time a university--?

Erskine: He may have given courses there, I don't know. But he was one of the regents of the University of California.

Jacobs: Here are people who got excited and people that you knew; had they worked with you before in other projects in San Francisco?

Erskine: Not in the case of the Bay. This was a new group of people.

Jacobs: Oh, it was a new group of people?

Erskine: Yes.

Jacobs: But they were seeking support. So they invited you over?

Erskine: Yes, but it's because we had already formed this regional group, Citizens for Regional Recreation and Parks. This wasn't tied up with the city of San Francisco. This was regional. It had existed for about four years at the time that this problem of the Bay came up.

Marin County Residents and Developers

Jacobs: You were telling me some weeks ago about another rather remarkable action by individuals. One on Strawberry—let's see--

Erskine: Yes, it was in Richardson's Bay.

Jacobs: Yes.
Erskine: Do you want me to tell you that?

Jacobs: Yes, just briefly. Who was involved in that?

Erskine: Because Marin County is so beautiful, some of the people who live there have taken a lead in preserving that county. There again, they were faced with one crisis after another. This particular one was that the Utah Construction Company had the options of all the owners of the tidelands in the eastern half of Richardson's Bay, and they intended to fill that bay and build something like ten thousand tract houses in there.

Jacobs: My!

Erskine: The first we heard of it was that they were going to an old lady, Rose Vernal, who had seven goats, and she lived in a tiny house at the end of Richardson's Bay. Utah Construction offered her $25,000 for her property, and she said no, she intended to live there with her goats and she didn't want to sell.

Jacobs: I assume this was a key piece of property.

Erskine: Yes. There was a hill behind her house. They came repeatedly and constantly raised the price they would pay, until finally they offered her $75,000, and she said: what do you want this land for?

And they said that it was to tear down the hill and fill the bay, and she said: well, I certainly wouldn't think of such a thing.

At that time, Caroline Livermore, who lived in Ross, heard about this, and she went to Miss Rose Vernal and she said: if you will give your land to the county so it will be safe, I will support you for two hundred a month as long as you live.

And Miss Vernal and Caroline Livermore went to the Utah Construction Company and asked what would be the cost of buying all those tideland options. They said: $200,000.

Caroline Livermore didn't have the money at all, but she said: well, I'll take it on.

So she went to the Audubon Society and said this was really a perfect bird refuge. This was where the birds came to winter. And she got from the Audubon Society $25,000. Then she persuaded Rose Vernal to give her property to Marin County, and in return the supervisors appropriated $25,000 in this campaign to save Richardson's Bay. Belvedere—the tideland ran along the side of Belvedere—passed a bond issue to buy their tidelands, with a great deal of work on the part of all the people in Belvedere, and raised $50,000 that way.
Erskine: Then the State Highway Department bought the land that went along the edge of Richardson's Bay for a hundred thousand dollars for the highway. So Caroline Livermore had her $200,000 dollars and she made out the check for the options held by the Utah Construction Company. She said it was the largest check she ever made out.

Jacobs: Again through the driving efforts of one person, around which coalesced a number of other people.

Erskine: Exactly. She really cared. She was a wealthy woman to begin with, so she could in a crisis put down some money to hold a thing like an option, and then she'd raise the funds. She had an air that both her sons have. Both Put and Norman have an air of approaching the public in the most confident manner—that they're going to get what they want.

Jacobs: Yes. It's a straightforward--

Erskine: Yes, straightforward, honest. But, anyhow, Caroline was a master.

Jacobs: You know, this little recitation about Utah Mining and Construction makes me understand why they dropped out of the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee.

Is it Caroline Livermore's boys that--?

Erskine: Correct. Her son now is the head of our State Resource Agency. That's Norman Livermore. And Put Livermore is the head of the Republican State Central Committee.

Jacobs: I just saw him the other day, by the way, and he offered me his help in whatever way he could for the creation of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Erskine: Oh, did he really? Good.

Jacobs: Yes, he said: I believe these things have to be non-partisan. He said: in a short time, I will no longer be Republican State Chairman, and I'll have time to help you in Washington or anyplace you want.

Erskine: Oh, marvelous! Well, that's only one of the extraordinary things that Caroline did. She helped save Angel Island as a park and to form the Samuel P. Taylor State Park and Tomales Beach and several other parks in Marin County. The top of Angel Island is named for her now, Mount Caroline Livermore.
Jacobs: Again, this is the action of individuals, who really can affect something once a crisis is perceived.

Bay Conservation and Development Commission Studies: Informing the Public

Jacobs: Well, going on from there, Dorothy, you've told us remarkably little about your own activities—I think by design.

Erskine: [Laughs]

Jacobs: But you really formed Citizens for Regional Recreation and Parks. I can remember so well how you used that publication to release in timely and very nicely condensed fashion a four-page summary of the reports that were put out sequentially by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission when it was developing its Bay plan over a period of two years.

Erskine: Well, naturally, the Bay's the biggest open space we've got, hence the most valuable. And at that time we knew that legislation being what it was, unless you had a strong body of well-informed citizens, when the time came to create that commission—which was just a study commission for three years—into a permanent commission, we'd need all the support we could get.

It was very fortunate, the thing that happened. In order to make a plan for the shores of the Bay, which was the responsibility of this BCDC study group, they had to have one report after another on different aspects of the Bay. For instance, like the wildlife, the fish, the shells, the sedimentation, earthquakes, the geological formation of the Bay, commerce and ports of the Bay, recreation around the Bay—all sorts of different aspects of the Bay to make their plan.

Instead of coming out in one big volume at the end of three years, they brought these studies out one by one each month, and it was those studies that we condensed.* We got a special grant—again,

*Asked whose idea this was, Ms. Erskine replied on the transcript: I imagine this process of releasing one report each month for two years was Joe Bodovitz's idea. He was then the Director of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and had journalism training, I believe.
Erskine: it was Martha Gerbode who gave it--of five thousand dollars to distribute these leaflets to all the members of the conservation groups around the Bay. The commission didn't have the money to distribute them. At one time, we were sending out sixteen thousand of these little leaflets every month. They were very readable, and people could thus understand the big reports.*

Jacobs: You also sent these out to the newspapers, didn't you? Because I remember the newspapers using your digest--the editorial writers--to make their job that much easier, and I was amazed at the publicity that occurred. Every time you'd make one of your mailings, the publicity would come down. Television stations would report on them. You were doing a very real service to the editorial writers of the Bay Area, Dorothy. Your writing, your condensation, was just marvelous. It's a very difficult job to do.

Let's presume, at least for the time being, that the Bay is saved. For this year, anyway [1971].

Erskine: [Laughs] The battle is going on more fiercely than ever over the U.S. Steel highrise of five hundred feet next to the Ferry Building. How can you say that?

Jacobs: Well, I think the will of the people is speaking again. They want their environment saved. We're tied to a bad economic system. We've suddenly gotten into the fight of how we can preserve the maritime shipping of San Francisco's port with the requirement for the appropriate and in-scale development of the northern waterfront for the use by the people. That's the argument, I guess. And a vast number of citizens have become involved in that--I think many for the first time involved in an environmental issue, wouldn't you say?

Erskine: Yes,

Jacobs: But, then again, the same group is there. You are there, Martha Gerbode is active in that. Jack Kent is in England, or he'd be involved in it.

Erskine: Precisely.

Jacobs: Larry Livingston. Now it's this similar group of people involved again.

We'd better close for the time being; but, looking back, in quick summary--what do you think citizen action has been most

*Samples in Foundation Series papers.
Jacobs: effective in doing? Now, you can answer that either philosophically or point to hard projects that have been accomplished.

Erskine: Say that again, John.

Jacobs: What have your citizens' groups—and I use that in the plural because you've formed others at the same time that you've been constant in SPUR—what have you been able to accomplish that would not have been accomplished by another means?

Erskine: Well, you certainly have to organize to accomplish anything! And I think the peculiar environment of San Francisco and California has a great emotional hold on people. Maybe that's not true. Maybe other people in other parts of the country feel the same way, but our surroundings are so dramatic that I think that it has generated a certain emotional drive that led to victory in the battle for the Bay, and advanced our region farther than other parts of the United States in consciousness about the environment. That we can say.

Jacobs: I think you're right. Would you say the battle of the Bay could have been won without all the interest given housing and planning and renewal by your group and other groups in the San Francisco Bay region? Do you think there was a general level of awareness that was raised to usable pitch?

Erskine: Yes, I think so. In other words, that's what I said when I began. It's the development of the individual who takes part in these things that is one of the most exciting things that you can notice. People completely change under the effort to do these things, and so the people have changed and they, in turn, affect the environment.

Jacobs: It's amazing. When you look around and see the very small circle of people who were responsible for this large educational effort. You know many more people than do I, Dorothy, but I know Joe Bodovitz and Al Baum. Joe worked here. Al was on the board of SPUR and other organizations. I guess Sylvia McLaughlin has been a member for a long time. Martha Gerbode. Then others, like Larry Livingston: people who really fought and gave support to this issue. Woody Stockwell. These are the younger ones, but—Jerd Sullivan was completely committed to the idea of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, despite the fact that he had some very apparent conflicts in his business contacts. But he brushed them aside and said that the Bay is important. This would not have happened unless you had gone to him at one time saying: this is important.

Erskine: Yes, that's right.
3. SAN FRANCISCO RECONSTRUCTION NEEDS AFTER WORLD WAR II

Business Leaders' Interest: Blyth-Zellerbach Committee

Jacobs: Jerd Sullivan, then, I think, was responsible in large measure for the success of the Blyth-Zellerbach committee. How did that come about, by the way? Did you have anything to do with that?

Erskine: Well, again, it's economics. The Planning and Housing Association was always a very modestly financed operation. Maybe seven thousand dollars a year we had as our budget. We were always baffled by the fact that certain big cities in the United States, like Cleveland and Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, had very eminent citizens and very influential businessmen at the head of their planning operations. We couldn't figure out what argument was used to get this thing started. When my husband and I were East one summer for our vacation, he came home by air and I took the train and stopped at different cities in order to find out how these citizen groups functioned and what argument they used to get business leaders into the picture.

The first city I stopped at was Philadelphia. I saw Aaron Levine there, and in five minutes he told me what the secret was. Redevelopment was going strongly at that time, and their citizen committee, which was called the City Planning Committee, I think--

Jacobs: Was it the Philadelphia Planning and Housing Association?

Erskine: No, the housing was separate. The planning was separate, but they had offices right next door to each other; one did the research and the other did the active program.

Well, anyhow, the secret of the Philadelphia success was that the citizen group supported the redevelopment projects, which in turn brought into Philadelphia two federal dollars for every dollar that the city spent on its improvements. You could compare: San Francisco had two redevelopment projects at that time, Western Addition and Diamond Heights. We were able to get from the federal government
Erskine: seven million dollars at the same time that Philadelphia was getting 66 million for about a dozen projects. But they had been stimulated by the citizen groups, and it was Aaron Levine who really put these things together and made redevelopment tick.

Well, it was easy to see what San Francisco was missing. They were missing, of course, the citizen group which would do this. The government wasn't powerful enough in San Francisco to buck the opposition that comes from slum clearance of the magnitude that redevelopment is. There has to be, in each case, a citizen group that can back it.

So, to carry on the story, Morgan Gunst left in his will a thousand dollars to the Planning and Housing Association, and we spent that thousand dollars to bring Aaron Levine out to San Francisco to make a survey of our redevelopment department, which at that time was badly bogged-down. In fact, it really had been brought to a halt (at our request) because of some corruption.

Jacobs: Oh, really?

Erskine: Yes. But the main thing was that the first day Aaron Levine came, he saw people from the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee, with Jerd Sullivan at their head, at the Pacific Union Club. He told them the facts of what it was costing San Francisco not to have a citizen group supporting redevelopment, and they could immediately see--many of these firms and outfits--the benefits that they would have, just in their own businesses, in supporting a program of this kind.

Jacobs: So it was at his behest, then, that they became corporate members to assure funds to SPUR, and also they began beefing up the renewal process.

Erskine: Correct. And that's when we got Justin Herman in. He introduced the citizen group to John Hirton, who directed the Redevelopment Agency in Stockton, because he felt he was a very gifted young director, who could reorganize the San Francisco Planning and Housing Association into the San Francisco Planning and Urban Development Association.

[Tape off. Interview resumes on a later, unspecified date, late in the morning.]
In some of this historical material that you brought in this morning, I see a lot of very interesting names. I see, of course, Jerd Sullivan's name. This is on a citizen's master plan committee. Is that the one that you used to sell sewers, or did this come after the sewer campaign?

Well, the sewer campaign followed that, but it was to dramatize planning. Many people--many of them businessmen--were reluctant to have anything to do with the Planning and Housing Association because of the housing angle. That was--oh, let's say, 'socialism.' So that we put the emphasis definitely on the making of the master plan for San Francisco, and that brought a great many other business people into the picture.

So an element of the master plan, even then, was housing.

Yes, that's right.

A master plan is required by law now by the State of California, which gives some small indication of how long it takes things to come about.

True.

When was this master plan committee set up? What year?

I imagine that was about 1941 or '42, after the Second World War had begun. We couldn't do any building during that period, as you know, but we were educating for planning. The big public works program that followed the end of the Second World War was planned during this period. And sewers was one of them.

That's remarkably parallel, in some respects, to Philadelphia, because they used the war years to devise that master plan of theirs.

Precisely.

Who got someone like--essentially a tough, although very personable banker--like Jerd Sullivan interested in this process?
Erskine: Well, it's just a person-to-person type of thing. Jerd happened to have a father who had at some time in his life functioned on a planning commission in some part of the United States; it was something Jerd was brought up with. He was one of the few businessmen who would have anything to do with the idea of planning.

Jacobs: But, I mean, who got him interested in it?

Erskine: Well, I don't know. I think probably I did. I don't know.

Jacobs: Did you just go to him?

Erskine: I'd go down to his office some day--I did my banking there--and I'd stop and say: Jerd, have you seen this article--and that kind of thing.

Jacobs: [Laughs] So by that process--

Erskine: Yes, that's right.

Jacobs: That's amazing. Did he have his office on the banking floor there? Did he have a desk on the floor?

Erskine: On the floor; you could get at him easily. He wasn't secreted up in the top of the building somewhere [laughs].

Jacobs: He was an approachable man, anyway.

Erskine: Yes.

Jacobs: I see here [rattles piece of paper] that you've got Marjorie Stern's father, Morgan Gunst, on that same committee. [Sound of microphone being moved.]

Erskine: I remember going to him. [Laughs] We were trying to expand our membership, and I was delegated to go to Morgan Gunst because he was one of my husband's clients, and he couldn't very well lock the door. He took out a membership of ten dollars in the Planning and Housing Association, and then he got so interested that he was one of the leaders later on, along with Jerd. Being a real businessman, he knew how to raise the money for the sewer bond issue. He and Jerd raised something like $25,000 for that.

Jacobs: Do you ever feel like a one-woman conspiracy, getting all these people interested?

Erskine: Well, I've had fun, I must say. It was fun dealing with these civic matters, which the businessmen were very well-prepared to deal with.
Housing Issues and Expertise

Jacobs: Let's see. I see some other names here that--

Erskine: We had plenty of architects. Always we had architects on the board.

Jacobs: Yes, I see Catherine Bauer's name here.

Erskine: Yes, she was a great source of strength. And so was Jack Kent, from the beginning; and over at the University of California we had Mel Scott. We had quite a few academic people, of course, and planners and architects. It was hard to get the businessmen into the picture. As I say, public housing was just in its infancy, and it was regarded with a great deal of suspicion by businessmen.

Jacobs: Perhaps they were suspicious because there were so many architects involved.


Jacobs: Now, Catherine Bauer—that was before she was Catherine Bauer Wurster—let's see. Ernest Borne. Helen Bridge—these are all members of the board of directors of the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association.

Erskine: Yes, she was a sister-in-law of Mrs. Harry Allen, and Harry Allen was building Sea Cliff at this time.

Jacobs: Ah, I see. Germaine Bulke.

Erskine: Labor.

Jacobs: S. Waldo Coleman?

Erskine: He was a banker, or insurance. Anyhow, he, for some reason or other, was interested in cooperative housing. We never could seem to get it started at this point. Later on, Justin Herman got it going. We had many meetings, and we studied the subject, but we never were effective as they were in Norway and Sweden getting cooperative housing started here.

Jacobs: I guess you have the cooperative houses on Nob Hill.

Erskine: Now.

Jacobs: And the cooperative apartments, but only for the very wealthy.

Erskine: But that wasn't so at this time.
Jacobs: Even then that wasn't so?

Erskine: Oh, my, no. Not at all. All of this condominium and cooperative housing is a very, very recent development. And it was just because the rents have gone so sky-high because the building costs have gone so sky-high that there's no hope in getting some of these people if it were on a rental basis. If they could buy the apartments, that would cut down the monthly, well, so-called 'rent.' It becomes maintenance for a cooperative, but they don't have to pay the same rent they would otherwise.

Jacobs: I see Gardner Dailey, an architect, was on the board then.

Erskine: Yes. He'd been on the Planning Commission.

Jacobs: Let's see, this is a call to people, I guess, for the master plan again. When was this published? Do you have any idea, Dorothy?

Erskine: It's not dated?

Jacobs: No, as usual.

Erskine: As usual, not dated. Anyhow, it was about 1941.

Jacobs: 1941. Vernon DeMars—I see his name on here. There's Martha Gerbode—Mrs. Frank Gerbode. Michael Goodman—who's he?

Erskine: He's an architect over in Berkeley.


Erskine: Harry Hilp was a builder—Barrett and Hilp. Barrett has built the airport, all of those parking—

Jacobs: Barrett Construction?

Erskine: Correct. And Hilp was a construction man; he was one of the few liberal people who would tolerate the idea of public housing.

Jacobs: Mrs. Marion Biers Howden.

Erskine: She came from Washington, and was in the public housing official group from Washington.

Jacobs: She was part of the federal government?

Erskine: True.

Erskine: He was president of the Downtown Association, an architect. But, again, these people were unusual in that they could tolerate the stigma of being tied up with public housing.

Jacobs: They must have been awfully unusual people. Harley C. Stevens--do you remember him at all?

Erskine: Oh, my; yes, indeed. He was a businessman. I don't remember exactly what his business was, but his wife--Georgianna Stevens--is the aunt of Bob Kirkwood.

Jacobs: It doesn't tell me much about Harley C. Stevens [laughs].

Erskine: It doesn't tell you much about him, no [laughs], but I thought I'd tie you in.

Jacobs: And I see Dr. Langley Porter. Dorothy Wright Liebes--a socialite, perhaps, or--?

Erskine: You evidently don't know how famous she is--a textile artist, and she was married at one time to Liebes of Liebes and Company stores. They were divorced, and she moved to the East because she was so successful in textile design.

Jacobs: F. J. McCarthy. Is that the judge?

Erskine: I don't remember who he was.

Jacobs: Yes, I think that was the judge, the one who just recently died. I think we were objecting to something that he was promoting--oh, Candlestick Park. We were objecting to the expansion of Candlestick Park, and he called me up, saying: I used to be a member of the board of directors of that organization.

Erskine: Oh, really?

Jacobs: In effect saying: you have to listen to me.

Erskine: [Laughs]

Jacobs: Now, here's San Francisco Planning and Housing Association, December, 1952. Ah, something with a date on it. I see that Ben Swig was treasurer.

Erskine: Yes, he was for a short time, and then he wanted us to do the kind of thing that he wanted to do, and we broke up. [laughs]

Jacobs: I wondered about that.
Erskine: Yes, that was quite a stormy session.

Jacobs: And George Johns was second vice president. Herbert Bartholemew, president. This is still 1952. What was his connection?

Erskine: He was a young lawyer, and his father was Bartholemew the planner, in St. Louis, I think. So he had a planning background, but he himself was a lawyer, and later on he moved someplace else. He moved out of San Francisco.

Jacobs: And I see Jefferson Beaver. He was head of some savings and loan company.

Erskine: Yes. And he was also very active in either the Urban League or the NAACP.

Jacobs: Selah Chamberlain--that name is familiar to me. Frank Gomez?

Erskine: I think he was real estate.

Jacobs: There's T. J. Kent., Jr., of course. Roger D. Lapham, Jr.--I didn't know he was on the board of directors.

Erskine: He was on the San Francisco Planning Commission, too, at one point, and we asked him to be on our board; but he didn't attend our meetings very often.

Jacobs: How about Cyril Magnin? I see he was a director.

Erskine: Yes; again, there were points at which some of these people, in holding public office, needed support from citizens on various planning schemes they had. I think Cyril Magnin was on some commission at that time. I don't remember what.

Jacobs: I wonder if he wasn't on the Port Commission that early? He might have been.

Erskine: Yes.

Jacobs: Langdon W. Post.

Erskine: Oh, Lang Post. He represented the federal government in the early stages of public housing out here, and then he left government. He was, say, regional director for public housing of the five western states--something like that.

Jacobs: Kirk Whitehead.

Erskine: He was real estate. He later on moved to Oakland.
Jacobs: Herbert Clark. I'm looking at the past presidents' council. S. Robert Anshen, the architect of Anshen and Allen.

Men's and Women's Roles

Erskine: Yes, you can see how many men were involved, but, of course, the men didn't write the letters or collect the dues or run the office. And that's why when I mention some women, it means that it was volunteer staff work that had to be done.

Jacobs: So the men would lend their names and--

Erskine: Well, they'd lend their good brains, and they appeared before--

Jacobs: I think you're being very polite, Dorothy.

Erskine: No [laughs], they had to appear before our board of supervisors and before commissions, and they carried the ball. In fact, without them, undoubtedly there wouldn't have been an association.

Jacobs: Did the organization operate very much then as it does now, through committee reports?

Erskine: Exactly.

Jacobs: The committees would report to the board of directors or the executive committee, and then that would become a SPUR position?

Erskine: True, but it wasn't SPUR then, you know. And then another thing we had to do—the few women that were involved had to get the facts out at the city hall that made up the material from which the men would then decide what action should be taken.

Jacobs: And then would the men take these positions, and would they defend them in front of the board of supervisors?

Erskine: Yes, they were very active in that field, but we had to prepare the material for them to save them time, because they were very busy.

Jacobs: The last time we were talking, I recall--

Erskine: [Whispers] I have to go soon.

Jacobs: You don't have to whisper. How soon do you have to leave, Dorothy?

Erskine: It's supposed to be twelve o'clock—Regional Area meeting.
Jacobs: Well, why don't you leave right now, and then we'll spend one more hour one other day.

Erskine: Fine.

Jacobs: Particularly after I look through some of this stuff, okay?

Erskine: Yes. I think you've got more of a picture now with this--

[Tape off. Third portion of interview continues, on unspecified date.]
4. SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING AND URBAN RENEWAL ASSOCIATION (SPUR): SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL CONCERNS

Jacobs: The first time we talked, you spoke of what citizen groups can accomplish by getting organized, in relation to the battle of the Bay. Are there other accomplishments and organizations where SPUR, specifically, has been helpful, do you think?

Erskine: Well, I think one of the things SPUR has done over the years is to give advice to the outlying areas. Even though SPUR is an urban association, it has acted in a very important way in the region by being able to provide expert advice to conservation groups who had no way of finding out what could be done in one crisis after another, as the hordes of people poured into California, creating all sorts of problems.

Napa County: Vineyards, Flood Control, and Parks

Jacobs: Can you give me an example of this? The thing that comes to mind immediately is the situation in Napa. What was the situation then, and what is the situation now, with respect to the use of land?

Erskine: We had three problems up in Napa. We were trying to get an agricultural preserve set up to protect the vineyards. That was one problem. The other was the problem--

Jacobs: Protect the vineyards from what, Dorothy?

Erskine: From urbanization.

Jacobs: Ah, subdivisions, things of that nature.

Erskine: Yes, subdivisions. They seemed to be just teetering on the verge of having subdividers leapfrog into that vineyard. Then, the second
problem up there was the Napa River. The Corps of Engineers was going to have a flood control project for about nineteen million dollars, and their plan was to control the flooding in the city of Napa through construction of a ditch which would go right straight through the middle of the town, with high fences and concrete-lined sides.

Were they using the Napa River bed for this purpose?

You see, it flooded, and they were going to--I would have to explain to you the whole physical set-up. It's what they call the 'oxbow' there. The river made a big curve.

And they were going to cut straight across it.

They would cut straight across with this ditch, and it was so ugly that people were just horrified at it, but they didn't know what to do about it. So that was a second problem, and the third problem was that we were trying to establish a park in mountains that adjoined Mount St. Helena.

We had collected three large pieces of land up there, some belonging to the state, some belonging to the federal government, and then some private pieces of land.

Now, where is Mount St. Helena in--

Mount St. Helena is the mountain that closes the Napa Valley in the north. It's in Mount St. Helena that the Napa River rises and flows south for fifty miles, into the Bay, creating this valley.

Now, that would be about ten miles north of Calistoga?

True. So we were trying to preserve an old trail, called the Oat Hill Mine Trail, where they used to bring the mercury down from the mines to load on the trains in Calistoga and later reload it on boats at the city of Napa. This was quite an industry during the sixties and seventies of the last century, and there was an old trail that wound through the mountains, where you could see the actual marks of the big, horse-drawn wagons that carried this mercury.

We worked with Nature Conservancy and bought several pieces of privately owned land, paying about six thousand to seven thousand dollars for it.

An acre?

No, this was for about 160 acres.
Jacobs: Oh, I see. Good.

Erskine: We worked with Nature Conservancy. They advanced the money. We raised the money and paid them back.

Jacobs: How did you raise the money?

Erskine: Oh, just through subscriptions.

Jacobs: Private subscriptions?

Erskine: Yes, private subscriptions. But the supervisors wouldn't accept it because they said they'd have to pick up litter in the mountains. So our idea was then to get the State Division of Parks to accept it and be the caretaker and manager of this three thousand acres up there in the mountains.

Jacobs: You mean, over the years you'd acquired three thousand acres?

Erskine: No, some of this was federal land and some state land. We were doing the job of putting it together and adding the private connecting links. So that you had a wilderness area where people had been hunting, ever since white men had come to the valley. It was about to be closed off by the state selling out its property and the federal government selling out its property.

So by action of citizens up there we were able to create enough support for this idea that we actually were able to get the state and the federal government to consent to put their land into this. But who would take care of it? That was the problem. So we had these three questions in Napa, and we decided we'd have a--

Jacobs: The agricultural preserve, the Corps of Engineers' short-cut ditch--

Erskine: Yes, that's right. And this park up in the mountains. So I asked John Hirton of SPUR—he was really kind of a genius at putting things together for conferences. His conferences have always been not only valuable and constructive, but very entertaining. He had a way of getting just the right people to talk, and the tempo of his conferences was always very swift and entertaining.

He had a little weekend place up in the Napa Valley; he was as interested as I was in this problem. He would come up for the weekend and we'd have a meeting up there with the local people and put together this conference, out of his knowledge of the political figures that ought to be invited and the academic figures and the engineers and so forth. He was the moderator of the conference, and did it excellently.
Erskine: Then we brought up these three problems, and the conference was very, very well attended. Mott came—the head of the state park department—and gave a speech, and so did Norman Livermore, the head of the resources—

Jacobs: Was he head of the resources agency at that time?

Erskine: At that time. And just getting Mott and Livermore together at that conference—after the conference, they actually arranged for the state park department to take over this area in the mountains. The Corps of Engineers had by that time met their match in a young planner for the city of Napa, Dick Oliver, who proposed alternatives for their ditch. By showing models and by speaking at this conference, Oliver won support for his river plan. The public was satisfied that this was exactly what they wanted.

Jacobs: The planning director's proposal?

Erskine: Yes. It was called the Dick Oliver Plan. The Corps of Engineers, when they were asked to speak at this conference, realized that there was terrific popular support for the Oliver Plan, and the way he had matched it up to get the extra money which his plan would require—

His plan was really almost like the way the Seine is engineered as it goes through the city of Paris. I won't go into details here, but it's quite beautiful, and it made the river the center, really, of a redeveloped city of Napa, the way it should be—one of its great assets, instead of being a liability. And then, finally, when the Agricultural Preserve was discussed, the supervisors, one by one, who'd been invited to participate, got up and indicated their support. Later on they could not very well back down on this, could they?

Jacobs: The agricultural preserve that you're talking about is really a peculiar kind of zoning that permitted—what, one dwelling per six acres, or something like that?

Erskine: No, twenty acres. The least that you could divide your land into was twenty acre parcels. In this way, the subdividers had a hurdle that they couldn't get over.

Jacobs: Now, this ultimately was voted through, wasn't it, by the supervisors?

Erskine: Yes, the supervisors passed the ordinance. This was a zoning ordinance—the least division of land is 20 acres of the 25,000 acre agricultural preserve that contained the main vineyards in the Napa Valley.

Jacobs: Where was the conference held?
Erskine: In the city of Napa, in the junior college.

Jacobs: And how many people attended?

Erskine: About five hundred people—very, very well attended.


Erskine: Yes, it was.

Jacobs: Was it held on a weekend or during the week?

Erskine: I think it was a Saturday.

Jacobs: Dorothy, what you haven't said in all this is your own particular activity. How did John Hirton learn of the problem?

Erskine: Oh, well, of course, he learned about it from me, but I was purely on the sidelines and learning a lot about [laughs] how you put together a conference; because I sat by, too, and saw how it was done and saw the results of it. These conferences, you know—

Jacobs: I must disagree with you. I saw how John Hirton got pushed into the Napa Valley ever so gently by Dorothy Erskine. [Laughter]

Erskine: Well, that's your version of it. Actually, having a house up there—that little cabin he had—made him very susceptible to being pushed. [laughs].

Jacobs: Again, I think it's just a marvelous example of how a few people can uncover the latent interest of a wider group and create something positive for future generations.

Erskine: All right. Well, then, I'll just tie it up with what we're interested in now. We're interested now, as you know, in establishing an open space agency. This is provided in Knox's legislation for regional government in the Bay Area.

   As we know, the agricultural preserve, which has been very successful in Napa—something like two thousand acres or more have been planted in new vineyards since that was stabilized and people knew that they could put big investments into the Napa Valley in grapes. So that has really been thoroughly vindicated—the establishment of agricultural preserves.

Jacobs: Because of that zoning, the assessor had to assess according to use, and the vineyardists aren't being pressured by rising anticipatory land value?
Erskine: Yes. They came in under the Williamson Act, after the establishment of that agricultural preserve. So they are only taxed on the use of the land—in other words, a reduction of taxes. But, since then, several outside interests—conglomerates they’re called these days—have purchased some of these vineyards, and they’re biding their time. The vineyards are not as safe as you would think, because if you get three out of five supervisors wanting to rescind this thing, they could. The Napa Valley could be urbanized. If we establish a regional environmental agency, the land use could only be rescinded at the regional level, and there's much less likelihood that that would happen.

Jacobs: I agree. Are you, then, supporting Assembly Bill 1057?

Erskine: Definitely. It's now or never for most of us.

Jacobs: I think you're absolutely right, Dorothy.

[Tape interruption]

Palo Alto: Ford Foundation Study of the Economics of Open Space

Erskine: --the whole quality of the Bay Area is the really important thing; but I think our Ford Study (Ford Foundation gave us a $58,000 grant in 1968) on the "Economic Impact of a Regional Open Space Program" and the "Palo Alto Foothill Design Study" have given us again the economic arguments that we need to make the open space stick. In this case, again, it's finding the arguments just as we did in the beginning of redevelopment--

Jacobs: Yes, they were two very valuable studies. Has that come up for a vote yet in Palo Alto—whether or not they'll acquire the surrounding foothills?

Erskine: Yes, but let's go back. The most interesting thing is that, due to the Ford Study, the public was fairly well educated; in other words, they learned that they were going to pay higher taxes if they allowed the foothills around Palo Alto to be developed for housing. They were going to pay so much more taxes for schools and roads and things of that kind than they would collect in tax revenues, that it would be cheaper to buy that land for thirty million dollars and keep it open than it would be to permit it to be developed and pay the taxes. In other words, the tax increases would amount to much, much more than thirty million dollars in the next thirty years.

Jacobs: Has it been voted on yet?
Erskine: No, and that's the interesting thing. They voted to put it on the ballot, and I heard the other day that they don't even think they'll put it on the ballot. They'll rescind that, and they'll just take it out of the taxes every year. It's cheaper, they're convinced.


Erskine: So our job now is to take that good news to every community and to make them realize that the preservation of their open space is the best news for the taxpayer that they could have.
5. BAY AREA CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

Jacobs: Dorothy, how many activists—let's call them planner-urban conservationists—do you know in the Bay Area, in terms of numbers?

Erskine: Oh, John! I couldn't give you [laughs] possibly--

Jacobs: Would it be twenty-five?

Erskine: Well, you draw from so many different places. The University of California and Stanford, and you draw from all these groups--

Jacobs: All the places that you draw from in the nine-county Bay Area. We'll even let you throw in Napa. How many is it—twenty-five, fifty, a hundred?

Erskine: Are you talking about the leaders, the people who know the--

Jacobs: Yes.

Erskine: Well, I can say that there are only a few in each county who know the score.

Jacobs: How many, would you say, in sum total? Fifty?

Erskine: For instance, I know a couple in Napa who know the score, who know the theory behind it, and--

Jacobs: Who know how to get things started and give their time to it and know how to get things done?

Erskine: And why. Of course, the Sierra Club is just tremendous now. It's the symbol of saving the--

Jacobs: It is, but even within the Sierra Club you find a very small core of leaders.

Erskine: The Sierra Club had the unique distinction of never having made a membership drive. The secret of that was that they were organized
Erskine: to take people up into the mountains and give them a happy holiday. They got them up into the mountains for two weeks, and nature converted them into being conservationists. So they’ve now become, of course, the great symbol for conservation in the United States, and they now have 130,000 members.

For many, many years you could never get them to attend, say, a supervisors meeting. They would vanish into the open spaces. They believed in it, but in a kind of a prayerful way. They wanted to get out into the open and stay out in the open, and not meddle with political things. That’s far from the case nowadays. They are some of the most astute and devoted leaders of both the political and the conservation scene. And they have the same adherence to getting their facts straight and developing a foundation of factual information, mostly through volunteers who know the subject and are anxious to--

Jacobs: I’m not going to let you off the hook on that question, wriggle though you might.

Erskine: [Laughs]

Jacobs: How many in the Bay Area? How many leaders? Fifty?

Erskine: Well, I guess so.

Jacobs: A hundred, maybe?

Erskine: Well, it depends on what you call leaders, how you define those. There are numberless people in the Sierra Club, for instance, in their organization.

Jacobs: I know, but how many—would you call John Sutter a leader?

Erskine: Yes, I'd call John Sutter a leader.

Jacobs: All right, how many John Sutters are there in the East Bay?

Erskine: I wouldn't say there were very many.

Jacobs: How many Kay Kerrs would you say there are in the East Bay?

Erskine: There's only one. [Laughs] She's unique. And down in San Mateo County—it's so big. Barbara Eastman went to live down there. There was practically no conservation--

Jacobs: Did she and Bill used to live here in San Francisco?

Erskine: They used to live in Berkeley. She had worked for People for Open Space. It wasn't named People for Open Space then, but Barbara had
Erskine: worked in our organization. And when she went down there, she knew what was at stake.

Jacobs: So there's Barbara Eastman. Marcella Jacobsen?

Erskine: Yes.

Jacobs: Janet Adams?

Erskine: Yes, indeed.


Erskine: Yes. You're mentioning women. There are lots of remarkable men down there--Stegner and Don Aikin and--there are quite a few men down the Peninsula that've been most, most effective in--

Jacobs: The more I talk, the more I realize that fifty would not be far wrong, would it?

Erskine: No, it wouldn't be.

Jacobs: So only fifty people have been exercising all of this leadership for the Bay region, and the cast of characters doesn't change very much. It's fairly constant. So, let's say, fifty people have for a little more than thirty years been fighting the fight for the physical destiny of San Francisco and the Bay region.

Erskine: Yes, that's right.

Jacobs: It's a pitifully small number.

Erskine: Well, it's a thinking process. You see, people who can figure out the formula and the direction that evolution should take and try--

Jacobs: Well, Dorothy, as the spiritual leader of those fifty--

Erskine: [Laughs] Now, John. This is getting awfully personal.

Jacobs: I will close now, unless you have something you'd like to add.

Erskine: No, I think I'd like to continue this, but any length of time is so much fun to be with you [laughs].

Jacobs: Dorothy, you are a flatterer. That's how you accomplish everything. [Laughter]

Erskine: We have a lot of fun, anyhow. I think the real secret is that people do have a good time together. I know when we tried to get Washington
Erskine: Square remodeled, in North Beach, the amount of spaghetti I ate with those Italians was what did it. [Laughter]

But it's due to a few leaders, like Caroline Livermore and her sons, who we talked about before, that all these people coalesce around, and they've got the idea of what--

Jacobs: There's a leader--

Erskine: There's a leader. And then, if you can just get across the idea, say, of what redevelopment is, and particularly the economic benefits. Now, take that Blyth-Zellerbach committee--once Aaron Levine pointed out to them what each of them as head of a big industry could get out of it--[tone on tape blocks out conversation]--astounded. But you have to have the citizen mobilizing the support for it.

Well, thank you, John.

Jacobs: Thank you, Dorothy.

[End of Interview]

[On November 26, 1975, Ms. Erskine returned her corrected transcript to the Regional Oral History Office with the following comment:]

"Thank you for your interest in this evolution of the concept of planning. It is interesting to get this over-view and serves to strengthen our morale to go on to the next stage. What we are engaged in now is the need to change our ideas on protecting our agricultural land in metropolitan areas for food and energy conservation. Land is a resource, not a commodity subject to speculation and mindless use. Nothing could be more formidable! Once again a case of David and Goliath.

"So back to our sling shots!"

Editor: Gabrielle Morris
Transcriber: Bob McCargar
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To: Manuscript Repositories Holding Regional Oral History Office Oral History Memoirs

From: Willa Baum, Department Head
Regional Oral History Office
486 Library
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Re: Obituaries of ROHO Memoirists

Date: 84 September 1982

Our records show that your library has ordered and received a copy of the following oral history memoirs. Enclosed are copies of obituaries which should be included with each individual's memoir. If not possible to tip-in the notice in the pertinent volume, you may with to note the information on your catalog cards.

Obituaries are enclosed for the following memoirs:

P
Erskine, Dorothy W., Bay Area Foundation History, Vol. III
Dorothy Erskine, Writer and Environmentalist

By Bill Wallace

Dorothy W. Erskine, a nationally known writer and activist in urban and regional planning who was involved in many of the most significant environmental battles of recent Bay Area history, died yesterday in San Francisco. She was 86.

"The world is like my house," she once told The Chronicle in an interview. "When the environment is abused or mistreated, or not taken care of, well, it becomes a personal concern. It's like housekeeping — I have to take care of it."

Mrs. Erskine was born in San Francisco on July 29, 1896, a native daughter of a native daughter. She attended local schools and the University of California at Berkeley.

