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University of California
Berkeley, California

SIERRA CLUB WOMEN:
AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WOMEN'S ORAL HISTORIES
IN THE SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Sierra Club Oral History Project

Edited by
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Class of 2020

An Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (URAP) project
in the
Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library
at the University of California, Berkeley
mentored by
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Abstract

The following document contains an annotated bibliography of all oral histories conducted with female members of the Sierra Club on record at the Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. The Sierra Club, as one of the oldest environmental organizations in the United States, contains a rich history of environmental advocacy coupled with a difficult past of environmental elitism. The following twenty-four interviews are annotated to reflect and unpack the variety of common themes that these women grappled with related to their work within, and adjacent to, the Sierra Club. These themes include outdoor empowerment, pioneering activism, intersectionality, women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity, leadership, labor and gender, legislative process, recounting early High Trips the Sierra Club hosted, and environmental elitism. Additionally, this document contains a collection of early Sierra Club High Trip photos, as well as a digitally processed map of three of the early routes of the High Trips that select interviewees attended.

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Ella Griffith
UC Berkeley Class of 2020
May 2020



Introduction

As part of my Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (URAP) project at UC Berkeley beginning in Spring 2019, I began looking for historical narratives about environmental justice within the Sierra Club Oral History Project—the Oral History Center's interviews with Sierra Club members. As one of the oldest and largest conservation organizations in the United States, the Club has been scrutinized historically for its elite membership and prior lack of intersectional awareness around environmental issues. I determined, however, that the Club's evolution toward holistic inclusivity—environmental and social—can be credited largely to the fierce, wonderful women who played, and continue to play, a role in shaping the Club's future. As such, the nuanced roles and perspectives of women in the Sierra Club emerged as the captivating focus in my URAP research.

In the Sierra Club Oral History Project collections, I found generations of women's stories. These archived interviews with women reflect a development of female consciousness threaded through the common denominator of love and care for the environment. Within this development, several interview motifs emerged. Women in the Sierra Club spoke similarly on the themes of fierce activism rooted in family values, of nature as an equalizer, outdoor empowerment, and about the role of women in leadership positions within the Club. Other recurring motifs were less empowering, including an inequality in resources, the cult of domesticity demarcating women's roles in the Club, the sinister exclusion and environmental elitism that existed between members and within the Club overall, and the trend of women's apparent value as interviewees because of their proximity to prominent men in the Club. But on the whole, women explain in these oral histories how fundamental they have been to the Sierra Club's successes, from its earliest days through the present.

The themes and issues that interviewed women spoke about remain relevant to today's gendered issues. Their narratives built upon one another, and women today expand on the layers of work that earlier women set down before us. Female activists—environmental and otherwise—stand now where we are because earlier women were not satisfied with where they were. When I started this research, I knew there were narratives and analysis missing from the mainstream history of environmentalism. This resource highlights some of those missing voices. But there are still many voices missing from our regular education. Though the pace of change is glacial, through these oral history interviews, we can learn more about the work that has been done, to help us better understand what is left to do.

Ella Griffith
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May 2020

Explanation of Thematic Tags

Outdoor Empowerment

At its most optimistic roots, the Sierra Club's founders appreciated the outdoors and the mutual enjoyment of exploring natural landscapes. Several female interviewees described the freedom and power they gleaned from access and exploration of the outdoors. This was a common theme especially as women described the early twentieth-century "High Trips" in the Sierra Nevada backcountry as joyous outings where neither man nor woman was restricted to any particular role. Rather, all "outings" attendees contributed as part of a group that moved through the wild landscape. Women spoke of their physical endurance and the power their own bodies gave them. These women led backcountry trips and wore pants before women were "supposed" to be leaders or wear pants! From the Sierra Club's earliest years, hiking and an intimate connection to the outdoors has remained a means for empowering women.

Pioneering Activism

Many Sierra Club women pioneered the Club's expanding involvement in various issues, from toxins in the environment, to the intersection of women's health with environmental issues, to advocating for a particular unprotected natural area. In addition, even when continuing to advocate for an issue the Sierra Club was previously involved with, women developed unique ways to gain traction on the issue. They called on their networks of "housewife" friends to rally when necessary, they hosted dinner parties to discuss important topics, and they held audiences with land developers who they intended to befriend, or challenge. In their own way, many of these women became pioneer activists.

Intersectionality

While Sierra Club women expanded the Club's involvement in a variety of issues that were intersectional to environmental work. Often, they were at the forefront of toxins, labor, gender issues as they related to conservation. Many women expressed concern specifically for their children and generally on public health issues, which reflects a conventional focus of women's activism. Still, these women nuanced their understanding of how complex environmental issues related to one another and stood at the forefront of pushing the Sierra Club's involvement on these issues.

Women as Nurturers and the Cult of Domesticity

Sometimes historical gender conventions limited the scope of the Sierra Club's female member's work or shaped the motivation behind it. The interviews reflected this to be particularly with issues linked traditionally to women such as children's health and "nurturing" others. This view of gender roles and subscription to them can be traced back to the "Cult of Domesticity" or the "Cult of True Womanhood": a framework of gender stereotypes demarcating women as the gatekeepers of the home, the moral compass of society, and generally as nurturers of the public.