She met her husband, the late Morse Erskine, an attorney, while still a student, and married him in 1918.

Mrs. Erskine was a writer and editor of renown who worked closely with such authors as William Rhys Williams. Besides editing and rewriting the works of others, she wrote two well-received books of her own, a text on the Soviet Union called "Russia's Story" and a book about Anza and the founding of San Francisco entitled "The Big Ride."

Despite her lifelong work as a writer-editor, Mrs. Erskine considered urban planning and conservation her first and most important calling; she referred to herself as a "professional volunteer" on behalf of the environment.

In the 1930s, she did original research on slums and wrote tracts calling for publicly subsidized, low-cost housing for low-income families. Her work was largely responsible for the formation of the San Francisco Housing Authority and she played a key role in the selection of the Authority's first members and the appointment of the initial director.

In the 1940s, Mrs. Erskine was a key figure in the creation of the city's Housing and Planning Association, the predecessor of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR). After the organization was transformed and revitalized in the 1960s, she served on SPUR's board of directors for many years. She was appointed its first director emeritus.

During this period, she also helped form the Citizens for Regional Recreation and Parks, and encouraged the formation of Point Reyes National Seashore and parklands in the San Pablo watershed area and Angel Island. She continued her active role with the group after it changed its name in the late 1960s to People for Open Space.

She also played a significant role in the creation of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, drafting non-technical summaries of the commission's early reports for circulation among Bay Area residents concerned about the bay environment.

Mrs. Erskine also helped secure the Avery Brundage Asian Art Collection for San Francisco and played a role in the acquisition of new parkland, trees and urban planting in San Francisco.

She was an early and ardent advocate of height limitations in the city, and almost single-handedly pushed through the 40-foot-limitation on structures in the Telegraph Hill area.

Among the awards and citations which she received for her labors on behalf of the environment and urban design were: SPUR Association Award (1965); American Institute of Planners Award (California Chapter, 1970); The San Francisco Bay Area Council Award of Merit (1971); Robert C. Kirkwood Award (1972), and the Sol Feinstone Environmental Award (1978).

A San Francisco city park was named in her honor.

Mrs. Erskine is survived by a sister, Jean Wolff, a son, Dr. John Morse Erskine, and a daughter, Florence Sinton, all of San Francisco.

A memorial service will be held Friday at 11 a.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin Street.

The family prefers donations to the Dorothy Erskine Fund for Open Space, either through the Trust for Public Land or People for Open Space.

Pete King
Newport Beach

Pete King, 68, who orchestrated the music for such motion pictures as "State Fair" and "Flower Drum Song" and arranged songs for Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Dean Martin and Pat Boone, has died.

King, whose career came to an abrupt halt in 1974 when he went deaf, died Monday at Hoag Memorial Hospital, the hospital said. It did not disclose the cause of death.
Florence Richardson Wyckoff

A VOLUNTEER CAREER, FROM THE ARTS AND EDUCATION
TO PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

An Interview Conducted by
Gabrielle Morris

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MATERIALS IN FOUNDATION SERIES PAPERS*


Letterhead, San Francisco Theater Union, listing Advisory Board, ca. 1938.

Application for Federal Employment, FRW, 1943.


Letter, Goodwin J. Knight to FRW, June 21, 1957, with attached proposed membership list for Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth.


Welcoming Address to Third Annual Conference on Families Who Follow the Crops, March 1, 1961.

Correspondence, FRW to Ruth Chance, and financial statements concerning funds granted to the Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth for Conferences on Families Who Follow the Crops, 1962-1967.


Background Information--Extension of Day Care Services (HR 10606), March 13, 1963.

*See also extensive related materials in Mrs. Wyckoff's own papers in The Bancroft Library.
Florence Richardson Wyckoff was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office to obtain an overview of a long and productive relationship between one community leader and one philanthropic foundation, the Rosenberg Foundation. From a distinguished University of California family and trained as a sculptor, Mrs. Wyckoff's career in social welfare extends from the California Conference of Social Work and the San Francisco Theater Union of the 1930s, through community health planning in Santa Cruz County and the Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth, to a remarkable series of projects with Mexican-American farmworker families in the 1960s, and national health advisory committees in the 1970s.

In this brief interview, Mrs. Wyckoff touches on all these topics, as well as her acquaintance with Leslie Ganyard, John May, and Ruth Chance, executive directors of Bay Area foundations, and other notable volunteer and professional leaders. Fortunately, the UC Santa Cruz Regional History Project has undertaken complete oral history biographies with both Mrs. Wyckoff and her husband, labor arbitrator and historian Hubert Wyckoff, to fully document their public service to Santa Cruz County, the state, and the nation.

The present interview was recorded on 18 March 1975 in the mellow redwood-paneled living room of the Wyckoff family home in Watsonville, on a hilltop overlooking orchards in bloom. In a preliminary conversation in Berkeley it was agreed to focus the discussion primarily on Mrs. Wyckoff's participation in activities funded by the Rosenberg Foundation. To this she addressed herself with energy, referring to a number of papers from her extensive files, and illustrating with anecdotes that give the listener a sense of participation in some very lively events. A warm, attractive, and welcoming person, Mrs. Wyckoff gave the interviewer a hearty ranch meal before concluding the interview.

With conscientious thoroughness, she clarified dates and details in reviewing the transcript, and added a fine summary on her views of the importance of private philanthropists and foundations in encouraging and testing new ideas to meet community needs.

8 April 1976
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California/Berkeley
Wyckoff: Could we just discuss a little bit about what we're trying to do here, first?

Morris: Of course.

Wyckoff: We can point out some landmarks this way.

Morris: Yes.

Wyckoff: You say in the notes you sent me for the interview: "Pre-World War II in San Francisco, your recollections of organizations you were a member of that received some early Rosenberg grants." Civic Unity? Yes, I was a member of Civic Unity. SPUR? No. [Again reading] "And acquaintances who were later on the board--Caroline Charles, Louise Rosenberg Bransten. How about Marjorie Elkus at the Columbia Foundation?"

I knew Marjorie Elkus. She was Marie Deal's sister; Marie was with me in SRA. I didn't know Caroline Charles until quite a bit later; I knew her when I did a great deal of work for the California Conference of Social Work earlier.

Morris: Did you?

Wyckoff: As a matter of fact, the early California Conference of Social Work was an extremely lively, militant hotbed of arguments and philosophical debates that went on, and we all looked forward to the annual meeting, which was always a donnybrook of tremendously vigorous people who got together and argued social policy, you know. The file that I have here is the whole plan to "prepare" Culbert Olson to be governor in 1936-38 by giving him a comprehensive set of briefs on every public policy that you can imagine; it was an outgrowth of this California Conference of Social Work. Mrs. Charles
Wyckoff: was a member of the conference. I remember distinctly. She later, after the war, became president of it.

At the time that I'm thinking of, which was before Governor Olson was elected, Dewey Anderson—

Morris: But while Olson was in the state senate?

Wyckoff: Probably, yes. And Dewey was in the state assembly.* Dewey Anderson, I think, was president of the California Conference of Social Work at the time. I think he was, or at least he was an extremely active person in it then. A number of committees were set up. I discovered, in our barn, the report on these committees. I was executive secretary of the health and welfare subcommittees of this thing, I know, and these are the complete set of reports, with all the correspondence backing them that went to Governor Olson, that prepared him for his speeches, that gave him his homework, you might say, on health, welfare, labor, employment, agricultural policies. [Looking at document] "Welfare and Relief," yes.

Here's the background paper Paul Radin wrote for a study we did,** if you want to have it.

Morris: Yes, indeed.

Wyckoff: This study was really fascinating. The section of it that we took part in was to interview the people who spent a lot of their time in the Greek coffeehouses around Third and Howard and Townsend streets. That area was always considered Skid Row, but it also had those wonderful Greek coffeehouses.

The gist of the interviews was that you didn't want trained interviewers, you wanted just regular, everyday people like us to show an interest and find out what skills they brought to this country and how we used those skills. Well, of course, what we discovered was that the skills they brought were marvelous hand skills like making rugs, lace, beautiful things with their hands, and we had put them to work either in celery fields or coal mines where they did the crudest form of work and never used any of their skills at all.

---

*Assemblyman (R) from Santa Clara County, 1935-7.
Wyckoff: What Paul was trying to assemble was the information on how we were using this enormous wealth of skills that had come from the old country. We were just throwing them away; we had no organized way of capturing those skills.

Morris: Your description sounds as if that study relates to many issues that are still unsolved.

Wyckoff: I was going to give these papers to Bancroft, but I just recently thought I'd wait a little longer, thinking something might happen where I would need them. Because, even though they have helped make rats' nests in the barn for nearly forty years--

Morris: It's almost that!

Wyckoff: [Softly] Forty-two years. Thirty-seven since Olson was governor. They're still quite legible.

Morris: Those will be valuable when you and Randall Jarrell do your full memoir for UC Santa Cruz.

Wyckoff: Well, this is what I wondered, whether [shuffles through some papers] I should talk to you about these things. Here's the program of the John Steinbeck Committee.* All right, I'll not go into those, then.

Morris: I'd put in a plug that after you're through with them, these papers end up at Bancroft with the other political materials.

Wyckoff: Yes. Now, here, for example, are the members of that subcommittee on welfare and relief. [Reading] Dr. Barbara Armstrong, Helen Valeska Bary, who represented the Social Security Administration in San Francisco; Benjamin Bonapart, head of the adoption agency, I think it was, in San Francisco; Edward A. Brown; Elizabeth Burroughs; Mary L. Cady—she was director of the YWCA; Milton Chernin; Dr. Martha Chickering; Dr. Norman Fenton; Sophy Hardy; Dr. Samuel Holcenberg; Dr. Emily Huntington; Mrs. Esther Hutson; Brownie Lee Jones; George Kidwell, who was the—I'll give you this so you can have it. You don't need to write it down. I kept three copies.

Morris: Good for you!

Wyckoff: I always do everything in triplicate [laughs]. George Kidwell—he was head of the Bakery Wagon Drivers Union; president, I think, of the San Francisco Labor Council at the time—or AF of L. They didn't have the CIO.

Morris: It was the California Federation of Labor in those days.

*See Helen Gahagan Douglas interview for more on this effort to provide for the needs of dustbowl migrant families living in ditchbank camps in California.
Wyckoff: Yes. [Continues reading list of names] Dr. A. E. Larson—he was head of what subsequently became Blue Cross. It was a health plan for people on relief.* Mrs. Helen MacFarlane, Mrs. Robert McWilliams, Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn, Mrs. Helen Meiklejohn, John Neubaur, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Plunkert, Mitchell Saadi—those two became very active in the State Relief Administration—Dr. James Sharpe—he was head of the housing agency, I think, here—Dr. Paul Taylor, Roger Traynor, Ann Treadwell, Ralph Wadsworth, Annie Clo Watson, Claudia Williams and Florence R. Wyckoff. There! [Laughs]

Morris: That's a remarkable group.

Wyckoff: Isn't that a group?

Morris: Really.

Wyckoff: And they were just one subcommittee that worked—well, they developed proposed health insurance legislation, much labor legislation, from the standpoint of things that had to do with minimum wage and that sort of thing. I wanted you to know that this is available, and I don't know how you want to work any of this in.

Morris: I'm going to have to bite my tongue, and say: leave that for Randall. Knowing that she is going to be able to go through all the details of your career, I think it's sufficient for us to say that you were in San Francisco in 1935 and working with this conference of--

Wyckoff: California Conference of Social Work. Yes. Let's see. Now, there's another thing which I was doing before.

San Francisco Theater Union: Ideas and Support

Wyckoff: First of all, in 1931 I was married. I came home from Europe after I had been abroad for several years and got married and moved to San Francisco and became a member of the San Francisco Women Artists. Helen (Mrs. Andrew) Salz and I were close in those days, working together on plans for the women artists. We were arranging exhibits and raising money and doing all kinds of things, and people like Mrs. M. C. Sloss and Mrs. Sidney Joseph and Mrs. Edward Heller and Alma Spreckels helped us out with a lot of the things.

*See Lawrence Arnstein's memoir in The Bancroft Library for an account of the Central Medical Bureau in the 1930s. Ed.
Wyckoff: I finally wound up getting a small sculpture exhibit at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, in a little courtyard there. Well, now, I'm going to just give you these backgrounds to explain how things happened, and I will do this also for Randall because I think it all ties together. You can't separate one out from the other too much.

I had a studio in an alley east of the Palace Hotel, in an old warehouse, which my mother, during the depression, couldn't rent. So she said, "You take it, and use it." It had four floors. It had large, hundred-by-hundred rooms. I had the top floor and I was lost in this enormous space. Going to that studio every day, I had to pass through a bread line, and I had never seen a bread line before. This was the bottom of the depression, before relief programs had started, when it was really bad.

So what I did one day was walk up to a man in the bread line and say: you have a box of carpenter tools there, haven't you?

And he said yes. I said: would you be willing to build me a table?

He said: yes, but I have no place to work.

And I said: well, I do. [Laughs] So he came along with me (we were only about twenty-five feet away from the building) and I said: you may have this floor--one hundred-by-one hundred--to build me a table. [Laughs]

Well, it didn't take long before he had a furniture shop going in this place. But he wasn't a carpenter, really, at all. It turned out that he was a product of the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York and was an accomplished actor and director and had very, very strong ideas about production of plays.

So, to make a long story short, the Theater Union of San Francisco was founded on the next floor, and he became the first director, and a whole series of plays was put on. They finally took over the Green Street Theater.

Morris: What was his name?

Wyckoff: George Bratt was his name. I was a kind of public relations beggar for the Theater Union. I went around to raise money, and it was then that I went personally to so many of the people who had helped with the women artists and other things. I'm pretty sure I got donations from some individual members of the board of the Rosenberg Foundation. I didn't go to the Foundation because this was a very radical group that was trying to do outspoken things.
Wyckoff: But, anyway, I know that Louise Bransten gave us some money for the Theater Union. I've forgotten—who were the other members of the board?

Morris: This would be about the same years when the Rosenberg Foundation was getting started. Charles Elkus, Sr., was involved but not yet a member of the board.* There had been some discussions about starting a community foundation, but the San Francisco Foundation, of course, didn't get started until 1948.

Wyckoff: And John May became its director. Of course, I knew John very well. He and I were at Cal about the same time. His parents were good friends of ours, and he was in our home at many social functions.

When he became head of San Francisco Foundation, John was very thoughtful whenever we needed advice. As a matter of fact, when we were starting that Gilroy clinic much later, in 1955, John was the one who said: Lucie Stern Foundation is where you should go.

I went to see him and asked about the small foundations in the Bay Area. He was a guide to all of them. He knew all the local family foundations, and he knew which one might be interested in a special subject. John always helped me with this kind of thing.

Morris: Tell me about Louise Bransten. She was a niece of Max Rosenberg's, I believe, and considerably younger than the other board people.

Wyckoff: As far as I know, she was—much younger. She was also a granddaughter of the original M. J. Brandenstein, the coffee man. I never knew too much about her, except that I would go occasionally and ask her for things, or go through someone. I was trying to think whether it was Leslie [Ganyard] who sent me there. I can't remember.

Morris: Monroe Deutsch from UC was added to the original board in 1938.

Wyckoff: He was head of the Latin department that my father was in, you know.

Morris: Was he?

---

*The original Rosenberg Foundation directors, named in 1936, were: Louise Rosenberg Bransten, R. S. Geen, Arthur C. Oppenheimer, Emilie Oppenheimer, and Walter Rothchild.
Wyckoff: Yes. My father was a professor of Latin, and Monroe Deutsch became head of the department when my father became Director of the Extension Division.*

Workers' Education: YWCA and International Institute

Wyckoff: Well, let's see now. In 1933, I joined the San Francisco YWCA and became chairman of the industrial department. And I think that I did that either because of the Meiklejohn School, or I went to the Meiklejohn School because of the industrial department. I can't remember which came first, the chicken or the egg.

It was at the Meiklejohn School where I think I met Leslie Ganyard for the first time. I wouldn't swear to that. It's very hard for me to remember where I first met her.

Morris: Am I correct that the Meiklejohn School operated as part of the University Extension?

Wyckoff: No. How can you say anything so dreadful? [Laughter] They had the holy contempt for each other. My father said that Meiklejohn's school was "elite," and Alexander Meiklejohn said my father's extension division was a "bargain basement."

Morris: [Laughs] I can see that they had differences of opinion.

Wyckoff: Oh, they had great differences of opinion. Father said: you should never charge more than six dollars for a course at the Extension Division because all courses should be available to the common man. He should be able to have a course at the University, and he should never be charged more than six dollars, at the maximum. And he said: I want to tell you that the Extension Division is not losing money. [Laughs]

Morris: He was very proud of that, wasn't he?

Wyckoff: Ooh, yes. He bought that building, over on Powell Street, I think, with those six dollars that he got. He was a very careful manager--never asked the legislature for money!

*See Leon J. Richardson, Berkeley Culture, University of California Highlights, and University Extension, 1892-1960, University of California at Berkeley, 1962.
Morris: Was Leslie Ganyard at that point working for the Extension?

Wyckoff: She worked for my father.

Morris: Secretary or administrator, or--?

Wyckoff: I think she just did the kind of administrative chores that you had to do to run that sort of a thing.

Morris: Girl Friday?

Wyckoff: Yes. These things do all tie together, because through the YWCA I got very, very interested in the International Institute and Annie Clo Watson. They were recipients of quite a number of grants from Rosenberg. They were interested in race relations and in the whole problem of immigrants settling in this country and cultural clash and cultural shock.

Morris: They were already verbalizing this and trying to do something about it in the thirties?

Wyckoff: Oh, yes, yes. Definitely.

Morris: If it was international, was this primarily geared to Asians?

Wyckoff: No, anybody. It could be anybody. It was the old-fashioned conception of a neighborhood settlement house, such as Hull House, where newcomers of any race or color or creed could come and get really good, sympathetic help from an accomplished social worker who knew what she was doing. She was really a great woman, that Annie Clo Watson.

Then, in 1933 or '34, along in there, the Pacific Coast School for Workers was founded. And that was organized jointly by the YWCA, the AF of L, the International Institute--[sorts through some papers] I can't find any grants that we got, and yet I strongly suspect that there might very well have been some, disguised.

Morris: Rosenberg wasn't yet functioning, nor San Francisco. There possibly were some family foundations, already set up as separate trusts. In 1941, Rosenberg did make a grant to the International Institute "to develop material to use in teaching citizenship to the foreign born."

Wyckoff: Anyway, this was sponsored by the California Association for Adult Education; the Workers' Education Bureau of the American Federation of Labor; the University of California Extension Division Bureau of Workers' Education; and the State Department of Education, Division of Adult Education. Irene T. Heinemann was the--there's the joint administrative board. [Reading] John McGuire of the AFL-CIO, and Remsen Bird of Occidental College, Los Angeles, and Dr. George Hedley, later of Mills College. He ran it.
Wyckoff: Now, the thing that was so interesting about this school was that it had very long, deep roots that went way back to the early days of the AFL-CIO. Matthew Woll, the vice-president of the AF of L, was in charge of workers' education for the whole United States, and he gave his blessing to all of this.

Morris: This was to improve the reading and writing and American history and arithmetic?

Wyckoff: No, not at all. It was how to manage a union, how to keep the books, how to do collective bargaining, how to negotiate, how to have an arbitration, what was the history of the labor movement, what was the economic—the whole background. It came out of the John R. Commons Wisconsin School of Industrial Relations, which was the granddaddy of the whole thing. Henry Melnikow was a disciple and practical implementer.

Now, I was thoroughly sold on this as a sound way of going about these things. When I was in the YWCA in the industrial department, twenty-two women's unions were founded, and these women didn't know beans about running a union. They hardly even knew how to keep a checkbook, let alone know how to collect dues and spend them properly and do the right things with them and all the rest of it. So we set up this school, which was at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, St. Margaret's House, to run in the summer months and used professors from the university. Frank Kidner of UC and Bill Hopkins of Stanford, among others, taught in it. I remember Henry Melnikow, a pioneer in teaching good union management, and people from various walks of life, including those who were actively engaged in negotiation and arbitration, and labor relations.

I went around and collected money for scholarships for the students to go. I went to everybody I knew, including all these people who were also foundation givers. Unfortunately, I never kept a book. I kept all the books for everything that I got from Rosenberg, but this is so long ago, you know. I think, actually, the records went to the house in Berkeley, and when it was torn down, they were probably burned. It's too bad—

Louise Bransten did not give to the Pacific Coast Labor School because, I believe, she didn't like their politics. The Rosenberg Foundation gave money to the California Labor School, which was run by another group [a $16,000 grant in 1945]. Very competitive!

Morris: Was that the one that was founded by the forerunner of the CIO?

Wyckoff: No, that was the Tom Mooney School. It was another group. We were always indoctrinated to believe that that school had a lot of Communists in it and that it was dominated by the Communist unions, and
Wyckoff: this and that and the other. I don't think it was true, really. I think they were both equally in earnest.

Morris: Tom Mooney wasn't in jail yet, was he?

Wyckoff: Oh, yes! Heavens. I should say. He was the first martyr. Olson pardoned him, but he was the great hero of the day, a real political prisoner type. Mooney and Billings both were.

So I noticed that Rosenberg gave money to the California Labor School, and not to the Pacific Coast Labor School. We were very careful to maintain a tremendous difference.

Some Individual Benefactors

Morris: I was going to ask you if the nice ladies of the community who funded the women artists' exhibit and what-not--did you go back to them later on? And how did they feel--

Wyckoff: Yes. Sure. For anything. Any time I got a few nickels out of them for one cause, I'd go back for [laughs] some other cause. Till they shut the door on me, and then I would go some place else.

Morris: Say Mrs. Heller, for instance. Would she--

Wyckoff: Mrs. Heller was marvelous (the old lady). She was just darling. I used to go up to her for all kinds of things. Of course, she was a darned good Democrat, and that always helped. She also bought a lot of my sculpture. She had me make four gigantic pots [laughs]--they stood that high [gesturing]--to go around the corners of her swimming pool. And some garden figures and different things, because I was quite a serious sculptor at one time.

Morris: I can see that. Is this one of your heads here on the table?

Wyckoff: Yes. Yes, that's mine.

Morris: That's a charming thing. When you came looking for scholarhsips for the labor school--?

Wyckoff: I think I went to them. I can't be sure.

Morris: Would she have had more questions about that than she did about the women artists?

Wyckoff: Questions?
Morris: Yes, in other words--

Wyckoff: Oh, sure, sure. She asked me all about it and was very--I remember her telling me: do you know that my father was a shoemaker? And she said: I still have his shoemaker's bench. She said: I have his little things, all his little tools; I'm not forgetting them.

She was a fascinating woman, just wonderful. Very open.

Morris: Was your sense that she thought these causes were good or that she thought you as a person had energy and ought to be encouraged?

Wyckoff: Oh, I haven't any idea. She certainly did encourage me and was very kind to me personally. I mean by that, she would do things on several fronts, like give money to causes and buy my sculpture and just call me up and say: come on down; I want you to meet some people. This kind of thing.

Morris: You said Mrs. Spreckels, too, was on your doorbell list.

Wyckoff: Well, Mrs. Spreckels--I only went to dinner at her house once, and she was friendly about this whole business of having the exhibit in the museum.

Morris: Were they, and you, fired up about women as artists?

Wyckoff: Yes. Yes, somewhat. Because I think the feeling was that women should try to arrange their own exhibits and try to see that they didn't get pushed out of academies and shops and all the rest of it just because they were women. They weren't very militant, but they liked the idea of banding together to help each other a little bit.
2. INCREASING AWARENESS OF ETHNIC AND LOW-INCOME NEEDS

State Relief Administration

Wyckoff: [Reading interview outline] Let's see. Oh, the 1934 strike. Of course, that created very, very high tension. Let me see, you asked about the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association that Dorothy Erskine--

Morris: Yes, and there was a prior housing survey that I thought you'd said something about.

Wyckoff: Well, all I said was that the Sunnyvale housing effort was the first San Francisco public housing. We worked very closely with Catherine Bauer, then, as I recall it. This is before she married Bill Wurster. She came out here--she was with the first housing agency--and helped to get us off the ground there.

There was another thing that I didn't mention the other day that had a profound effect then. I don't know how it ties in, exactly, to foundations, and so I guess it isn't too good for this interview. And that is the LaFollette hearings.

Just before the war, the LaFollette Committee sent Henry Fowler out here--he was the chief of counsel--to investigate violations of free speech and civil liberties, especially of those of workers. Henry came to our house. I think the reason was the news of these reports that we got together for Governor Olson had sort of sifted around, and so people would come to me when they didn't know anybody, and they would say: where can I go to find people that know about welfare, reclamation, labor relations, farm workers' housing, and so forth?

So I was running a kind of an information bureau, you might say; and frequently, when people were of sufficient importance, like Henry Fowler, I would personally take him on a tour of the San Joaquin
Wyckoff: Valley to meet people and to see what was going on. I remember taking Henry—and do you know, I think I took Leslie along on some of those trips.

Morris: I was hoping you could remember some more about that.

Wyckoff: She didn't like to drive herself long distances, and they were making grants to a lot of those small towns in the Valley. There was a grant to the Council of Home Missions to do a recreation program in the migrant camps.

I found this wonderful letter from a farmworker to my mother.* I had taken my mother up to Paradise to see the Farm Security Agency [FSA] camp—and the letter is from a farmworker family that we visited. Mother felt so sick about the condition they were in that she went home and bought a tent and sent it to them. And that is a letter from that family in 1938.

I used to take Leslie around to those Farm Security camps, and then she would see how a community center was needed in those areas. The FSA camps were a network. There were twenty-two Farm Labor Centers throughout the state. They were where the dustbowl families, the Joads that Steinbeck wrote about, came and dropped down as just the first place to stay. It was from there that you could go out to get acquainted with the community.

Morris: Those were set up by the federal government?

Wyckoff: Yes, by the Farm Security Administration. That was one of the best programs we ever had. It was really marvelous.

Morris: And then you were working for the state?

Wyckoff: I worked for the State Relief Administration (1938-41). I went around to fifty-eight counties—to try to get the supervisors in those counties to put up their share of matching money for the employment on relief projects of one kind or another. There were, I think, six thousand women in the sewing project, for example. And I had to buy all the cloth and all the materials for them. They made mattresses and they made clothes; they made all kinds of things. But those were the state work relief projects that were going on. I had to go around and get the counties to put up their share because they had to put up a matching half, or whatever it was, before they got any state funds.

*See next page.
Paradise, Calif.

Nov. 29, 1938

Dear Mrs. Richardson,

As we are settled down and gotten a home we will write you and let you know where we are and how we are all getting along. We are all doing the best we can and we have bought 3. acres of land one mile North East of the Paradise Post Office near the Pines Road. The kids are all in School. They are happy and liking in the Big Tent. Your People rent us and say the land Bells. Everyone of your People for in and don't stay warm and dry in it, we have a good plant floor in the ground to be and happy. We have been for heating will not end. [...]

...[Liner]

...Learn one out and land it if you can for we want to build a big house, so don't spend any extra time but if you do run across one please let us know and send it as we don't. With our regards and we are planning hard for a nice little Stick house. Very much on the Spanish order or a typical California style home on a small order. And now please let us thank you and all your family for our Big Nice Tent for Mrs. Richardson. You will know when we are thankful, as we are for it and we send our best wishes to Mrs. W. Cho. We sincerely hope your are all well and happy and that we hear from you again soon.

Mrs. R. W. Fuller,

[Children]
Wyckoff: She traveled and informed herself a lot, and I think she did a good deal of bringing them back the general picture of what was going on, and I think they responded to her. She was not a dependent personality in this way. She was an independent person, who judged a lot on her own. She liked to get out and see what was going on. She was a very sensitive group listener, assessor of what a group could do. She was very good at that.

I think she got some of that at the Meiklejohn School, because that was a group process. It was very interesting, and I think a lot of people learned from that--group thinking and the way it works. Faculty members were Charles Hogan, John Walker Powell, Myer Cohen. Both Charles Hogan and John Powell occupied the flat under ours on Vallejo Street. Max Stern of the San Francisco News lived next door, as did Mrs. Horatio Livermore and her daughter, Beth. We were close friends, and Leslie knew all of us well.

She was quite different from Ruth. Ruth was much more consultative, every step of the way, and Leslie assessed things by listening and sort of letting people go and not putting in her ten cents' worth at all. She would listen and watch them work and then have a pretty good assessment of what they were up to.

Morris: You mentioned the philosophical ideas that were abroad at the Meiklejohn School. What were they directed toward?

Wyckoff: Well, I think they were moving in the direction of stimulating your responsibility to take part in the action in your community or shaping things, making things happen the way you hoped they would. You couldn't sit back and just let things happen by default. You really had to try to get in and do what you could in the direction you felt was the thing you wanted to do.

Morris: I've heard this summarized by black leaders as: you need to pay your dues.

Wyckoff: Yes. For being here [laughs].

Morris: Yes, that's the other half of it. And that's what I've come to believe. Were there blacks and Asians in some of those Meiklejohn classes?

Wyckoff: There were some. Japanese, I think Ed Howden's wife was. The Booker T. Washington Center was one that sent Negroes and--

Morris: Okay, time for you to take a deep breath while I turn over the tape.

[Tape turned over.]
Morris: Whose idea was it that the counties pay a share?

Wyckoff: The legislature. See, the law provided that the state would give half if the county would give half. This way you shared the expense.

Morris: What kind of response did you get from the supervisors?

Wyckoff: Oh, I got terribly poor response, many times. But usually the people that saved me were the Main Street merchants. I would go up and down any Main Street and say: look, they're going to cut your people off relief if your county supervisors don't come up with the matching funds.

They knew perfectly well this would mean one of two things: all those people would move out of the community, or they wouldn't have anything to spend. [Laughs] They wouldn't have them as customers in the stores. In several counties this might mean the loss of over a million dollars in spending on Main Street. So quite often the merchants would go down to the supervisors and ask them to put up the share.

Morris: So you really got acquainted with people--businessmen and the legislative bodies and the supervisors--all over the state in the process.

Wyckoff: Yes.

Morris: How many of them were still in those spots when you were back there ten, fifteen years later on other things?

Wyckoff: Well, the counties where I went later were primarily Fresno county, Kern, Kings, and Tulare, over there--I didn't travel throughout all fifty-eight counties after I came back. I wasn't doing a concentrated effort until I had to do the Conference on Families Who Follow the Crops, and that let me get around again some. I saw some of the old places then.

Meiklejohn School for Social Studies (ca. 1934-40)

Morris: Tell me about some of the conversations that you and Leslie had on what you were doing and what she was doing.

Wyckoff: My goodness, it's hard to remember.

Morris: I wondered how much direction she got from the board, or if they pretty much left it to her to get a handle on what was going on throughout the state that they might--
Morris: Was your husband, Hubert, also studying at the Meiklejohn School?

Wyckoff: He went for a while, but he got terribly intolerant of it. He thought it was fuzzy. "Fuzzy doings," he said. The word was fuzzy. He had already read all the books, though, because he loved anything to do with great books. Living in the same house that John Powell and Charles Hogan did, we had Meiklejohn morning, noon, and night. We didn't need to go to a class—we lived it.

Food for Freedom: Washington, 1941-45

Wyckoff: Now, getting back to Leslie Ganyard, I think probably the most significant thing that occurred there was after the war, when I first came back here to Watsonville in 1946. In Washington, I had carried along my interest in the farm labor situation, although it wasn't a main thing. My job there was with an organization called Food for Freedom. We tried very hard to establish the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization in the United Nations. We lobbied for it. And we also tried very hard to preserve the Farm Security Administration, which is the thing that ran the twenty-two camps, remember. So I was in touch with this whole farm labor thing, even though I had always lived in San Francisco or Berkeley.
3. GRASSROOTS BASE IN WATSONVILLE

Wyckoff: After the war was over, we came down here to Watsonville, where Hubert's father had a law firm for many years. So we came and settled here.

Morris: How did you feel about coming to settle in Watsonville?

Wyckoff: Oh, I was just so happy about it because I had always wanted to live in the country, and I knew, from having worked in Washington, how eager people were to hear from small country towns. A letter from the boondocks, a little town, means more in Washington than from the big organizations. You see, the farmer lobby there is extremely potent, especially because of the seniority system, where Senate committees are run by rural Senators, and these little country letters can mean something. So I thought: hah! I'm going now where I can write some letters [laughs].

Morris: You wouldn't mention in your letter that you'd spent several years in Washington and several years in San Francisco?

Wyckoff: I wouldn't mention a thing about that, no. I told them all about just how deep the topsoil was. [Laughter]

New Opportunities with the TB Association, 1947

Wyckoff: Anyway, I came back here and did not have any special interest in the subject of health, and this is where Rosenberg really came in.

I thought about what I should do here, and I really didn't want to do anything for a while. Then I thought, "Well, I'll go on the board of TB Association." Someone asked me to do that.

So I did. At that time, Alice Earl Wilder, who was the executive director of the TB Association--
Morris: For California or for the county?

Wyckoff: Just for this county. The TB Association was really important because we really had no other health program here at all. We had a miserable health department. It never did anything. It had a one-fourth time health officer, one nurse, and one sanitarian.

Morris: This would be before there was the 1946 state law to establish county health departments and really get them staffed.

Wyckoff: Yes, I would say it was about that time. Anyway, she went up to Rosenberg Foundation and asked for a mobile X-ray machine—a truck and a machine and an operator.

Morris: Did you tell her that Rosenberg was there, or did she already know about the Foundation?

Wyckoff: Oh, she knew Leslie well. They'd been to school together. They were good friends. Alice Earl was an astounding person. You really ought to interview her. She has the memory of an elephant. Oh! She remembers everything that has every happened in her lifetime. She's still alive, and I'd certainly recommend her for an interview.

Anyway, Leslie was smart enough to see that Alice was ambitious. In those days it was considered a great glory to go touring up and down the country in a truck with "TB Association" written on it. That looks fine and people feel good about it, and it helps to sell Christmas Seals. Leslie knew that there had to be more than that. So she said: you may have it, provided you take a health educator and put her in the Health Department.

Morris: How did Alice Wilder react to that?

Wyckoff: Well, she was startled, but she took it. I mean, she wanted the truck, and so Leslie just bargained with her. [Tape interruption]

So, the Rosenberg grant really made it possible to hire Mary Jane Neal.

Morris: She was the educator?

Wyckoff: She was a health educator who had been trained by Dr. Dorothy Nyswander, in the UC School of Public Health. They trained in the theory of community organization. This was really part of that coordinating council period, when you accomplished your purposes by organizing people so that they did the thing that was needed for themselves. You didn't do it for them. That was the whole philosophy with them. And to do this, you had to give people the tools to work with.

Oh, look at that little bird. Isn't he sweet?
Morris: Just beautiful.
Wyckoff: We put peanuts out there for them, and they come looking for them.
Morris: Pretty little crested thing. Do you know his name?
Wyckoff: I have to get my bird book out. I'm not a big Audubon type. [Laughs]
Morris: You can't cover all the phases of human endeavor.
Wyckoff: No, no.

Organizing the Pajaro Valley Health Council

Wyckoff: So, Mary Jane came to see me. We lived in an old farm house up the road from here, and she came wandering in to the garden, and she said: would you be willing to help organize a health council here in the Pajaro Valley?

That's the name of this valley. I said yes, I would. So we started in working. Now, I have the whole story of this carefully written out for you.* So I was wondering why I should try to stumble through it, when it's all carefully told, in great detail.

Morris: Fine. That would be a marvelous supporting document.
Wyckoff: We formed this health council, which really was a citizens committee intended to educate the citizens by getting maximum participation of every person that could be involved, all the way from the status people--like the presidents of all the banks and the people who were running important business, whatever we had here--and people from all walks of life: conductors on railroads, farmers, housewives, and so on. Some county agencies were represented and the Red Cross and social agencies.

Morris: And this was all under the aegis of the TB Association?
Wyckoff: No, no. This was not. The TB Association was part of it, and it was through their grant that we got a health educator in the county, but

Wyckoff: they weren't dominating it at all. This was done as the Pajaro Valley Health Council, which was part of the Santa Cruz County Health Councils. There was also San Lorenzo Valley Health Council; each area had its own health council. They were community health councils, and they looked at the condition of the water, the condition of the sanitation, the condition of the milk, the meat, the child health, the immunization—all of the different facets of public health that you can imagine.

Morris: Marvelous.

Wyckoff: They had subcommittees, and they studied all the health laws, and they saw whether they were applied properly, and they fired up organizations like the Farm Bureau, of all things, to really get in and dig and do some tremendous work on this thing. Hulda Hoover McLean (that's Herbert Hoover's niece), who became a county supervisor on the strength of what she did on this health council, designed a community organization plan for conducting a health survey, which was used nationally by the Farm Bureau, finally.

Morris: Was she on the board of the Farm Bureau, or was she active in the Farm Bureau?

Wyckoff: Her husband was the paid director of it. And Hulda was always very active in it. Hulda, of course, is an ardent, working Republican, and so is Alice Earl Wilder, incidentally, and they were very strong-minded about the need for this thing. Right in the middle of it, a very beautiful young man, who had just come back from the military, died of brucellosis.

Morris: Oh, dear.

Wyckoff: Everybody knew him. He was a member of the committee. And his death was due to the lack of pasteurized milk in this county. Now, Mary Jane was smart enough to grab that incident and say: pasteurization is something you've never had. You're one of the few counties that doesn't have it, and we'd better get busy.

So we went down in a body and got a pasteurization ordinance. This was remarkable, because the dairy farmers who were members of the Farm Bureau didn't want pasteurization. It was expensive. They really had their chickens come home to roost that time. It was really a hard fight. Anyway, pasteurization was put through.

Morris: Going back to the health councils, was health an issue on which Republicans and Democrats could work comfortably together?

Wyckoff: They could agree. Yes, Democrats and Republicans know when the bacillus attacks them that politics doesn't—
Morris: It does not respect whether you're an in or an out.

Wyckoff: It doesn't. So we were able to work together on this health council. That really was the start of my interest in public health.

I give the Rosenberg Foundation a lot of credit for that. I give Leslie the credit for having seen that Alice's idea would never work without the community organization professional brains behind it, and the only way to get it was to hire someone who really knew how to do it. So Leslie bargained with her until she got her to accept it.

Morris: That sounds like it was a very simple process of two directors, in effect. Did either of them have to involve their boards? In other words, did Mrs. Wilder have to get approval from her board?

Wyckoff: Oh, yes.

Morris: And did Mrs. Ganyard come down and chew this over with the whole group?

Wyckoff: I told this story a number of times to the Conference of Social Work; it's in the Bulletin I gave you. I was very active in the Conference then, you see.

Morris: Did the Conference include both people with professional training and the volunteer leadership?

Wyckoff: The California Conference of Social Work has a long history, and you have rows of its publications in the library, for all I know. It was all the county welfare staffs, plus all the private agency boards and staffs. People came who were interested in social work problems of any kind. And this covered health, it covered welfare, it covered labor; it covered an infinite variety of things: legislators, church leaders, labor officials, and so on.