In several Sierra Club interviews, women described their environmental activism with both overt and subtle explanations either of ways they felt restricted or ways they chose to engage in the Club based on these gendered stereotypes.

Leadership, Labor, and Gender

Interviews with women focused on their work within the Sierra Club, and several interviews dedicated an entire section to the role of women in leadership and bureaucratic positions within the Club. Women discussed the expansion of female leadership, limitations, and regressions. More specifically, interviews discussed the "secretarial" work that often fell on the female members to organize behind the scenes, take notes, and be the record keepers. This was often disrupted when many interviews explored how they felt about their role expanding to high-up, visible leadership and the role they played shaping the future directions for women in the Club and the Club itself. These women reflected on how female Club members often helped and mentored one another in their leadership roles as well.

Proximity to Male Club Members

There are many early conservation environmental celebrities that worked within the Sierra Club, including Ansel Adams, John Muir, the LeConte family, among others. Some interviews or portions of interviews with women of the Sierra Club are intended to gain insight on these other figures and their contributions to the Club.

Legislative Processes

The Sierra Club played a critical role in the emergence and development of environmental legislation advocacy. As membership swelled, the Club began to organize around fighting for outdoor spaces protection. Later, the Club expanded its activist agenda to include other environmental issues of concern, including resource regulation, toxins, and environmental racism. Many interviewees, particularly those that were involved with higher up leadership, such as the Council or Board of Directors, discuss the steps in the legislative process that the Sierra Club participated in and their own contribution to that process.

Early Sierra Club High Trips

The roots of the Sierra Club are in the organized outdoor "High Trips" that members took annually. Aside from the outdoor empowerment that these trips fostered for women, some interviews spend a significant amount of time recalling the details of the trips themselves. From the delightful entertainment the participants engaged in, to the logistics of getting up the mountain, to the specifics of meal-time, these recollections transport the reader back in time to the trips that provide the foundation of the Sierra Club.

Environmental Elitism

Oftentimes, the women interviewed came from very similar affluent backgrounds. They were encouraged to explore the outdoors as kids and had the time and resources to do so. When discussing membership into the Club, many women had the time to take off work for months at a time to participate in High-Trips. Many of the women that held leadership positions were volunteers and did not have to worry about this missing supplemental income to support them or their families. Additionally, many of the interviewees acknowledge a lack of diversity in the membership in Club's formative years, and either overtly or covertly admit their own complacency in this issue.

Selected quotations from Sierra Club women formatting

Narrator's Full Name

Recommended oral history citation: Narrator's full name, "Title of oral history" date of interviews by interviewer, *Volume*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, publication date.

Thematic Tags: Tag / Tag / Tag

Abstract

Abstract of full oral history, particularly as it relates to this annotated bibliography.

Selected quotations and thematic tags

Specific thematic tag for the following quotation

Direct quote from the narrator regarding this specific thematic tag. (page number in published transcript)

Specific thematic tag for the following quotation

Direct quote from the narrator regarding this specific thematic tag. (page number in published transcript)

Abigail Avery

Abigail Avery, "Nurturing the Earth: North Cascades, Alaska, New England, and Issues of War and Peace" an oral history conducted in 1988 by Polly Kaufman in *Sierra Club Nationwide IV*, Sierra Club Oral History Project, Sierra Club, 1996.

Thematic Tags: Pioneering activism / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor, and gender / Legislative processes

Abstract

Abigail Avery was a dedicated Sierra Club advocate whose involvement spanned park, wilderness, and wildlife protection to recycling efforts and offshore oil regulation. Her environmental interests began with personal experiences in the out-of-doors—in her case, with mountain climbing and family vacations in the Pacific Northwest and a trip to Alaska in 1940. Like many Sierra Club members, Avery shared her environmental interests with her husband, Stuart Avery, who led Sierra Club efforts in wildlife protection for many years. Abigail Avery became an activist upon learning of a US Forest Service plan to log a beloved valley in the North Cascades. She wrote to The Wilderness Society for help, received a positive response, and was "turned on." Later, she financed the Sierra Club film, *Wilderness Alps of Stehekin*, which became an important part of public relations effort leading to the establishment of the North Cascades National Park in 1968. Avery worked with the Sierra Club's New England Chapter on issues of offshore oil, wetland protection, local recycling, and with local peace groups. The environmental impact of warfare and nuclear proliferation became another issue of activism for her, both nationally and with the New England Chapter. Avery's oral history demonstrates a deep respect for life and a nurturing attitude that underpinned her more than thirty years of environmental work.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Leadership, labor, and gender / Proximity to Men

I remember going on trips with him, but I would go as a wife, you see. I was keeping my AMC [Appalachian Mountain Club] interest. It really worked very well. I remember that one time I was asked by the AMC if I wouldn't be interested in being on their board. I made a very significant decision then, I think. I decided that what I would like to do would be just to do what I was doing, but to be the liaison between the AMC and the Sierra Club. (pg 4)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

What I really was concentrating on during that time after Stuart got back was having the rest of my family. Really you cannot maintain everything. You're not free to do it. So there's a hiatus in there. (pg 4)

Leadership, labor and gender / Legislative process

Beginning her work in the Northern Cascades: Well, when I got home after that summer, I kept thinking, "What can I do about this? This should not be... I wrote a letter to the head of the Wilderness Society, who at that time was Olaus Murie. Back came the letter, two pages, single-spaced, and thanked me for my letter saying, "One of the things you could do as an individual is to alert organizations such as the Wilderness Society." (pg 8)

Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor, and gender

Well, that turned me into an environmentalist, because I had gotten a response, which I think is a very good thing for people to realize. That's the way you get people turned on, with an issue, not by lecturing. (pg 9)

Leadership, labor, and gender

Right. Well, I certainly did. I remember going down to Washington and testifying in favor of this. I hadn't thought of it that way, but maybe that is one of the most important things I did. (pg 12)

Legislative processes

On her political work advocating for forest space: The people who were representatives were interested in the whole forest. You weren't there as advocates for a particular slant. It was very effective when Reagan came in, and the question was, what are you going to do about wilderness, and it became the business of the different states to decide where the wilderness should be. (pg 14)

Legislative processes

Backyardism. What we need to do is to find Sierra Club people who live right around there, so that they can really keep an eye on what is actually happening. (pg 16)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

I was interested in education, and one of the ones was up in Homer. It was a project that took the native children--but there were also some of those that were not natives--that took art of the fourth, fifth grade program. It was a really good environmental education program in the summer. (pg 18)

Legislative processes / Leadership, labor, and gender

Well, as soon as people get back from their vacations, I'm really going to go out to my representative, Chet Atkins, and others that I know who are activists. I'm going to write a letter for the New England Siem, the chapter's newsletter; they want me to get something published about this trip. (pg 20)

Intersectionality

Well, [the purpose of the Environmental Impact of Warfare Committee] is to point out wherever it's appropriate, the connection between what is happening in this whole military buildup and the effect it's having on the natural environment. Our traditional concern with the Club over is the natural environment. What effect is all this having on these other issues? (pg 23)

Legislative processes

...look at the way the funds have been cut. You take the White Mountains that we were talking about. They've been cut in their budget. Because all of these departments have been cut. And the national parks have been cut. So from an economic point of view, that's just a fact of life. They're having to put up with getting the private sector to help them as much as possible. Look at what's being done about the waste that's produced by the nuclear plants, both the energy plants and those that the government has been using for production of its military weapons. What's that have anything to do with that waste? And is low-level waste? What is high-level waste? It's a whole business, what should you do with it? (pg 24)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor, and gender

I'm troubled by generalizations because there are women and women and there are men and men. And I think the things that are attributed to women are a particular concern with, rightfully so and tradition and because of nature, with what is happening to young people. It's nurturing. When they're helpless you should nurture them. And I think this is something very fundamental in women. But it is a very good characteristic for men to have too. But it is sort of--women have it anyway, just as men mostly are the ones that have the strength, physical strength. So I think it depends on what the job is that has to be done. I think women--it seems to me that science has shown--have a capacity to survive. Perhaps it goes along with the first thing. Just as female animals when their young are small, they will fight against impossible odds to protect the smaller children. I think that is something that is also basic to us. (pg 25)

Pioneering activism

Well, I think the individual has to make the decision, and it's easier if you make your decision according to where you're at. And it comes back to backyardism, where you're at. What's the most appropriate thing for you to do and not be overcome with guilt or too angry at everything? But just keep on. (pg 26)

Elizabeth Marston Badè

Elizabeth Marston Badè, "Recollections of William F. Badè" an oral history conducted in 1976 by Eleanor Badè in *Sierra Club Women I and II*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1976.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Early High Trips / Proximity to male Club members / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

Abstract

Elizabeth Marston Badè, an early member of the Sierra Club, attended High Sierra Packing trips early in the 1900s. Her husband Dr. William Badè, also an avid member of the Sierra Club, wrote *The Life and Letters of John Muir* (1923). While humble about her volunteer work, Elizabeth Badè made important contributions to her husband's various publications. She also supported the Sierra Club while many enlisted men could not fulfill their responsibilities as officers in the Club. Her interview focused on early High Trips with important figures like John Muir and Ansel Adams, and it details the editing and publication of *The Life and Letters of John Muir*.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Outdoor empowerment / Early High Trips

My first mountaineering was done with a small group who climbed Goat Mountain.... I consulted Marion Randall as to whether I would be able to do it, and she said, "You will have to decide that for yourself." So I decided I would! (pg 2)

Early High Trips

The Sierra Club trips were all a month. I think it was the month of June. I don't remember the exact dates. The headquarters were there in Kings Canyon Camp Kanawyer's store was there. People went in groups on side trips, according to how good mountaineers they were. (pg 4)

Proximity to male Club members

Mr. Badè and I were married when he came out at Christmas time and down to San Diego for our marriage January 12th, 1917. He then had plans to follow the path of John Muir on his trips through the south which he took very soon after the Civil War. When that country was devastated, Muir walked from Indianapolis down through Georgia, as told in his journals, which were later published as the Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf. Mr. Badè was editing those journals. (pg 5)