Morris: And it also included volunteer leaders?

Wyckoff: Yes, it did. All the Community Chest agencies were in it, very definitely, and all the boards. They encouraged board membership in a very great way. Before the war, there were many more board members than after the war. It got a little too professional, finally.

The social workers finally formed a union for themselves and pulled away, which was good because that left the other organization one in which the volunteers could participate--

Morris: Did that become the California Association for Health and Welfare?

Wyckoff: I think it did, yes.
Wyckoff: Now, do you want to glance through this pile of papers while I get us some lunch? They all relate to grants made by Rosenberg. I put these together mainly to get the dates in my own head. They go back to the Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth and the Rural Health and Education Committee, which received grants from Rosenberg Foundation.

Morris: [Looking through papers] And come up to 1967.

Wyckoff: I have all the letters from governors and the financial records I kept on the Rosenberg grants. [See Foundation Series papers.]

[Lunch break]
How Can the California Conference of Social Welfare Locate Unmet Needs

Florence R. Wyckoff
Santa Cruz County Citizens Health Council

There is no doubt about the sincerity of the present Conference leaders in wanting to encourage participation of laymen in the work of the Conference. That is the reason for my invitation to present this paper today.

It came as somewhat of a surprise to me to find that the layman is a pretty rare bird around the Conference now. So, in being invited to speak here today, I feel like the man who dined and wined so well at a country pot-luck dinner that he had to be helped home by a friend. The way home led them across an irrigation ditch that was spanned by one of those beautiful curving high Japanese bridges. When his friend had succeeded with great effort and difficulty in propelling him to the peak of the bridge, they paused to rest before negotiating the treacherous descent.

The man in need of help leaned over the rail and saw the reflection of the moon in the water below.

"What is that?" he asked.

"That is the moon," said his friend.

"Well," said he, "if that is the moon down there, what in the world am I doing up here?"

It is a risky business to turn a layman loose among professionals with a license to say anything she wants. For one thing she's likely to reminisce, and that's just what I want to do for a moment. A dozen years ago we went through a trial by fire which seems to me to have been forgotten. It was then the Conference developed the techniques of working successfully with laymen to a high degree.

In the last analysis it is the laymen who are responsible for whatever social welfare programs we may have. They are the ones who pass the laws or don't pass the laws. They make the final decisions. Here they need all the help and wisdom that the professional social worker can give. If the two groups work in close harmony and with mutual confidence, better decisions will be made. This kind of cooperation is the thought I would like to develop.

In the past, when many of us belonged to the California Conference, it was a great and vigorous public forum where ideas were hammered out in the midst of the smoke and heat of a severe social crisis. Those were the days of the depression, mass unemployment, the widespread agitation for old-age pensions, and the dust-bowl migration which flooded California with homeless families. Both experts and laymen were then concerned about what should be done about the growing poverty and destitution in our midst. Citizens from all walks of life were thinking about it—not just social workers, but civic groups, church groups, labor unions, women's groups, special interest pressure groups, and the man in the street.

The professional social worker worked shoulder to shoulder with voluntary groups trying to cope with mounting problems. As laymen we felt we were in an equal partnership with the trained workers, each giving the best he was capable of giving. There were bitter arguments, but the purpose was high, human needs were desperate, and there was a clear understanding that any improvements in social welfare legislation could be accomplished only through the understanding and cooperation of the majority of our citizens.
It is a tribute to the social workers of that time that you rolled up your sleeves and tackled the problem with practical realism, both from a political and professional standpoint. You acted unselfishly and devotedly. You won a respect for your profession which is permanently remembered by all who were associated with you. You were slandered, persecuted and abused by some rather powerful groups in our society, all of which you bore with courage and equanimity. I like to think you were helped by the large number of plain citizens who stood firmly behind you in spirit.

Here is where the Conference made an important contribution. It opened its doors to all citizens who were interested in social welfare, and many of us came in eager and willing to learn, and to serve as best we could. Much was accomplished under the guiding hand of the Conference, because it somehow seemed to put everyone to work. Each member had a sense of dignity and self-respect in knowing he was doing something intelligent to help. With all the pulling and hauling, it was a fine example of democracy at work. However, the Conference was in the mainstream of the conflicting forces of the times. Often we got into heavy seas when the weather was so rough we thought the Conference was going on the rocks. In fact, after I left, I understand that a lot of things, some good and some bad, were thrown overboard in order to keep the ship afloat. Be that as it may, the Conference must not lose its rare ability to stimulate citizenship responsibility—which is the main-spring of the American people.

Now that I have this big load off my chest, we can get down to the business of discussing the methods the Conference can use in trying to locate unmet needs, which is the topic of this paper. The early history of the Conference proves pretty clearly that if the right methods are used from the beginning, the problem of getting action in solving social problems can be relatively easy.

This series of regional meetings is a healthy sign that the Conference is trying to proceed in a sound democratic manner. The functions and the program of the Conference decided upon after this series of meetings will be much better than if the decisions had been made in a back room by a group of experts. The leadership will be the wiser for it, and the membership will have greater understanding of the problems of social welfare, and greater confidence in the organization. It was through these methods that the Conference attained its widespread influence and effectiveness throughout the state.

Coming now to the community level, it is clear that the Conference can be of great service provided it is willing to work on a broad and democratic base. Let me give you a specific example of the kind of work the Conference can do:

Here in Santa Cruz County we had a pretty badly run down health department and some serious health hazards resulted. The per capita expenditure a year ago was only $34, one of the lowest in the whole state. The county hospital was in bad shape for lack of beds, equipment and personnel. The skimpy budget allowed for only one public health nurse for 12,000 people, and the small staff, with all its earnest efforts, could not keep up with the health needs of the people. The sanitation work was falling far behind, and there was little or no enforcement of health laws. Worst of all was the hopeless lethargy that seemed to have settled on the public.

We happened to have one fairly vigorous private health agency in the county, that is the Santa Cruz County TB Association. One strange and significant fact was that the budget of the TB Association here was for many years larger than the budget of the whole County Health Department. This demonstrated that the people were willing to give generously to a private agency in which they participated rather than to a public agency which really belonged to them, but for which they had lost all sense of responsibility. For example in 1937 I am told, the county's first budget for a health department was about $45.00. That year the TB Association raised about $1,700 from its sale of Christmas Seals and out of that they paid the salary of a clerk for the Health Department. In 1939 the county paid half of the salary of the clerk and the TB Association paid the salary of a health nurse for the county. Finally the county took over the salary of the health nurse, and so on with the private agency trying to meet the needs and the county reluctantly facing its public responsibility. Last year the TB Association decided to try a new approach. They asked their state office to send down a highly trained expert to make a survey of conditions in the county. He made a fine report to be sure, and told a lot about the health situation in the county, but like many such worthwhile reports it began to gather dust on the shelves, because few people knew about it, read it, or understood it. But it was highly technical and no doubt accurate. However, it did not lead to anything. So the TB Association decided to try again. This time they arranged through a foundation for a health consultant to come down and stay here and work with us. Then things began to happen.

Now I want to give you the details of the steps taken in this case because I believe it demonstrates an effective way to locate unmet needs and furthermore to get something done about them, on the community level.

First, the presidents of about 48 county organizations were asked to submit lists of names of public spirited citizens from whom a Citizens Health Planning Committee was selected. Ninety-eight per cent of them were laymen, the rest were doctors. Here a lot of credit goes to the doctors because they didn't try to control the committee and were willing to sit down and work patiently with laymen. The committee was not dominated or sponsored by the Health Department, the medical profession, the TB Association or any other particular group. It was a good cross-section of the community. This group, with the help and guidance of our health consultant, drew up plans for a county wide survey of health conditions to be made by the citizens themselves. The work was divided into different subjects such as communicable diseases, child care, maternal care, water and sanitation, housing, milk and food handling, VD, TB, industrial health, etc. etc. A series of very simple questionnaires was prepared for the use of the survey workers. It was not required that any worker have specialized knowledge, but only that he be interested enough to take the job. Most of the questions were ones to which the answers might easily be found in the county health records. Then the planning committee asked a large group of people to volunteer as survey workers, and it was encouraging to see how willing people are to be of service in the public welfare when they are asked to do something specific.

The facts assembled by the survey may not have been as complete or as accurate as the survey of the trained expert, but the main facts were correct and, what is more important, the basic issues became understood by a good cross section of all the citizens, who could now speak about them from first hand knowledge.

Aside from the actual data collected, there were two important things accomplished by the survey:

First, in the course of the work the members of the committee got more and more interested in finding out about the existing laws and their enforcement or lack of it. As a member of the water and sanitation committee I can tell you from my own experience that we certainly had our eyes opened!
Second, as we brought in our material to report at the joint meeting of all the committees, we saw clearly the extraordinary interrelationship of these health problems. For example, communicable diseases related to sanitation and to housing in many cases, and so on. It was here that we began to locate the gaps in our present services. Here we all began to see and understand together what the "unmet needs" were.

Now we are embarked upon a community-wide effort to correct the health hazards in our area and make our community a better, cleaner, healthier, and more beautiful place for all of us to live in. We have a permanent citizens health council organized in both Watsonville and Santa Cruz. Among these groups are representatives of most of the large and influential organizations in the county, together with representatives of the press, who have played an important part in public education on these issues.

Since the first of last May when the work started there has been rapidly growing public support for measures to improve health conditions. For one thing the report of the expert who came down and surveyed the county has been carefully studied and understood by quite a number of people. Already we have progressed from having one dangerously overworked doctor who held two full-time jobs, that of medical director of the County Hospital and administrative officer of the Health Department, to two men working full time. Little by little funds are being provided for improvements in our inadequate services. In less than a year the per capita expenditure of funds from all sources for public health in the county has gone from 38¢ to a dollar. We still haven't enough nurses or trained sanitarians, and our salary scales are so low that it is almost impossible to find anybody willing to take the jobs. We are still far down on the list of California counties in the service provided, but we are making headway. We are wide awake and busy working out plans for action. In Watsonville for example, the Citizens Health Council is working for a community health center, with a 24-hour emergency first-aid station, and quarters for the health department, the county welfare, the Red Cross, and the TB Association. This will include facilities for the VD and X-ray work and child health conferences. We are also working on plans for a clean and healthful public camp for seasonal workers and their families to try to eliminate the ditch bank camps and unsanitary conditions which are a threat to the health of the whole community.

The Council has the advantage of not being tied down to any one agency, so it can look at the whole problem broadly and see what services are lacking. It is free to act whenever a pressing need becomes apparent, and in relation to any agency or level of government.

What success we have attained has been due to the fact that the work has been carried out by a combination of a very few professional workers and many laymen working in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation.

We were very fortunate to secure the services of an excellent person for our health consultant. She was trained under Dr. Dorothy B. Nystrand, Professor of Health Education at the University of California. It is hard to say if it is her training or her character that gives her that peculiar genius for letting other people get the credit. She knows it is far better to delegate work than to do it herself, even though from the standpoint of efficiency she would doubtless have done it much better than any of us. But then she should never have learned anything. She has been quietly helpful, but has never taken the lead away from the Committee or the Council.

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She had the vision to see that independence is a much prized quality in a community with a strong pioneer tradition, and that no citizens committee would survive if it were dominated by any government department or professional or any other group.

The project has its roots in the old New England Town Meeting idea, and is a lively bit of democracy. I have described this local experiment to you in considerable detail because it offers what seems to me to be a most effective technique in locating unmet needs. There is no reason why this type of community action cannot be tried in every county in the state. I do not mean in the field of health alone, but in any field of social welfare.

Here is an opportunity for the California Conference of Social Welfare to do for other counties what has been started here. Through its membership it could stimulate the formation of citizens committees on any pressing welfare problem. Through the survey system the subject can be studied by a fair sized group of citizens. Then the resulting facts can be evaluated and the unmet needs recognized. Common sense and practical considerations will probably dictate the priority of projects to be undertaken. Then a course of action can be planned and the survey committee turned into an action committee. To accomplish the desired results, of course, it is necessary to get the people of the community back of you, and to get the cooperation of some public officials, but these objectives should not be difficult if the first steps have been taken in a sound democratic fashion with a broad base.

The Conference state office can be of great assistance to such groups in providing information about available agency resources or competent individuals who can help with data on laws, regulations and background material, and to answer questions on the proper evaluation of findings of fact in the surveys, but the lead should never be taken away from the citizens committees. Otherwise their most valuable asset will be destroyed, that is, citizenship responsibility.
Morris: That was a beautiful lunch. What was the seasoning in that marvelous corn souffle?

Wyckoff: That's what we chicanas call salsa.

Morris: Shall we start with your appointment to the Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth?

Wyckoff: All right. I'll say a little bit about how I got there. What happened was that as a result of the Rosenberg Foundation funding a position and Mary Jane Neal coming down here and starting the Pajaro Valley Health Council, it accomplished so much in such a short time that it became a kind of prize example of what a rural community could do. Dr. Nyswander and Ann Haynes liked to use it as a model.

Morris: They were from the State Health Department?

Wyckoff: Yes. The School of Public Health and the Department of Public Health would go around talking about the 'model that we had developed here', giving Mary Jane and themselves the credit, and it was workable. It operated, and it was effective, in terms of doing the things that it set out to do. It got the milk pasteurized when it needed to be pasteurized. It got the Sudden Street ditch covered over, which was causing typhoid, and it did various things that needed to be done in this county. It seemed to be able to function without much money and without--it was a self-starter. It's still functioning. And it required nothing more than two dollars dues and a few postcards. There is a feeling of accomplishment about it that holds it together. People want to belong to a group that gets things done, that's all. It doesn't take a great deal of money to do that.

Well, this was sufficiently noticeable so that the health officer of the state--the director of Public Health, Wilton Halverson--was asked by the governor: would you recommend somebody for the Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth? We'd like you to recommend
Wyckoff: a layman--someone who's part of the community organization effort for health--and we'd like to have somebody who would be rural.

The word went around and Ann Haynes turned in my name. That's how I was nominated, and appointed by the governor. Watsonville sounds so beautifully rural, you know. It's a very pedestrian sounding place. Old Colonel Watson'll turn over in his grave to hear that.

So I received word that my name was submitted by Dr. Halverson. I was startled. And, of course, I accepted. I was delighted and a little bewildered. Then I went and called on Dr. Halverson.

Morris: In San Francisco?

Wyckoff: In Berkeley. Berkeley was the headquarters of the State Department of Public Health. And I asked him: what is it that you want me to do? What do you expect from me?

Morris: Before you'd been to the advisory committee?

Wyckoff: I hadn't been to any meetings of the group. I said: I have heard that you turned my name in. You must have wanted something. What was it you wanted? I'd like to know what you expect.

And he was surprised that I had confronted him so bluntly and directly. He said: well, I think it would be nice if you were to acquaint yourself with the condition of children in rural areas throughout the state and keep the committee informed as to their condition. Travel around, look at things and make your own observations and then come and tell the committee what you see. I think that would make a good contribution.

Well, that was a fine answer to give to a layman, because I had no specialized professional background to work from.

Morris: You'd had some experience going around the State of California and looking at various kinds of communities.

Wyckoff: In the State Relief Administration, I had. I had been to the Farm Security camps. I knew about the Agricultural Workers' Health and Medical Association; I had seen it operate. I knew the Rosenberg Foundation's great nurse, Millie Delp. Do you know her?

Morris: Millie Delp?

Wyckoff: Oh, you ought to interview her. Millie Delp was "Planned Parenthood," the first Margaret Sanger nurse that went up and down this state. And
Wyckoff: Rosenberg funded her.*

Morris: Before World War II?

Wyckoff: Yes. And I knew her. I knew Dr. Anita Faverman very well, too. So I really did have a little background on this whole business of the health program. Farm Security was my idea of a model of how you reach people in the country, and I knew how the farm workers lived.

Fresno County: Infant Deaths and Agricultural Extension Workers

Wyckoff: I was appointed in 1948. It just so happened that in 1949 a crisis of unemployment developed due to early cotton picking and a long, wet winter. Hunger, cold, illness and misery became rampant in the farm labor camps and small towns all over the Valley. In one place, twenty-eight infant deaths occurred, and a big scandal arose in the Valley as to the cause.

Morris: The babies dying down there.

Wyckoff: Yes. Governor Warren asked the Department of Public Health to take the lead in setting up an emergency aid program. I went over there and helped to start the Fresno Rural Health and Education Committee, which was like a super health council.** It was formed to look at the problems of the people living on the Westside, they called it, which was the place where there were no small villages, no services, nothing. It was just a barren expanse of cotton field. There were a few crossroads, and really nothing. And these big, big labor camps.

*In 1939, Rosenberg made a grant of $1,800 to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., for "partial support of educational work of a nurse among migrant people of California," and in 1940 a $500 grant to Tulare County "toward inauguration of a birth control clinic." Ed.

Morris: Were some of those labor camps ones that had been started by the Farm Security Administration?

Wyckoff: No. Westside camps were all on growers' land. There was one Farm Security camp at Firebaugh.

[Wyckoff, softly] See the woodpecker out there in the tree? That's why we keep that dead tree he's sitting on. We like to see them.

Morris: He seems to feel that's his tree, too.

Wyckoff: Well, unfortunately, he likes to drill holes in my house, too. We keep the tree so he can work on that.

The Governor's Advisory Committee, then, began getting a series of reports from me on—I was a very lowly, new member.

Morris: Who was chairman at that time?

Wyckoff: Dr. Robert McKibben, a Methodist minister. He was head of the All-Nations Foundation. And later there was Don Howard, of course, and Mrs. Rollin Brown and then Roy Sorenson. They were chairmen, one after another, and I forget what order they came in.

Anyway, I was a very lowly member, and I had only the status of chairman of the rural health subcommittee. I served on other committees, too, such as the Adoption Committee, but I was chairman of the rural health subcommittee. Because nobody else gave a hoot about rural health but me. I'd try to get a few people interested. Usually they wouldn't show up.

Morris: Had they had a rural health committee prior to your presence?

Wyckoff: No. They didn't have anything like that at all.

Morris: I've wondered how it functioned.

Wyckoff: It was very hard to get them interested. Most of them were urban-centered people. They were awfully university-centered and urban-centered. But, on our Fresno Rural Health and Education Committee, we did have representatives from the agricultural extension service, the health department, the welfare department, Red Cross, and the schools and the housing agency, among others.

Rosenberg did a very great thing when they funded that agricultural extension worker—Irene Fagin, her name is.
[Asked to clarify Miss Fagin's role, Mrs. Wyckoff wrote the following on December 18, 1975.]

Miss Fagin was for many years a Home Advisor (home economist) for the UC Agricultural Extension Service in Berkeley. In 1949-51 she was assigned to the task force sent to the San Joaquin Valley by Governor Warren to coordinate state services to the people during the emergency there.* This was during the same period as the formation of the Fresno Rural Health and Education Committee, which was a parallel local effort to coordinate services in Fresno County where the crisis was very severe on the far west side of the Valley.

As UC Agricultural Extension's contribution to the services given by the task force group, Irene Fagin designed a new approach to extension services to low-income families. She trained Lillian Johnston in a totally new technique of working with migrant farmworkers. This innovation was funded as a demonstration for a short time by the Extension. Then the funds ran out and the experiment was almost ended. However, Miss Fagin spoke to a meeting somewhere when Leslie Ganyard was present. Mrs. Ganyard saw the opportunity for a good role for the Rosenberg Foundation. The upshot was that Rosenberg carried on the funding for two more years, permitting the training of Anna Price Garner, and I think also Georgia Wrenn and Gertrude Lausche.** After that, the local county extension offices got interested and picked up the idea, using materials developed by Miss Fagin and the others to train members of their staffs to work with low-income families. This they now do on a regular basis.

[Recorded interview resumes.]

Wyckoff: The two home extension agents Rosenberg funded—"home advisors," so-called—were to be totally new animals. They were to be entirely different from the usual home advisor who spends most of her time showing you how to run a General Electric oven and all those good things that you can do when you have money; or they might show how to make over last year's hat, or something like that.

These first two women were remarkable. They (Anna Price Garner and Lillian Johnston) were trained to go out and start at the level of the migrant mother who lived in a tent with a dirt floor and had one saucepan with a kerosene stove to cook on, and how you cope with that:

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**Beginning with a $22,000 grant in 1951. Ed.
Wyckoff: what you do; how you begin to try to cope with these fearful conditions. These women were so gifted that they were able to help these migrant mothers do just miraculous things, with no money, and improve their diet, their cleanliness, their capacity to survive.

I told my sister, Jane Hanks, Professor of Anthropology, about one of these women, Georgia Wrenn, and she invited Mrs. Wrenn to go to Cornell University, to a summer session, where the United Nations was bringing women from all over the world to discuss--I think it was the problems of rural poverty.

Look at the hummingbird. See him, trying to get in?

Morris: Beautiful thing, yes.

Wyckoff: Anyway, Georgia Wrenn, one of the new home advisors from UC Agricultural Extension Service, went back there, and my sister said the delegates from India and Pakistan and Africa crowded around her and said: you do have poverty in America, too, don't you?

This was the first time they discovered that we recognized that we had poverty, dreadful, grinding poverty in this country, and that here were some people trying to cope with it. My sister said they sat up all night with her and wouldn't let her rest because they were trying to pick her brains, they thought her ideas were so valuable.

She filled her car full of these five-cent saucepans and all the little kinds of dinky things that you have to work with when you live in utter poverty. So it was quite a remarkable thing. Now, Rosenberg funded that effort. They paid for those first two women, and it was a triumph of Miss Fagin's that she was able to get it through, because that Agricultural Extension Service has usually been run by the most conventional, unimaginative, orthodox people.

And dear Irene was trying so hard to pull the thing into the realistic world, but she was a very timid lady. You know, the timid ones sometimes accomplish more by just being determined in what they want.

Morris: Did she have the backing or support of your health education committee in going to Rosenberg?

Wyckoff: Yes, yes, yes. We were very eager to have her do this.
Morris: One more question about the statewide advisory committee as a whole: did it serve as a clearing house for various kinds of things going on in the state, and did it send out any kind of information sheet?

Wyckoff: Yes. It put out numerous publications. It sponsored statewide youth conferences, and made many valuable studies and stimulated interest and action. The Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth was a remarkable organization. I wish we had it again. Its function is needed in government, regardless of whether it's focused on children and youth. It can be focused on anything.

It was an established, continuing series of meetings about once a month; I think we met regularly quite often, usually for two days. There were thirty non-governmental citizens, from outside of government, who had no axes to grind, as far as a particular government program went. They were objective, in other words, and they were people who, I guess, could express the general public opinion on the problems of children, youth, and family life in all strata of society.

Then there were top-echelon professional people from the departments concerned with children. I think there were thirteen departments. These were the kinds of people who could make decisions, and who had the ear of the administrator sufficiently so that things could happen if they brought something back to them. And occasionally we would have the top person come. They were usually too busy to come; but we got a better working level, having somebody, for example, like Lucile Kennedy in the Department of Social Welfare, because Lucile lasted forever. The top administrators got shot down, but she was always there. She provided the continuity. She was a topnotch social worker and a really great person.

It wasn't only the fact that we met and talked with each other, but each department found out what the other departments were doing during the course of this work. And, do you know, there really is no good communication system in government. It's getting bigger and bigger, and people just across the hall from each other don't even know what's going on in their own agency.

So this was a clearing house in many ways. I must say, I think that the Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth was an effective working organization that's now sadly, sadly lacking. I don't see it anywhere else.
Rosenberg Foundation Presence

Morris: I was wondering if its mailing list would include some organizations like the Rosenberg Foundation?

Wyckoff: Well, Rosenberg almost always met with us. I don't think I can remember a meeting that was not attended by either Leslie Ganyard or Ruth Chance. They always attended. They wanted to know what was going on, and it was a good place to find out.

Morris: Yes, it would give them an insight into--

Wyckoff: They were almost always guests. Because I remember them many, many times. And if they didn't come, they may have sent somebody, I don't know. But I think they made it a policy of attending. They had a pretty big investment in it, too, because they had paid for many of the studies and publications--as you know, if you go through these lists.

Morris: Roy Sorenson was a member of the advisory committee for a while, too.

Wyckoff: A long time, yes. As a matter of fact, I think he was chairman for a while.

Morris: Probably; he was president of the Rosenberg board in the late '50s. What kind of a man was he?

Wyckoff: Oh, he was a delightful person. He had a wide range of interests, and he was not a narrow man at all. I learned it was hard for him to understand what I was up to because he was urban-centered. He would earnestly ask me lots of questions about it, so that he could get the meaning of what I was trying to do. These Conferences on Families Who Follow the Crops stirred up quite a lot of controversy, and he wanted to know more about them. So he asked me many, many questions.

You see, Roy was head of the YMCA in San Francisco, and the YMCA was always more conservative than the YWCA. The YWCA was always very pushy, out in front doing things that were controversial, and getting knocked down, but going on; and they still are.

I certainly have had some funny experiences with them. I'll never forget [laughs] in Berkeley when that Pacific Coast Labor School was going there; I was asked to take charge of recreation at St. Margaret's House--a small compact place, with no recreation areas, and here were these kids full of muscle and wanting to exercise. And I thought, "Well, YMCA has a swimming pool. I'll go down there." So I went right down. There was this dear little man at the YMCA desk, and I said, "We have some workers from San Francisco who are at the
Wckoff: Pacific Coast Labor School, in session at St. Margaret's House, and we need some recreation. I wonder if I could arrange for them to come down and have an hour of swimming or something of this sort with you."

And he said, in an awed voice, "My, you girls have a lot of courage." [Laughter] I'll never get over that.

Sponsoring Conferences on Families Who Follow the Crops

Wckoff: So Roy's background was one where he had charge of a lot of people who didn't want to rock the boat, and I think he rose above that level, to the point where he was—he was a person of courage and a person of vision and somebody who saw far beyond. But he came from a base that was narrow. It was difficult for him to do these things, because I know his boards were not progressive.

Morris: In other words, things that the Governor's Advisory Committee sponsored, his board would view--

Wckoff: His board might not have wanted to do.

Morris: What were his concerns about the Conferences on Families Who Follow the Crops?

Wckoff: I think he was concerned about whether we were creating a tension between the workers and the employers that was healthy. I had to explain quite clearly to him my belief, which was that the growers and the workers and the labor contractors and the people involved in that whole process should sit down across the table from each other and talk about some of their grievances against each other.

Morris: Like other kinds of labor-management situations.

Wckoff: Yes. And that this business of hiding behind a whole barrier of institutions and things would not solve anything; it would just make it worse. And that there should be a beginning of negotiating, a beginning of communication and talking. My husband was a labor arbitrator, you know; so, after all, I had some perspective on this.

"Labor relations" was only one part of the Conference discussions, because we were discussing education of both children and adults, which was a very important facet of the whole thing. We were discussing housing, we were discussing health and welfare. It all got down to a question he would ask me: well, why all these programs for farm-workers? Why should you have clinics for them, specially, separate
Wyckoff: from the clinics for other people? Why should you have special kinds of treatment for them in rural areas?

I had to explain to him: well, when the laws were originally drafted, you exempted farmworkers from the minimum wage law. You exempted them from the Unemployment Insurance Act. You exempted them from--they were not to be taken care of because they were outside the pale. All the city labor organizations were able to go in and get protective legislation for themselves, but there was nobody to speak for farmworkers then. Therefore, they got left out. They were traded off to buy the votes of rural legislators. So, their wages are depressed, and they can't buy medical care because they haven't any money to do it. So they've just got to learn how to get into the mainstream. They're shut off.

So Roy got the message, finally, but he wanted to know every step of the way.

Morris: Do you think he became supportive of what you were--?

Wyckoff: Oh, yes. Absolutely. Oh, yes, he attended meetings and he would come to the conferences in rural settings and do things to help. Yes. He may have interpreted the rural problems to the Rosenberg board.

Morris: In that marvelous description of these Westside clinics, you described these conferences as coming after the Westside clinics were started because nobody picked up on the idea.

Wyckoff: Right. The Governor's Advisory Committee agreed to put on these conferences as one of a group of organizations sponsoring them. If you'll notice the letterheads-- [See next page.]

Morris: A wide range of sponsorship.

Wyckoff: Well, they changed every year, with new people, different things. Helen MacGregor attended them all.

Morris: By the third conference, the whole back of the paper was covered with sponsors.

Wyckoff: That's right. I believed in putting down everybody's name that sort of helped the ball roll along, always with their written permission! Anyway, the Governor's Advisory Committee, if you'll notice, was only one of the sponsors. I didn't want people to feel that they weren't getting the credit for taking the lead. That was one thing that Dorothy Nyswander's Mary Jane taught us all, and it was an extremely valuable thing. So did the old social workers and the YWCA, 'way back, and that was that you don't get cooperation, you don't get the things moving, unless you give people plenty of credit for what's being done. If you try to take all the credit yourself, why then things don't function too well.
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Getting Growers and Farmworkers Together

Wyckoff: So in these Governor's Advisory Committee conferences we tried very hard to give everybody as much of a piece of the action as possible, and the interesting part--I think when we really matured was when we were able to get farmworkers and growers to sit down and start planning the new conference a year ahead, rather than just coming to it. It's easy enough to say, "Rosenberg, give us some money. We'll buy a ticket for a farmworker and send him there." But to get the farmworker to participate in planning the conference months in advance, that was hard to do. For one thing, it's hard for him to give up work that day, or hard for him to get off, or hard for him to take the time out. It's very hard to do that sort of thing. He has to be motivated.

And the grower is a busy man, too. It's very hard to get him to do this. So we had really severe problems in trying to get around-the-table participation. Now, you could get PTA women to come and help plan. You could get teachers and others to come and help plan; but to get the ones who really were the key people that you wanted to get there was a terribly hard job. And that's where we got help from indefatigable workers like Bard McAllister of American Friends Service Committee, and like Doug Still of the National Council of Churches. He was head of the Migrant Ministry for a while. And Howard Frazier.

Howard Frazier was one of the few federal people who worked steadily with us. He was an employee of the United States Department of Labor, and he thought those conferences were most important. [Walks away from microphone to let dog in.] He devoted untold hours of time and effort to getting these planning committees together. These conferences didn't just suddenly happen, you know. They were long, hard struggles and a lot of work. Whew!

That was why, when Reagan just brushed the whole thing off and abolished the Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth, I just decided--well, I wasn't going to struggle with it alone. Plus the fact that Cesar Chavez and Fred Ross and the CSO and the various organizations that had long been trying to get the farmworkers organized to the extent of identifying themselves as people who could do something as a group were finally succeeding. So in a sense "the show was on the road."

My role in the Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth was to serve the general public interest, especially that of the children involved. I'm not a labor organizer or personnel manager--somebody else has to do that. I'm neither an employer nor a farmworker, but a "consumer." So it's now up to the parties to make their bargain. I think what happened was that we just opened the
Wyckoff: door for them to start negotiating and gave them the impetus to begin doing it. I think that's all we could do. I really do. I don't have to do any more.

Morris: In going through your working papers on one of the conferences, I came across the name of Herman Gallegos. Was he from one of the farmworker families?

Wyckoff: Yes, he was one of the farmworker families. I think Herman went to work eventually for Ed Howden in the Council for Civic Unity. He moved to the city. I think he was with one of the early Mexican American organizations, too—CSO, or one of those. Well, you knew about Fred Ross and Saul Alinsky and that whole bit.

Community Development Controversy

Morris: I got a sense of differences of opinion in the pamphlet on that 1963 community development conference.* Did the health clinics get involved when some of the community development organizing became kind of controversial?

Wyckoff: Let me think. Ed Dutton was over in Fresno—I really ought to check this out. Do you have a copy of that conference on community development here?

Morris: I did bring it with me.

Wyckoff: Good. I want to look at the names and see what he gave as his title. You know who Ed was? He was the brother of Fred Dutton, and Fred was one of Governor Brown's assistants. When Governor Brown was defeated, Fred went back to Washington and worked for Kennedy and Johnson in the State Department.

Morris: This 1963 conference pamphlet has Ed at the United Community Fund.

Wyckoff: Jim Drake is not here. He became the assistant director of Migrant Ministry, I think, and then, I think, he went over to Chávez and became a lieutenant of his.

*Report of A Symposium on Community Development in California at Asilomar, July 9-12, 1963; made possible by the Rosenberg Foundation. Copy in Foundation Series papers.
Wyckoff: [Reading from pamphlet] Edward Dutton, Social Planning Consultant, United Community Fund of San Francisco. Well, later than that, then, he wound up in—not Delano; it was a little town over on the east side—Del Rey, where they set up a community development training center, which was funded with money from the OEO.

Morris: Was that the Center for Community Development? Rosenberg also made some grants to them.

Wyckoff: Something like that, yes. Yes, and he was head of it. [Reading from pamphlet again] Red Stephenson, from Richmond Neighborhood House; he was on the Governor's Advisory Committee. Avalon Community Center. Watts. And Opal Jones. What a lovely name. Avalon Community Center in Watts—those were the great people of that fearful time. Opal Jones was wonderful.

Youth Participation: Watts and After

Morris: At lunch, you were saying that the Ford Foundation was very helpful to the Governor's Advisory Committee during the Watts—

Wyckoff: Yes. Opal Jones, Roy Johnson, and Timothy Sampson were all from the Avalon Community Center, right in the heart of Watts. You see, one of the things that we were trying to do with this Youth Participation in Community Action was head off the very kind of thing that the Watts riot was all about. In other words, getting the vigorous, young people who were angry and unemployed and frustrated together to try to do something about it, and do it in a constructive way. So we had this plan. Did you see it? The Youth Participation in Community Action?

Morris: Yes. I came across it in your papers. I wanted to follow it--

Wyckoff: You have? Well, the theory was that we would try to get, in the most tense places throughout California—Oakland had a lot of them; Helen MacGregor was very, very sympathetic to that because she knew just what we were talking about.* Watts was another one. There were various places where there was either racial tension or tension of some kind that was making people terribly angry.

*After her years on Governor Earl Warren's staff, Ms. MacGregor served on the state Youth Authority board and was also active in interracial efforts in her home town of Oakland, California. See her memoir in The Bancroft Library. Ed.
Wyckoff: The plan was to get young people together in teams. There would be the high school level. There would be the junior college level, and then there would be just a little bit older, maybe the graduate student level. The idea was that the very young ones were much more apt to relate to and work with someone nearer their age than they would be to someone who belonged to another generation. The eighteen-year old youth responded to the younger ones who looked up to them, and so on up the ladder.

We had also a plan whereby people were not to have a structured program all laid out and handed to them, but they should get together and decide where something was badly needed in the community—where they wanted to do something, where they needed to have a voice—and then see how to do it together at all these different levels.

Well, it was quite an undertaking and, curiously enough, I was dumbfounded at some of the results. The Los Angeles County Board of Education finally agreed to allow one of the youngsters from the Watts schools to participate in all their meetings—closed sessions, everything. I was amazed that they were able to do this. Now it is fairly common, but then it was a big innovation.

In other words, they were trying to break barriers down to get a voice in here and a voice there. Our feeling was that if they could do this, it would speed up the changes that were needed; it would keep local government from being hung up on the wrong points that were not bothering the community, and it would awaken our officials to such things, for example, as the fact that Watts itself was totally without any means of transportation out or in.

Morris: That seems incredible.

Wyckoff: The incredibly awful things that people skirted around and just didn't face or believe happened—outsiders didn't realize what it was like to live there. And these youngsters could see this. So I really felt that that was one of the best projects we ever had.

Morris: Ford came in on this before or after the riot?

Wyckoff: I was trying to get the dates. I know that we had started very much on this before the riot, and if we had had a chance to go a little deeper, I think it might have made a difference; but we weren't able to. It occurred practically as we were getting off the ground, I think.

Anyway, we had a governor's conference in Long Beach, in which we brought all these youngsters in from all of these communities. Believe you me, these were kids that had been in trouble with the law and put in juvenile halls. These were not the easy kids. We believed
Wyckoff: in trying to work with the tough ones. The man who was head of it was Kenneth Beam. I think it really had a lot of merit as a way of tackling things. I still believe in it as the only sensible way.

[Airplane flies low overhead.] I'm afraid we're going to get a little flak from that airplane. It's a crop duster.

Morris: I saw one spraying the orchards this morning. It smelled like sulfur.

[Phone interruption. New tape started.]

Wyckoff: I might study all this to refresh my memory a little more, to get my sequences right, time-wise. I might have to straighten this out afterwards.

Morris: You can do that when we have a transcript of this interview.

Wyckoff: All right. Now, let's see what questions you ask here. [Reading] "Nineteen forty-eight to sixty-eight, Governor's Advisory Committee on Youth." It was on children and youth, and we never would allow it to be just on youth. It started out focused on children in trouble with the law. We called it the 'youth committee' occasionally, though, just to make it short.*

[Again reading from paper] "Clearing house for statewide youth matters." Yes, there were just so many, many different kinds of conferences we had. We had to do all the preparing for the White House conferences, of course, and then we had these interim conferences that were half-way points. See, every ten years was the White House conference; every five years was the interim conference. We'd call them town meetings, or we'd call them things that people could rally around and assess their communities and decide what the needs were. We tried very hard to have lots of regional or county meetings, as a preliminary before the big meeting. So people would bring in a report of what they had from their own local situation to the big meeting.

We also tried very hard, as time went on, to get more and more youth participation in those conferences, and that's where Rosenberg was enormously helpful. They paid for the participation of some of the minority students that we simply could not get any other way. We were able to work out a lot of funding mechanisms besides Rosenberg's to get the youngsters to attend, and I really think those experiences

*Originally, it was the Youth in Wartime Committee, appointed by Governor Warren in 1942. Ed.
Wyckoff: were of great importance to those young people. I hear about them now, long years later, and they're memorable experiences. They became very enthusiastic and very excited over all the new ideas presented and being able to debate, and it was a very stimulating thing for them. Of course, we scared the governors half to death. [Laughter]

I'll never forget that time we had a conference in Long Beach, and we had all these youngsters from Watts who came in; they were a hardy-looking lot, I can tell you. This was before the time when they dress the way they do now. In those days, it was a surprise to see somebody with an Afro clear out to here and a striped robe and beads and all those things. We hadn't seen those things, you know.

Morris: But this was the first time you began to see that?

Wyckoff: They began to see those. And the governor appeared, and there was a great poster, saying, "Come to the entertainment tonight, at the Governor's Youth Conference. Music by The Cannibals and the Head-hunters." [Laughter] Governor Brown had to laugh.

Morris: About the same time that she went to Rosenberg in 1958, Ruth Chance was on the State Board of Social Welfare. Did you have any contact with her in that role? I wondered if she sat in on any of these conferences.

Wyckoff: I knew of her, and, of course, she was a lawyer; Hubert knew her as a lawyer, I think. He knew her husband quite well, but I never knew Ruth, really, until she got--I didn't know her well, just slightly. I think I knew her through Jane McCaskle. Jane was a very good friend of mine. I've known Jane for many years. I think I used to see her occasionally at the California Conference of Social Work, because I had done a lot of work for them, of course.
Morris: Okay. Then, there were other conferences that seemed to relate to the later development of the health clinics. There was the state Conference on Employment in '49, and then the Report on the Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley, 1951. Jack O'Neill was active in that. What's the federal tie-in? I've always heard them referred to as governors conferences--is this the Rural Health and Education Committee your pamphlet says was funded by the National Consumers League? And they prodded Governor Warren?

Wyckoff: Well, in 1950 the Fresno Rural Health and Education Committee was formed. Tom O'Neill was head of it. Tom and Jack O'Neill were big cotton farmers there, and they were two very different men. They were brothers, but they were totally different. I think Tom was an adopted brother. He was not of the same character at all. Jack O'Neill was the typical benevolent, patriarchal type, who believed that he should decide what was good for you. He decided that it was good for his workers to have a clinic, but that he would take charge of it, run it, and he wouldn't have any camp committees or citizens' committees or anybody messing around with it. He would handle all that himself. He had a very different approach.

Tom O'Neill, on the other hand, said: I will have a clinic in my camp, on my farm, and I want to have camp committees. I want to have the farmworkers help build the clinic, help furnish the clinic, help staff the clinic. I want to share--

He was a very humble man and a very thoughtful person, rather silent, kind of shy and inarticulate, but the kind of person that you could work with to build the kind of a health organization where people participated in taking care of themselves. The other man seemed to arouse a great deal of resentment among his workers, who felt--well, that he's a big boss man. When they were frustrated,
Wyckoff: They'd want to vandalize or destroy or do something to show their displeasure. So they were both different.

Russell Giffen was another enormously interesting man who participated in that whole thing. Mind you, the size of these farms you can't conceive. I happened to pick up a copy of the Coalinga paper and see that Russell Giffen had borrowed about $35 million just to plant one crop, and the banks weren't big enough to give it. So he had to get Clayton Anderson and the federal government to loan it. This kind of thing was going on over there.

It was just incredible how large the operations were. Russell Giffen was quite a progressive man. He was one of the first growers to say that he thought workers ought to have unemployment compensation, that they should have unemployment insurance, or that they should have disability insurance—things of this sort. He had been a dust bowl Okie, and he worked his way up to be a multimillionaire. He was a self-made man, a really remarkable man. At one point he was very bitter because he had built a clinic and a housing project for his workers, in the Jack O'Neill style—done it for them: 'here's something nice for you'—and they had destroyed it completely, just torn it apart.

Well, he was very resistant to trying to cooperate. He was mad, you know. He was going to strike back. This nurse was smart enough to get him to make one more try, and she said: now, let's see if we can't give the farmworkers a part in this, so that they will feel it's their clinic and they're running it and they're helping to make it a success, and see if that doesn't work. You give the land, and we'll see if we can get some outside funds to do this, and they'll help build it and put it together. We'll make it a cooperative effort.

So they did, and it worked. And Giffen, afterwards, said: well, I didn't think it would work, but I'm glad to find out that you all have a stake in it now.

So there was eventually this kind of cooperation. Actually, Five Points in Fresno is a very untypical place to work. It only represents the westside. I realized that one of the reasons why our demonstration programs didn't happen elsewhere was, for example, where would you ever find a school district in which all the taxpayers were on the school board? The westside was just the opposite of the eastside of the Valley, where there were many small farms and communities.

Morris: There were only five taxpayers? That does make you stop and think.
School Services

Wyckoff: You see, these ranches were so enormous, and the concentrations of wealth were so great that it was easy to have a school board meeting, and they'd say: well, we'll double our taxes, and--

Morris: You'd have a referendum right there.

Wyckoff: "We'll do these things. We'll see if we can make this school a really good thing." And they did--a marvelous school. [Laughs] They had a school you wouldn't believe out there. A kid would come in in the morning, and he would get a shower, and he would get clean clothes, and he would get a breakfast and a snack in the middle of the morning, and he would get lunch, and--my land, I mean, there was a nurse there all the time. Helen Cowan Wood wrote that marvelous book, which was funded by Rosenberg, to teach those children.* The whole theory of that--have you ever read it?

Morris: I've read excerpts from it, yes.

Wyckoff: The whole theory of that book was to make every day worthwhile, regardless of whether we had the child for another day. Today, in and of itself, should be worthwhile. That was one of the first books that was ever written with that idea, that there didn't have to be continuity, that it wasn't so necessary, that what you had to do was make the experience of today one in which the child had a sense of success, a sense of having done something worthwhile. And it gave a wholly different effect.

Of course, you had to train the teachers to do it this way, and that was where that wonderful man Gunderson--Martin Gunderson was one of the great school men of the world. He grasped the problem of what he had, this flow of people in and out and these children who were coming and going.

Morris: Was he the county superintendent?

Wyckoff: No, he was the principal of Five Points School. (That Five Points School became the Martin Gunderson School.) He was one of the best men I have ever known. He stuck it out and died out there.

Yes, I think he was a heroic figure. He educated the growers as well as the farmworkers. He was the one who had the most influence with them and got them to go along and do things, where the nurses

*Handbook on Teaching Children Who Move with the Crops.
Wyckoff: would try—they would do some pretty desperate things to try to get cooperation, like putting a dead baby on the desk in front of a grower: you won't permit us to have a clinic? Look.

You know, this kind of thing is hard to do. They would do things like that.

But Martin Gunderson lived with them. He was out there. Anybody who was willing to live on the westside, fifty miles from the nearest community, and be there all the time and be very patient with them, was somebody who had a great deal of respect from them. You know, the wives of those growers who lived out there had to be pretty good to take it, too. It was another world. And they all worked in clinics. They were good. It was a cultural desert.

Morris: Did their kids go to the Five Points School?

Wyckoff: Up to a point, and then they were shipped away to boarding school and that sort of thing. But that was an excellent school.

The big problem was the fact that you had this flow through, where the population dropped, and then they got an influx of migrants.

Morris: From one end of the year to the other.

Wyckoff: Yes, up to two thousand kids, all of a sudden. It was a very interesting society, but you can see it was not an average society. Therefore, you couldn't draw conclusions from it. California's agriculture is different from Alabama's agriculture or from Iowa or any of the agriculture of the rest of the country, in that it is what they call 'labor intensive' agriculture. It involves large quantities of labor for a short time, and this is socially a very difficult thing to cope with. When you are a migrant farmworker with children, trying to send them to school, it is very difficult. And to get a farmworker family to work out a way of life in a seasonal industry like agriculture is very hard.

There were some very interesting experiments that went on over there. There was a man—Frank Coit—who invented a fishing reel factory to put his workers to work in the winter, to make steady, year-round employment for them, so they wouldn't have to migrate. This was about 1952.

Morris: Very creative.

Wyckoff: He was really creative. Frank Coit grew cotton and melons, and he lived in Mendota, which is the end of the world. I think I made a trip with Leslie Ganyard to Mendota, when she first went into the community center funding business. I think I did go out with her there one time.
Anyway, this man was remarkable. He tried to solve the problem of seasonal unemployment. He made a fishing reel factory, and the women could make little, tiny wheels and things and put those things together, and they were very clever at doing this. So the women got most of the jobs in the winter, and the men had the jobs of picking melons and doing all the stuff in the summer. He made a heroic effort to try to create year-round jobs for his workers. Some of the others have tried it, too. They've tried it with crop rotation and various other things, but it's never been very successful as far as I know.

Morris: Tell me about Bruce Jessup and how he became involved in the health story.

Wyckoff: Oh, I didn't get that in--?

Morris: We don't have it on tape.

Wyckoff: Well, Bruce Jessup in 1959 had just been funded by Rosenberg to work on the faculty of Stanford Medical School as a kind of outside, outreach person who would try to relate the work of the medical school more to the community and not quite so much to the ivory tower. About the time that he went there, we had a little regional meeting of the Conference on Families Who Followed the Crops at a school in Santa Clara. Our method of holding these regional conferences was to simply ask the local people who lived in rural areas to come in and tell us the stories of what they did and what their problems were with respect to housing and health and welfare and employment and all the rest of it, to start building the next program for the Annual Conference and see where action might be needed.

We were particularly interested in young people, since this was sponsored, as you know, by the California Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth. So we invited some young farmworkers to come in and tell us the conditions in which they lived in Santa Clara County, which at that time was growing urban but still had many rural areas in which there were migratory farmworkers. And a bright young woman, who belonged to an organization called the 'Diamantes,' came in, and she described the conditions under which they lived and how proud she was of the efforts of these young people in a tiny little club to help the less fortunate mothers and children in the labor camps.

Bruce Jessup, whom we did not know at that time, was sitting in the back of the room, and one of the speakers told the story of the Westside clinics in Fresno. They were just beginning to start, and
Wyckoff: the results were just beginning to be known, in terms of the effect on infant mortality, the effect on the improvement of the health of farmworkers. Bruce Jessup finally couldn't contain himself anymore. He leapt up and he said: do you mean to tell me we have these conditions right in our backyard, right in the back yard of the Stanford Medical School, and we didn't even know anything about it? I want to find out more about this.

The meeting broke up, and he came forward and he said: well! I just can't believe the story of the Fresno Westside Clinic. I'm going to find out about this. In fact, I'm leaving tonight. Give me some names.

So we gave him the names of the physicians in the clinics over there, including Dr. Patricia Henderson, and he took off and went over. When he came back he was convinced it was true. He became an eloquent speaker before the American Public Health Association and before various bodies on what he had seen over there. It was his great enthusiasm that finally made Dr. Merrill* select him as the man who should do the survey which laid the groundwork for the passage of the Migrant Health Act in the State of California, and later the National Migrant Health Act.

We give him a lot of credit for getting the whole show off the ground. He became the first director of the Farm Labor Health Service as a result. It was all very well to have this small program in California. The first state appropriation was about $125,000, but it has remained that ever since. It's never gone up, partly because of the fact that everybody thought, "Well, let the Feds do it" (the excuse being that some migrants came from out of the state). It was the first statewide, state-sponsored health service for migratory agricultural workers. The state act was passed with the support of the California Farm Bureau, the state PTA, the Rural Committee of the CMA, the AFL, and the churches.

Morris: Were there any federal funds?

Wyckoff: There were no federal funds at that time. This was just before the White House Conference on Children and Youth.

Morris: That would be the 1960 conference?

*Malcolm Merrill, M.D., then director of the State Department of Public Health.
Wyckoff: The 1960 conference. The California Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth was sending a large delegation back to participate in the conference, and Bruce Jessup was among them. When we got back to Washington—do you want all this?

Morris: Yes. I like the way you tell the story.

Wyckoff: When we got back to Washington, the conference—like all conferences—got stuffy and dull and long-winded speeches in a big hotel, and it seemed as though nothing really was happening. Bruce Jessup became more and more itchy and nervous, and finally he said to me: isn't there some way that we can get out of this place and make something happen?

I remembered that when I lived in Washington during the war. I had learned the ropes, in terms of activities on the Hill, and I remembered some old friends that had worked with me in the State Relief Administration years before and who were staff men on important Congressional committees, one of whom was the chief of health legislation for the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, whose chairman was Senator Lister Hill. His name was William G. Reidy. He was a member of my staff in 1939-40. I went to him, and I said: could you help us draft some language for a bill, which would put into the federal hopper the proposal that we conduct a migrant health program similar to the one in California and make it nationwide?

He agreed to help us with this. He was a man who had lived in Visalia in California, and he had seen the migratory farmworkers. He had worked for the Farm Security Administration and had also worked for the Federal Housing Administration, where he had set up a health program and knew the problems of the farmworkers. He had taken Monsignor John O'Grady, head of the National Catholic Charities, through the Valley in 1939 as part of our work in State Relief.

So he drafted the language, and then he said: you realize that you can't get this through without the help of certain key people here, certain staff people. For example, there's a man who is the chief of staff for the Appropriations Committee, and you can't get anywhere unless you can get his blessing.

Do you want his name? [Laughs]

Morris: That's up to you. We'd like it.

Wyckoff: [Laughs] We'll see about that.

So that particular week, Bruce Jessup and I and Bill Reidy went the rounds on the Hill to try to lay the groundwork for the passage of the bill. Now, a bill doesn't go through just because three people
Wyckoff: want it. It has to go through because of an enormous amount of support from national organizations, and this meant getting the American Public Health Association, of which Malcolm Merrill was chairman or president, the State and Territorial Health Officers Association, the National Conference of Parents and Teachers, of which Mrs. Rollin Brown was--

Morris: National president?

Wyckoff: National president.

Morris: That was a nice coincidence, since she'd been vice-chairman of the Governor's Youth Committee.

Wyckoff: The various organizations that had participated in our conferences out here and who were logical ones to approach to support the bill back there--the American Federation of Labor was one. The churches--

Morris: How about the medical association? Did they get on board?

Wyckoff: Bruce Jessup moved heaven and earth to try to get the American Medical Association to go along, as I recall (I think I did say this in the report).

I think it was the American Medical Association and the American Farm Bureau Federation, both of whom agreed not to fight it, but I don't believe they were known to actually go out and testify in favor of it, in spite of the fact that their California members supported it. However, after quite a bit of struggle we were able to get some good witnesses and build a good record. Senator Harrison Williams helped us a great deal. Fred Blackwell, who was on his staff, helped us, too. And the machinery worked in our favor, and finally we were able to get it through, and I had the great pleasure of going back to the Rose Garden later, when President Johnson signed the amendment. That was the second renewal of the original act, meaning that it had an established base as part of the Public Health Service.

Morris: Oh, that's marvelous.

Wyckoff: And I have the pen, and LBJ shook my hand. That was a fascinating thing. What happened was that I got a telegram from the White House. It came to my home when I was out on the road, travelling with my husband, who is a labor arbitrator, and we were in Springfield, Illinois. I had taken along some bathing suits (it was the middle of summer) and some hot-weather old clothes and expected just to sit around a motel swimming pool and rest. And this telegram came, saying: please come tomorrow morning to the White House, to the Rose Garden, where we're going to sign this bill.
Wyckoff: So I went, and here's the telegram, which you can put into the record, if you like.

Morris: I'd love to. Now, was this done in one Congressional session? You got this all passed in 1960?

Wyckoff: No. The bill passed in 1962 for the first time and was given a test run of three years, and I went to the signing of the second authorization at the end of that time.

Here's the telegram. [Reading] "The President has asked me to invite you to the signing of the Community Health Services Extensions of 1965, on Thursday, August fifth, at twelve p.m. Please present yourself at the Northwest Gate, and arrive at 11:45. Would you please advise me of your schedule. We'll treat you to a pen. Lawrence F. O'Brien, Special Assistant to the President."

Morris: Yes. Is that what O'Brien was doing in those days? [Laughter]

Wyckoff: Yes, that's what he was doing. Let's see what this says. [Reading] "One of the pens used by the President, August 5, 1965, in the signing of S510, an act to extend and otherwise amend certain expiring provisions of the Public Health Service Act, relating to community health services and for other purposes."

Now, this was not the first bill. This was about the second authorization. In other words, the Migrant Health Act went through a series of tests. First of all, it passed as the Migrant Health Act (1962), and then it became, about three years later, incorporated into the permanent legislation and became part of the Public Health Community Health Services. So it was not until 1965 that it not only became permanent, but it was an improvement and had a very greatly enlarged budget.

So, the first time it went through as a tentative experiment with a life of three years, during which time it was to demonstrate its value.

Morris: That's still pretty good.

Wyckoff: Yes, it was quite quick, really, considering all that. I think you've got all the records of it up in Bancroft. I mean by that, the hearings showing the testimony of the many organizations we had to rally to achieve final success.
6. ASPECTS OF DECISION-MAKING

Network Films and the Climate for Legislation in the 1950s

Morris: Then there is this earlier letter in your file from 1952, correspondence with Harriet Dryden at the Ford Foundation.* It has a Chicago, Illinois address. It sounds like you were on the road again.

Wyckoff: Yes, that was a strange thing. My husband's done about four thousand arbitrations, we figured out, all told in his lifetime since about 1938. And I would go regularly with him to Chicago, where he would have to stay for a month at a time to do these things; and when I went, I would not take any files with me at all. I'd usually regard it as a nice vacation, when I would do some painting or some sculpture, or do something to renew my hand again. So I was not thinking about all the social problems of the world [laughs], and all of a sudden I got a letter forwarded to me from the Ford Foundation, from Harriet Dryden, asking me to give her my impressions of what was happening on the Westside of the San Joaquin Valley in Fresno County.

That letter is the answer; I don't know where her letter of request is—probably in the boxes of letters at Bancroft.

She wanted to know the background of this, so that we could decide whether or not we would use this as one of the examples of community action to be covered in depth for this collection of programs called 'The People Speak,' which is a program funded by Ford Foundation through, I think, the Fund for the Republic. I'm not that sure.

Morris: There was a Fund for Education, too.

*In Foundation Series papers.
Wyckoff: No, this was the earlier Fund for the Republic, I think. Milton Eisenhower, I remember, was head of it. So I sat down and simply wrote a play-by-play account of what happened on the Westside, without any files, just off the top of my head. She asked for things like, "Who were the sparkplugs?" I answered her questions in that latter. You can see what her questions were: "Who are the people? What were they doing?" All this kind of thing. So I tried to give her as lively an account as I could of what was happening and make it vivid, so she would see.

Well, the net result of it all was that they did send out a big team of interviewers, cameramen, radio men, all kinds of people, who were going to get a story of this event out there and all the principal people involved and record it for this series of broadcasts.

What year was that letter?

Morris: Your answer is dated 1952.

Wyckoff: Yes. I think that the effect of that series of broadcasts helped to lay the groundwork for passage of the Migrant Health Act. There was just no doubt about it. It created a national climate in which we could do this kind of thing.

**Fact-Finders in the Valley: National and Local**

Wyckoff: I think, also, that they followed through with other ways of helping, such as sometimes attending and covering the Conferences on Families Who Followed the Crops. I think, also, their great interest in what we were doing out here in those conferences led to their sending out to California, to us, the people who were shaping up the whole underlying philosophy of the War on Poverty, which was based on the idea of community action.

Morris: There were some Ford people who were in Washington--

Wyckoff: Well, Dick Boone, in particular, was one of the ones who earlier was with Ford Foundation. He came from one of the projects that they were funding in Chicago, and then he came out to look over California and try to see what kinds of community action we were interested in doing here. And he tried to get us to participate in the drafting and the shaping and the support of the Economic Opportunity legislation, and the Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth, which we did.

Morris: Was he one of the people you took on your tour through the Valley communities?
Wyckoff: That's right. Yes, he asked me if I would. In fact, I took several people on tours of the Valley who were interested in learning what the problems were, what the communities were like, who were the main decision-makers, and how things happened in those rural communities.

First of all, I took Henry Fowler of the LaFollette Committee, way back in the beginning [1938]. I took Abe Fortas [1939]. You must realize that I took people to the Valley constantly from 1934 to 1969—thirty-five years—with the exception of the war years.

Morris: Did you?

Wyckoff: Yes. And I took—[pauses to think] Oscar Chapman [1938]. He was the assistant secretary of interior. And I took Richard Boone [1960] and Robert Choate [1962] of the Choate Foundation. The latter two, Boone and Choate, were important members of the President's Study Committee—what was it called? It was on the causes of poverty; that was President Kennedy. [Sighs] I've given you all my papers on it, so I don't have any. That was in the fifty boxes.

Morris: They're in The Bancroft Library.

Wyckoff: Anyway, the work that we did was helpful, although it didn't always come out the way we recommended, at all. Nevertheless, it was a—[phone rings, tape interruption].

Morris: You said that you took these people out around the Valley to meet some of the decision-makers. Would these be people like the boards of supervisors?

Wyckoff: Oh, no, they might be many kinds of people. For example, one person that I always found very valuable as a contact over there was Mrs. Mina Teilman. Mrs. Teilman lived in Selma. That's about fifteen miles south of Fresno. At one point she was a member of the grand jury of Fresno County, and she decided that the Fresno County grand jury needed to know about more of the county than just the city of Fresno. So she arranged for a series of buses to take them on a tour of the whole westside and all the labor camps. And that grand jury, when they came back, were a very different group of people from the ones that went. Little by little, she kept the pressure on to educate them as to what was going on in the outlying rural areas.

She was, I think, one of the great, strong women of the rural countryside in California. She was of Danish background, and she and her husband had a small farm there. She was a very determined woman and, I tell you, the supervisors respected her tremendously. The one in her district nearly always voted for our Westside clinics. We finally got the supervisors in Fresno County, due to her efforts, to take over (as part of the health department) and fund the clinics which the Rosenberg Foundation had been funding.
Morris: Good.

Wyckoff: Oh, yes, and it was due to the really hard work of educating a board of supervisors as to the practical value of those clinics and the reasons why, the sound reasons for doing it. And getting them to rise above the jealousies that occur between the east and the west of the Valley, which is very, very serious, you know.

So I would take people to her house—these people who just turned up, wanting to know what was happening—and there were similar people in Tulare County. I would take them down there to see various people in Visalia and Tulare, and then I would go into Kern County and go over to Wasco.

There was a labor camp and one of the old Farm Security camps in Wasco. There are several of them in Arvin and Wasco, and I would take them around to those camps to talk to the camp managers. They would learn a great deal about the life of a migrant farmworker from talking to the camp manager who dealt with them on a day-to-day basis, and then they could meet some of the farmworkers there if they wanted to. So that would give a chance to—

They would stay and go to the clinics, or there would be something they could see. We would generally try to go to the Five Points School if possible, to see that one.

Morris: You could see the accomplishments.

Wyckoff: Yes. They'd see the good side and the bad side and get an idea of the enormous contrasts that there are over in the Valley, and the struggle that people have gone through to try to solve their problems.

Morris: It occurs to me to wonder if they had anybody they could go to who could show them what was going on in the cities, as well. Did anybody ever happen to mention this?

Wyckoff: Well, I was the rural person, always, so I always felt that other people were doing the city thing, and I never felt that I had to do much more than fill gaps, you might say, in the range of interests on the Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth. There were plenty of urban people on that.

Developing Mexican-American Leadership

Wyckoff: I admit that when the Watts riot occurred, I had already been concerned about Watts and also about East Los Angeles. Watts and East Los Angeles are two enormous ghettos in the middle of a big city, and they
Wyckoff: have a lot of rural people in them. A lot of migrants go there and live over the winter or settle down, and so I would go there just to see how the children and youth were doing.

Now, Anthony P. Ríos, who is the early, if not the first, president of the CSO, had an office in East Los Angeles, and I used to go down there and talk with him about what they were doing. CSO meant Community Service Organization, and it was a Mexican-American organization, set up to try to give some political structure to the big colonias of Mexican-Americans that exist all over California, and to help them register to vote and try to speak up for themselves. There was a foundation, of course, that helped to fund that activity. I think it was called the Schwartzhaupt Foundation, which gave funds to Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation; and I think the latter put Fred Ross into the field here to train the community organizers to staff the Community Service Organizations.

Fred Ross was the first one here, and he trained Anthony Ríos and several others. When he got hold of César Chávez, he had hold of somebody who wanted to dedicate himself to a very much more--deeper program, not just community organization, but labor organization. So he worked with him on that.

Morris: Had Chávez been through some of the Alinsky training? Or is that just rumor?

Wyckoff: Oh, no. He was part of this whole structure, which was an Alinsky--you know, Alinsky was, I guess, the philosopher behind this Industrial Areas Foundation. As you know, his methods were ones that I don't whole-heartedly agree with, and we had a few head-on collisions over his philosophy of confrontation.

Morris: You had some confrontations about confrontations?

Wyckoff: Yes, I believed in negotiation and communication, and I believe in other methods of trying to resolve problems. So he regarded me, I think, as one who just confused the issue. But, then, I had my own way of working, and he had his. We each have the right to try our own methods.

Morris: He thought you confused the issue, when it sounds as if you were in the area, involved with the community before--

Wyckoff: Oh, I was in it out West before he was. Sure I was. Yes, that's true. But Alinsky was doing his thing back East at the time and had just moved out here.

Morris: We've mentioned Mr. Ríos and Mr. Gallegos and Mr. Chávez. Who else that you knew developed as Mexican-American leaders for the Mexican-American community from some of these projects?
Wyckoff: Well, the American Friends Service Committee did a lot of work with the Mexican-Americans. Oh, Bard McAllister was a tremendous worker among them. He got Rosenberg Foundation, you know, to give him a grant for--

Morris: A number of grants.

Wyckoff: Oh, my. Those grants of his were marvelous, and he did great work with those. The Self-Help Enterprises was a good one. That, incidentally, has just come here to Santa Cruz County, to my amazement. We are now just trying for the first time to get Self-Help Enterprise funds for some farmworkers' colony here on the coast. Of course, now it's a federal Farm and Home Administration program; Rosenberg isn't being asked for money anymore. That was a demonstration that was really very valuable. It really launched the program.

Morris: Your view is that the Friends Service Committee was developing leadership in the Mexican-American community.

Wyckoff: Yes, definitely. So was the Migrant Ministry, the Catholic church, some schools such as Occidental College, and some community colleges.

Morris: And then the Fresno health and education committee, too?

Wyckoff: Yes, in the 1950s. I received many calls to speak on the cultural problem of integrating the Mexican-American migrant child into the school system and the family into community life. The Girl Scouts, the YWCA, the National Council of Catholic Women, all followed up on the paper given at the National Council of Social Work.

Morris: Were you interested in developing Mexican-American leadership?

Wyckoff: Oh, yes. On the practicing level. One of the most important things that we did in the health program was to teach the methods of making a group decision to farmworkers in camps, where they were doing little camp committee activities--where, for example, the babies would be dying of some communicable disease, and they would need to be vaccinated or immunized or something.

The only way you could approach a thousand people who couldn't read or write—you couldn't hand them pamphlets, right? The only way you could do it was on a door-to-door basis, and you'd have to do it in such a way that you would have a few people come and meet in a cabin somewhere. And they would learn the process of making a group decision for themselves. You could not force it on them. Once they made the decision that this proposal was good, and that they should back it and help it, then they would willingly go out from door to door and hold other meetings of their own. They had to learn a simplified form of Robert's Rules of Order, is really what it was.
Wyckoff: How do you make a group decision and abide by it? How do you take a vote and decide? How the whole group agrees to act on this decision—

Now, these families had never gone outside the family. They were just—they had never had anything to do with other families. Everything was centered in the family, everything decided in the family. There was little neighborly feeling. Everybody outside was a potential enemy. To get a group of people together to make a decision that everybody in this camp is willing to be vaccinated, that was a big decision. So the public health nurses were really trying to teach group decisions. The other thing you're trying to teach, too, is how you get a group together to identify itself as a group and say, "We're going to make a decision." Now, I don't think you have to be violent to do that. I really don't.

Confrontation vs. Negotiation

Wyckoff: I think you have to pick goals that are step-by-step goals, such as immediate things that need to be done right now, and then decide on them and move on to the next, and move on to the next, but always making these decisions together and getting practice in doing that. I think that's a very important thing. So I think we were all doing the same thing, as far as that goes. But I just didn't feel that Alinsky's idea of constant confrontation was the way to move. That's all. I just didn't agree with it. It bred fear.

Morris: Do you think that this controversy, which seemed to center around activities called community development, had any repercussions in either getting legislation passed or getting budgets approved, either by supervisors or for the state farmworkers health service or anything like that?

Wyckoff: Well, I know that sometimes confrontation scared people into doing things, and other times it reacted against you. So it's very hard to evaluate just when it helped and when it didn't. I know that there was a lot of resistance to some forms of confrontation. It just seemed to create a counter-mood that didn't result in anything constructive at all. On the other hand, I think there had been too much apathy sometimes, and it woke everybody up that something needed to be done. You got some reaction that was needed. So it's very hard to say.

Of course, people that are raised in the climate of group work—you see, my influences were largely from the old Jane Addams, Grace Abbott, and Sophie Breckenridge group work, where neighbors got together in Hull House, in Chicago. And they learned how to work
7. THE NATURAL ORDER OF FUNDING NEW IDEAS AND SOME HAZARDS

Chicken Dinners: Building Local Commitment

Morris: You've covered most of the questions on my outline, and I wonder if, with all your long experience, you have any over-all guidelines for how you go about funding a new enterprise. We've touched on the government and--

Wyckoff: I have raised money every way there is to raise money. Forget guidelines! I've tried them all. I've had the chicken dinner you speak of. I think the greatest chicken dinner we ever had was tamales at that Gilroy clinic dinner. I'll never forget that. It was marvelous. And yet, that was a heart-breaking story when it all finally collapsed.

What happened was that the Westside clinics really were such a success that the people in Gilroy wanted to try to do the same thing. There was a Catholic priest over there who was very enthusiastic, and he said: now, this town can raise the money to do this thing and have a great farmworkers' clinic here if we all get together and try to put it over. The parish house, we'll make it available to you, and you can have a great potluck dinner, in which the Mexican colonia can cook all the food, and the citizens of the town can give door prizes, and we'll have a grand and glorious dinner and a great evening, and we'll raise enough money to have the clinic last a year.

Morris: How much money were we talking about in those years?

Wyckoff: Oh, I think they were hoping for--at that particular moment--only maybe two or three thousand dollars, something like that. I've forgotten exactly.

Anyway, quite a few of us from Watsonville went over to the gala dinner at the parish house, and when we got there, here were great tables, set for hundreds of people; and in front of every plate, for every person, was one quart of red wine and one quart of white wine,
Wyckoff: together as a group, politically and in every way, to accomplish things. I believe that that's the way to go, but I don't see why it has to be carried to the point where you have to engage in head-on violence. I just don't see it.

Morris: Particularly if you're all going to have to continue to live together in the same community.

Wyckoff: Yes. Now, you can say that the Watts riots were needed, that they had to have them in order to get attention to serious problems. Well, it got attention, I won't deny that. But I was trying to do it another way, which was to get the kids into these community action programs to force the issues one by one before people until a change took place. Mine was a too gradual approach. They couldn't wait for it, so they burned the town down. That's another way of doing it. I just don't think that's necessary, and I don't think permanent progress is made that way.

Of course, my friends in the American Friends Service Committee, I think, are torn between which is the best and when it's the best. I know you have to confront eventually, but I really think if you've prepared for negotiation, you've learned how to communicate, how to talk and to bargain, I think you can change things. I don't see why you have to bomb people or kill them to get change to happen. Do you? I just don't see it.

Morris: That sounds like a good Quaker position.

Wyckoff: Well, I guess I'm part Quaker [laughs].
Wyckoff: donated by Pete Scagliotti, who was a winegrower who was enormously enthusiastic about the idea of a clinic for his farmworkers.

The reason he was so enthusiastic about the clinic for the farmworkers was that this good man had been driving a badly crippled child of a farmworker on his place back and forth to the county hospital himself, to try to get him the proper medical care. There was no means of transportation for them.

Morris: No Red Cross volunteer?

Wyckoff: Nobody doing anything, and no earthly way of those people getting there except walking twenty miles. Well, he took that child back and forth until he was exhausted, and he realized that this was a thing that was really needed. So that was one example of a grower who really had a heart and who wanted to do something.

Well, we raised the money. It was certainly the best potluck dinner I ever ate in my whole life. And people came in—it was really funny, because they knew how good the food was going to be, because they knew Mexican women were marvelous cooks. So the townspeople came in (and they charged a good, right round sum for the dinner to raise the money. I think it was three or four dollars, which was a lot then)—some of them took home a dinner because there was a boxing match on television that they wanted to see. They wanted to give the money [laughs], but they didn’t want to miss the fight. So they came and took the food, paid for it, and they went home and ate the food while watching television. Well, they raised the money.

**Gilroy Clinic: Organizational Difficulties**

Wyckoff: The clinic ran for a year and was a great success. It was a marvelous clinic, but the great tragedy was the—oh, incidentally, that money was used to match the Lucie Stern Foundation grant. The great tragedy was that the groundwork with the medical society had not been sufficiently laid, and there was some kind of internal struggle that took place, which wound up in cutting a physician off the malpractice insurance list—

Morris: The physician in charge of the clinic? How dreadful!

Wyckoff: Tragic. A lot of this was due to the mishandling of the plan for the whole thing. The idea on the part of the group there was that, in order to get the cooperation of the medical group, the money should all be turned over to the medical society to operate the clinic.
Morris: Rather than work somehow through the county health department?

Wyckoff: Yes. And this was a fatal mistake, and I blame the county health officer and the lack of interest on the part of the health department over there. They were very unwilling to get involved in anything that had to do with treatment.

The old-fashioned public health philosophy was that health departments should never engage in treatment. They could only do prevention, and they should leave all treatment to the medical society, and they must never meet on any ground.

Morris: And the county hospital, which does provide treatment, wasn't prepared to get involved?

Wyckoff: No. They were not prepared to be involved in any satellite clinic or outreach, or anything like that. The medical society is very inadequately equipped to administer anything of this sort; they maintain a staff whose principal job is public relations, and they usually hire an old newspaper man or somebody like that to see how many lines of praise they can get in the paper for the great stuff the doctors are doing that make them loved.

Anyway, this turned out to be a ghastly fiasco, and the money just simply—well, it paid the rent. I mean, the money wasn't stolen or anything, but nothing was done in terms of involving the education of the medical group to see how this should carry on. Nothing was done to carry it—in other words, they were supposed to keep records to measure what the need was, explain it to the doctors, get the basis laid so that there would be a satellite clinic and this service would be carried on. None of that was done. None.

Years later Dr. Skilllicorn took hold of the situation, and I think through his diplomatic efforts they picked up the pieces. He was not only chairman of the medical society, but also chairman of the State Department of Public Health Advisory Committee on Seasonal Agricultural Workers. He made his own personal survey of the health conditions. Now they have—in one of their little hospitals in Gilroy they have a satellite clinic from the county hospital. So it's going all right.

Morris: Is it in any way a continuation of—?

Wyckoff: Only partially. I think we learned more from our failures than we did from our successes sometimes. And that failure over there taught a tremendous lesson, in terms of who to deal with, how to manage. I think it had a good effect, actually, on the administration of a lot of public health programs after that date. That was a fiasco that was—well, it was expensive, to say the least, and yet it taught us a great deal.
Morris: In other words, you think that other county health departments were aware of what did and did not happen in Gilroy.

Wyckoff: I think nationally what happened was that they realized that if they were going to go in for medical care, there had to be a way of dealing with these medical foundations, which were set up by medical societies which were trying to apply for the money all the time. There had to be a way of making them accountable and making them function better than they were doing in this case.

It's a very, very slow group to change. Doctors are a very, very inflexible lot, you know. I mean by that that their structure and the way they're trained in medical school, the way they're set up in relation to each other--the old school ties--

Morris: But then you have people like Dr. Jessup, apparently, who--

Wyckoff: Suffers. [Laughs]

Morris: Who suffers because of that, but is not--

Wyckoff: He's a really great man. You know what he's doing now, don't you?

Morris: Isn't he running an innovative health service in Marin County?

Wyckoff: No, Dr. Jessup is a pediatrician working in the East Palo Alto Clinic, which is a totally black community, and he's one of the few--he and Dr. Herbert are the only white physicians in that place.

Morris: East Palo Alto is a very interesting community.

Wyckoff: Oh, yes. It is.

Self-Help Enterprises

Wyckoff: You know, one thing I wish you would do is to make an index of all the foundation grants from Rosenberg that have occurred since the last summary they had [1936-47].

Morris: You'd like to see a topical index?

Wyckoff: I would like to see a topical index of all of those, because I am sure there are threads that have flowed through this thing that are impossible for me to pick up without going through every one of those indexes, and I didn't have time to do that. So it would be a nice thing if you had something like that which would give you a quick run-down on what had happened.
Morris: That's something I'd like to do when I have time.

I wondered if, from your experience, you've got any ideas as to particular areas where local foundations might be most valuable, either in their approach or--?

Wyckoff: [Turning pages of Rosenberg annual report] There are a lot of grants I remember here in 1958. [Long pause] Did you ever interview Bard McAllister?

Morris: I haven't. I haven't been clear as to whether or not he was back in California.

Wyckoff: Oh, yes. He's back in his old home town of Visalia. I have his address if you want it. He certainly was able to use Rosenberg money more effectively than almost anybody else I know, in terms of trying to help agricultural workers on all sorts of fronts. I think the grant they made to Self-Help Enterprises was really a very important one.

In a sense, it was an original idea, this idea of hiring a supervisor to help a farmworker during his slack season to build himself a house. It was good. It taught not only the building of the house, but the educational business of handling the money, handling the plans, handling the setting up of a community. It was ideal for a man who wanted to do good community organization and group work at that level.

It was a good conception. In a setting where there was so little community spirit because of this vast movement of migratory workers up and down the state, it gave a home base—a place where people could drop down and their kids could go to school, and they could settle, make a home base. Now, it wasn't all perfect, but Bard had a good idea, and I was awfully glad that Rosenberg funded the experiment. And, of course, now it's become a national program. The Farm and Home Administration actually has kept it in its budget up to the present time—much longer than any other farmworkers home program. I think of all their housing programs, it was the one that stayed operative during the 'freeze.'

Shifts in National Policy in the 1970s

Morris: An interesting pattern seems to be developing in my research: that for some things it's easier to get private donors to put up some money, and then other things are more suitable for foundations, and then the federal government comes in at another level.
Wyckoff: Yes, I have the feeling that the natural order of things should be that the private foundation or the private donor or the voluntary agency, such as a Community Chest agency or one of the locally funded agencies, should do the experimenting with effective methods of service or of operation in meeting the public needs here and there; and when a sound and effective method of working is developed, after all the false starts and all the learning has been done and you come up with something that is fairly sound, I think then it's logical to expect that the public financing on a permanent basis should take over.

We seem to have historically moved that way. We moved from an infinite number of little post office systems into a great postal system throughout the whole United States. It's worked fairly efficiently, and it was not considered socialized postal service. But we seem to be turning around and trying to hand back to private hands things which the public long ago decided should be run in their own behalf by their government for them, and that they would pay for it on a permanent basis so that there would not be this uncertainty about it.

I'm very troubled about the efforts that are being made by a number of federal administrations to turn back to the local and the private hands programs that have been tested and tried and found necessary. I can't see what good it does to turn around, subject them to all the disruption of putting them back where they started from.

Morris: How about the other side of that? There seem to be several places where the federal government is now making grants to try new things.

Wyckoff: Well, this business of revenue sharing is an example of an effort to try to turn back money to the local level and not decide at the national level what'll be done with it. This is the same thing. This is just going back to where you started from. For example, you have a noisy bunch of people that say: we're scared to death. We can't walk the streets at night. So we would like to spend all the local revenue sharing money on a big jail.

Now, that is just utter folly. Yet, it's the kind of thing that short-sighted, frightened, inexperienced people would do, and we're supposed to have risen beyond that stage quite some time ago. So I am really discouraged at this point, the way we're going. We do need to have more participation locally in decision-making, but you don't need to abdicate the entire process of running things that have been tried and tested and handed over to the different levels of political structure to be run for the people. I think those decisions were sound.
Wyckoff: We are, I think, afraid of the bigness of government, and one of our better ways of trying to deal with the bigness of government, particularly the executive branch of government, is by putting in citizen participation—voluntary kinds of citizen participation on an advisory basis at various levels—and not leaving it all to Congress to be the only representative voice. I think that it's probably a good thing to do that.