Proximity to male Club members

I know that there were two filing cabinets brought to my husband in which to keep all this material so that he could get at it easily. And all his spare time for the next years was spent on the Life and Letters of John Muir. (pg 8)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

I am saving [Old Sierra Club Bulletin posts] for my grandchildren, who are already becoming active mountaineers. (pg 10)

Proximity to male Club members

Later John Muir came in for a short part of the trip. I'm not sure how long he was with the Club, but I remember he spoke by the campfire, and we all listened with most intense interest. (pg 11)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

The only work I ever did for the Sierra Club was in the war time.... I wrote book reviews and helped in that way. I read proof too. (pg 16)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

I read the Sierra Club proof, and I read the proof of the *Life and Letters of John Muir* and later the *Records of the Tell en-Nasbeh Excavations* of my husband. It really put my eyes on the blink. [laughter] (pg 17)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

I want to say how happy I am that the interest in the Sierra Club and its objectives is a continuing one in our family. My father, George W. Marston helped in the establishment of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park in San Diego County. My husband led the fight for the Kings River Canyon Park. Since I returned to San Diego to live in 1937 I have watched the San Diego chapter grow to over 1,000 members. My daughter and son have taken many high Sierra outings. (pg 18)

Helen King Burke

Helen King Burke, "Sierra Club Outreach to Women: Women's Issues in the Environmental Movement" an oral history conducted in 1980 by Waverly Lowell in *Sierra Club and the Urban Environment, Volume I: San Francisco Bay Chapter Inner City Outings and Sierra Club Outreach to Women*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1980.

Thematic Tags: Intersectionality / Legislative process / Environmental elitism / Pioneering activism / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

Abstract

Helen King Burke played a key role expanding the Sierra Club's outreach to the East coast and pioneered the Women's Outreach Program within the Club. She grew up in New England in the 1950s and was introduced to the Club while living in San Francisco briefly in the 1960s. Upon returning to Boston, Burke sought to continue Club involvement and helped found the Boston chapter in 1977. Throughout her lifelong volunteering, she advocated for women's issues within the Club and helped organize female members into working coalitions over a variety of issues. With a keen eye toward gender dynamics within the Club, Burke empowered female members within Club leadership. Burke's oral history reflects an intentional view of activism, where she aimed to make the greatest impact by taking her time and by separating personal from political interests.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Intersectionality / Leadership, labor and gender

It means that in essence, I'm the interface point between the volunteer sector and the board on that particular issue. Right now, I have been looking for someone in the volunteer sector to become chair of the Women's Outreach Task Force. In other words, someone, a woman Sierra Club member, who would be primarily responsible for heading up that activity. (pg 3)

Leadership, labor and gender / Environmental elitism

Founding the Women's Outreach Program: The timber industry started hiring women to go out and lobby women and consumer groups for their version of the Timber Supply Act... The Sierra Club hired women to counter this marketing and it came to a head within the National Council of Negro Women (pg 3)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

Then also, I think that within the Sierra Club, if you look at past presidents, if you look at the percentage of women serving on the board and if you look at various other percentages within the Club, the Club has, in the past, been a rather male dominated institution. I think that's changing now. We presently have four women on a board of fifteen, which is roughly a little over one-fourth. I have some statistics which I can find for you in terms of active women on the executive committees, etc. Those percentages are going up. But at any rate, I think that the women's outreach effort has an aspect of being a kind of support group for women within the Sierra Club. (pg 3-4)

Intersectionality / Pioneering activism

Regarding the Sierra Club statement supporting the Equal Rights Amendment: "The Sierra Club urges ratification and implementation of the Equal Rights Amendment as quickly as possible as a guarantee of a national commitment to equal status and participation for women and men in all facets of life. Such measures would foster increased career and educational opportunities for women, resulting in better utilization of women's skills in promotion of wise stewardship of the earth." (pg 4)

Intersectionality / Leadership, labor and gender

I think that the goals of the Women's Outreach Program are really three-fold. First, one purpose is to build a coalition by maintaining general support of women's groups and by developing better working relations with them. A second purpose is to promote the Club's conservation goals by generating support for national and local Sierra Club campaigns among women's groups on issues of mutual interest, such as toxic substances and cosmetics safety. The third goal is to attract women to the Club as members and active volunteers. (pg 4)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Legislative process

If you move forward too vigorously with a controversial issue then it tends to weaken your effort. (pg 5)

Intersectionality

Reply to a question about outside response to the women's outreach committee's activity: The other kind of negative feedback has been in letters... Why is the Club in ERA, why is the Club in labor issues, why is the Club in urban environment stuff? They can't see why the Club is spread out into these areas. They say, ``What do those areas have to do with the environment? (pg 7)

Environmental elitism / Intersectionality

But one of the grounds for criticizing the Club is that we're elitist, that we're all white. Where are the black faces in the Club? That we want to lock up the wilderness for those who can get in there, the backpackers and so forth. That we are more interested in posies and birds than we are in people. I think that these coalition efforts are all human directed, toward people per se. They help counter that image of the Club as an elitist backpacking wilderness-only organization. (pg 8)

Pioneering activism

If we try to accomplish too much, then you disappoint people and don't meet expectations. I think it is better to focus your energies in one place where you think you can have an impact. (pg 12)