For example, I served for a long time on the Program Review Committee of the Migrant Health Section of the United States Public Health Service. There were about twenty of us who came from all over the United States. There was a grower from Michigan who came from the Farm Bureau in a little town—Traverse City—and she made a marvelous contribution to that committee. There were farmworkers and rural physicians.

We would review applications for grants from all over the country, and we would recommend to the administrator whether or not to fund the programs. We would all discuss each program. So everyone's voice was heard, even though one member would study one project in depth and have to report on it.

There was a Catholic priest from Texas. There was a professor, a sociologist from Notre Dame University. There were all different kinds of people on that committee, and everyone brought something to it that was needed. The discussions were good, and for five years we were able to work together on this. The committee, I think, may still be functioning, but new members, of course, have come and gone. I think they all have a limit of five-year terms. This 'peer review' process is also done in the National Institutes of Health on their various grant programs and contract programs. I'm now serving on the National Cancer Institute on that basis, too.

I guess it is the orthodox way of getting away from too much bigness in government, even though some people think it adds to the bigness to have all these citizens talking [laughs]. Well, I like participation at any level. I think it's important to have.

Morris: You certainly demonstrate your case beautifully. It's just marvelous to hear you tell of your adventures.

I think that might be a good place to stop, unless there's anything particularly—

Wyckoff: All right. Let's stop today, and then if you think we need more, we can add to it.

[End of interview]
8. A FEW OBSERVATIONS ON FOUNDATION GIVING

I believe foundation giving played a vital role in the progression of these events, particularly in the establishment of public health services for farmworkers.

The crucial demonstrations of various services and clinics, built upon a large amount of volunteer participation, built the popular support and understanding necessary to make them an accepted public service supported by federal and state legislation.

In the demonstrations, the key to success was as much in the methods of community organization for delivery as it was in the actual effectiveness of service. Participation by consumers of services was established here as a principle long before it was mandated in such programs as OEO and CHP (Comprehensive Health Planning).

The migrant health program was a testing ground of ways of working with poor people during its period of foundation funding, before the Economic Opportunity Act was passed. It had the benefit of a long period of gestation, during which various methods of overcoming cultural barriers could be assessed, and the whole process was not subject to the pressure of deadlines required by federal operations. These pressures are very destructive in the field of community development, especially when working with rural poor families.

One of the valuable contributions made by foundations was the gift of time allowed in which to plan, develop, demonstrate and evaluate a program—and do it properly.

My experience with foundations has been limited to small grants and much encouragement. To summarize the effects of the grants:
In the case of the Santa Cruz Tuberculosis Association grant for the health education placed in the County Health Department, I think Rosenberg actually initiated some constructive action in the whole county and created a model for other counties in some respects.

In other cases, such as the Conference on Families Who Follow the Crops and the Westside Clinics of the Fresno Rural Health and Education Committee, there had to be a lot of preliminary groundwork, citizen support, and local demonstration and initiative before a grant was considered seriously.

The original idea that foundations were the logical ones to do the pioneering in new methods, testing new ideas and trying out new services, has only been partially true, especially in recent years when the federal government has funded so many new approaches to the 'War on Poverty,' "Economic Development," 'Rural Development,' and so forth.

Unfortunately, the natural cycle of any governmental operation requires an inflexible tempo of budget-making, authorization, appropriation, grant application and review, reporting ad infinitum, in an endless progression of deadlines, all of which do not fit the natural processes of democracy. There is not enough time for proper education, thoughtful consultation and participation by a broadly representative body of citizens in working together to solve community problems, to guide the program effectively.

Here is where foundations can be more helpful than the government, because they can adjust time requirements to meet the needs of each individual group.

When there is a change of political administration, there is a desire to make a 'clean sweep' and start new programs leaving the imprimatur of the newly elected politicians. Often what happens is just a series of reorganizations in which the old guard makes way for the new, and the programs and services continue under another name as long as the original constituency so desires and can keep the pressure on. There is a lot of so-called evaluating done at this time, which often is not as objective as it should be.

Here again is where foundations might be very valuable in doing objective outside evaluations. This is not always easy. For example, in the case of the migrant health service the statistical base was destroyed by the abolition of the statistical positions and resources, so that when the time came to evaluate, or prepare testimony for Congress, there was little to rely upon. This is one way to destroy a program.
A by-product of the revenue sharing concept has been to set many community services back where they started—the idea that we must go back to the state of demonstrating the need, testing approaches, and proving all over again some obvious discoveries, such as, for example, that migrants are a high risk health population and can't avail themselves of services which are inaccessible because of distance, cost, or language barrier. All this seems like re-inventing the wheel.

If we are stuck with revenue sharing, the key to avoiding such expensive and wasteful repetition of effort is to educate or train local decision-making bodies in getting some perspective on the situation. How best to do this is a tough question. The media—TV, radio and newspapers—are an important educational tool, but a representative citizens' community council or committee can perform a valuable service at this time. Perhaps this is a small but effective area where foundation support is worth doing.

We need a new breed of community catalysts, as well as the classical community development worker trained in the Del Rey project by Ed Dutton and funded by Rosenberg Foundation. I think William Koch's approach has great relevance at this time (see Community Development Symposium).
Emmett Gamaliel Solomon

A CORPORATE CITIZEN'S CONCERN FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

An Interview Conducted by
Gabrielle Morris
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Emmett Gamaliel Solomon was interviewed in order to obtain the views of a leading banker on the role of a community trust in responding to and interpreting the urgencies of civic concerns. Chairman of the Distribution Committee of the San Francisco Foundation at the time of the interview, Solomon represents a very American kind of career. A Nebraska trust officer at the time of World War II, he saw army service in Hawaii, remaining there for several years after the war in the field of industrial relations. Like thousands of other veterans, he finally settled in San Francisco; he resumed his banking career in 1954 and rose to become chief executive officer of Crocker National Bank.

In addition to joining the Crocker financial firm, he also took an active part in Episcopal diocese, hospital, united fund-raising, and other charitable endeavors. In these he had the encouragement of W. W. Crocker and Helen Crocker Russell, whose devotion to San Francisco included a sense of responsibility for not only business but cultural and charitable affairs.

The single interview was recorded on January 29, 1975, in Solomon's handsome period-furnished office in the old Crocker bank headquarters at One Post Street. A tallish, solid man, quietly well-tailored, he did not wish to dwell on his personal life, but expanded willingly on some broad aspects of the San Francisco Foundation's work, for which, he asserts, there is "no franchise that's irrevocable to distribute funds for philanthropic things in the community and we'll be in business just as long as we do a passable job."

In his experience, business leaders have been significant in recognizing community needs and finding the wherewithal to do something about them, although he feels that corporations should expand their efforts in this area. Responding to current criticism of philanthropic foundations, he finds that as members serve on the grant-approving board, they have an increasing ability for more objective evaluation of the various areas of philanthropic activity, with less inclination to favor certain areas. He notes the value of recent activities to bring older leaders into contact with restless younger ones.

He is also favorably disposed to developing new staff procedures, including ways that the Foundation might perhaps itself initiate programs,
adding a concern that "maybe there are some very worthwhile things that we aren't responding to that perhaps we should."

Mr. Solomon read the interview transcript and made a few revisions in the light of later events. He suggested, and the Distribution Committee agreed, that sample materials from board discussions be included in this study of foundation history.

Interviewer-Editor

26 March 1976
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California/Berkeley
1. THE DISCIPLINES OF PROPOSAL WRITING AND GRANT-MAKING

Solomon: I was thinking of this afternoon's discussion while I was having lunch with Bill Roth. We were talking about the San Francisco schools' committee he's heading up,* which seems to be in a difficult situation, getting started on a tremendous task with all sorts of public attention.

They've come to the San Francisco Foundation to ask us if we're willing to have a role in their funding. It's a developmental type of request for an initial budget, although they hope to be finished with their work in eighteen months. It's a good example of the kind of discipline that's required when groups come to the Foundation for grant support.

So many times, applicants come in, and their ideas are frequently good ones, but they're unrefined and haven't been thought through. They haven't gone through the mental discipline of having to put down, in coherent fashion, points A, B, C, and D as to how they expect to get where they really want to go. I think that sending them back, and giving them assistance in how to prepare a good application for a grant, frequently makes the difference between whether they succeed or don't. Certainly, that evidence of mental discipline and coherence has a major affect on whether or not they get money.

Morris: That is a question I wanted to ask: About how many of the proposals that the Distribution Committee sees do you feel need reworking?

Solomon: Well, this is an area that bothers me a great deal, because while we see undoubtedly worthwhile proposals that come up to us and have been carefully studied and researched and written up and

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*Appointed by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors at the request of state Superintendent of Public Instruction Wilson Riles. Ed.
Solomon: recommendations made thereto, I'm worried, I think, about the number of proposals that are deserving of deeper consideration that never got on the table for the consideration of the Distribution Committee.

At one of our recent meetings, we had grant applications totalling in the aggregate approximately five million dollars. We made grants at that particular meeting of around five hundred thousand dollars, or just ten percent of the total that had been applied for. Well, in that ninety percent that we didn't look at in depth, I'm sure there were a number of proposals that were probably worthy of a good deal more consideration than they got.

The limit on the amount that could be granted, of course, relates to the availability of funds during the course of a year which can be used for this purpose. We try to schedule that so that, generally, it is distributed over a period of about eight grant meetings during the course of a year.

Morris: So that you do work toward a general known total figure for the year?

Solomon: Yes, we do. That's right. For example, this year, if our total funds amount to, in round numbers, forty million dollars, including advise and consent funds over which we generally respect the wishes of the donor setting up the funds, we try to come to a point of distributing about eight percent of the principal value of those funds over which we do have discretion. That means using the income, to the extent it's available for grants, and supplementing it by principal distributions, to make up the roughly eight percent.

Morris: That puts you well above the amount required by the Tax Reform Act [TRA].

Solomon: Well, that's right. It does, yes. If we had a forty million dollar figure, and we were distributing about eight percent of it, that'd be about $3.2 million for this year. I think we'll probably do something more than that, because there are certain funds that we're required to pay out within a certain period of time, which would have a tendency to up that total figure.

Morris: Up the total percentage?

Solomon: Last year, for example, we paid out, in actual funds, about four million dollars, although we had granted requests totalling about a half a million dollars more than that—a little over four and a half million. But some of those are scheduled for payments in second, third, and fourth years. For example, the grant to the
Solomon: University of California for its Santa Cruz campus was scheduled for payment over a five-year period, with the initial grant being paid in 1974. Now, in all likelihood, that will probably be accelerated, rather than extend over the full five-year period.

Morris: Does that relate to the condition of money at the moment? The school will get more value from it if it's spent sooner?

Solomon: That's the consideration, yes. Definitely.

Morris: Did they suggest that, or did you?

Solomon: The school came to us and, I guess, found a sympathetic ear. We're in the process of working it out now.

Morris: It sounds as if they have very creative, practical-minded people down there.

Solomon: That's right.
2. COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE SINCE 1953

Corporate Citizenship

Morris: Maybe we could go back and start with the beginning of my questions. When we did our preliminary discussion on the points I wanted to cover, the first thing I asked was if you would give us a bit of background of yourself and the activities that contributed to your interest in civic affairs.

Solomon: I don't like to get into that aspect of it, really. That is too self-serving, I think.

Morris: I was thinking more of the experiences that would equip one to then take on a responsibility like the Distribution Committee.

Solomon: Well, I think that as one moves up in whatever business career he's scheduled for himself, he finds that there are increasing obligations to personally identify with aspects of the community's social life. This means more of a commitment of his time to these kinds of activities than is true when he's in the earlier years of his business career. I found that there was an acceleration from year to year in the time that I had to devote to this kind of activity, to the point where, in the most recent active business years, I was spending perhaps as much as thirty percent of my time in civic activities of one sort or another.

Morris: Is this because as you move along in the business career there are more things that you can delegate to other people?

Solomon: Yes, and the recognition, I think, that good corporate citizenship requires an increasing time commitment by principal executives to community affairs.

Morris: Could you talk a little bit about what corporate citizenship involves?
Solomon: Well, it means providing leadership, I think, to things that are important in the community's life. For example, in the health field, in the welfare field, in education, in the development of the humanities and the arts—all of these things will reach a stage of maximum effectiveness in direct proportion, I think, to the degree to which competent business people and others so-minded in the community commit their leadership.

Morris: Is this a tradition of the Crocker Bank?

Solomon: More so, I think, than was generally true of other business organizations in years past. I'm sure, however, that other organizations have done a lot of catching up, to a point where it is generally recognized that active identification with community affairs is a corporate responsibility of high priority.

For over three generations the communities of the five county Bay Area, especially San Francisco and Oakland, have enjoyed outstandingly competent business leadership. These leaders have been receptive and responsive to their communities' social and economic problems and requirements. They have assumed leadership in these areas, committing time and money along with their organizing abilities to provide solutions to civic needs. The performance of business leaders in rebuilding San Francisco following the 1906 earthquake and later providing the initiative for the formation of the United Bay Area Crusade [UBAC] are both classic examples of many that could be cited.

The formation of the San Francisco Foundation was the product of the joint efforts of many civic-minded individuals, but leaders in the business community played leading roles. Business is clearly and importantly identified with the financing of essential community services largely through its support of the United Bay Area Crusade. The San Francisco Foundation, however, operates almost entirely upon resources provided by the individual private sector.

Morris: Do you think that the business community has particular skills or a point of view that can contribute to the solutions of community problems or concerns?

Solomon: Yes, I think so. San Francisco, for example, is a closely-knit community, not so big that everything is lost in the shuffle. I believe many things that are inaugurated have their origins in the business community, and then are carried out to the rest of the community. It seems to provide the nucleus for getting things going. And the participation by business not only in the leadership
Solomon: but the financing of community activities, becomes very important. Yet, from the standpoint of the San Francisco Foundation, the funds with which it works are almost wholly provided by individuals, either by lifetime gifts or testamentary dispositions, that kind of thing.

**Helen Crocker Russell's Guidance in Business and Philanthropy**

Morris: Since you were not a Bay Area man born and raised, when was it that you first became aware of the San Francisco Foundation, and the Rosenberg Foundation?

Solomon: Well, the San Francisco Foundation was organized, really, in 1948, not too long before I arrived on the scene in early 1953. I quite naturally became very much aware of the San Francisco Foundation by reason of the Crocker family's participation in the founding of the Foundation, and its continuing, year-to-year interest in its development.

Morris: So that you knew Helen Crocker Russell as soon as you came to San Francisco?

Solomon: Oh, yes, of course. And a very substantial proportion of the total Foundation funds now is represented by Crocker family gifts, particularly those of Helen Russell.

Morris: She must have been a remarkable woman. I regret I never met her.

Solomon: She certainly was.

Morris: Did she make it her business to inform the people that she worked with and knew about the concerns of the Foundation and the community?

Solomon: Yes, yes. She certainly did that. And knowing her, the sincere personal emphasis she placed on all forms of philanthropy perhaps influenced countless others to fall into line with her thinking without her having to spell it out in detail to anyone. She led, and others followed.

Morris: I see. In other words, are you saying that she was effective in getting other people to support the things that she was interested in?

Solomon: Oh, no question about it, yes. They told stories of how in the early days--before the United Crusade really was founded--in support
Solomon: of a deserving community activity, Helen would get together with three or four influential businessmen in the community and decide to make a visitation upon a prospective donor. They knew how to apply the right kind of pressures to the nerve centers and usually came away better than empty-handed. This kind of dedication produced results.

Helen used to tell me that when she was at school, she received an allowance (maybe I told you this story?)--

Morris: I don't think so.

Solomon: The only requirement with respect to this allowance was that a certain percentage of it had to be accounted for by her to her family as gifts made to certain types of philanthropies. As a consequence, she got into the habit when she was still of school age of recognizing the importance of an individual identifying with important social and welfare activities, church support, and that kind of thing. So that it became quite a natural thing for her to enlarge upon and to develop that philosophy as she grew older and became more of a force, in maturity and influence, in community life.

Morris: Was this considered unusual for a woman in her day?

Solomon: Well, let's say that she was an unusual woman; I don't think there are very many Helen Russells.

Morris: How about Mrs. McLaughlin?

Solomon: Oh, she was an extremely strong personality, and dedicated, too. I imagine it's just a question of degree. She was regarded as having the same dedication, the same sense of community responsibility that Helen had.

Then as we come into successive family generations, I think we find a tendency of the dedication to become [pauses] perhaps less intense on the part of following generations than was true of their predecessors.

Helen Russell saw this community develop and grow. She observed its progress during her father's and her grandfather's generations. Each of them had so much to do with the early history and development of California. So it isn't too surprising that she felt an obligation in the family tradition to become and be a continuing part of its ongoing development.
Solomon: Now, as succeeding generations come into being, I think that same feeling of obligation grows a little bit more remote. Contemporary members of the Crocker family are widely dispersed—they have moved to one section of the country and another. There isn't the concentration of family members here that there once was. It is quite natural, therefore, that the influence of the Crocker family in San Francisco is now measurably diluted from what it was formerly.

Morris: What has appeared to fill the gap, since nature abhors a vacuum?

Solomon: I think a broader base—a wider spectrum has filled the gap. This broadening of the base of support is something that is constantly being sought by UBAC and like organizations—the fine arts museums, the symphony, the opera—that depend heavily upon a community support. The loss of important former major donors is mitigated to a major extent by others responding in greater numbers to take the place of what doesn't any longer exist.

Morris: Was Mrs. Russell involved at all in the family business activities?

Solomon: She was a fine businesswoman, yes. There was a family corporation, in which she was a very active participant, as a director, and she was influential, I think, in the business decisions and in determining the course of that corporation.

Morris: Did her philanthropic principles ever relate at all to any of her business decisions?

Solomon: Yes, I think her influence with business organizations with which she was either directly or indirectly affiliated was very material, and resulted, I am sure, in a stepped-up awareness on the part of those businesses to their philanthropic responsibilities. Most likely that wouldn't have occurred except for Helen's insistence and the exercise of her influence.

Morris: Would this be things like the working conditions of employees and wage levels?

Solomon: Not so much there. I think it was more related to the humanities and the arts, welfare, education, health, hospitals—that kind of thing.

Morris: That there should be a financial contribution by the corporation to this kind of thing?

Solomon: That's right. It's what she was able to do to bring not only her own support, through a very generous personal participation, but to attract the support of others. I think one could say that she
Solomon: could twist a tail as effectively as anybody in the community, if she really made up her mind to do so in behalf of her favorite enterprises.

Morris: That's a remarkable skill.

Solomon: I should say it is.

Episcopal Diocese Matters

Solomon: But you can go right through the list—the church: Grace Cathedral up on Nob Hill was built on the old Crocker homsite that was given to the Diocese of California for the building of the cathedral. The family's influence over the Diocese of California was great.

Morris: I didn't realize that it was that close a connection.

Solomon: Yes, and within the cathedral you will find the Mary Crocker chapel.

    W. W. Crocker's last civic undertaking before his death was to raise the funds necessary to complete the cathedral. It is one of the few in the United States that is completed.

Morris: I saw your name on the plaque in the narthex listing the building committee. Was that the first time you got involved in Episcopal church activities?

Solomon: No, I'd been active prior to that time, through the diocesan board of directors, I think, but that came as a result of my active participation with my own parish, in San Mateo. But I've kept a relationship with the diocese fairly active since that time.

Morris: While we're on the diocese, in the last ten years or so, the diocese itself has funded a number of rather innovative social experiments. I was thinking of the Free Church over in Berkeley and some of the outreach programs.

Solomon: Yes, that's true, and the cathedral itself has been the site of a number of programs that are intended to relate more to contemporary times and are designed to gain deeper penetration into the community and hopefully to help provide some solutions to misunderstandings.

    I think that that has not been an easy thing for the cathedral to do because it has antagonized many who haven't modernized quite
Solomon: as quickly as might be desired. A number of their programs have been controversial. I am sure this has affected the level of giving in certain areas, too.

Morris: Since those programs began there's been a change in giving to Grace Cathedral?

Solomon: I think so.

Morris: Did you participate in any of the discussions prior to these decisions?

Solomon: Not directly, no. For a time, I was on the board of trustees of the cathedral chapter, which would think about these things, but my period there preceded the more recent developments of which we're speaking. And then, since that time, I relate primarily to the board of directors of the diocese, which is concerned more with the investment of funds and the business end, and not the--

Morris: Program end.

Solomon: Programming, that's right.

Morris: Did Mrs. Russell ever consult with you or ask your opinion on things the Foundation might be considering?

Solomon: Yes, we had long talks about various community activities and certainly they covered the spectrum. Most particularly, they were in conjunction with how we might be of assistance in furthering the objectives of organizations that she thought were undertaking worthwhile projects.

Morris: How "we, the Crocker business--"?

Solomon: Yes. How we could influence other giving sources to participate.

Morris: What did you decide?

Solomon: Well, we'd discuss how an approach might be made, and set targets to determine the most effective means of approaching a source of giving in order to maximize the effectiveness of the approach. After all, so many of the worthwhile projects in the community are administered by people who are dedicated, but who lack that kind of association with the community. I mean, they badly need help in fund-raising activities that are so necessary if what appears always to be an ever-increasing budget is to be balanced.
Solomon: I think it's sort of regrettable that university presidents these days are primarily involved in fund-raising and not academics, that they have to depend on deans and faculty members, through delegation, to maintain the academic standards of the university so that they can spend a high proportion of their time generating funds for operations.

United Bay Area Crusade

Fund-raising

Morris: When you were working on the board of the Bay Area Crusade, was this a point of discussion: That the Crusade could concentrate on fund-raising so that agencies could concentrate on operations?

Solomon: Oh, by all means, yes. The whole concept of the United Crusade was to free the several agencies from the time-consuming responsibility for developing plans, good, bad, or indifferent, for raising funds to meet their budgets, usually at very high cost. Agencies looked to UBAC to conduct a campaign for funds, agreeing to take their proportionate share of the total raised, based upon a system of allocations by a community-wide committee, known as the Allocations Committee. As a most important part of the Bay Area Crusade structure, this committee would review the budgets and determine relative need as among the several agencies, apportioning to each member agency a part of the funds raised.

I think, with all of its imperfections, this probably represented the best approach imaginable to a complex situation. It did cut down costs. It did provide a program for assessing relative importance to the community of agencies, one as against the other. It did enforce budgetary discipline within agencies. All of this was important because an agency's claim to funds was looked at from a relative standpoint. Before we had the consolidated fund-giving drive, each agency was on its own in seeking financial support. Some were well and carefully administered, but others were not. UBAC has, I think, played a significant role in improving the effectiveness of the dollars raised, in their end use.

Morris: Were you primarily on the financial committee, or did you get involved at all in the program?

Solomon: In the fund-raising end of it, primarily, although I did sit for a time on the budget and allocations committee.
Morris: I've wondered if UBAC was in a position to have an overview of kinds of things that were happening in the community, either things that were emerging and needed attention or things that maybe no longer needed as much emphasis as they might have had?

Solomon: Well, any agency that applied for admission to UBAC had to go through an admissions committee review, where its activities would be related to the question of need in the community. It had to go through a pretty rigorous procedure in order to qualify for admission to UBAC and any subsequent allocations of funds. It just simply wasn't there for the asking; many agencies had to wait some considerable period of time before they could be considered qualified for admission into UBAC.

Morris: In terms of their own staff strength and--?

Solomon: Yes, that's right. And that's still true. Unfortunately, as effective as UBAC has been, it has been unable to meet what we call the minimum needs of the agencies that are a part of UBAC. We've always fallen short. But in that sense, I guess, we're no different than the experience of United Funds in other communities, who never seem to be able to reach the minimum-needs requirements of the agencies that are participants.

Morris: When you say, 'the minimum needs', have you got some kind of an effective formula?

Solomon: Well, this is based upon the individual budgets, submitted, revised, and ultimately approved by a budget review committee and the Allocations Committee.

Morris: What happens if 'X' dollars is an agency's minimum budget, and it doesn't raise that much money, either from UBAC or its membership?

Solomon: In certain instances, where it's considered by UBAC to be essential that an agency have extra dollars which it's not able to provide, the agency has been authorized to go out and supplement what it gets from UBAC through some kind of fund-raising enterprise on its own. One can see how carefully that has to be administered, however, or it would destroy the concept of 'one give'.

Morris: I think of the Girl Scouts and the Campfire Girls. Part of their activity, annually, is cookie and candy sales to their neighborhoods.

Solomon: That's right. Then we've had major agencies defect—withdraw from UBAC participation—feeling that they could do better on their own. If an agency withdraws and goes its own route, there's frequently an attitude on the part of business to the effect that, "Well, if you choose to go this route, don't look to us for any help because we
Solomon: give through UBAC as a most effective means of meeting agency requirements. And why should we supplement or give independently to you, when others are taking their proportionate share through UBAC." It makes some sense.

Morris: So in that sense, UBAC provides a way by which a business can simplify its participation in the community.

Solomon: That's right.

Social Planning: Trend toward Consolidation

Solomon: Some years ago, I headed a study group on the division of responsibilities between UBAC and social planning. We felt that probably it was not proper for UBAC to be both the fund-raising agency and also assume the responsibility for social planning. So we formed a Bay Area Council on Social Planning, which was to separate out of UBAC the social planning aspects, provide UBAC with its conclusions, and UBAC itself would thenceforth be concerned solely with fund-raising.

Morris: Who funds the Council on Social Planning?

Solomon: It was initially funded by UBAC. Following initial funding, it was to be on a decreasing basis. Conceptually the separation of the functions was good. Practically, it hasn't quite worked out that way because I believe UBAC would like to get back into the business again, and the Bay Area Council on Social Planning is beginning to undertake study projects now for which it can receive independent financing.

For example, the Council made a study of the juvenile court system and received some independent financing for that, and they're available to make studies of individual community projects in the Bay Area. They have the expertise, the staff, the know-how, but now expect to be largely funded from independent sources. They still receive a fairly sizable proportion of their budgetary requirements from UBAC.

Morris: It sounds like there are two hazards there. One, that Bay Area Social Planning Council might reach a point where it was spending too much time on its own fund-raising, and alternatively that its planning expertise might go where the money was.

Solomon: That's right.
Morris: In the mid-60s, didn't the social planning structure shift from a separate unit in each county to a regional Bay Area--?

Solomon: Yes, that's right. There was great provincialism evidenced at that point, too. [Laughter]

Morris: In other words, one county was not happy with having a regional approach to a problem it was concerned with?

Solomon: Yes. Then, on the other side, I have seen a lot happen to centralize activities (as they should be, I believe) in the Bay Area. For example, the Council on Alcoholism. We used to have one, almost, for every county. Now that's come together as more or less of a Bay Area approach. The same thing is true on suicide prevention and mental health—a tendency to look at the metropolitan Bay Area as a unit, rather than at the several components that make it up—the several counties. And this makes sense.

Morris: Is this the result of the practitioners in the field and their feelings, or is it the government's programming?

Solomon: I think it's the practitioners in the field, plus the questions that are continually raised by donors as: Well, why do we have separate entities in counties? What's so sacrosanct about a county line that means your problems here are identifiable and differentiated from the county adjacent to you? Aren't you all dealing with the same kind of problems? Shouldn't they be met through a common approach?

I think this has had a major affect on bringing about consolidation of activities of this type, on more of a metropolitan Bay Area type of thing than anything else.

Morris: These have gone on since, or did you notice them before you joined the Foundation?

Solomon: I think it's been a fairly recent development, one that's occurred in an accelerating way over the past, let's say, ten to twelve years. For example, Red Cross used to have its individual chapters within the Bay Area. Now they have come together in recognizing a community of interest, county by county, into a more cohesive, Bay Area type of operation.

Morris: As you get increasing regional kinds of organization on some of these things (and you say that there have been times when complaints were heard), are there then sometimes still gaps at the local neighborhood level—are these perhaps what some of these grassroots operations have sprung up to fill?
Solomon: Well, perhaps so. I think the problems in provincialism related more to the volunteer help than it did to paid staff employees. Here again, pride of position, that kind of thing, was the most difficult hurdle to overcome in many cases where you were seeking what seemed to be a more logical concentration of efforts than the fractured type.
UBAC Appointee

Morris: Going on to the Foundation, do you remember who first invited you to join the Distribution Committee?

Solomon: I came on to the Foundation shortly after Helen Russell's death. I was appointed to the Foundation by the then-president of UBAC. I can't recall who that was at that particular time.

Morris: I didn't think to check that before I came. Did you have much of a discussion as to what this might involve, either with the UBAC people or with the Foundation people?

Solomon: Not a whole lot. The knowledge of the Foundation and what it did— I was pretty well aware of that. I knew it meant a substantial commitment of time, but like a lot of other things, you learn by participating. Any new member of the Distribution Committee, I think, is in a state of utter confusion until he's gone through several meetings, before he begins to feel any degree of confidence or self assurance in what it's all about.

He gets his docket, and it means several hours of homework before a grant meeting is convened. Then, I think it takes a period of time before he's able to be really objective in his relative evaluation of the importance of one grant as against another, and seeing the total picture in the Bay Area.

For example, we've had any number of requests for grants from legal assistance organizations.

Morris: Yes, I've noticed that.

Solomon: A lot of them are on ethnic basis, and some have one purposes as differentiated from another. Maybe some are more interested in
Solomon: problems involving the Department of Immigration, others in providing legal assistance for the people that can't afford it.

Effectiveness of Community Effort and Foundation Dollars

Solomon: We thought that maybe the time had come to find out what we were doing in total in the several instances requesting grants.

Morris: Legal assistance as a whole field?

Solomon: Yes, that's right, and other fields as a whole. Well, this developed in Martin Paley getting representatives together for lunch the other day from organizations that we are now supporting, and he just put the problem to them and said: Look, what you're doing independently is probably a very good thing, each one of you. But isn't there a possibility of being more effective if there could be some consolidation here?

This got them thinking. We haven't had any answer yet, but it's typical of the evolution of this type of project that I think can result in more effective work being done for fewer dollars--eliminating overlap.

Now, the same thing is true with dance companies. The dance is very important, we'll agree, and it gets out into the several communities, which is a great thing to encourage participation by young people of all strata. Yet, we're making grants in so many instances that maybe someday we ought to do as we are with the legal organizations--get them together and say: Look, what you're doing, we don't fault at all, but isn't there some way of doing better over a wider base at probably some saving in administrative cost and making the dollars go further?

Morris: In other words, in a sense, turning the problem back to the community.

Solomon: That's right. That's exactly it.

Morris: Saying in effect: We can't do all of these things. Therefore, you people figure out your priority.

Solomon: That's exactly right. I think it has to be recognized that the Foundation has to work through people and organizations, but it has a perfect right to look at the effectiveness of the job they're doing and say: Maybe it could be done better. Let's get people together to talk about it and see how it can better be done.
Solomon: We had a fairly substantial amount of money left to the Foundation to provide service to disadvantaged children. It was called the Coleman bequest.

Morris: That caused quite a lot of controversy, didn't it?

Solomon: It did! Our staff moved out into the community and talked to people who were engaged in youth work to get their ideas on how we might most effectively spend this money. At one meeting, they found that a group of people who would like to provide all the answers stacked the meeting and really took it away from staff, to the point where lots of antagonisms were built. The long and short of it is that the Foundation is being sued by this group of renegades, which I believe they are, and they are now charging that the Foundation membership is prejudiced, establishment-oriented, that kind of thing.

Morris: That puts the Foundation right out there in the middle of all this community participation.

Solomon: It does.

Morris: You really find out what it's all about.

Solomon: But we kept going on this, and convened a group of people that have been very active and acknowledged leaders in this particular field of endeavor, got them together and agreed, after a fairly comprehensive study was made—in this case, I think, by a Mexican-American who is able and widely respected in the field. They agreed on just how this project should be approached, what the most effective means for doing it was. And that's now in operation.

Morris: The project has been set in operation? Even though there was this challenge from the community?

Solomon: Yes, that's right.

Morris: Did any of the Distribution Committee participate in these meetings?

Solomon: No. It raised the question in our minds whether it's desirable to lead with our chins, in the direction of having public meetings at which people with special interests could appear, and by one means or another, divert consideration from the objective you are trying to obtain, which is wholly objective, to something altogether different. We're inclined to think that maybe we shouldn't have public forums, that we should get our information through other means.
Solomon: I don't think, for example, that we could effectively have meetings that are open to the pros and cons of a Foundation grant that's being sought, by having people appear, either on one side or the other. We've had any number of requests on the part of partisans in connection with grant requests to appear before the Distribution Committee; and we just can't permit that, or we'd never get anything done.

Morris: How about the symposium approach? I understand the Rosenberg Foundation has used that upon occasion; they've picked an area that is of interest to them and had a number of experts--

Solomon: We do that. For example, if we feel that we haven't the expertise represented on our own staff in conjunction with an application for a grant, we'll seek outside special help of an unquestioned, qualified nature.

Morris: In relation to a specific proposal?

Solomon: Yes. For example, let's say a project comes to us from the University of California, in the medical division, which seems to be completely innovative and which would be responsive to a need, but which we're not able to evaluate in technical terms. We can go to some acknowledged leader in the field whose opinion would be valuable on that and get input from him that would then be incorporated in the staff report that comes to the Distribution Committee--not only one source, necessarily, but two or three, perhaps. And we resort to that a good deal of the time.

Morris: I was thinking of it more like the meeting of the people in legal defense, in which a group of people, working in a field, come together for an interested public audience of some sort, to discuss their work from different points of view, thereby providing feedback to the interested community of what's going on from different angles.

Solomon: Hmm. We haven't done too much of that. The executive director, as I said, frequently does invite representatives of a given field to lunch with him and the staff where points of view are fully explored. I think there are great opportunities here; yes, I do.

Foreseeing Community Needs

Solomon: Another thing that we're concerned about is: How much should the Foundation do in trying to foresee or anticipate community needs on its own, in the way of inspiring grant applications that would
Solomon: meet those needs? We haven't done too much of that up to this point. We have simply reviewed those projects that survive the screening, and admittedly--

[Tape turned over]

Solomon: Following up on that statement: We have not done very much in the way of originating creativity—of being responsive to what appear to be community needs. And I'm not sure that that isn't a real part of our role for the future.

Morris: Have you talked about how you might go about doing it?

Solomon: I think this would involve budget considerations, obviously. We would have to have more staff than we now have, and we've been reluctant to substantially increase budget, until the economy goes the other way a little bit. Last year, for example, we made grants to over 250 agencies. Now, that's an awful lot.

Morris: Yes, as a number; but as you said, that must mean there are 2,500 organizations out there.

Solomon: Well, that's right. But if we believe in innovation and think that foundation funds are best spent on projects that appear to have real merit that otherwise wouldn't get off the ground until they can subsequently become self-supporting (and we do place a high value factor on that possibility), then shouldn't we become more creative in our own initiative? We could attempt to get things going regarding those things we see as community needs, but which no agency is appealing to us for help with respect to.

Another way of saying this is that, looking to the future, shouldn't we perhaps concentrate our giving in large chunks over longer periods of time, so as to become a more effective force in certain things that we think are of extreme importance, rather than to scatter our shot, so to speak, over a wider area?

There are always a fair percentage of projects that don't pan out. And those hurt.

Morris: They do. When you say, "a fair percentage of projects that don't pan out," what's your criteria?

Solomon: Projects that seem to have a basis for funding to begin with and, for one reason or another, just don't survive after a year or two, or even three years. That can happen for a variety of reasons. I think we've become very much aware of how important a factor adequate direction can be.
Solomon: The agency head is so important in many of these undertakings—the ability, the dedication, the capacity to attract good people, responsible people to the governing board, keeping alive their interest, their increased participation, reaching in turn out into a broader base in the community to gain additional support—all of these things are not always there. And if they fail in any material way, so can the agency fail, too.

Morris: Going back to the mid and late sixties, when you were first on the Foundation board, those were the years when there was a great rash of the grassroots projects—numbers of young people and minority people without much in the way of what you'd consider agency training or leadership experience. Do you recall how the Distribution Committee dealt with those, how you decided which ones to fund?

Solomon: You mean in agencies that were responsive to the needs of those people or those that originated their own projects and—?

Morris: I'm thinking of the projects that you funded that seemed not to fit the traditional agency organization. I call them grassroots for want of a better term. In other words, the nonprofessional kinds of things, like Hospitality House and some of the arts workshops.

Solomon: Here again, I think that the Distribution Committee has endeavored as individuals to keep pace with the times, and if they see social issues developing, they try—individually and collectively—to be responsive to them. I have witnessed a willingness to commit funds of the Foundation without being too sure of how well it'll go down with the community, but with a feeling that the commitment is a step in the right direction in the collective judgment of the members of the Committee.

And frequently we—well, not frequently, but on occasions, we haven't been proven out on these things. Our judgment hasn't been impeccable, and I don't think it should be. If we were always certain of what the end result would be, I'm afraid we'd develop a reputation for not doing much of anything that—

Morris: Innovation carries with it a certain amount of trial and error?

Solomon: Of course it does.

Morris: Would these 'step in the right direction' things—I'm interested in how the Distribution Committee and John May worked together—be a matter of, "John proposed and the Distribution Committee disposed," or would the board give him direction as to things you thought he ought to look into?
Solomon: I think this gets back to my previous point, that we've been pretty much dependent upon applications that simply come to us for grant support, and not enough on the side of initiating things on our own. So I'm fearful that the things that we do relate to are those that in one form or another come in at the staff level. Then there's discussion, and it gets to the point where maybe a grant application is made. Then it begins to surface at the level of the Distribution Committee.

I would hope that we can move farther in the direction of initiating things on our own belief of what is needed in response to social needs and changing times and that kind of thing, to provide what I believe is the real function of a community foundation.

Staff Procedures

Morris: That sounds as if you feel that from the Distribution Committee's combined knowledge of the community, plus all the data that the staff has on the kinds of applications coming in and the kinds of people the Foundation already has contacted, that the Foundation has an overview from which it might be possible to predict what things--

Solomon: I think that collectively the members of the Distribution Committee are very much aware of contemporary times and changes that are taking place. And they can block out areas which they think are worthy of further development, or say: Let's do some research in this area to find out what, if anything, could become a factor in the right kind of development, or contribute something.

Then we need staff to follow it out from there. All we can do is to block out the general area, I think, and then depend upon staff to bring something back to us—that we can then look at. Now, that's where we hope to get, and it's going to take more than we have in the way of staff now to do that, since at the present time the volume of applications is such that to get through them is requiring many extra hours on the part of the present staff.

The applications are divided into three parts and reviewed in thirds by each staff member. They're assigned, not on the basis of field, but in rotation as they are received. So that each staff person sees a good cross-section of all--

Morris: That's interesting.
Solomon: Which is right.

Morris: Yes.

Solomon: Then, after all staff members have read their allotted shares of the grant applications, they get together and have a discussion of each application, so as to try to get a consensus. It's better than depending on the individual exclusively, because you do get a consensus. It's not ideal, because I'm fearful that the sheer volume is such that a lot of things slip through the cracks, and I'm constantly fearful that maybe there are some very worthwhile things that we aren't responding to that perhaps we should.

Morris: This is completely out of my line as historian, but it occurs to me that some of the Distribution Committee might take a flier at reading some applications, perhaps some of the ones that aren't worked up in full detail.

Solomon: Well, we do. If we get a particularly controversial one, and a very lengthy one, it's frequently referred out by staff for review by either one or two or maybe three members of the Distribution Committee. So that they have a deeper acquaintance with all of the resource material than would be available through the staff write-up.

Morris: Yes. Some projects get rather blurred.

Solomon: This isn't done as a rule, but it does happen on occasions. And I think you're right. Yet, it's questionable how much time, in addition to what they're already spending, members of the Distribution Committee could devote to this.

Morris: That's true. Looking back over the years you've been on the Distribution Committee, can you see any stages that grant applications have gone through or any stages in the community?

Solomon: In talking to Martin Paley earlier this week, we developed a format for budgeting. Without requiring the agency to conform to the exact form in which we would like to see their budget presented, we can test what the agency submits to us against a form that we've developed, to ascertain whether or not it answers the various questions that we wish answered. And if the application doesn't meet that test, we can then bring the petitioner in and discuss wherein it misses and assist in restructuring the budget so that the next time around it can do that.

Now, we do that only with respect to those applications we think are related to projects that would be worthwhile undertaking if properly presented, and not in a hundred percent of the cases by
Solomon: any means because, obviously, if the application doesn't appear to staff to merit the consideration of the Distribution Committee, or if it's outside our field of logical participation for one reason or another, then it never gets to that point.

Morris: Do you think that the people sending in applications nowadays are doing a better job with their budgeting and their design than they used to?

Solomon: Yes. Much better. I'm sure you've seen the annual report, but in the--

Morris: I haven't seen the new one.

Solomon: Well, it is very well done. We describe how to donate funds to the Foundation, ways of doing it, tax considerations; but then we also have information available to the applying agency on how to prepare an application and encourage it to come in and talk to staff. So that it has at least an even chance of not being ruled off the course at the very beginning.

We have, as a matter of policy--this being primarily a San Francisco and Bay Area foundation--pretty well restricted our consideration of grant applications to this geographic area--that is, oh, roughly the five Bay Area counties.

Morris: That's a good-sized area in itself.

Solomon: It has to be. It's amazing from what far, distant points we get grant requests. The Foundation is widely known through foundation directories.

Morris: You get applications from beyond the Bay Area counties?

Solomon: Oh, yes.

Morris: Do you ever respond to any of them?

Solomon: To those beyond our jurisdictional or our geographic area that we've sort of drawn for ourselves? Only rarely, in the case of specific instructions for an advise and consent fund.
Government and Foundations

Morris: You were already on the Distribution Committee when the Tax Reform Act of 1969 arrived on the scene. Were you aware of the deliberations leading up to that and what it might mean to the Foundation?

Solomon: Yes, we had a pretty good idea that this would mean an enhancement of the influence and permanence of the community foundations at the cost of private foundations.

Morris: Why did you think that was going to come about? What were the reasons that the legislation was drafted to do that?

Solomon: I think that there'd undoubtedly been abuses in the administration of private foundations. They were more exposed to public view as to their activities, their pay-out. I think, generally, the legislation was favored by the public as a whole, as being very much in the right direction.

I think that was true during the whole time the proposed legislation was under consideration, that something had to be done, in the interest of long-term philanthropy and providing funds for the requirements of the future, to draw attention to some of the abuses that were existent up to that time.

And, certainly, private foundations, family foundations—not all, but in many cases—were guilty of misapplication of intentions.

Morris: Did the Foundation, by any chance, send a delegate back to testify, or did the legislators do any fieldwork to—?

Solomon: No, we didn't. We have participated, through the Council on Foundations and, of course, this was a major concern to it. Our input came through the Council on Foundations, and then through them to the legislative committees and public hearings before the Congress.

Morris: In other words, people from the San Francisco Foundation did express its concerns to the Council on Foundations.

Solomon: Oh, yes. John May, of course, was very active in the Council on Foundations. Now, the Filer committee—

Morris: That seems to be an interesting hybrid—some governmental and some private in its auspices.
Solomon: Yes, it is. That's true. And perhaps the best authority on that is one who's a very active participant, and I suggest you might want to talk to Bill Roth about it.

Morris: We discussed it briefly. He didn't want to talk about it too much yet, because I gather the reports are just coming in for discussion by the Commission.

Solomon: Yes.

Morris: I was interested that it seems to be primarily concerned with the financial aspects.

Solomon: Yes. Tax effects and that kind of thing.

Morris: I'm unclear whether the concern of all of these discussions—and the legislation—is to increase the amount of money the government gets in tax revenues, or whether it is to encourage that we citizens look after ourselves through our own organizations.

Solomon: I think it's largely the latter.

Morris: How does that then relate to the government, in its executive departments, making grants in areas like education and prison efficiency and things that foundations are interested in?

Solomon: I wish I could see that as clearly at this point as I would hope that members of the Commission will see it. But I think there is confusion, as you just suggested, in everyone's mind now, about what the ultimate can be on this.

Morris: I've come across a couple of comments, in regard to projects in California, that when the government was making large-sized grants in the area of juvenile delinquency and in some minority community concerns, then applications in those areas dropped off to the foundations. Did you have any sense of this on the San Francisco Foundation?

Solomon: No, I'm not aware of that. That may have been seen at the staff level.

Emergency Funding

Solomon: We have found the opposite to be the case—so many times, government funding for one agency or another had all of a sudden not been
Solomon: available. And UBAC felt an obligation to be the catalyst in providing for bridge funding for those organizations that suddenly found themselves without funds.

The Distribution Committee of the San Francisco Foundation considered that it was certainly in order for them to commit $250,000 to a large fund, this being the largest portion of it, by far, that would be available to UBAC and governed by representatives of groups who supported the fund to provide the agencies with the bridging funding that was necessary. This has been very important, or a number of the agencies just simply couldn't have paid their bills.

Morris: This is recent, within the last couple of years?

Solomon: Yes, very recently. It's been in effect for about a year. We find that of the $250,000 we committed there's an unexpended balance of our funds of just a little under one hundred thousand dollars. We recently agreed to leave the balance on deposit and probably would supplement it if we ran into the same situation all over again.

Morris: In other words, this is to carry an organization through to the end of its budget year?

Solomon: Yes, that's right.

Morris: That's a very interesting comment. Way back in the San Francisco Foundation scrapbook, I came across a small item that a private donor had left a small sum of money to the Foundation as an emergency fund.* I wondered if that had all been used up, or if it had been retained as a revolving fund that was used. This was about fifteen years ago.

Solomon: I don't know, but there are frequent occasions when we will make special grants directly to an agency which we had been funding, which for one reason or another had to have bridging funds to carry for a month or two months or even six months, but I can't answer your question about the emergency fund. I don't think anything of that type exists.

*The 1953 San Francisco Foundation annual report lists a $3,481 emergency grant to the United Crusade. The 1956 annual report lists five thousand dollars to the Yuba City Red Cross after the Christmas flood of that year, made from the Whitney Warren Trust, an 'advise and consent' fund. Ed.
Solomon: The executive director of the Foundation, however, can make discretionary grants up to five thousand dollars in any single instance, with a limit of, I believe, thirty thousand dollars between grant meetings of the Foundation, just to meet emergency situations of the type of which you speak.
4. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Growth of Assets

Morris: Another thing that happened in the first years that you were on the Distribution Committee was that, in John May's phrase, "a number of bequests began to mature." There's a sharp rise in the assets of the Foundation, beginning about 1966, and I wondered if a geometric increase in the amount of assets caused the Distribution Committee to consider whether they should make any change in policy as to the kinds of grants or the size of grants that they would be interested in.

Solomon: I think it's had an affect on what it was willing to commit in the way of size of grants, and there's a trend now to larger grants. For example, in 1974--the figure's given someplace [looks through annual report]--a fair number of our grants were for less than a thousand dollars, and this doesn't seem to be especially meaningful. Last year we made 245 regular grants, and of those 27 were for grants in amounts under a thousand dollars, which doesn't seem to make too much sense.

Morris: That's interesting, the way people out there in the community see the Foundation. You would think in today's economy, you would go somewhere else for a thousand dollars.

Solomon: That's right. [Pauses] One of the responsibilities of the Distribution Committee, of course, is to encourage additions to the Foundation. This is an elusive thing to really get a hold on, because we don't have any development department. That's one reason that we pay so much attention to the quality of our annual report, getting it into the proper form and using it as a merchandising vehicle with opinion-formers.

Morris: I'm glad you're so candid. It strikes me as a very effective tool.
Solomon: Well, I think so. We try to get this into the hands of lawyers, into important trust departments throughout the state, the hands of the judiciary, the state legislators generally, city officials, trying to popularize the concept of the Foundation, so that it becomes a conversation piece. And that's really what we have to rely upon.

We have no franchise that's irrevocable to distribute funds for philanthropic things in the community, and we'll be in business just as long as we do a reasonably passable job.

Testamentary Provisions

Morris: In discussions of early days of the Foundation there have been several comments that banks and trust departments and attorneys were concerned with the problem of advising their clients what to do with their worldly goods. I wondered if, as a banker yourself, you find this continues to be a problem.

Solomon: I think the Foundation concept is well enough established now and its record of performance is such that there isn't a hesitancy on the part of the lawyers or trust people to recommend the Foundation at some point.

It's surprising how many times, after a testator has made provision for people close to him and then makes an end disposition in the event none of those contingencies occur, that the end condition comes into being. This is what we'd like to have more people think about, considering the Foundation as the ultimate, residual beneficiary of an estate. Certainly we wouldn't want a testator to deviate from the object of his principal concern in making adequate provision, but hopefully think of the Foundation as a contingent, ultimate beneficiary.

Morris: Is it a complicated task for banks to advise people and then fulfill their trust responsibilities to people?

Solomon: No. Generally speaking, if a person comes to discuss estate planning the bank's role is to generally advise him with respect to taxes and things like that and to discuss the philosophy of his distribution program, but then say: Go to your lawyer and have him put it all together.

Banks draw a very clear line between what they can give in the way of advice and actually implementing anything through the drafting of an instrument. We won't do that, and won't even specify an attorney to which a person can go if he doesn't already have his own. We'll give him a list from which they can select someone.
Solomon: But this is the most important area for the future of the Foundation, as far as increase in assets is concerned.

Morris: Are people of means more likely to talk to their attorney or to their banker, or do they already know what they want to do with their worldly goods?

Solomon: I think lawyers are in a very key position. Depending on the relationship that a trust customer has with individuals in the trust departments, that's becoming an increasingly important consideration, too. I have had, among personal acquaintances related to banking, many people talk to me about estate disposition.

Morris: Knowing that you're president of the Foundation?

Solomon: Not particularly, no. Not related particularly to the Foundation at all.

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Trustees' Committee

Morris: Does the Distribution Committee meet at all with the Trustees' Committee?

Solomon: Not as a Distribution Committee. We have had a representative of the Distribution Committee, together with Martin Paley, meet with the representatives of the trustee banks, to inform them of what our objectives are, how we operate, what kind of return we like to look to on assets invested, how much we pay out—in other words, to acquaint them with the operation of the Foundation so that they feel more than just custodians and investors of funds.

Morris: Is this a recent innovation?

Solomon: This is fairly new, yes. And there's been a very splendid reaction to this. They all have risen right to the hoped for response.

Morris: Did it involve many changes in your portfolio?

Solomon: No. We don't attempt to tell them what to do, because they have sole investment responsibility, and so many times their investment policy will be guided by the terms of the separate instrument. Some testators or trustors will give the trustees complete discretion, and others will limit them to certain types of investment.
Solomon: All we can do is to say what we're trying to do as a foundation, what we hope for in the way of total results, and generally acquaint them with more than they have known about the Foundation and our operations in the past. And they've reacted very well to it.

Morris: Has the Distribution Committee, either among itself or with the Trustees' Committee, raised this current question of the social aspect of the investments of the Foundation?

Solomon: No. That we stay away from.

Morris: I gather that other institutions, like universities and some of the other foundations, have gotten into this.

Solomon: Yes, I think they have. But since we have no responsibility over 'the investments' when they're particularized, we feel that that's an area that we should stay away from and leave it with the trustee banks who do have the responsibility to arrive at their own decisions.

Morris: Would they think of this, unless somebody raised the question?

Solomon: My guess would be—not generally. I think they would be looking to do a professional job in the investment of funds, without attributing too much importance to the social aspects of their investments. They'd be looking more for other things—security, the investment quality, return, prospects for growth, prospects for increased income. All of these things would outweigh, it seems to me, in the opinion of the trustee banks, the social implications of the investment.

Morris: It's one of the issues that is discussed in relation to foundations these days.

Solomon: Oh, of course.

I would say that meeting with the Trustees' Committee keeps the Foundation in their minds. They all have a number of other responsibilities, as do the lawyers, who may or may not think to suggest that clients include the Foundation in their wills.

That's one of the reasons we try to give our annual report as wide a distribution as possible.
5. WORK OF THE DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

Appointing Authorities

Morris: Another issue that's received a fair amount of attention is board representation—in your case, the Distribution Committee. I wonder about the process of seeking a new Distribution Committee member. Does everybody on the board participate in that discussion when they know there's a vacancy coming up?

Solomon: No, not in a preliminary briefing. Usually, a new member of the Distribution Committee, as was the case with Hamilton Budge, spends time with Martin Paley, with the staff. He becomes oriented with the general scope of the work through visitation in the office and a review of all the functions. Then I spent some time with Budge, as did Brooks Walker, and then it becomes a process of developing knowledgeability through participation, I think.

Morris: In other words, you don't really have much control over who the appointing authorities decide they will appoint to the Distribution Committee?

Solomon: No. Distribution Committee can make suggestions, but we definitely rule it out of bounds to come up with only one selection possibility. We generally provide a slate of several names, and say: Here is a group of names from which you might wish to select, but you're not bound to.

Morris: Do the appointing authorities usually ask for some advice or informally chat about the—?

Solomon: Mmmm.

Morris: Do any of the community activists ever go to the appointing authorities—say, to the president of UBAC?
Solomon: Not to our knowledge, no.

Morris: And say: You ought to appoint Thus-and-so?

Solomon: No. I think that the composition of the Distribution Committee probably raises some question in the minds of some people, but as imperfect as the process of selection may be, how could it be any better? I think one has to look at the alternatives.

Morris: The only comment I've ever heard on this is one that entertains me; that is that when the Foundation was set up, the League of Women Voters was considered a very far-out, activist organization, and now they're just as establishment as everybody else. [Laughter]

Solomon: Oh, that's true. But the appointing authorities for membership on the Distribution Committee are about as broad-based as one could wish.

Docket Discussions

Morris: When it comes to the Distribution Committee discussions, is there much debate or difference of opinion on the various items on the docket for approval?

Solomon: Not as a rule. Yet, in the course of an average meeting, there are, on occasions, some very definite disagreements among members of the Distribution Committee with respect to a given application. And, generally, we require x-number of Distribution Committee members to approve a grant.

Morris: Is it usually fairly predictable that this individual will raise this kind of an objection to a given proposal? Does it divide up into groups at all?

Solomon: Not at all. And I will say that the discussion is completely lacking in acrimony. It's kept on the highest plane. There are honest differences of opinion, and in a high majority of cases, the divergent points of view can be wrung out, but then reconciled to everyone's satisfaction, after there's been a complete exposition of the pros and cons.

Many cases, where a difference of opinion does exist, will result—if it can't be resolved at that meeting—in a request of staff that they come in with further information of a specific nature, after seeking a specific opinion, or additional facts that would better inform the several members of the Distribution Committee.
Solomon: on facts that may not be available to them at that time. There generally is no disposition to make an irrevocable decision if additional information could be made available and would be helpful in resolving differences of opinion.

Morris: How often are things that knotty that you want to send them back?

Solomon: Not too often. Maybe an item or two a meeting. Sometimes we get through a meeting without anything like that.

Morris: It sounds as if you have, maybe, twenty items that come through on an agenda.

Solomon: Oh, many more than that.

Morris: The grant meetings are every two months?

Solomon: About eight a year. We don't have them during the summer season.

Morris: Do you ever have any situations where there's a possible question of conflict of interest with a Distribution Committee member--with all the variety of activity of members?

Solomon: Yes; oh, yes. For example, we once had the president of the Opera, who was the chairman of the Distribution Committee. We discussed that one up one side and down the other in connection with a grant application of the Opera. And rather than to deny the right to vote, I think the discussion we've had has resolved the problem so that no one who's directly affiliated with an organization that's seeking grant support becomes an advocate before the Distribution Committee.* It's just simply understood that he won't. He'll be responsive to inquiries that are made, to provide more information, but I think that he would hesitate to become an advocate. And that's just

*The Foundation's minutes for April, 1974, report a policy that applications for funds from an agency or organization in which a member of the Distribution Committee is a central figure "should be appraised by a committee of not less than two members of the Distribution Committee who are not involved in the agency or organization... The staff shall not be involved except as fact-finder or consultant as required by members of the sub-committee,"... which "shall make a recommendation to the full committee which shall vote its decision in the usual manner." Ed.
Solomon: accepted, without any hard and fast rules drawn that he should or should not vote, or that he should absent himself from the room.

Morris: Has this involved any discussion to thrash this out?

Solomon: Oh, yes. We've had oodles of discussion, hours spent on it, memoranda prepared; but we come right back to the point that the best thing is just an informal understanding among the— For example, we had a member of the Distribution Committee that was very active in conjunction with a program in East Palo Alto, and he was sort of the—he was a compensated director of this agency that was applying for grant support, in very substantial sums. That was a little knotty. But it was finally resolved, and it was all done out in the open, without any caucuses or cleavages developing or off-the-record conversations that couldn't be talked about right at the meeting. That's the only way I think a Distribution Committee can effectively function.

Morris: That's admirable.

Solomon: Well, it is. Sure it is. But members of the Committee approach such situations with a view that their principal obligation is to look at things with a complete objectivity, and I think that the members of the Distribution Committee make it quite clear that advocacy, by reason of a direct interest in an agency that is seeking support would be a very unwelcome thing.

Morris: So did you fund the Opera after discussing the dual board membership?

Solomon: Oh, sure. Yes, we provided some grant support.

Morris: You said that the president of the Opera was requested not to speak as an advocate of that proposal, which seems sensible. Do board members have various general concerns about society and its development that they do espouse and advocate in discussions?

Solomon: I think that's inherently true. There will be those who feel certain areas of activity that affect society are more important than others, and who in a general way, not specifically, will be advocates of this approach rather than some alternative approach.

Morris: We should do more to encourage youth participation—that kind of thing, rather than: We should fund this particular concept.

Solomon: Yes. On that conflict of interest business, I was in such a position, being president of Mills Hospital in San Mateo when a request came up for assistance in purchasing a major piece of equipment, or in underwriting an educational program in participation
Solomon: with Stanford. I found it awfully difficult to sit on my hands, but I did, knowing that if I spoke beyond what had been developed by Foundation staff in its contact with the staff of the hospital, that it would be prejudicial and probably have an unwarranted influence in the decisions that the other members of the Distribution Committee would come to. It's just recognized that that's not the thing to do.

Advocacy on and off the Board

Morris: I wonder if Distribution Committee members ever either get personally lobbied or have any personal contact?

Solomon: Oh, no question about that. But it's diminishing in its intensity. Frequently, a grant applicant or someone of prominence on the board known to a member of the Distribution Committee would call that particular member of the Distribution Committee and say: We've made this application; now we expect your support, and we hope that we'll get it. Even after action had been taken, they might double back and say: What happened?

We're all pretty well schooled not to take a position either in behalf of an application we know is going to come up, or give any assurance in that connection, or say anything that would divulge the deliberations of the Committee after the fact. So that that tendency, which may have worked in the past, is rapidly dissipating. I don't get the pressures any more.

Morris: But you used to?

Solomon: Used to.

Morris: From people that you knew, or also from--?

Solomon: Yes. People who were sincere, I'm sure, in their feeling that the thing to do when you believe in something is to bring every pressure to bear to see that it's successfully culminated.

Morris: Well, in community activity, the standard procedure has been that a person from the group is detailed to talk to each Supervisor.

Solomon: Sure. That's right.

Morris: I sometimes wonder if the Supervisor doesn't think: If they aren't out there bangin' on my front door, they don't really care. Therefore, I won't vote for it.
Solomon: But members of the Distribution Committee now, I think, are pretty well schooled to the fact that if someone came and said, "We have an interest in this project," we'll say, "The thing for you to do is to take it up with staff. Give them all the information that you think is pertinent, and look to them for help in the preparation of your application, but beyond that, don't ask us to intervene in your behalf."

Morris: When you say 'schooled', is this something that you will advise a new Distribution Committee member about?

Solomon: No. The members that have been on the Distribution Committee for any length of time know this, and the newer members will soon get it. [Laughs]

Morris: Does a new member come wading in with comments and opinions right away?

Solomon: It depends. Ruth Goldman, who is a new member of the Distribution Committee appointed just a few months ago, has been quite active in her participation in discussions. And it's a knowledgeable activity on her part because she does have a fine, broad base and knowledge of community agencies. Hamilton Budge, who's attended only one meeting of the Distribution Committee so far, has participated only in the area of seeking clarification or additional information, not speaking in behalf of any particular end, at this point.

Morris: How about Ira Hall?

Solomon: Ira generally sounds off. There's a case where one had to be very careful. He was the one I was referring to in connection with the project down the Peninsula. And Ira for a time, I think, was inclined to feel that his primary obligation was to be an advocate for his racial group. But it's been interesting to watch him get away from that restrictive point of view, to a point where he recognizes that he must be more objective. And he will accept a majority opinion of the Distribution Committee, even though he is on the minority side, and do it in good grace.

Morris: Is he primarily advocating things from a point of view of being a Negro himself, or from being quite a young man?

Solomon: Primarily in behalf of his racial group, I think. He has--as you may know--decided to go back to school; he's taking a combined MBA course, business along with law.

Morris: That sounds like a remarkably interesting program.
Solomon: Oh, he's just as bright as can be. This will be terribly demanding on his time, but he wants to remain on the Distribution Committee. I had the pleasure of writing a highly commendatory letter for him, on his behalf, to the dean of admissions, and I meant every word of it.

Morris: He's what, 27 or 28 now?
Solomon: Yes.
Morris: He has acquired quite a collection of positions at a very young age.
Solomon: Yes, that's right.
Morris: Is that a sign of the times, or is he exceptionally able?
Solomon: He's an exceptional person. He's certainly a leader in his group. Excuse me a minute.

[Solomon phones, Morris puts new tape on machine]

Importance of Applicants' Board and Staff

Morris: Thank you for asking your secretary to bring in the Foundation docket; it really helps to see what one is talking about. Might we include some of the material as illustration for this interview?
Solomon: Sure, I see no reason why we shouldn't. Let me talk to Martin about that, and see if we can't. I think it would be a good thing to do.*
Morris: Yes. And not the most recent. What we're after is a historical perspective. We don't want anything that would be currently controversial or awkward.

*A sample of summaries of applications, reviews of grants made, executive director's reports, and other materials for the Distribution Committee's discussion in 1974 are included in the appendix to John R. May's memoir, since most of them were written by Mr. May. Ed.
Solomon: There again, there's been great evolution in the quality of the staff work that's prepared Distribution Committee members for what they'll be thinking about. My docket now is about two inches thick for a bimonthly meeting.

Morris: The foundation field seems to be one in which the technical expertise has increased tremendously in recent years.

[Miss Mouton brings in armload of bound documents and leaves.]

Solomon: This is just a small, old one that I have, but it's an idea. The recent ones are such big binders--

Morris: That's about eight inches thick.

Solomon: Yes, that's right. [Going through the docket] This is the agenda material and minutes for about six months' work, so that we can check back and see what action we've taken.

Morris: Just the size of the binders gives an indication how more complex the field has become.

Solomon: That's right. We pay a good deal of attention to the kind of volunteer leadership that an applying agency has. Generally, we're very much interested not only in the full time staff of the agency, but the quality of the volunteer leadership, the directors, and--

Morris: The board of directors?

Solomon: The board of directors, that's right. What their affiliations are, who they are, and the degree of their financial commitment to their agency.

Morris: What do you do with a group that applies, few of whose board of directors is known or has had much prior experience?

Solomon: We depend pretty much on the staff's appraisal of the effectiveness of these people. For example, you get so many neighborhood groups, but we don't know any of them, that we have to depend upon the staff, who go down on the ground and draw a pretty good evaluation of the effectiveness of this board in influencing the neighborhood, how they're regarded. We feel that we can depend pretty solidly upon their conclusions.

Morris: Have you had enough experience with this kind of grant yet to know how the results of this kind of a project might compare to a similar project run by an agency with an old, established leadership?
Solomon: Oh, yes. Yes, we've had some phenomenal successes in connection with—well, I say "we've had them," it was none of our doing, other than to provide the funding, but our relationship to some of these has been the very best. There's a group of Negro ladies that none of us know, that are the prime movers in an agency that is just doing a remarkable job.

In such instances we have to depend upon performance and what we can learn of them through staff inquiries concerning their stature in the community and the effectiveness of their work. But if you get some dedicated people, and they seem to make sense in responding to an acknowledged need—we haven't had very many failures on this score.

Morris: Do you get any feedback from some of these neighborhood kind of organizations that, having once gotten a grant from the San Francisco Foundation, they find their subsequent fund-raising easier, or a greater acceptance—?

Solomon: Oh, yes. No question about that.

Continuing and Cooperative Funding

Morris: What happens to a small new organization when the grant funds run out? You said that you give some attention to what their continued financing—

Solomon: Normally, we are hesitant to fund an organization unless we can see the second step pretty clearly. We must be convinced of their being responsive to an evident need, that they have the competence to carry out the project, that the project has a sufficient attraction so that they can either gain admission into UBAC or get some form of governmental support or outside financing from individuals or other foundations. We especially like to join with other foundations in funding a project.

Morris: Would this be for grants of larger amounts?

Solomon: Yes. Or at the end of a couple of years where we've been the sole funding source to them, when we may ask—on an enlarged basis—another foundation to come in with us.

Morris: How has that worked out?

Solomon: Very well. There's a greatly improved interchange of information now among foundations.
Morris: In the Bay Area?

Solomon: Yes. Out of the San Francisco Foundation office, monthly, goes a list of all grant applicants that come into us, by name and purpose. We send that out to all the other foundations that we know in the area, and ask them for any information they have concerning grant requests made by anyone on the list, and there's been some excellent exchange of information.

Morris: In some cases will this lead to another foundation picking up a project, rather than the San Francisco Foundation, or trading back and forth?

Solomon: Yes, that's right. Frequently, we'll see applications come to us where there's been a commitment on the part of the Rosenberg or Van Loben Sels or other foundation to participate. This is always attractive to us, when a project is good enough to draw support of other foundations. And the reverse is true. Frequently, we'll find that other foundations will withhold commitment until they find out whether there's going to be support from the San Francisco Foundation.

And we have found any number of instances where, in major fund-raising activities, people come to the Foundation for a grant before they think they've laid the right kind of a base to go to the general public or to other sources. The endorsement of the San Francisco Foundation means something in fund-raising terms. That's true of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, for example. They place a very high value upon a commitment from the Foundation, in terms of what it will do to influence others to give them support.

Morris: Have you any kind of rough approximation of how many projects go on to some kind of government funding, and how many to other foundations?

Solomon: No, I don't. That would be an interesting statistic to compile, and I'm sure they don't have it readily available in the office; but it would be interesting.

Morris: Yes, and at the other end of the scale, what percentage of projects has disappeared, and why.

Solomon: Frequently, at the end of a period of funding, whether it be one, two, or three years, we will come up with a final grant that we inform the agency is terminal. So that they have a year to think about it, and lay their plans accordingly.
Solomon: And we like something where the grant is of diminishing importance over a period of time. So that there's a step approach to becoming independent. We've had 'em go the other way, too, where we think the worth of the work being done is such that it justifies additional annual help from us.
6. INDICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Funding

Solomon: I think that we may find that the period of funding will be extended, particularly if we identify in a more important way the development of certain agency activities; we may find that we'll extend the period from two or three to five or even more years.

Morris: That's very interesting that you come back to that. Isn't there a sociological theory that it would be possible for a foundation to influence, in effect, what was done in a field by imposing itself into the field, rather than waiting to hear from 'out there'?

Solomon: That may be true, although I think the Foundation is inclined to look, primarily, at the competence of the staff direction of the activity. Unless we can be satisfied with that, it's awfully hard to gain initial support or continuing support.

Then, we're also interested in the volunteer leadership that's attracted, and moves they make toward becoming self sufficient as time goes on. But we're not likely to involve ourselves in the day-to-day, week-to-week, or month-to-month operation of the concern. We just stay away from that.

Encouraging Younger Leadership: Resource Exchange

Morris: Speaking of new ideas, I wonder if you would tell me a little bit about this Resource Exchange group that you've been having breakfast with.

Solomon: Well, it's a Rockefeller-inspired organization that I think has about six or seven counterparts throughout the United States. We have one
Solomon: here that's made up of six youth representatives and six representatives from business. The idea is to gain a basis of communications exchange between youth and business executives that will contribute to a better understanding of each other's problems.

Most of the representatives of youth are identified with a specific organization. And the top business people, who generally are insulated from the problems of youth, find that on a first name basis, which has developed, there is a new awareness and appreciation of each other's points of view.

The two groups came together initially at a retreat which they attended one weekend in Sonoma. This was before I was a part of it.

Morris: This was the first encounter between the two?

Solomon: Yes. .It was very carefully planned within the group to match a businessman with a youth. The group might spend a morning together, talking about each other's areas of concern, and then in pairs they'd go off together in the afternoon. Each would talk about what was said in the group meeting that morning and further discuss differing points of view on a give and take basis. It is a good exercise in achieving better understanding.

Since it's all on a first name basis, it irritates Miss Mouton when Tony Tse, a Chinese boy, calls and asks, "Is Emmett there?" [Laughter] But this is the way it goes.

I think it's in the embryonic, development stage. I think it's necessary. I'm not sure we have just the right format yet for doing everything that could be hoped to develop ultimately.

As a project, the youth contingent of Resource Exchange gathers equipment from businesses throughout the city, and then places that equipment in areas of need, usually with agencies or organizations that need it and can't afford it otherwise. Once committed, it pretty well stays there.

Morris: Yes, I would think that would need some working out.

Solomon: They have been casting about for other areas where they could be helpful. On an experimental basis, they are now operating a passenger van that was given them by Fireman's Fund, where they pick up--

Morris: A Dial-a-Ride kind of thing?
Solomon: Yes. Where they pick up senior citizens, and take them to meeting places. It's kept in operation twelve, fourteen hours a day. It's worked out very well, and it's certainly demonstrated the need for a comprehensive transportation facility to serve not only the senior citizens, but the handicapped as well. So many agencies have need for transportation, it's difficult to supply it to all the people that are in need.

Morris: And those who have the transportation don't necessarily get to the people who are out there needing it?

Solomon: That's right. We've had proposals come before the Foundation for funding an operation that would look to these needs, but the cost as a minimum runs up to a quarter of a million dollars a year in budget requirements. And there has not yet been a comprehensive study made that we feel would be the basis for funding something of this kind.

Morris: When you say they handle the resources and the van, this is the six young people?

Solomon: Yes, that's right. One of the six of them is sort of the director on year-round basis, and they depend upon volunteers within the organizations that they represent to supply other work. They do hire the van driver and pay him, pay gas and oil and insurance.

The funding, the cost of the operation, is supplied by the six corporation participants. This runs each of them about four thousand dollars a year, or something like that. So that they're working on a budget of around $25,000.

Morris: That's pretty good for a young—in all senses—organization.

Solomon: Yes.

Morris: Is it the same people, by and large, working together since the beginning?

Solomon: Yes. There have been some changes. It's been going about a year and a half to two years in San Francisco. The industry participants are Tom Clausen, at Bank of America; Gordon Hough, of the telephone company; Stuart Menist, chairman of Fireman's Fund; Brooks Walker, U.S. Leasing—

Morris: He's on the San Francisco—?

Solomon: He's on the Distribution Committee. Very bright, very forward-looking, and very socially conscious.
Morris: Is U.S. Leasing motor vehicle leasing?

Solomon: No, all types of industrial equipment—computers, ships. They will buy and lease anything.

Morris: That's a very interesting kind of a company to have a young executive of great social conscience.

Solomon: Oh, yes. You should meet him. I think, in his age group (and I would guess he'd be middle-forties), he's as outstanding as any I know in the community, probably without many peers. Then the other member of the Resource Exchange is Bob DiGiorgio, who's DiGiorgio Corporation.

Morris: He was a Rosenberg Foundation board member for awhile.

Solomon: That's right.

Morris: Has it been going long enough to have observed any changes in the participants?

Solomon: I have been affiliated with it only a short time, and then I was out of commission the last six months of last year. So that I don't feel that I yet have the 'feel' of the group to the point that I'm convinced that it has an assured future existence.

Morris: Rockefeller is no longer a factor in it?

Solomon: Oh, yes. He has staff people that he sends out talk to this group here, and is very much interested in it.

Morris: Every meeting?

Solomon: No. Just a couple of times a year.

Morris: And do you then as a group send any feedback to them?

Solomon: Yes. Through the youth manager.

Morris: It's a very small sample, but a very interesting sample.

Solomon: It is a very small thing, and its total influence isn't anything to speak of at all; but whether it's going to take off, mushroom, become highly significant in time, is anyone's guess.

Now, there's one of the co-directors of Delancey Street Foundation, the prison rehabilitation group, among the youth. As a matter of fact, he's president of the organization.
Morris: I don't believe he's under thirty.

Solomon: No, well, he's--

Morris: That's what I was going to ask you. What's the age of the young people?

Solomon: He is, I would say, middle-thirties, maybe. Chinese--Anthony Tse, who, I believe, is doing some work for a master's at Berkeley, but is the full time director. There's a Mexican-American, a Negro, another girl that represents latinos. That's about it, I guess. Then another Chinese.

As Chairman of the Distribution Committee

Morris: You say you haven't been meeting with this group long enough to observe any change. Do you, in general, observe a change in the Foundation Distribution Committee members, after they've worked for awhile?

Solomon: Yes, I think they discover a philosophy that comes to them without any period of indoctrination or schooling. It just develops. So that in that sense, yes, one can see a change. I think there's a tendency to look at relative values more, that the inclination to favor certain areas of philanthropic activities diminishes in the interest of more objective evaluation of the several areas. They become more generalists than specialists in their ability to evaluate. And I think this is important.

Morris: Yes, given the whole range of the Bay Area's needs and interests.

Solomon: Right.

Morris: I've asked you a number of questions. Are there any things that I have missed that have struck you as particularly important in your experience as chairman of the Distribution Committee?

Solomon: No, I don't think so. I do see a change taking place in the transition from John May to Martin Paley. Each person brings to the position of executive director his own management style. John contributed so much that he will always be remembered as a tremendous contributor to the stature and success of the Foundation. Martin, on the same basis, is bringing improved management methods to the Foundation.
Solomon: We're learning a lot more about our financial position, how much we have to do with. I think the staff work is being better organized. We're getting a better relationship with trustees' representatives. Martin has inaugurated a system of bringing together for lunch once a week or once every two weeks representatives of various fields of endeavor. Informal luncheon--sandwiches are cold meats or something--in the Foundation office. And this is a great thing to do.

Morris: For informal, continuing contacts?

Solomon: For just informal communications, exchanges of points of view, and this has had a tremendously beneficial effect.

Morris: The results of this come to the Distribution Committee?

Solomon: Oh, yes. It's too early to really evaluate it, but it can't help but be good.

Morris: In the sense of bringing more information and understanding.

Solomon: That's right. And, certainly, it popularizes the Foundation, what it is and what it's trying to do. So that there are not the misconceptions or doubts or reservations about it. This is the desired end result that a good program of communication will accomplish.

Morris: We've talked pretty much, in talking about grants, of the areas of social trouble. A couple of people have said: Thank goodness the arts and the environment are fashionable again.

I wonder if you see any other large areas emerging that may need some attention as time goes on.

Solomon: Well, I think our principal areas are pretty embracive of most anything that we can expect to come down the road. Health, welfare, environment, humanities and the arts, and education--that seems to pretty well encompass everything.

Within those areas there are, of course, tough problems that will probably come to the Foundation in one form or another. Martin Paley and I were talking just the other day about the role of private versus publicly-supported hospitals.

The way costs are escalating, it's hard to tell what's ahead, but obviously something will have to happen. In the area where I used to live, there's Mills Hospital, which is private, and Peninsula Hospital, which is tax-supported, both with sizable investments in plant and equipment. Do they both need the latest
Solomon: model of electronic scanner, for instance? Who decides? And then, who pays for it?

Morris: Is this the kind of question about which the Foundation might decide to initiate a proposal?

Solomon: Well, we'd at least be likely to sit down and talk with grant hopefuls if they represented an objective, independent point of view.

Generally, we try to keep a balance between those six broad categories. The Distribution Committee will exert some influence in approving grants if it looks as if the balance is getting out of line in one category or another. In some respects it gets to be a matter of: Can the community do all these things? What are the priorities now, since there is a responsibility to change with changing conditions?

Often we find that when we disagree with staff recommendations, it is on the basis of other considerations than staff has researched, thorough as their work is on the staff qualifications and budget and organization of proposals.

Morris: Does that mean that the responsibility of the Distribution Committee is to look beyond those specifics of individual proposals to make a conscious decision on what the priorities of the Bay Area as a whole are from time to time?

Solomon: Yes.

Morris: Well, if you have nothing to add, I will--

Solomon: I don't think so. It's been very pleasant talking to you, and I wish I could be much more articulate than I am in this area.

Morris: I think you did beautifully. You've given a good picture of the way the Distribution Committee functions and the way you see its responsibilities.

Solomon: That's only as I see it. Others may see it altogether differently.

Morris: I understand. That's why we are talking with a number of foundation board members, to have a representative cross-section of views.

Solomon: That's good.

[Indicates color photo on easel near desk] You might be interested in this photograph; it's the latest picture of the telephone company board.
Morris: That is a handsome photograph.

Solomon: It's sort of a nice, informal picture. Several of its members are also sitting on the Roth Committee we talked about at the beginning. I gather there is some concern that it doesn't have as much parent input as people would like, nor as much business input. The school district's problems seem to be largely administrative and budgeting, areas the business community is most familiar with—maybe they should contact the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee and bounce a few ideas off some of its members.

Morris: I thought the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee had ceased functioning ten years ago or so.

Solomon: Oh, no. It is still a going concern. It primarily supports the work of SPUR, but it can go into action whenever it decides there's a matter of urgency. Gwin Follis is the present chairman.