Leadership, labor and gender

One thing that concerned me was the other night at our annual dinner when they gave out annual awards. They had all the living Club presidents all grouped and lined up there. Of course, they were all male. (pg 13)

Leadership, labor and gender

It's also interesting to note that, for example, if you look at membership chairs and public relations and that sort of thing, there's a higher percentage, I think something like sixty percent, women in those positions. Which sort of fits in with the traditional image of women's role, of the woman being the one doing the social aspects of things. (pg 14)

Leadership, labor and gender / Intersectionality

The more men see capable women, qualified women elected to the board, the more they will see that women are able to carry significant burdens, etc. That's what women's liberation is all about. (pg 15)

Doris Cellarius

Doris Cellarius, "Sierra Club Volunteer Leader: Grassroots Activist and Organizer on Hazardous Waste Issues" an oral history conducted in 2001-2002 by Ann Lage, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2005.

Thematic Tags: Pioneering activism/ Intersectionality / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender / Legislative process / Environmental elitism

Abstract

Doris Cellarius was a dedicated environmental activist. She served as both a grassroots organizer and headed local and national Sierra Club committees focused on empowering people in campaigns for a healthy environment. Cellarius came of age in the 1950s, and earned a master's degree in biology from Columbia University. Her involvement with the Sierra Club began as a hiking member. But after attending the first Earth Day teach-in at the University of Michigan in 1970, she dedicated herself to solving various problems of pollution. Cellarius became a member of numerous Sierra Club national committees, including chairing for ten years the Hazardous Waste Advisory Committee, always with an emphasis on grassroots organizing and involving volunteers. She was an early advocate for corporate social responsibility and pioneered broader political mobility to target issues related to corporate accountability. Doris Cellarius's oral history revealed an energetic and thoughtful activist who reflected on community, religion, family, gender, and civic involvement.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Leadership, labor and gender, Pioneering activism

From the Interview History: She trained as a biologist, receiving a master's degree from Columbia University, but left the field when her professor expressed disdain for women graduate students and failed to share her interest in investigating chemical causes of birth defects, an interest that was perhaps ahead of the times. (xix)

Outdoor empowerment

When I was a little girl, I used to go on walks by myself to find woods to walk in. I have no idea why I like to walk in the woods. Once I took several other children with me (pg 2)

Leadership, labor and gender

First I wanted to be a forest ranger, and then that goal shifted to becoming a veterinarian, and then people told me, "Women have a horrible time in veterinary school, so don't try to be a veterinarian unless you like to suffer." So I said, "Okay, I'll be a doctor because I like medical things." (pg 5)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

On traveling to Washington DC after winning a national homemaker contest: We all had an interview with a psychiatrist before they selected the winner, and I thought that was very interesting. Later, the psychiatrist told me that she knew I wouldn't win, because I was too ambitious. That didn't bother me at all. It just didn't faze me. I had no idea I was more ambitious than other people. She said I had much too much of an academic interest and that just would not be the typical homemaker. (pg 7)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

Why Cellarius's graduate school advisor did not like female students: He said, "We invest all this time in you, and we help you write a thesis, and then you have some babies, and you're gone. (pg 9)

Pioneering activism / Intersectionality

Earth Day came as a great shock to me because it had never occurred to me that the environment didn't clean itself... When I learned at the time of Earth Day how much pollution there was and how bad pesticides were, I instantly became very active in the pollution area of the environment. (pg 13)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

And then I also started an organic vegetable garden at my children's school, Northside Elementary, and I did it by working with the children, the latchkey children who had nothing to do after school, so we gardened. (pg 19)

Pioneering activism

I realized that you had to have people. You couldn't just do things alone. You had to both have a group of people that you worked with, and then you had to do educational programs, too. (pg 19)

Outdoor empowerment / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

Interviewer: How did this part of your life sit with being a mother, raising children? Did having these young children help motivate you more? D. Cellarius: Yes, I was very concerned about them... We did Sierra Club outings and trips, and we did lots of things with the children and got them used to camping, and they both still love camping. (pg 20)

Legislative process / Pioneering activism

Once I moved to Washington state, I always represented the Sierra Club. So we were able to get Sierra Club people making calls. (pg 26)

Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender

On meeting with corporate leadership: I started meeting with them, getting to like them. I wasn't the toughest guy in the world. I was always able to be very civil to people, because I liked them as people. (pg 28)

Legislative process

I started out thinking you could win with facts, and then I began to realize, especially now, that we need these campaigns such as the Sierra Club has, the CAFO [Confined Animal Feeding Operation] Campaign; campaigns where you mobilize everybody in society. You find your friends among the hunters and anglers, and you go to shopping centers with your ironing boards and hand out literature, because that's what really works. (pg 29)

Pioneering activism / Legislative process

Sierra Club members become friends with their legislators, and the legislators know they're going to hear from Mary Jones, and you know Mary Jones is not going to vote for you next time and she's going to tell her friends not to vote for you, and so voting records and all that-- (pg 30)

Legislative process

...you really only win when you hit them really hard, and you have lots of people involved. (pg 31)