Morris: That should be no problem, then, since Mr. Follis is on Mr. Roth's committee.

There is one question we touched on in our preliminary discussion that I'd like to include in the record, if you have another minute. You mentioned that in a financial career and in working with something like the Episcopal Diocese, one has a sense of stewardship. Could you tell me what you mean by stewardship, and if it also is a factor in the considerations of the Distribution Committee of the Foundation?

Solomon: I define stewardship as the assumption of responsibilities in acting for others—'good' stewardship means a high level of achievement in the conduct of those responsibilities. It is closely akin to trusteeship. The sense of stewardship is most certainly felt by the members of the Distribution Committee.

Morris: Well, I shouldn't take any more of your time. Thank you for this interview.

[End of interview]
Bill Somerville

A FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE IN TRAINING, 1961-1974

An Interview Conducted by
Gabrielle Morris

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Bill Somerville was interviewed in order to record an account of his experience as director of several innovative community projects funded by Bay Area foundations and also further discussion of concepts of foundation granting he outlined in an article written at the request of the San Francisco Examiner.

The article had led to Mr. Somerville being retained as consultant to the Alameda County Community Foundation shortly before this interview was recorded on March 11, 1974. Not long afterwards he became the first executive director of the San Mateo Foundation, so that this short memoir stands as one pattern of the experience and qualifications for becoming a foundation executive in the 1970s.

The use of Bill as his official name reflects the informality and the accessibility he favors. Big, blond, and fit, he also conveys a sense of idealism and energy. Plants, textbooks, and piles of current affairs studies filled the small off-campus office of the UC Berkeley Community Affairs Committee where the interview was recorded.

In the discussion, Mr. Somerville touches on fourteen years of work with school volunteers, black college students, and field studies in criminology. He describes personal experience with poverty, frustration in dealing with large institutions, and his hopes for encouraging broad-scale dialogue on social priorities. He sees the Bay Area as a fertile source of new ideas to be evaluated and encouraged by foundation grant-makers, and considers some current criticism of philanthropic foundations as opportunities for growth.

Mr. Somerville reviewed the rough-edited transcript of the interview, removing occasional remarks for greater clarity and once or twice softening a comment. He also supplied additional materials describing his concept of a social priority study for use as illustrations.

Interviewer-Editor

30 April 1976
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California/Berkeley
OTHER VOICES

Those Foundation Dollars

By Bill Sommerville

There are over 100 private foundations in the Bay Area that have over $600 million in assets and make annual grants to groups and organizations of over $22 million. But there is not enough foundation money to go around since the Bay Area is also one of the idea capitals of the nation—hundreds of groups compete to get creative ideas funded by private foundations.

Foundations play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life here in the Bay Area because they are the only source of funds for new idea programs, for organizations just getting started, and for groups which are not eligible for public funds but which relate to social concerns.

But very little is known about these foundations—what they fund, who decides how the funds should be dispersed, and what priorities they recognize.
Many people have no idea what a foundation is and, what is worse, many groups that are in great need for money do not know how to make their needs known. This is because there is no public dialogue concerning foundations. It is as if they were a “third estate.” One learns about them not from everyday experiences and reading materials, but from special exposure and professional literature which has to be ferreted out.

I have found foundations are as diverse as 110 different people would be. Some are very generous and effective. For example, the Rosenberg Foundation and the San Francisco Foundation are headed by two of the most experienced executives in the Nation.

However, many foundations seem to lack priorities and public concern when giving their money away. Giving for many of them is an exclusive undertaking and boards appear to be far afield from foundations’ stated interests and from those of the community.

Because of the way the system of getting money is set up, many groups seeking funds attempt to prove their authenticity and validity by the importance of their sponsors rather than by their ability to carry out programs. Unfortunately, prestigious people printed on a letterhead have nothing to do with the validity of a social program or its ability to get something done.

Another evident problem is that many foundations are lax in their evaluation of programs they fund. The simple question of “Did the program achieve its goals?” often is not asked. Too many examples come to mind of programs receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars that are unable to achieve their stated goals. This is to say that the criteria for giving funds was unrelated to the potential for success.

How can the mysterious philanthropic dollar become less mysterious? The argument has been made by legislators that foundation funds are “quasi public” because they are funds which would have gone to taxes if it had not been for the forming of the foundation. If this is so, it seems reasonable to ask foundations to be more “public” in their actions.

One way to insure a responsiveness in serving stated goals is to be sure those goals are the product of an interchange of the community to be served. In other words, a representative group of people should have an input in the determination of how foundation funds are to be disbursed.

Events during the late 60’s showed how requests legitimately made and not responded to can become the demands of radicals. For example, change in higher education became the result of threat — of either bodily harm or physical damage. This happened in institutions where we would least expect it, in universities where we felt there was an openness but found there wasn’t the mechanism for involving relevant people in decision making.

The philanthropic dollar is here to stay — there are too few choices of what to do with your money when you die — either you give most of it to the government or set up your own giving program. It is still too early to say that corporations play a major rule in philanthropic giving because they don’t. But the day is not far off when we will see corporations designating a much larger share of their assets to programs which today they see as unrelated to their concerns.

Corporate giving is almost totally an exclusive enterprise and it cannot yet be called philanthropic in the sense that there is not a private vested interest being served. Undoubtedly this will change — if corporations are to keep pace in a world that is becoming more concerned with life qualities and not merely with profit.

If corporations and foundations are to be building blocks in bettering the quality of life, people in the community must help to determine the priorities of that quality and have better access to the assets being distributed by these two entities.

What is being asked of foundations and corporations is, “Where is your doorbell?” People do not desire, nor should it be necessary, to hire high-priced fund raisers. The excitement of dispensing the creative dollar should be matched by the challenge of knowing that the competition for that dollar includes the ideas of people from all walks of life and all segments of the community.

People who are concerned about fund raising and the practices of foundations might want to make their thoughts known — where they have had problems, where they see room for improvement, and what areas of concern they consider top priority.

Bill Sommerville is a staff member of the Community Affairs Committee for the University of California and the City of Berkeley.
[Date of Interview: 11 March 1974]

1. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Thirteen Years in Berkeley and the Bay Area

Somerville: When do you think you'll be through with this study?

Morris: The whole thing will be finished in approximately two years.

Somerville: I'd love to read it. I think the kinds of people you'll be interviewing are the kinds that I would like to hear what they have to say.

Morris: Good. Well, I think foundations are a very interesting field, and, as you say, not too much is known about them. The oral history office has been interested in this for a number of years, because whenever we talked with distinguished community leaders, sooner or later most of them have either been on a local foundation board or else had worked closely with foundation grants.

I think your own experience has been very interesting. My research tells me that in the last ten years you have been director of a new small agency that was operating on a foundation grant, worked with broad programs that probably had grants from many sources, and have recently begun consulting to a foundation board.

Somerville: Over the last thirteen years I have done what I would call program development. This is something that I'm just coming to understand myself, because a developer is different from an organizer. An organizer, I think, works with people, and a developer works with ideas.

Obviously, we commingle sometimes, but primarily I work with ideas. My job is, as one person said, to turn words into reality. So I have developed new programs, and I have worked with, oh, maybe six different foundations that have given me funds—various kinds of funding over these thirteen years. Most of it's been in
Somerville: the East Bay, although all of it has affected the Bay Area at large. Almost all of the programs are still going. Some of them are thirteen years old.

Morris: So School Resource Volunteers wasn't your first program developing?

Somerville: Well, it was one of the first. The first was when I was working at Stiles Hall. You want me to just give you a rundown of the programs?

Morris: Yes, and then maybe we could talk about each of them.

Somerville: School Resource Volunteers was a program for which I was the first director. The idea was Charlotte Treutlein's; it was a very creative idea, and a very good board of directors established it--Betty Jennings and other people.

Then I set up the San Quentin program, where university students were working with San Quentin inmates. And that is still going on, I understand. They expanded that idea to working with people in Napa [state hospital].

Morris: Was that Rosenberg?

Somerville: No, we didn't have any funding for that. In many cases, we don't need funding for these ideas.

School Resource Volunteers was the first time I met Ruth Chance. That was about eleven years ago and we've been very close associates since.

Morris: Did you work on the first grant application for School Resource Volunteers?

Somerville: Yes. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Chance interviewed me in my Volkswagen bus on a steaming hot day out in front of what was then Burbank Junior High School. That's where we first talked to each other. She wanted to know who was going to direct this program, as any good foundation person would. Who will direct a program is one of the most important elements in the program.

Ideas are nothing but words on paper. We've gone on the assumption that you can ship ideas around the country, and I think that's maybe a false assumption. More important is: who is going to make those ideas work? You can find good projects popping up here and there, and it's because there's good people here and there. Sometimes it's because the same person, flitting around the country, is settling here and he'll start the idea up and he'll settle somewhere else and start another idea up.
Somerville: I would add that I don't think ideas are a dime a dozen, though, as some people think they are. I think ideas are sparks that need to be fanned, and I think foundations should do more fanning. I think there are what I call sparkers, fanners, and burners. [Laughter] One of these three isn't better than the other, by the way. The sparker is the creator, the person who comes up with new ideas; the fanner is the person who fans that spark into a program--it's, I guess, what I am, although I'd like to think of myself as a sparker, too; and the burner is the administrator, the person who keeps it going. You need all three of them.

Morris: This is one of the questions in the whole foundation field: how does a foundation person fan the ideas, as you say, without perhaps imposing the foundation's viewpoint on the person who is applying for a grant?

[Telephone interrupts reply. Somerville completed his answer in writing when reviewing the transcript.]

Somerville: Good question. Much of foundation work is subjective and selection probably involves biases and such. But I think too many ideas just flicker out by default and this is wrong. Foundations should be improving their antennae so that they can find and encourage more people with ideas. Thus it isn't so much a question of imposing one's viewpoint as it is of trying to be sure you are open and welcoming to ideas.

[Tape resumes]

School Resource Volunteers and Ruth Chance

Morris: Maybe you could tell me a little bit about your perceptions of Mrs. Chance in that first contact with the Rosenberg, the grant for School Resource Volunteers.

Somerville: Well, I think that Mrs. Chance is one of the most knowledgeable and capable foundation persons in the United States. I've known her for about eleven years. I've been very impressed with the way that she can do a background check on a person, or program, or idea. In fact, she makes the CIA look meek [laughter]. She is excellent.
She is a woman who can say 'no' and not diminish you as an individual in so doing. She is just a very outstanding person, and I think it's regrettable that she is retiring.

I remember that first time we met, we were in my Volkswagen bus sweltering in the sun, and she was asking me things; I thought it was rather delightful. I found her to be what I can call an invigorator. I go and see her, oh, once every three or four months, and we have sometimes a five- or six-hour conversation that sometimes lasts into the night. Sometimes we'll phone each other and we'll talk for many hours. I find that she stimulates my thinking and she stimulates my good feelings. She's just a delightful person.

Had somebody in the School Resource Volunteers group had some experience with the Rosenberg Foundation?

Yes, I think it was Charlotte Treutlein who initiated the discussions with the Rosenberg Foundation. And then it was at that stage that I met Mrs. Chance.

And you discussed what you had in mind, and then the project was written up?

Well, I think the project was written up ahead of time. And then it sort of evolved, as all projects evolve, by the kind of director that is hired. Projects also evolve by the nature of the problems that they come across. Of course, no one can predict those things.

So the idea was presented to Mrs. Chance, and then she came and looked us over. Then she decided to fund us. The project then got started and turned out to be a bit different than they had thought, but not too much different.

The School Resource Volunteers board. There was a board made up of a lot of experienced women, older women, from the community who have had experience in Berkeley. They set this up.

Had you been working with the program before you became director, before the funds were received?

No, except for prior discussions about whether I would be the director and that sort of thing.

You said that you had worked with a number of projects that involved grant funding. Did these projects recruit you from School Resource Volunteers?
Somerville: No, I would often think up an idea and then seek their funding afterwards. I think this is the sort of thing that foundations like to see—i.e., new ideas with the possibility of being implemented.

I believe Mrs. Chance has given thought to the idea of how foundations could play more of a role in supporting creative people. I wish she would give more thought to it, because I would say, as one who deals with ideas, that I find it very hard to find support. Extremely difficult. Sometimes, especially if your idea is seen as ahead of its time, it's impossible to find support.

And I think that's where we ought to be. We as a community and we as foundation people and we as developers—that is, having some perspective and being able to be sympathetic to ideas that are ahead of their time; that's called the creative process. I don't think we're very sensitive to it.

I worry that this sounds self-serving. But I'm going to be frank and say that I think I've come up with some creative ideas and I've found how difficult it is to get them funded. If not impossible.

San Quentin and Stiles Hall

Somerville: The next program was the San Quentin project and then came the interracial retreats at Stiles Hall. The latter has since turned into the Personal Encounter Groups that have been going for many years at Stiles Hall. The retreats were where we brought black and white students together. It was the only program of its kind on the Berkeley campus when there were very few black students there.

I had just finished taking part in a two-week encounter group at Lake Tahoe in the early sixties. I thought to myself that if black and white people could be talking like the white people in this group were talking, that would be progress. And so we started the retreat program. And it worked. It was the only program of its kind as far as I know. I think that's a poor commentary. I think that in Berkeley right now, the dialogue between white and black people is diminishing. And almost sputtering out. I think this is regrettable. I should state that it is not just Berkeley; it's true in a lot of places now.
Somerville: After Stiles Hall, I went to graduate school in criminology at UCB. Almost immediately one of their staff members was killed in an auto accident and they asked if I would take his place. I was just starting as a first-year graduate student, and here I go on as a full-fledged member of the staff. That was just when the poverty program was starting, in 1964. And I was asked to set up the work-study program.

We had a quarter of a million dollars to spend. We went from that to one and a quarter million dollars, and then to two million dollars. Our program paid the highest wages in the country, and became the model for the state—at least we were told that. We also became the brunt of a John Birch Society suit. They sued the University on the basis that we were placing University students in the community, which was exactly what we were doing. But they didn't want that to happen.

The University's vanguard position with this program should be credited to Dean Joseph Lohman. He deserves a lot of credit and I admire the man very much. He was the reason that I went into criminology. I'm not a criminologist in the strict sense of the word. I'm a program developer. My emphasis in the past was on race relations. But, as I've told people, a white man in race relations in the sixties is an unemployed man in the seventies. As you know, I had many very difficult years recently, retooling myself to go into a field other than race relations. That is not a field I can be in any longer. Why, I don't know; but it's the way things are right now.

Educational Opportunities Program: Work-Study and Subject A

Somerville: In the work-study program, we were placing up to eight hundred students. I left it in 1966, as I was offered a job by the chancellor, Roger Heyns, to develop the minority student recruitment program on campus, called the Educational Opportunity Program [EOP]. I remember Heyns introducing me to his staff; in effect, he said that this was the first time he had hired a man and not been sure what he was going to do.

Morris: That was to bring more minority students into the University?

Somerville: To Berkeley. That's correct. Heyns wasn't sure what the job was going to be. We set up a program that became the largest of its kind in the nation, and the model for the state. It did what it was supposed to do; it brought in over eight hundred students in
Somerville: the first year and a half. Which was moving ahead fast. And then that doubled again, and now it's stayed there; it hasn't grown much beyond that.

Morris: Let's stop on that one a minute. Didn't that have a Rosenberg grant?

Somerville: That had a Rosenberg grant for what I called the College Commitment Program, where I visited over 120 high schools in California, and I found that I just couldn't keep it up. On a visit to Hayward High School, I mentioned to the counsellors: What would you think of me placing a half-time graduate student with you to act as a counsellor with minority youngsters? And they liked the idea. I thought they might be threatened by it, but to the contrary.

Morris: You were suggesting a UC student--?

Somerville: Who would work in the high school and would get academic credit, under field studies or something of this nature.

So I came back to my office and we set up a program that I named the College Commitment Program. We got a grant from Rosenberg to start it. I hired a gentleman to run it. Before the grant, a woman initiated the program (Beth Cobb, now admissions officer for Mills College). She was actually director of the program on a volunteer basis.

And then that developed into a pay job for Bill Sherrill, who eventually replaced me and became admissions officer at Berkeley. He's now at Howard University. I found Bill at Berkeley High, where he was a counsellor. I thought he was a capable fellow and asked if he wanted to come to work for us.

Morris: How come the University went to Rosenberg for money for that, instead of using University resources?

Somerville: Well, I went to Rosenberg because there weren't other funds available to me. The very first budget to start the EOP was six thousand dollars of a graduate fellowship I had which I asked the donor [Aquinas Fund] to give to the University rather than to me. I thought that since this money came without restrictions, then we should use it in a creative way.

What we did was to use that money totally for scholarships to some of the youngsters that were on campus at the time. It was fun. Some minority students were coming in and saying: You know, Mr. Somerville, you're trying to bring in more minority students and I can barely survive right now, and I'm working.
Somerville: So I negotiated with them. I'd ask them how much they were making that semester, and they'd say three hundred dollars. And I'd ask them if they could spend more time studying if they did not have to work. And they'd say yes. That was the usual answer. Sometimes the reality of not working didn't bring more time for studying.

After an assessment, I'd say: Tomorrow morning, in Room 307, Sproul Hall, there'll be a three hundred dollar check for you.

I had a good set-up with Billy Nealson in Financial Aids, who was my back-up person. And she would have the check ready. The student didn't believe me; but it was there the next morning. This was service that the University had never given before.

In the work-study program we gave custom service. We would set up an individualized position for each student. It was very exciting. The administrators were quoted as saying: If we do it for you, son, we'll have to do it for everybody.

My answer was that you damn well ought to do it for everybody [laughter].

Morris: Both of these programs, the one in the School of Criminology and the EOP—were there federal grants involved, too?

Somerville: I had a staff of sixty people, most of whom were college students working in the high schools, and we had about four or five full time people in the office. Most of our budget came from the Chancellor's Office and from the work-study program which was federal money, but it was through the University; it wasn't a special federal grant for EOP.

Talent Search started up, but we never did get any of that money. We applied for it, but they never gave it to us. They said that we were already well established and we didn't need the money—which was inaccurate.

So I went to the San Francisco Foundation and asked if they would give us money for some innovation in Subject A. We were finding that our students were flunking Subject A—what's known as bonehead English. We found that our students were having some of the same problems that foreign students were having. We were very careful not to patronize, in the sense that you would lump everybody in the same basket.

So we set up our program in which all University students in Subject A could be taught in classes of six. And the San Francisco
Somerville: Foundation gave us the money to do it. It was very interesting. It didn't work very successfully, but it was a good try and was worth it.

Morris: Why didn't it work?

Somerville: I don't know. There were more problems than meet the eye in Subject A.* I'm beginning to think it's like so many other things—it depends on who's teaching the course; some of the people were just good teachers and some weren't. And it didn't matter whether their classes were big or small.

I teach a night school adult class in swimming. At times I have up to thirty people in my class, and that's much too large for a swimming class, where everyone has to have individual space. And, yet, I can do it. But I can do it better if I have twenty people. Some people can teach and others can't. But we tend to blame it on the situation when that isn't the main problem. It's not a simple thing to analyze--a lot of factors are involved in effective teaching.

Morris: Even though the grant didn't help with Subject A, did you get any clues as to what might work for minority students? I understand that the problem is the language skills of many minority students.

Somerville: Well, I don't know that they are any worse than any other group. When I came to Cal I flunked four entrance exams. I flunked the Yale entrance exam, the Navy scholarship exam, the Subject A exam, and the draft deferment exam. With two of them I was told I flunked by one point, which was devastating. I had some serious concerns as to whether I was intellectually capable of going to the University of California. I remember really having doubts, crying in front of my mother and everything. And if it hadn't been for her support I would never have gone to Cal.

Many minority people say the same thing, but the irony here is that they say it and people see it as if it were their problem alone. My feeling is that that is not so. I come from poverty; I know what poverty is about. My mother and I finished high school together, and my father never finished the fourth grade. I'm aware of a lot of the things that people are talking about.

*In 1975, Subject A was debated with some heat by UC students and the legislature during state budget hearings. Ed.
Somerville: I think one of the mistakes that a lot of white people make is to think that some of the problems that are presented to them are unique to the group from which the person speaking comes. I don't think they are. And I think it's important that we recognize that.

This is not to say that some groups do not have serious problems. I am arguing that we look at problems as human concerns because I am aware of the divisive nature of seeing things in a narrow frame of reference. I don't think we want to get off on this, because it's another hour's discussion in itself.

Morris: Yes, that's true.

Somerville: But I think it's important for foundations to recognize some of these things; otherwise they are about to be raped if they remain naive.
2. FOUNDATION CONCERNS

Evaluation and Accessibility of Grant Results

Morris: One of the things that's useful in any field is: What are the things that have been tried and failed. What did you learn from them that wasn't what you set out to find out, or what's been tried and didn't work and therefore you don't need to try again. For instance, looking at foundation work over the last thirty years or so, the Bay Area foundations have put a lot of money into education--

Somerville: Are you asking if it has been good?

Morris: Well, one of the things I've wondered is whether people developing new grants have access to the reports, or summaries, of earlier foundation grants in the same area?

Somerville: You're hitting on something that's very important. No, I don't think they do have that access. In a way you are asking about evaluation and Ruth Chance is the expert in this area. She has just written an article--.

Morris: In the Council on Foundation's Regional Reporter?*

Somerville: Yes, in which she states that foundations have little knowledge of evaluation. Foundations have historically said, you know, we're not educators, and we're not scientists, and we can't make certain judgments on some of these things, because we don't know whether in fact statements are true or not.

*February, 1974, issue.
And yet they still make grants in these areas. Sometimes it's maybe that the grants are given hopefully. Or maybe it's based on some excellent background work that they creatively did. I don't know. A lot of times it's a vote of confidence for the person who's going to be directing the program, because the foundations still don't know what the program's going to do. In other words, it's sort of a commitment grant, or sort of a venture grant, if you will.

But in terms of evaluation, we're not clear with regard to whether grants, indeed, are doing what they're supposed to be doing. Mrs. Chance is one of those who is very tolerant. She points out that we funded some programs that didn't do what they said, and we re-funded them because we recognized that it turned out to be impossible to do what the group said it was going to do, but we still believed in them and felt they were doing something worthwhile.

You know, that's a tolerant person. The point is that you can't always evaluate a person in terms of whether he did what he said he was going to do.

I guess I'm trying to say that there are two kinds of evaluation: evaluation on who should get the money, and evaluation after the project is done. One is called assessment, the other is called judgment. And those are very difficult areas. I'm doing some investigating on these two areas myself for the foundation for which I work.

On the basis of past records?

I'm now interviewing agencies that have been receiving grants and trying to find out what they feel that these grants have done for them. I'm trying to find what they think they've done for the community. I'm also trying to find out what they think of foundations.

I'd like to hear your results. [Although Mr. Somerville intended to do an article on evaluation, he wrote about revenue-sharing instead.]

Thoughts on Past and Future Social Change

On your work with the University: you were still there in the late sixties when there was an increase in the number of black
Morris: people who began to insist on a larger share in decision-making. Did this affect the sources of grant funds, or the amount of funds? I gather that you feel that it did affect you, personally.

Somerville: I was kicked out as director of the EOP. I don't mean dropped out; I mean kicked out. I was told to leave, and not given any other job. I think that's a pretty shoddy way to handle people, but it was a sign of the times; to some degree, it still is.

You're asking if black demands brought about more money for certain things, and the answer is yes. I've been giving it a bit of thought and talking to older persons about it; and I'm beginning to think in terms of what I call 'sympathy power' as opposed to other forms of power. I think that a lot of minorities--women, older people, ethnic minorities--get a lot of their strength in that they have sympathy.

In other words, if you're only ten percent of the population, if it came right down to it, you don't have much power. Except if the ten percent is focused in one area, like some core cities, you do have some real power. You can elect a mayor, you can elect other people as well. But, in the larger sense, I think that a lot of people get their power on the basis that it is given to them by a majority group. I don't say that in a patronizing way, and I don't say it in a perjorative way. I mean it literally. The term sympathy power is not meant in a negative sense.

Going back to my years at the University, it's possible they were responding to a certain extent to the general sympathy for blacks when they decided to create some programs. And what happened? Nineteen sixty-nine was the most disruptive year in higher education; it was also the year when the University had done the most to bring in minorities. At the time, those minority persons felt most uncomfortable with what they had found.

By disruptive, I mean the most violent--physically violent. I'm concerned that the post-World War II birth cohort, which is the largest tidal wave of humanity in the history of mankind, is going through life at a time when change is a factor of threat. I think we have to ask ourselves, in this country, if a democracy can survive if change is a factor of threat? I ask it rhetorically, because the answer is no.

Morris: Do you mean that change per se involves a threat?

Somerville: I'll point it out to you. In higher education, from the 1964 to 1970 era, almost all major changes in higher education in America came about as the result of threat--bodily harm or physical damage.
Somerville: This is an interesting commentary on intellectual institutions. I think something significant went wrong, and I don't think we've given much time to finding out what it was. I don't think most academic people are willing to admit to that state of affairs.

That tidal wave of humanity is now in the business world. I spent a year recently interviewing business executives, and my main question was: What do you have in mind for this group of people in terms of your own corporate social awareness and social involvement?

I found that not much was in the making. Take a look at TV. Watching the San Francisco strike coverage, the people striking look about twenty-eight to thirty. They look young to me, and I think they are in this cohort. This is the worst time to be striking; jobs are hard to get and we're in a depression. And yet, they're striking. This is part of the militancy of this cohort.

Predicting: The Creative Stance

Somerville: I think foundations and the rest of us ought to be predicting. I think in Berkeley, maybe in foundations, and maybe generally, we spend too much time in reacting—reacting to the present state of affairs rather than asking what it is that we would like our lives to be. In other words, what do we want to have happen? That's the creative stance, and it's one which the academic world isn't related to as much as I would want it to be. I think the academic world is much too passive.

The learning process doesn't seem to ask: Young man, what do you want to have happen?

This is exciting, but it also means that you have to be creative. I am concerned that we—meaning foundations, colleges and others—have to do more now to encourage a creative stance on the part of people, and to encourage a positive frame of reference as opposed to a reactive position.

Morris: Let's get back more specifically to the foundations. You said that you'd worked with five or six local ones. Was this when you were working with the Wright Institute?

Somerville: Yes, I've worked with—do you mean worked with, or gotten funding from?
Morris: That's an interesting reflection of my thought. When I say work with--

Somerville: You mean to get funding.

Morris: Yes--referring back to your comment that you found the discussions with Ruth Chance fruitful when developing the School Resource Volunteers grant.

Somerville: Yes, I think she's just a capable woman and insightful. Anybody who is on the cutting edge, as she is and many foundation people are, has a great breadth of knowledge to impart to others. I would wish that KQED would have a series with her and John May talking about the future.

For example, if this tidal wave of humanity is thirty years old now, what are they going to do when they're sixty? I would predict that they are going to abolish retirement laws, for one thing. Because, for the first time, there'll be more people sixty and over than at any other time in the history of man. That means that they'll have the political clout; they'll have the power to do it. They don't have to depend on sympathy power as people over sixty do now.

Striking Sparks: the Unpopular Grant

Somerville: Can foundations get into the position to watch for idea sparks and maybe think of some ideas themselves? Foundations are not doing much initiating; maybe they should take a more aggressive role. Foundations are concerned about controversy, but some executives urge consideration for funding some ideas which might be unpopular with part of the public. I would like to see this happen more.

Morris: That's an interesting idea. Going back to your work in the sixties, we've talked about funds minority programs received from the San Francisco Foundation, and from Rosenberg. In the sixties were those considered unpopular?

Somerville: No. They were considered very appropriate grants.

I'll give you a grant that's interesting. My research in criminology was in prostitution. I still have contacts with women who are prostitutes whom I interviewed. One is Margo St. James, who is sort of an institution in the Bay Area. I put her onto a foundation that gave her six thousand dollars with which she
Somerville: started COYOTE, which is an acronym for Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics. She's trying to unionize prostitutes, and get rid of the double standard. It's always the woman that's arrested. She says the woman wouldn't be in business unless there were a demand for her services, and I have to agree.

What's exciting to me is not so much that women are involved in sex; I'm interested in what I call the exploitative situation. That's why I was involved in studying prostitution; I am concerned about the outside and self-exploitation that goes on.

In addition, things that we demand and condemn at the same time, like prostitution, are important to me.

Morris: That's an interesting way to put it.

Somerville: Prostitution is one of those things and, more recently, the automobile is another. We talk about it as the polluter, the behemoth on the highway, as this ugly thing; and yet we demand it. It tells us something about ourselves. I'm not enough of a social analyst to know what it does tell us, but I know that it's something I want to look into.

This was why I was excited about prostitution. Because it tells us something about the human state of affairs.

I think there's a certain hypocrisy going on when we condemn something we demand. I think we've got to be honest and to confront that. And I think foundations ought to help in that honesty. I think if somebody asked me if I would fund Margo St. James again, my answer would be that I certainly hope so. But, you know, the idea of prostitution is just anathema to foundations.

Foundations are pretty square, and pretty straight. And yet, somebody like Ruth Chance is a real swinger, in terms of her ability to know what's happening. I get the feeling that many foundation people are caught in their own web—they would like to be more 'with it' but their own background does not give them the freedom to be 'with it'. Both as individuals and corporately, as boards. I think that they're caught in sort of an ambivalent feeling, and their actions seem to turn on and off, and it's hard to understand them.

I'm a man of two worlds. By many straight people, I'm considered too radical; and by many radicals, I'm considered a sell-out. I've worked this out in my own mind by being Bill Somerville; I don't care what some people think of me. I'll do what I think is the honest way of proceeding.
Somerville: You have Fay Stender, a controversial woman lawyer who started the Prison Law Project—she got that funded by the Stern Fund, which was one of the very few so-called 'radical' foundations in the country. She kept it going by the skin of her teeth. Stern funded it for three years and then stopped. They were hoping someone else would pick it up; no one else picked it up and the program closed its doors.

Shifting Funding Priorities: Local, National, Governmental

Somerville: Now, my feeling is that if 'unpopular' programs are doing something good, somehow we ought to figure out ways to get them funded. One of the things that's happening that concerns me is revenue sharing. Revenue sharing has no social criteria that I can ascertain in giving out the funds. There seem to be political criteria. My feeling is that this is social dynamite. In San Francisco, it seems to me, it's up to the mayor who gets the funds. At least it looks that way. I hope we would get onto the cutting edge with some of that money. I mean, where IS the federal government with something like the Prison Law Project?

Morris: This is something that I was going to ask you about. I was not all that clear about the various ins and outs of the legal aid programs. But, in the fifties and on into the sixties there was a series of legal assistance programs starting with the Legal Aid Society, and then into the poverty legal projects and the rural legal projects—some of which have gotten federal funding. If the federal government comes in in advance for various projects, does this push the foundations out?

Somerville: No, it doesn't push them at all. Your question would have been appropriate ten years ago. It's just the opposite now; the federal government came in with a lot of ideas through the poverty program and others, and then they atrophied and died off. Everybody wants the programs to continue, and so they're going back to foundations.

In 1964 the foundations were asking themselves: What should be our posture with regard to new programs vis-a-vis the poverty program? They used to use the word seed money. Now foundations are caught on the horns of their own dilemma. Every foundation has a particular mold. Rosenberg is interested in youth, and somebody else is interested in retarded children or whatever. Grant seekers are struggling to find out what the mold is so that they can fit it.
Somerville: This mold also takes the form of special words. The Ford Foundation used to say: We want to be the first breaker on the beach with the tide following.

I thought this was corny. People would listen and then they would write proposals saying that this is unique and this is new. And then relevant became a magic word, and then some other things became magic words. What happens is that the foundation is saying: We're interested in these areas, but people are trying to hear so that they can feed back to the foundation what they think the foundation wants to hear.

And the foundation then turns around and says: Don't feed us what you think we want to hear; feed us what you need to say.

And the people say: Yes, and get turned down?

It's a dilemma for the foundation and the grant seeker. I think that here is where Ruth Chance is a genius. She has transcended this dilemma and she is the only foundation person that I know who has transcended it. She has some approaches that I hope other people can adopt. She is one of the finest foundation persons I've come across.

Morris: Because of her ability to clarify what it is that an applicant is really saying?

Somerville: To clarify it, to be honest to you, to tell you in some cases that your program is not going to get funded and you don't walk out feeling, "Well, to hell with her," but, "I better try harder; it was wonderful to spend time with her."

She tends to honor your ideas. And I think that's very useful. She tends to be able to relate to you on a human basis rather than get all hung up in what language you want to hear and all that sort of stuff.

Morris: Her very skill, I think, would mean that increasing numbers of people have gone to her and to Rosenberg over the years. How do they cope with the fact that more people are going to them than they can possibly fund?

Somerville: That's another thing. That woman can handle what ten people would normally do. How, in God's name, she did it, I do not know. It will be interesting to see if her successor can handle it in terms of reading, talking to people, and being available to people. She's not one to rush you on the phone. She gave a lot of advice—free advice to people. She's the kind that could charge a hundred dollars an hour for her advice.
Somerville: You're right. As I understand it, foundations in San Francisco are turning down thirty proposals for every idea they fund. I don't think that that's bad, necessarily, because a lot of people come in with some hare-brained schemes, and whatnot. Here is a grantee idea: one fellow got 120 bicycles in East Oakland. How, in God's name, he got them, we don't know. But he wants to make it so that youngsters can have an opportunity to ride bikes; so he's going to rent the bicycles out on a nonprofit basis and let youngsters use them. I don't want to put it down, but it doesn't grab me. How did he get the bicycles, and if he has enough money to get them, what's he need other money for? Then, sure enough, he did come in with $120,000 grant proposal to a foundation, and there was a high salary in there and all that.

You see, foundations are caught in their priorities. They said minority youth was a very major area. All right, that's fine. Usually, what is meant is black youth. And I think that's a real mistake. There happens to be a lot of different kinds of minority youth. Indian youth, the Samoan community in the Bay Area is large. The largest immigrant group in California is the Filipinos. How about them? We're not aware of those groups, and in a sense, in our blissfulness, we tend to pit one group against another.

By spending all our time with black youth, the other youth start hating the blacks. I will have no part of that sort of thing. I think that it's a mistake when foundations swing way over to one area and then swing way over to another. I'd like to see a little bit less of this pendulum phenomenon and see if we could work on a basis using less extremes.

It gets back to how do you determine the value of some of these proposals.
3. BAY AREA FOUNDATION COMMUNITY

Need for a Clearing House

Morris: Do you have any sense that, over the years, the foundations in the San Francisco area have tried to sort out whose territory is which so that they can refer proposals to each other?

Somerville: Through John May and Ruth Chance they have started a lunch group where they get together periodically and talk. But, it's my understanding and my feelings that foundations have very little dialogue with each other. There's no evaluation clearing house so that if a foundation receives a grant working with retarded youngsters it can look up quickly who else has funded some similar things. The Foundation Center might help, but it is on a national basis, not a Bay Area basis. There's no reference source on different program evaluations which are in progress.* In other words, Joe Blow Foundation is funding such and such, and here we are; we have a request for the same type of effort, and maybe we ought to talk to the Joe Blow Foundation. Foundations are not aware of funding by each other.

Morris: Well, there are only a few foundations that actually have staff, aren't there?

Somerville: There are over a hundred foundations in the Bay Area, but most of those are teeny weeny foundations. Any foundation below ten million dollars is considered small, and yet some foundations are

*Mr. Somerville's "Prospectus for a Bay Area Resource Center" is in the Foundation Series papers. Ed.
Somerville: fifty thousand dollars or smaller. That's pretty small. Given the size of most of them, there's a lot of foundation executives in the Bay Area.

Morris: And most of them meet for lunch as a group?

Somerville: Yes, occasionally. On an informal basis. It's a familiarity lunch, to get to know each other.

The foundations seem to be sort of covetous and possessive, and they seem to be easily threatened in that they act defensive. One foundation executive told me: We might talk democratic, but our actions certainly are not in that direction.

[Tape turned over]

Community Foundations: East Bay and San Francisco

Morris: Can you tell me a bit about your experience as a consultant to the Alameda County Foundation? I'm interested in how it compares with the San Francisco Foundation.

Somerville: The San Francisco Foundation started just after World War II. It is 25 years old, and the Alameda County Foundation is 44 years old. The Alameda County Foundation has, up until just recently, had nine hundred thousand dollars, which is a very small foundation. They were what I used to call a 'mimeograph machine foundation'. I say that jokingly, because they would give out—and they still do, primarily—small grants of fifteen hundred dollars or less for capital expenses. For example, they would give a grant to repair the roof.

In a sense they were trying to do things that UBAC didn't have the funds or the inclination to do. They would fill in where you couldn't get other funds. And they still do this. It's a very good foundation for that purpose. You need a typewriter? This foundation is the one that can help you get it. Eight hundred dollars is not much of a grant, but eight hundred dollars for a typewriter is a lot of money to come out of your small, struggling agency's budget. Just recently the Alameda County Foundation has gone to three million dollars.

Morris: In the paper I saw a reference to its being now a joint foundation with Contra Costa.
Somerville: It is now called the Alameda-Contra Costa Counties Community Foundation. In a sense, it's the East Bay foundation, but it's not called that. [The name has how been changed to the East Bay Foundation.]

They decided to enlarge to Contra Costa County, in one part because some of their board members started living in Contra Costa County. It says in their by-laws that board members have to live in Alameda County. The board members started reevaluating themselves and their purposes, and decided to include Contra Costa County. They have determined that all of the money that they had up to the point of including Contra Costa County is only for Alameda County. Any money that they get from now on is for both counties. They have very little money for Contra Costa County, thus far.

Morris: The San Francisco Foundation seems to have been put together partly because attorneys became interested in the usefulness of a community foundation, both for philanthropic work and professionally for advising clients making wills. I wondered if this was the same kind of a group that had set up the Alameda County Foundation.

Somerville: I don't know. It was set up in 1928, and I don't know what the modus operandi was, or what the initial thing that started it was. I do know that community foundations depend a lot on trust officers, on attorneys, and on public accountants—those kinds of people. Community foundations are very different from family foundations. They are favored by the government as opposed to private foundations. They are also going to grow faster and have a lot more emphasis placed upon them.

For banks, they represent a marvelous thing. If the bank is the trustee for somebody's estate, they get a fee in perpetuity for just keeping the money in the bank. Which is very nice for them. The bank handles the investment of the money, so they're getting a fee for this. It's a very attractive way to make money for banks.

Morris: What interested me, though, is that here we've got the two sides of the Bay looking at each other, and a community foundation in each.

[Tape off, then on]

Morris: We've had the San Francisco Foundation becoming very active and visible in the whole Bay Area philanthropic world. And the Alameda County Foundation, which you don't really know exists unless you go looking for it.
Somerville: In the San Francisco Foundation by-laws, I've just read that preference will be given to grants and to grantees in the City and County of San Francisco. So, it's really not a Bay Area foundation. My hope would be that the San Francisco Foundation would change its name to the Bay Area Foundation. In a sense it is really the Northern California foundation.*

It seems to me that many foundations have heretofore had a very poor track record. I think that's why, when the 1969 Tax Reform Act was being passed, they found they didn't have much of a public in terms of public support on their side. Foundations still don't have, in terms of legislators feeling sympathetic to them, to the best of my knowledge. I watched when Pat Buchanan was before the Senate Watergate Committee, and how readily people like Senator Baker and others responded: If some legislation comes up, I'll back it for reform of foundations.