Leadership, labor and gender

...a lot of things you do in church are the same things you do in the Sierra Club. You have discussion groups, and you do things for the poor. (pg 35)

Pioneering activism / Intersectionality / Leadership, labor and gender

I even helped write a handbook about this later, a handbook for empowering citizen groups at local sites, because there are some basic things that we know in the Sierra Club, but people who have never faced a community problem don't think about these things. (pg 36)

Legislative process

I think that they knew that there was something behind a single Sierra Club member, that we would do publicity, we were politically active, we would go to county commissioners, and we could help them, or hurt them, whichever we felt was necessary. (pg 39)

Intersectionality / Pioneering activism

I remember the mothers were concerned about the fact that they felt that there were health problems immediately following the worst flood. One woman had actually gone door to door and done a health survey and noted down the dead kittens, the sick children, that followed the pollution. I worked with those people for quite a while. (pg 42)

Pioneering activism / Intersectionality

It was an environmental justice site because the EPA was treating the people sort of casually. They put down this woman's survey of the health problems--they called it "folklore." They used really derogatory words for her work. I suggested that we get them an environmental justice grant because these people were terribly poor, especially in these apartments. The EPA said, "No, environmental justice grants are for people of color, and these people are all white. (pg 42)

Pioneering activism / Intersectionality / Leadership, labor and gender

In response to the question: How does the Sierra Club work with these groups that are outside the Sierra Club's membership? Traditionally Sierra Club members tend to be middle class, college educated, and all that? How does that coalition develop? D.
Cellarius: Sierra Club, I think, has always had really good sense about this. Any Club member I've worked with in the United States who's working with people at toxic waste sites goes there to be helpful. We don't go there to make them be members. We've never-- this is just something Sierra Club does to be helpful. We want a clean environment, and

we love to work with you. That's continued to be the tradition of our environmental justice work. (pg 43)

Pioneering activism / Intersectionality / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

In response to the question: What are your thoughts about how gender fits into the environmental movement? What is different about what women bring to it? D. Cellarius: Well, I think women just seem to care a lot more about--in the pollution area-- about what happens to people, what happens to children. They think more of the long-term consequences of things, and I think they get more outraged that it's all these men in the corporations that really just enjoy creating these chemicals and building these things that are problems. But I think they have more of an outrage that these things shouldn't be done to the environment or to people. (pg 53)

Intersectionality / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

For the broad environmental activism, I think that in the Sierra Club men and women kind of work side by side and with equal passion, but at the toxic waste sites, I think it's women because they care about the children and their own health. (pg 53)

Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender

On a friend who had felt weak from years of poisoned water who went and lobbied her local legislature: She said, "It made me strong. It made me realize that I could do things." She had been, I believe, just a housewife. It just turned her into a tiger. (pg 54)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

They spoke out even to the point of knowing their husbands would be upset, and even then they found their husbands had more respect for them, and other people listened to them, so it was empowering in kind of a sad way. (pg 55)

Pioneering activism / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

But I really began to feel it when I worked with these women at toxic waste sites and saw that it was mostly women. I saw how the people from the agencies were mostly men, and they didn't take the women too seriously. It never made me feel it was a gender thing, though; I thought it was more government oppressing the citizens and treating them like something in the way of getting their job done. (pg 63)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

You come to understand in the church that you are not here just for yourself, and you need to have a reverence for life and for creation and for your fellow man. A lot of those things seemed to the kind of things that the Sierra Club bases its work upon. Especially the stewardship ethic. (pg 67)

Irene Charnock

Irene Charnock, "Portrait of a Sierra Club Volunteer" an oral history conducted in 1977 by Paul Clark in *Southern Sierrans II*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1977.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity
/ Leadership labor and gender / Legislative process / Environmental elitism

Abstract

Irene Charnock exemplified two key values of early Sierra Club membership: dedicated volunteership and consistent outdoor engagement. Born in 1898, she grew up in Pasadena, California and spent much of her childhood exploring the San Gabriel Mountains. Before joining the Sierra Club, Charnock participated in other outdoor societies in Southern California that introduced her to the Club. As a social worker, Charnock applied her secretarial skills to keeping the Southern Chapter's paperwork in order and membership organized. Her consistency led her to co-found *The Southern Sierran* chapter newsletter, and she played a key role in its publication. In this oral history, Charnock discussed the independence she experienced during Sierra Club backpacking trips, and she noted many women joined the Sierra Club for similar reasons. Charnock's oral history paints the portrait of a dedicated Sierra Club volunteer.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Environmental elitism, Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

On her early adolescence with various climbing and hiking groups: I could not belong to this Club because I was a female; it was only a men's Club. (pg 2)

Leadership, labor and gender

By then, I hadn't been in the Sierra Club for any time at all when people discovered the aptitude I have, which is analyzing and dissecting what is the matter with things. (pg 4)

Environmental elitism

We did have lots of parties. We had a dance about every month. For instance, after the Friday dinners, we didn't just go home. I went out in the street and said, "What shall we do tonight:?" Mostly, they went to a place to dance. (pg 7)

Outdoor empowerment / Early High Trips

For some time before I joined the Club, I liked to go by myself. I'd take my car up in the mountains anywhere and go by myself, maybe get a horse to carry the stuff. (pg 12)

Leadership, labor and gender

I learned about the treasurer's work from a sharp person named Dorothy Cutler. The treasurer's records for the executive committee are not like they used to be.... There are lots of people that don't care about past things, just the issue of the day. Of course, there's a lot to do about conservation. (pg 18)

Legislative process

The Club spends a lot of money now on a very good purpose that it didn't used to--on lawyers. I think one of their best features is their legal work. (pg 21)

Leadership, labor and gender

At one time, in the early days, the Club [headquarters] wanted to run everything. However, they learned that it pays to let those who want to work do the work. (pg 22)

Christy M. Cicely

Christy M. Cicely, "Contributions to the Sierra Club and the San Francisco Bay Chapter, 1938-1970s" an oral history conducted from 1978-1982 by Ann and Ray Lage in *Sierra Club Women Volume III*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1982.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment/ Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity/
Legislative process / Environmental elitism / Pioneering activism / Intersectionality

Abstract

Christy M. Cicely served as a leader and a mentor for women in the early decades of the Sierra Club. Born in England in the early 20th century, Cicely grew up with a love of the outdoors that her parents nurtured by encouraging her to travel and explore. Cicely joined the Sierra Club soon after she moved to the United States and experienced her first High Trip in 1938. From there, her Sierra Club involvement only grew. Her profession as a landscape architect provided a sound outlet for her love of natural beauty and her lifelong determination to protect it, particularly parks and wilderness areas. She held numerous positions within the Club, including on Sierra Club Council and as an editor for the Bay Chapter's *Yodeler* newsletter. Cicely's oral history reflects her gentle but solid nature as well as her contributions to the growth of other female leaders in the Club.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Outdoor empowerment / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

In response to the question, How would you characterize the women members of the Club?: I think the question of venturesome brings up something different. Our education on those trips was in being careful. The idea that someone would have to look after you if you hurt yourself was deeply impressed, not by word of mouth, but by example. And we learned many things. (pg 7)

Early High Trips / Legislative process

I have never heard a discussion which divided camping people into political cohorts, not on the outings, no. Even in the Club office, you could tell perhaps who was Republican and who was not, but they got along very well together. They had a larger interest. (pg 7)

Legislative process

Everybody came to the conservation committee meetings who was interested. It became quite large. I think the most interesting part of my life was connected with that nationwide interest. Then it got too big, and there were regional conservation. (pg 12)

Environmental elitism

On Club membership sponsorship and efforts to accept more diverse members: Most of the problems originated because people were concerned that the Club was becoming so cosmopolitan that there wasn't enough chance to get to know the incoming members. That was really the basis of it. I think there was very little in the way of hard feelings, of prejudice there. It was a concern for the Club as much as anything, though it took the form unfortunately of objections to the method in which membership was carried out. That is rather hazy--long ago, and it has not been the Club habit to dwell on the type of problems they had in the past. (pg 14)

Environmental elitism

It was my recollection that it was very unimportant, but a noisy prejudice against what you might call cliqueness--the tendency of certain groups to become enclosed within themselves and not feel a part of the larger groups. (pg 15)

Intersectionality

In response to: The Club's interests broadened in scope to include population, pesticides, pollution, etc. I wanted to ask you, at that time, what did you think of the changes which were taking place?: There was great excitement about the conservation projects which were causing the growth. That was the time of the Dinosaur battle, and Point Reyes came into it later. I think that very few of the membership, very few, realized how much the Club had grown. (pg 18)

Environmental elitism / Legislative process

I think that they simply got absorbed and went on doing exactly what they had been doing before. I know that one leader remarked, as the Club began to grow, that a certain group which was meeting for dinner in San Francisco disliked change and didn't want to change their place of meeting or the method of the meeting. He said, "You and I know that these people will go on meeting at that particular cafeteria for all time [laughter]; the changes in the Club don't touch them!" (pg 18)

Legislative process

In response to the question: Would it be an accurate description to say that the council was actually the various chapters' voice in the Club's activities? You are quite correct. That is what it was meant for, and that is what it still is, though it is becoming unwieldy

now, and there is still much talk about what to do in order to keep the council within numerical bounds. (pg 22)

Legislative process

The committee on committees really became a kind of ombudsman. It collected the ideas of people who wanted them presented but didn't quite know how to go about it, or objections that arise in the course of things and in general need to be talked over and fed back to the board sometime to see if they ring a bell there; and that is about all it was. (pg 24)

Pioneering activism / Intersectionality

We have to live, we have to eat, we have to get automobiles. It is a very very difficult and sad position sometimes--to choose what to give up of necessity, and what you will keep and refuse to let people exploit. Exploiting does not always mean--it is not always a bad word. It just means to develop sometimes, and a number of people have come into California during the last twenty years--well, that speaks for itself. They have to go somewhere, they have to do something. (pg 30)