I mean, foundations are seen in terms of family foundations that were giving money to their favorite charities and to their favorite things, and giving very little money away at that. They were more a tax dodge than anything else.

Well, what's happened is that since 1969 there's been a large amount of regulations that apply to foundations. You have to have a lawyer now. It's beyond the scope of the lay person. And now I've noticed that the worm has turned. Foundations are spending a large amount of time now dealing with the detailed reports that have been laid on them because of a poor track record in the past. I think that's unfortunate.

Ruth Chance has been spending an inordinate amount of her time meeting the requirements of county or federal auditors and others. She has probably the finest foundation around, and yet she was held accountable for things that would more fall under the category of the Bob Hope Foundation, which I don't think has been very imaginative in its granting. Maybe the federal government was more intending to focus on those. But it's a broad brush with which everyone is being painted the same color. I think that's too bad.

*In 1975, the San Francisco Foundation affirmed a policy limiting grants to the immediate Bay Area counties. Ed.
Somerville: Now, getting back to your question about the San Francisco Foundation versus the Alameda County Foundation: there's concern on the part of the San Francisco Foundation that the Alameda County Foundation will be getting money that would normally be coming to the San Francisco Foundation, and that's true. One of the bequests that the Alameda County Foundation got recently would have gone to the San Francisco Foundation in earlier years.

The San Francisco Foundation under John May is thinking that maybe they ought to relay East Bay grant requests to the Alameda-Contra Costa Counties Community Foundation. I know that that foundation is in no position to handle that sort of thing. They make very few grants that are above ten thousand dollars, and very few that are that high.

Morris: If their assets have increased markedly in the past few years, is there any sense in which they might have a responsibility to their community to be the kind of source for advice and counsel on ideas that you talked about?

Somerville: Oh, absolutely. As a matter of fact, I think that Alameda-Contra Costa County--it's such a mouthful [laughter]--Foundation is moving in that direction. I think that's why they hired me. I'm their consultant for community relations. I think that what they're really doing is hiring me to assess what kind of professional help they need.

Morris: Is this a result of new people on their board?

Somerville: No, it was a result of that article that I wrote in the San Francisco Examiner.* [Laughter] Their chairman, Otto Hieb, read that article and liked it, and came in to see me. He's been with the Foundation, I think, for fifteen years.

Morris: Is the Alameda County--it needs an acronym.

Somerville: I call it the East Bay Foundation.

Morris: The East Bay Foundation: are their trustees appointed like the San Francisco Foundation--a representative of the banks, and of the Community Chest, and so on?

Somerville: The Alameda County Bar Association, the Contra Costa Bar Association, Alameda County Board of Supervisors, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. The Trustees' Committee and the governing board both appoint three people each. It's about eleven to fifteen members altogether.

Morris: The San Francisco Foundation has a trustee appointed by the Chamber of Commerce and by the League of Women Voters--

Somerville: --by the League of Women Voters and by the presidents of Stanford and of UC, and--

Morris: But the East Bay Foundation doesn't follow that plan?

Somerville: It's not that it's required. The recommendation is that your board of governors be a board made up of people who know the community well and who have a solid background in the community. In San Francisco they picked agencies which they thought were solid and then asked them to pick solid people.

Morris: This is part of the articles of incorporation?

Somerville: Yes.

Morris: Since you wrote that open letter to the foundations before you had become a consultant, then, I take it your thinking was that your work with the Community Affairs Committee did, by its nature, relate to the foundations.

Somerville: Well, when I took this job, I took it on the basis that I would have up to thirty days to do other consulting, on the rationale that I'm an eclectic person, and I need to have the ability to move around and talk to people. The Community Affairs Committee felt that that would be to their value as well, so they went along with that. So I work with the Foundation. That, pro-rated over a year, is a half-day a week, and that's what I spend. I spend more than that with the Foundation, but the other half is on my own time. It's not moonlighting is what I want to say.

Morris: I understand that. What I was thinking was, as the Community Affairs Committee has developed, is there a place for foundations in its work?

Somerville: Well, I've tried to move them in that direction, and the answer is: yes, there is. But that is not in the planning of the Committee at this state.
Morris: Sometime I'd like to hear more about that. There've been so many town and gown projects over the years in Berkeley.

Then have the foundations been a source of advice and counsel to the work?

Somerville: Of the Community Affairs Committee? No. Foundations as a source of advice and consultation is a very difficult thing. The point is that I don't know how many people really know about foundations.

**Reaching the Public**

Somerville: I'm surprised at how few people know about the Alameda-Contra Costa Counties Community Foundation. I'm also surprised at how hard it is to publicize yourself. I send press releases monthly to very paper—I mean every paper; I never knew there were so many. There's the chicano this, and the Chinese that, and the Filipino this and the Oakland that; and I'm sending copies to all of these people, and get almost no cooperation from them, and no response to the articles that are published. Very interesting.

So sometimes it's the same people that keep coming back to the Foundation. One way that I can change things is to find new people and work with them on an individual basis. It's a hard way to do it, but it's the way I've always operated.

Morris: You'll work with people individually. You mean you're going to go out looking for people?

Somerville: Sure, that's what I think foundations ought to do.

Morris: There were a number of ideas in your article in the paper--

Somerville: It was in the *San Francisco Examiner*; it was a part of the editorial page run by the young Hearst. I forget his first name, but he's a fellow about 25 or so.* He had gone to some people in San Francisco and said: Who are significant others I ought to talk to?

*Willie Hearst, III, assistant to the publisher. Ed.*
Somerville: My name popped up when I was with San Francisco Consumer Action, and he was hoping that I would write about the consumer movement; but I wanted to write about something which I felt was more broad than that, and more pertinent. And I wrote about this.

The general reaction to the article by foundation people is that I was a bit rough. I was super-careful not to be as critical as I could have been. And yet, it gives you an idea about how sensitive foundation people are.

Morris: You did get a considerable amount of feedback, then?

Somerville: No, I asked for it. The people that I've talked to. One well-known foundation person said I was a bit rough, another foundation person said that that person wasn't very much in support of what I'd written.

Foundations are really a very strange phenomenon. I was just reading some literature produced by the Foundation Center in New York, and it was pointing out that for foundations' annual reports, it is very good for them to have pictures, and especially pictures of attractive youth or good-looking women.

I couldn't believe my eyes. You know, that's called cheesecake; and usually when they mean good-looking women, they mean a body with certain proportions and all that sort of stuff. Now, when that kind of suggestion comes out, I know there's trouble brewing. First of all, it's sexist; second, it's using women as a thing; and third, it's inappropriate, completely, for what foundations are about. It's appealing to the lowest common denominator of peoples' interests.

Morris: Does it address itself to what you just mentioned—that you had been sending press releases out which nobody prints?

Somerville: Yes, I guess if I sent out a press release with a bathing suit-clad woman saying that San Francisco Foundation says such and such, they'd print it. Maybe that's true, and maybe that's a commentary on society. But it's a commentary I don't think we ought to subscribe to. I think we ought to change it.

I happen to believe in a lot of what women are talking about in terms of their deciding their own destinies rather than having them decided for them. And I think using women as an object is inappropriate. If women use themselves that way, that's something else. For instance, with prostitution, if women find that they want to be prostitutes, that's something else. I'm not going to
Somerville: say they shouldn't do that. If they're in prostitution because they have a choice of nothing else, then that's a totally different problem; there ought to be other alternatives for those women. And this is an area that I've worked in.

Morris: Leaving aside the question of pretty women in sexy poses—there's also the media's view of what makes a good news story. And I would wonder if the suggestion that sexy photographs be attached to foundation press releases and annual reports was misjudgment, but the intent was to convey to people who had not dealt with public information how you make things readable.

Somerville: Well, I thought it was just weird that they weren't conscious of the put-down implied in that kind of material. I don't think foundations are following that kind of information, because the brochures I've read certainly don't have that kind of stuff in them. They're a bore in the other direction—they've got numbers all over the place and it just isn't much fun to read the annual reports. San Francisco Foundation brochure, I think, is an excellent one. It's done by a couple of young fellows that have their own firm.

Morris: The last few I've read have been impressive. I miss the kind of thing that Rosenberg used to put out, with a narrative tying clusters of grants together in terms of what was being done—

Somerville: The woman died who was doing that—Helen Rowan—but they're going to have, this year, Jim Baumohl, from the Community Affairs Committee; we sponsored his research. He's going to write about young people and vagrant youth—what he calls the youth hobo problem of America. That's going to be the essence of their annual report. It's going to be more an essay than an annual report.

Creative Idea Capital

Morris: Going back to your article: the point that the Bay Area is an idea capital of the country struck me. What is there about this part of the world?

Somerville: I was involved about a year and a half ago with a National Institute of Mental Health conference. They brought a bunch of us from around the country together for a week at Warner Hot Springs at San Diego, and they asked us to talk about alternatives (that was the magic work within NIMH a year and a half ago; maybe it still is).
Somerville: I tried to figure out what the deuce they were talking about; what they were really talking about was alternatives to drug abuse. They quoted the heroin addict who said: Well, can you think of anything better?

And they thought that was a worthwhile challenge. In other words, could they think of anything better.

Morris: Than using drugs as a life style?

Somerville: Yes, that's right. And I think that's a legitimate question for the drug abuser to ask. So they tried to think, well, are there some alternatives. And alternatives got into a big programmatic idea. Alternatives deal with life itself, and life styles, and life philosophies and everything.

And then, from that, I started to do an inventory of what I called alternative agencies in San Francisco. I have two stacks, twelve inches high, documenting alternative Bay Area programs. What I did was to find out what is going on in the Bay Area, and I came to the conclusion that the Bay Area is probably one of the richest places in the world in terms of new things and new ideas and its ability to attract people with different thoughts.

One foundation executive told me that he was in India over the summer, and some guru was saying that there are two places in the world that are giving off positive vibes, or something—I forget the words that they were using—and one was someplace in India and another was the Bay Area. Places that are very alive, right now, more than any other spots in the world. Well, that's how a religious man looks at it, and how a foundation executive looks at that religious man; but the point is that the Bay Area is extremely rich in what's going on.

The thing that worries me is that it's a very ephemeral sort of thing. It comes and goes.

Morris: The flow of ideas and efforts being made?

Somerville: We're very wasteful of human resources here. It's just unbelievable. There's something happening in terms of how life is passing us by, sometimes.

For instance, there's the warehouse movement, which is a social movement which most people aren't aware of. It is related to Keynesian economic theory that we overproduce and we have too much of various things. Well, we have empty warehouses in San
Somerville: Francisco and some young people are renting these warehouses for a handsome price. The person who owns them is getting a nice income—five thousand dollars a month, for example. A fellow my age started Project I, and 120 people live there.

It's a very interesting phenomenon and I don't think that people have paid much attention to it.

Then there's Resource Exchange. Corporations used to trade in their furniture and get new furniture, and they would get a trade-in value of five dollars a chair. Now they can get a ten dollar write-off and give it to some alternative group, through Resource Exchange. That was started as a result of John D. Rockefeller, III, getting people together around the country to talk about ways that youth and businesses could come together.

Morris: Why are projects like this wasteful?

Somerville: Well, I'm not so sure they're wasteful. I think that we're wasteful, in the sense that these are ephemeral and they shouldn't come and go. If they have a worth to them, I would wish that they would last a little longer than they do. I mean, all things of a human nature come and go, but these come and go rather rapidly. It's almost a luxury we tend to take for granted in the Bay Area, in terms of these people and their work. We think that when a program dies there'll be something else popping up pretty soon, we'll wait for it.

Morris: Is the ephemeral nature a characteristic of alternative life styles and agencies?

Somerville: Well, it is in this society. And I'm arguing that maybe it shouldn't be. Maybe there's something worthwhile in some of the alternatives that are popping up. We tend to have a homeostasis phenomenon in that things get back to 'normal' too soon.

[Interruption--office business. Tape off.]

Somerville: You were asking if it were wasteful. I think the wasteful part is the fact that some people's good energies are involved in an alternative project for such a short time, and it's such a struggle to keep them going that usually the person switches to something else. We have no way of judging whether that idea was given its due share of attention. And that's why I say I think we ought to fan more sparks. I recognize that that's difficult, and I recognize that the dilemma of the foundations is how many things they can fund. They're flooded with ideas.
Morris: Another question is why are alternatives springing up? Have you got any clues to that from talking with some of the people in these alternatives?

Somerville: I don't know; I could guess. I think people are looking for new things. Sometimes because they're dissatisfied, sometimes because they're creative people who are constantly creating new things. Sometimes it's rebellion—I think the whole streaking phenomenon now is a very nonviolent way of rebelling. I'm delighted that it's nonviolent and that it's not aggressive.

Not all nudity is nonaggressive. During the People's Park thing, some women were taking off their shirts and running bare-breasted at the fences. Their breasts were sort of cannons. I thought that show of nudity was meant as an aggressive act.

What's going on now is nonaggressive. It's sort of silly, but it's significant that it's nonaggressive. And it is an act of rebellion, too.

Morris: The streakers seem to have a deadly earnestness and determination. The few that I've seen. As you say, they're proving something.

Somerville: Well, I was predicting that this summer there would be much more nudity on the beach. I think when a woman starts asking the question, "On what basis are my breasts considered obscene"—that's a very exciting question to ask in the court of law. And it is now being asked. There are some cases pending. I think it was on that basis that pornography laws fell apart.
4. SOCIAL PRIORITIES

Establishing a Dialogue on Decisions

Morris: Your next point was that you felt that some foundations lacked priorities and public concern. Have you thought through the local foundation scene enough to have some thoughts on what kind of foundations are lacking in concern and in priorities?

Somerville: I proposed to the San Francisco Foundation a year and a half ago that there be a social priority survey in the Bay Area. The Foundation staff was in favor of the proposal, but the Foundation board was not. They wanted to do it just for black people, for example, and I would have nothing to do with that. Then you set up something where black people get all the attention and where other people start getting anti-black just because of that. I don't like that—laying one group against another, advertently or inadvertently.

The thing that I'm interested in is not in saying that this group is better than that group, but in creating an area of dialogue, if you will. I set up a rather sophisticated system for doing that. It was a delphi inquiry system, with an emic-etic anthropological approach. It's my design, so you won't find it in the literature.

My proposal included where I was going to find the people for the panel in the Bay Area, and that we would constantly add to the group, and through a delphi system (which means that they don't have to come together; you can do it through the mail) bring people together to discuss what their ideas are; and through the mail each panel member would get a summary of responses and respond to that.

The kind of thing that might happen, for instance—say there's a large foundation in San Francisco that funds private boys schools. If the dialogue is over here in, say, women's liberation concerns,
Somerville: drug concerns, minority youth concerns, the symphony, or some areas of the arts or culture or whatnot, and this group is giving to private boys' schools, I thought it would be a very creative way of putting pressure on that foundation to either justify their stand or to change their stand. But to use pressure in a creative way—not in a confrontation way, or an abrasive way. And to hold foundations more accountable publically.

That was an idea that I proposed a year and a half ago. And it was not acceptable, evidently. As one person said, I was two years ahead of my time. Another six months and we should propose it again.

Morris: That brings up the question of the weight that the trustees have in the decisions of the foundations.

Somerville: They have total discretion. I asked one large foundation for a copy of their criteria from which they give grants, and they gave me an undated memo which, in essence, hardly said anything. (It's not what it said, it's what it didn't say.)

And, in a way, I think that's okay. Although I would like it if there were some written things that could be a basis for a dialogue on social concerns in the Bay Area. A barometer, if you will. A barometer doesn't tell you it's going to rain or not going to rain; it tells you there's a good chance of rain coming. It gives you an area of concern. Maybe that analogy isn't good, but I would like to have a social barometer for the Bay Area—to show us where the areas of concern are.

UBAC tried to do this through the Bay Area Council of Social Planning. It had a five hundred thousand dollar grant to do this. I went to UBAC and asked them for the report, and I got a fourteen-page mimeographed report. I said: No, I'd like the back-up material.

And they said: There isn't any.

I thought, I'll be darned. I read it over and I thought: Five hundred thousand dollars—that's pretty expensive for fourteen pages.

Morris: Nobody'd looked at it?

Somerville: There wasn't any back-up that they had that they would share with me or share with a foundation executive who was a member of the council planning subcommittee. And the fourteen pages didn't say anything. It's political dynamite. Scares too many people to work on priorities. It also probably goes against the idea of autonomy or independence—
SOCIAL PRIORITIES SURVEY FOR THE BAY AREA

Purpose-

To assist foundations, corporations, individuals and others in becoming aware of social priorities with regards to philanthropic giving. To help develop a public awareness of social priorities and encourage a continuing dialogue to keep these priorities current and representative. To assist in planning for the future and hopefully offer a basis from which predictions can be made regarding areas of social concern.

Methodology-

A panel of forty persons representing all facets of life in the Bay Area including ethnic, generational, sexual, religious, economic, educational categories would be chosen. Each panel member would be involved in a four step interrogation: 1. listing social concerns about which the member is concerned both for the present and the future, 2. reacting to a listing of all concerns from all panel members (twice), 3. receive information on survey findings from other metropolitan areas, 4. be interviewed for a "debriefing" about the priorities they chose.

Two optional possibilities are also available: 1. to hold small group meetings of panel members (4-6) to discuss priorities, 2. to send a questionnaire to a large random audience for comparison with the panel decisions.

The Report-

Based on the survey data, a report would be written describing social concerns in their order of priority. In addition, a two part narrative would describe the procedures by which the survey was accomplished and offer some of the expressed thoughts of those who participated regarding the priority order of the social concerns. The report would be as short as possible and designed so that it could be renewed each year with easy cross referencing. Based upon their usefulness, graphs, charts and tables will be used for data analysis.

Future Possibilities-

If this survey fulfills its purpose of becoming a useful reference and a stimulant to community awareness, it might be possible to have surveys on an annual or biannual basis. With such surveys, trends, changes and variations in perceived significant social problem areas can be readily observed.

Budget-

The survey would take four months to conclude. Using a coordinator part-time and with other expenses the total cost would be $4425.

(Submitted by Bill Somerville, Scientific Analysis Corporation, S.F.)
Somerville: Many foundations fund cultural things which to some are not priority items. The San Francisco Foundation gave money to some group in San Francisco that helps to train future musicians--on the basis that if we're going to have a symphony, we've got to have people who are going to play in it. I thought that that was sound, and I'm glad that they did. They were trying to enhance the quality of life, but not at the expense of minority youth, for example. I would like to see some sort of dialogue started so that priorities can be formed, but not to create either/or situations.

Morris: Going back to the people who fund boys' schools as an example: What would the boys' schools and the other philanthropic activities that rely upon continued gifts from old boys and loyal supporters--what would they do for survival if all of the philanthropy money went into the priority areas?

Somerville: It doesn't mean that you would stop funding them, but it does mean that you wouldn't exclusively fund them. In other words, you would give concern to some other areas as well. I'm not against boys' schools. The Lick-Wilmerding School in San Francisco is probably a very good school, and maybe sets the pace for some other schools in terms of a well-run plant. It deserves support. The question is, does it deserve support as much as X, Y, and Z? That's what we ought to be talking about. We ought to have a dialogue that is not political, based on clout, or how loud one can talk!

Morris: Your design for an inquiry system would be people with experience and/or training in various social concerns?

Somerville: Yes. Start with some people--you'd be very careful how you pick the people. And then somebody might say: Why haven't you added So and So?

We've done that with the Community Affairs Committee. We just had a letter asking why the school system isn't involved on that committee. That's a good question. I sent that letter on to the city council people who did the selecting. They must have had something in mind to exclude school spokesmen, or to include them at a later date. I think it's valid to bring up that point, and I think that it's good to grapple with it. They might make the decision that they don't want somebody from the school system on the Committee for some reason. But it's the dialogue which I think is healthy.

Morris: How would this relate to the grassroots kind of movement?
Somerville: Well, it would relate in a very difficult way. Because there would be all sorts of grassroots movements and organizations trying to take over the dialogue, so that it would favor them as opposed to others. And that's probably why many foundation people don't want to deal with it.

Sources of Criticism and Pressure

Somerville: But what foundations are doing is what I pointed out in my article, and that is, that they are dealing in an exclusive way with some of the social problems in America. That's why I said earlier that I think foundations are possibly going to get raped. That's a strong word, but what I mean is that they're leaving themselves open for some criticism that could devastate them.

Morris: By whom?

Somerville: By legislators, by the public, and by militant leaders in different groups who want to put down foundations. So far they haven't done that, but it well might come about.

We're leaving a period of tranquility with foundations. We have new legislation: the '69 law and the laws that have been changed since then, and are being changed, that relate to foundations. Some people might say that these changes will give more stability to foundations. That might be so, but we are leaving an era from which we came and which we're used to.

Another thing is that we're having very well established, very capable people retiring right now--especially in the Bay Area. Those people were the stability of the foundation world, and they have left. That's very significant and going to be very much of an influence on the foundation picture.

Morris: Are you suggesting that their retirement is going to leave a vacuum?

Somerville: Yes.

Morris: And that therefore there will be some pulling and hauling to fill that vacuum?

Somerville: No, it's not that they are political people; it's that Ruth Chance was very much of a solid force in the community. We're going to have to find those kinds of people again. They'll pop up, I'm sure, but I say that it's a vulnerable period.
The other thing is that boards of directors are, as the accusation goes, white middle-class males. I have to be careful on that, because I'm a white, middle-class male, and I'm not going to say that they're bad people. John May came up with a good criticism of foundations. He said that the boards should be more representative, but they certainly shouldn't be made up of people who just represent one group.

I agree that it has to be more broad, because I think that you'll find that some board members do, indeed, represent just one group. We tend to think of business as one group, and of blacks as a group. We think of a business representative on a board as okay; why don't we think of a black representative as okay? There's room for dialogue here, and I'm not sure that John's suggestion is that easily implemented. I think many of the people on foundation boards now represent one group, or a specific area of interest.

San Francisco Foundation, in the last few years, did appoint a trustee who is black.

He's the representative of the Stanford president.

Was he a staff person at Stanford?

No, I think he's with the Peninsula Urban Coalition.

That sounds as if it might be at least a dual constituency.

Yes, in a sense it might be.

It's interesting that at least that much of a breakthrough has been made.

But the complaint will come that foundations are not representative enough of black people and they don't have all the minorities as such, or women. I was surprised that a man replaced Ruth Chance; I was almost sure it was going to be a woman. I think that there will be some changes here, in terms of foundations getting pressure put on them.
Opportunity for Growth

Somerville: My thought is that pressure might be a good thing, but I hope foundations don't buckle under the pressure as did higher educational institutions. I think foundations are where higher educational institutions were about ten years ago. That was when we enrolled a lot of persons who had heretofore been overlooked. Those persons made demands, which is a natural state of affairs, but it also turned into the most violent era in higher education—1969; Wheeler Auditorium was burned down at that time, during one of the third world uprisings. And there were more police on campus at that time than at any other time.

I ask: Do we have to go through that ritual again with foundations, or are there ways of dealing with change and demands in a creative way? That's why I think we need a dialogue. It's also where you have to be careful of what I call opportunists. Every group has its opportunists; they pop up like mushrooms and they are very counterproductive. You spend an awful lot of time in things that are just not getting the job done.

Morris: Are you thinking of opportunism within the operation of foundations, or are you thinking of it in terms of the kinds of applications that are coming in?

Somerville: Operation of foundations: you ought to have more representation of X group, and here I am; why don't you hire me—that sort of stuff. That happens all the time. And I think we're going to see a lot more of it.

What I worry about is that white people sometimes go on blissfully doing things which amount to bad things in terms of racism; and then, in order to make up for it, they just flip to the other side. They say: Anything that you want is okay with me.

Morris: Overcompensate?

Somerville: It's wrong in the first place, and it's wrong in the response. And I would like to see more sensitivity. That's why I wrote that article in the paper. Unless dialogues are opened, I think we've got trouble. I think that you're going to have some trouble anyway. I just hope that it doesn't turn into something counterproductive. It could become a growing experience, where community and foundations can grow together, rather than for foundations to protect themselves and become defensive.
**Corporate Giving, Responsiveness, and Image**

Morris: Where do corporate gifts fit in? You indicated that you thought there's going to be more of this in the future.

Somerville: Yes. Maybe I was too optimistic. Corporations have room for improvement, with their feelings of threat and their lack of movement into creative areas. They're awfully slow to respond. Too slow in my estimation. The ray of hope is that things are so bad that they might not get worse. Corporate giving is virgin territory where things might change very rapidly. I look forward to some exciting changes in this area.

Corporations, for the most part, have not been imaginative in their foundation giving. There have been very few corporations that have done as much as, say, Levi Strauss. And the opportunities are wide open for corporations. My folks were very successful in the business world because they believed that to the degree that they made you successful as businessmen, you're going to remain their customer. They used to work their heads off; if they said a job would be ready at four, it was ready at ten to four. And you could depend on it. Their prices were not cheap, but they were worth it. It was a very profitable business because people could depend on them. They were related to the people they were working with.

Well, corporations are bigger than the little printing firm that my folks have. Corporations relate to the society. Corporations spend fortunes trying to get a corporate image. I think any corporation that gets involved with some of these areas that we're talking about couldn't help but enhance it's corporate image. And yet, they seem to be in the Neanderthal period with the way that they relate to some of the social issues.

Morris: Do you see them as becoming more generous in their support of foundations, or do you see this as corporations being involved in social action as an operating expense?

Somerville: Both. I think corporations have a great latitude with regards to how they can make contributions. They can set up corporate foundations and they can also make corporate gifts without a foundation. They do both, but they do it on a very small scale. They are where foundations were many years ago. And they haven't moved along in my estimation. The amount of corporate gifts are increasing, but that's not the impressive part. I mean, if it increases from five dollars to ten dollars, when it should be a hundred dollars, that's not very impressive. And everyone says
Somerville: that, well, it increased fifty percent. It's the content—we're talking about an overall way of measuring the impact of that corporate responsiveness. It's what I call social responsiveness on the part of the corporate world.

Morris: Do you think this is a possible role of the foundations?

Somerville: Yes, some foundations are helping corporations in terms of how they could have more of an impact. How much this is happening, I don't know. But I was reading the other day that some corporations do go to foundations and say: Where could we have an impact?

Many corporate people sit on private foundation boards, where they have an impact. But sometimes they feel that they've done their job by just sitting on the foundation board. Why don't they translate their foundation actions into corporate actions as well?

I left the business world fourteen years ago. I left it because profit was not the motive on which I can operate. The thing I like about money is giving it away. The creative expenditure of money.

Morris: That's made you unique and fortunate in your job. Foundation literature is pointing out how hard it is to give money away.

Somerville: Well, I think giving money away creatively is a very exciting way to make a living. And it's what I'd like to do and what I'm aiming toward doing someday in my life. If that happens, I'll be very pleased.
5. CONCERN FOR GRANTEES

Advice to Applicants

Morris: That brings us to your concerns about applicants. I gather you have some concerns about the kinds of groups that apply for grants, or the way they present themselves?

Somerville: I don't think people know how to apply for grants. When you're after money, do you go to all the foundations, and does that mean that you have to hand-type each one of the applications like it tells you in some of the literature? The Bread Game tells you that: type each one original. I talked to one foundation executive who said: If they send us a photocopy, that's okay.

But I've read that if other foundations get a copy they usually give it lowest priority, and they also ask who else you applied to. Then the person who is asking for the funds gets all mixed up. He feels that: It looks like I'm playing one against the other; or if I tell this foundation that I went to that foundation, this foundation will say we'll wait until we hear what you got from the other.

He's caught in a Catch-22. The advice is not clear on how to proceed in that situation. There is little dialogue between the foundations to help him. The other thing is: who do you go to for which kinds of things? And how do you find out about some of these foundations?

Morris: Thinking of your analogy between the foundations and the university several years ago: if there were considerably more information available and advice and counsel to community groups looking for money to start things, would this lead to a danger of again raising expectations in terms of, "Of course we can find you some foundation money"--would that increase the antagonisms?
Somerville: Well, I think you're right. But we've made some decisions in the opposite direction, whether we want to admit it or not; and that is that we've left it sort of catch as you can, which really means that the agencies that know about foundations are the ones that go to them. Those that don't know about them often represent good ideas that die on the wayside. And I'm asking the question of whether we should look at this. Your question has a corollary, and the corollary is: how about those proposals which aren't getting funded, which maybe deserve some more attention, too?

I proposed a course to the University Extension on program development, and it turned into a proposal writing course; that's what they wanted. I cancelled the course because the people who came wanted to know how to write the proposals and everything. I was willing to help them with that, but I wasn't going to write it for them. The people who came were the kind that just sort of flopped themselves on your doorstep: what do I do next, and then what next? That wasn't what I wanted to do.

I wanted to hear from some people with some creative ideas and see if we could help develop these ideas and progress from there. One is developing the idea, the other is presenting the idea—articulating it in terms of a proposal; the other is once you've got your money to get started, and the other is learning how to evaluate the program. I was interested in a whole bunch of categories that we could talk about. Now, with regards to foundations making themselves known, it's part of the foundation literature that they should make every effort to make themselves known to the public. So your question might be inappropriate in the sense that "making yourself known—does that create false expectations" is inadvertently loading the question. You have no choice but to let people know that you exist and hope that they will make use of your resources.

Perspective on People and Ideas

Morris: A nice global question occurs to me: how do you recognize an idea that has merit, a fruitful idea?

Somerville: Well, you come at these things with a perspective. Many of us have been developing ideas for some time ourselves. Many foundation people have read hundreds of ideas and they get a perspective. It's the same thing as how any expert recognizes quality in his field.
Somerville: When you're a person who works with ideas, you can start recognizing them. You also immediately look at the person who is behind the idea and you assess him or her. That's probably the most important thing, and making that assessment is very difficult, too. That would be a bigger global question: how do you assess the validity of some people themselves?

But with this perspective, then, you get an intuitive feeling, at least I do, and then you move ahead with it and do some assessment, by looking into the person, by looking into what other people think about him. By looking at the background, at the idea, and the people, it all starts coming together. That's the way I think Ruth Chance does it.

Morris: This kind of information is available about individuals who have training and skill and experience. I was think about the raw idea that (I believe) is out there in the community in the grassroots; there are good ideas walking around in the heads of people who have no skill in program development—who know their own immediate community, maybe a school maintenance person or someone less intellectually skilled, but who have an idea about their people, as it were.

Somerville: I had a knowledgeable leader in the community tell me that you have to be careful on going on reputation, because a lot of good people aren't known. I related that to a foundation trustee, and he differed. He said: Good people are well-known.

I said: Well, they might be well-known amongst other good people, but they might not be well-known amongst the public. I have to believe that many good people aren't well-known, and when you base it on reputation or how many degrees you have or whatever, sometimes you lose a lot of those good people by the wayside.

But your point is good. Say a janitor comes up with an idea; you think: Good Lord, he wants to do this and he has no experience in this area at all.

And yet, we're constantly seeing people with no experience doing a marvelous job in an area. That's where you just have to work on your intuition, I believe. I'm not so sure that there's going to be anything that will tell you how to do that. Although how often this happens, I don't have enough experience to state. It might be that they pop up all the time and so it's very difficult, or it might be that they pop up rarely, so that it's worth a try every once in a while: Let's see if the janitor can do such and such.
Somerville: Probably what the janitor would be proposing would be that he'd do it at night. Then you think: He's really going to do it in his spare time; I wonder if it really can get done?

But say he makes thirteen thousand dollars a year and you give him thirteen thousand dollars, and he drops his janitor job and he drops all that security and all that retirement and every-thing; that's asking a lot of that man. He's probably not going to be willing to do that.

Staff Involvement and Advocacy

Morris: Is it within the foundation's role for its staff person to go to an applicant's employer and negotiate a leave of absence, or to suggest that an applicant do so?

Somerville: Well, I don't know how much of that a foundation wants to get involved in, because it might mean getting involved too much. Many foundations say: We'll give you the funds, but we're not going to tell you how to do it. Nor do we want you to ask us how to do it.

You can give some suggestions or some recommendations or whatever, but you have to be very careful with those.

I see myself, in working for the foundation I'm with, as an advocate of ideas. I go out and look up ideas, and if the idea's a crummy one, I probably won't get involved in it. But those ideas that I am involved in, I really see myself as an advocate. In some ways, this is one of my weaknesses, because I get very enthusiastic and I get very involved in it, too. I don't get possessive of it in the sense that if the foundation doesn't fund it, it is an affront to me; you can't afford that. But I do hope and pray that the thing will get funded.

If I believe in the idea, I don't see this as contradictory to a foundation executive's role. I'd even like a sort of adversary system—adversary in the good sense of the term, and that is that I'll go before the Distribution Committee and I'll advocate these things, and the Distribution Committee will put me through the grill. And just grill me up and down as to why this idea is any good. I'll have to have my homework done as to what I think of it. Maybe in some cases I'll say that this idea isn't worth funding, and they'll grill me on that—why I say no.
Morris: Something they want to fund?

Somerville: They might want to fund it. I like this system. I think it's the way Ruth Chance used to work, although probably in a great percentage of the cases, everything she recommended got funded, and those she didn't recommend didn't get funded. It's asking an awful lot of foundation board members to do as much work as the executive. That's why they hire an executive.

Now, in the case of the East Bay foundation I work with, the board actually goes out, personally—all the board members—and they'll ask the applicant all about a program; and then they come back and act as the advocate. They make the priority rating on it. It takes an inordinate amount of their time, but it's what they pride themselves on, and what they want to continue doing. It's the only foundation that does this, too. So they don't need an executive director; they need a coordinator or an administrator, or something like that.

Morris: Will they be able to maintain that if their assets go up and their grant applications multiply?

Somerville: I don't know.

Morris: The rub on that, for either a staff person or a trustee, would be if you got a number of applications in an area in which you personally felt there was merit. How would you advocate a whole group of grants in the same area, or how would you select from them which ones you felt you should be funding?

Somerville: Now, that's the $64 question. Actually, I hope we don't get it all written down. I hope we start what I call the dialogue, again, and that we do get some stuff down. But I hope that it isn't that if you fit into this mold, you'll be funded; because everybody will be struggling to fit the mold and lose a lot of their creativeness, and also all people won't get funded who fit into the mold. We've discovered that already. There's a lot of it that will have to be intuitive, a lot of it subjective. But you just hope that you have people as sensitive as Ruth Chance to do it.

It's very hard being a foundation executive, because when people are hard up they tend to hear what they want to hear, rather than what is said. That's an axiom that I came across when I was directing the Educational Opportunity Program. Students would hear me say they could get into Cal, when I said there's a chance of your getting into Cal. Two different things.
Leadership in the Quality of Life

Morris: Sort of to sum up, can you zero in on a couple of things that you feel might be the top priority concerns emerging now in the foundation world?

Somerville: I think foundations ought to be giving more attention to criteria. I know you're asking about concerns with regards to some of the subject matter out there. I can't answer that way, because I don't think women's issues are more important than Philippine immigrants or somebody studying for the symphony or whatever. The attention ought to be on criteria for looking at ideas and judging them. I think foundations ought to give more attention to evaluation, as to whether their grants are having an impact. Evaluation tends to hold foundations accountable, and also hold the agency that they gave money to accountable. Then, I think the foundations ought to try to be fanning sparks more; they ought to be playing more of an active role in society. And not worry about controversy that much. I think foundations will come to public attention more, but I think this might be good. But maybe they're too vulnerable, and I am naive in not understanding how vulnerable they are.

My feeling is that foundations ought to play more of an active role. I guess that then we will start to find that they will be more on the cutting edge of social change, and they will get into creative areas and they will get more into what we want to have happen in our society as opposed to reacting against things. I would also like to see foundations help open up new areas--areas that the government might then consider funding.

Somehow, foundations ought to get out of their defensive stance. I would hope that foundations would have a much better dialogue with the legislative sector. In some ways things are a bit backwards. We're trying to have foundations make amends for what society has done.

For example, poverty is the result of many things, and I don't think that little foundations, family foundations, are going to resolve poverty. But they can have some impact on some mighty significant areas that could show the way for the legislative sector. We ought to be getting involved in these areas.

Morris: That's interesting. Does that mean that foundations as a group are in a better spot than other institutions to observe what's going on in the society as a whole?
Somerville: It doesn't matter so much if they're in a better spot. Let's just leave it that they are in a very good spot for finding these areas of the community. If they're not, then they're not doing their job in my estimation.

I think foundations ought to be getting out and looking around; foundations are the essence of an eclectic organization. They ought to be drawing from all sorts of parts of the community.

Morris: You have a nice way with words. Yes--do foundations feed back any of this kind of perception to the community?

Somerville: To the best of my knowledge they don't. That's why I'm saying that they ought to get out of their defensive stance; they ought to be much more aggressive and they ought to be stating some of these things.

They are going to get more in the rough and tumble world when they do get aggressive, but it's going to be in a way that we like, rather than the world where you've been naive and all of a sudden you have to make amends for it, and are funding projects from a defensive stand.

I'm very optimistic. I think foundations represent one of the finest institutions that we have. It is the concept of man helping man; unfortunately it is sometimes belated idealism--I've made my money; here, let something good happen with it.

My feeling would be the living foundation where people can give their money while they are living. There are foundations that accept money that way, and it's exciting. I would like to see foundations become more of a leader in the community. I think that would be exciting. I'm talking about the community that deals with the quality of life.

Morris: How do you define the quality of life?

Somerville: Well, I think we've talked a little bit about it--things I call the cutting edge, areas of creativeness and areas that deal with what we want to have happen. Those are things that I think go into the quality of life. I also think that the creative aspect of a person deals with the quality of life. I am hoping that the University of California will somehow be able to switch the educational process so that it will deal more with the creative process. I think that students come out of the University in a very passive state. Waiting to see what's going to happen next, that sort of thing. Listening and reading are sometimes very passive experiences. I would like to see students called on more
Somerville: to think about what they want to have happen. And how are they going to play a role in helping it happen? That's exciting.

Morris: I remember fifteen years or so ago, there were a number of studies of creativity which seemed to conclude that creativity was so variable that it was difficult to define.

Somerville: I wouldn't have trouble with that. I think creativity is to let a person—is to try and put as few inhibitors on people as possible. Permissiveness isn't the problem, inhibitors are. An open education says: There are certain things you have to learn, but at the same time, we want you to learn so that your own innate potential will start using those things.

It's sort of what you might call the person creating his own momentum. Creativity might be defined as a person creating his own momentum in life. When something hits something, there's always a rebound. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about all of a sudden you get up and go. That's the creative process. It's exciting.

Morris: Thank you very much for your thoughts. I know you're overdue for another appointment.

[End of Interview]
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