Intersectionality / Environmental elitism

In response to the question, Would you have any thoughts on what the Club's role should be with regard to broader environmental issues of urban problems, the energy problem, overpopulation?: All I can do is quote John Muir that if you take up one thing you find it hitched to the whole universe. I think that the Club can leave urban things to other groups, who are more likely to be interested in the urban things than they are in the outdoor natural things. I think that the Sierra Club's main objective in life, and the thing that they can do best for this country, is the preserving of open spaces and the good air that will keep the open spaces. If you get air pollution you will find that your pine trees in the Sierra are suffering--well, there is not much good in preserving the pine trees in the Sierra if you can't reduce pollution on the coast. You have to pay attention to everything. (pg 31)

Legislative process

I think that the contact between the Sierra Club and Congress or the legislature is probably the most important that there is. We must try to keep the legislature and the congressmen informed as to what is going on. (pg 31)

Leadership, labor and gender

In response to the question: Do you think there was a tendency for the men to step into the top positions?: Yes, I think the tendency was there, in the minds of those voting. It was just a holdover from the time when they automatically voted for men many years ago. (pg 33)

Leadership, labor and gender

It was just reflected in each chapter I think. I think people grew out of that [the tendency to vote for men] rather deep laid, not exactly prejudiced, but just habits of thought. (pg 34)

Nina Eloesser

Nina Eloesser, "Tales of High Trips in the Sierras" an oral history conducted in 1984 by Ann Lage in *Sierra Club Reminiscences III, 1920s-1970s*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1985.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Early High Trips / Proximity to male Club members / Environmental elitism

Abstract

Nina Eloesser was a veteran High Trip traveler with the Sierra Club who contributed to the Club's administrative tasks based on her experience as secretary for President Herbert Hoover. Eloesser developed an early interest in hiking from walking trips in England, Scotland, and Ireland in the 1910s. She attended her first High Trip with the Sierra Club in 1919. Eloesser's oral history recalls her work as secretary to Herbert Hoover during his World War I service with the Commission for Relief in Belgium. Her recollections of Sierra Club High Trips in the 1920s give humorous and lively anecdotes about leaders, companions, and events on the trail in the Sierra Nevada mountains and in Glacier National Park.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Outdoor empowerment

There was quite a sizable "mountain," they called it. We wouldn't think much of it, but it was about six or seven thousand feet up, and it was called Craig Dhu, which meant the "black mountain." I used to walk by myself, because mother couldn't. I walked all over that country. (pg 2)

Outdoor empowerment

In response to the question, Was that unusual for young women to walk alone like that?: Yes. It was quite unusual. Mother couldn't keep me back. She kept saying, 'I don't know how I got hold of you, because I don't know how you do so many things. (pg 3)

Proximity to male Club members

I worked there, and after a while Mr. Hoover said, "Take shorthand?" I said no. I could type. I'd typed. He said, "Well, go away and learn it." Just like that. (pg 5)

Proximity to male Club members / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

Mr. Colby said, "Mrs. Eloesser, will you please stand up." I thought, here goes the honeymoon. But not at all. He said, "Mrs. Eloesser, we know you're from England, but you must please understand that the Sierra Club's motto is 'not to destroy'. And you must please not pick any flowers you see. You can tell the naturalist who's with us, and he'll tell you about the flower and describe it." So I felt very small and sat down again. (pg 13)

Early High Trips

I myself had a pair of very smart riding britches that I'd had made ages ago when I was riding. They were khaki material. They were very nice. You'll find at the beginning of that book a picture of me and Herbie standing there saying that at least we've started this trip clean. (pg 15)

Outdoor empowerment

In response to the comment, It seems as if you and the other women were well equipped to keep up with the men: Yes, because up in the high mountains (you know that don't you, Ann?) you have to walk very slowly. In fact my husband always led us because if I led I was always striding along like Mr. Colby. I was used to walking with long strides and it took me a long time to learn to walk mountain ways just putting one foot in front of another. (pg 17)

Early High Trips / Environmental elitism

While we were there, a party from the hotel came. One of the women was on horseback. There were several of them on horseback. This stupid woman had high-heeled shoes with just straps to hold them. You know how they make them. She walked on the ice and they melted. (pg 25)

Outdoor empowerment / Early High Trips

I bet nobody else came from England and had a four weeks honeymoon in the high mountains the way I did. Herbert didn't even ask me. He knew I liked walking because we'd walked a bit in England. I'd walked him around a bit. (pg 28)

Nora Evans

Nora Evans, "Sixty Years with the Sierra Club" an oral history conducted in 1973 by Judy Synder in *Sierra Club Women I and II*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1976.

Thematic Tags: Early High Trips / Outdoor empowerment / Proximity to male Club members

Abstract

Nora Evans joined the Sierra Club in the early twentieth century and remained a lifelong hiker and outdoors woman. Evans, who was born in California in 1887, trekked up and down California with the Sierra Club beginning in 1912. Although brief, Evans's recollections of early High Trips shared spirited information from the perspective of a can-do woman who never let her gender get in the way of her successful mountaineering. She discusses her own transitions, from wearing long skirts on her first High Trips in 1912-13 to later leading other women who were rookies on the trails.

Selection of quotations and thematic tags:

Early High Trips / Outdoor empowerment

And then I rode by horseback up to the top of El Capitan alone, but at breakfast they discovered that I was hiking alone. They sent two boys to run up and find me and escort me up and back. (pg 2)

Proximity to male Club members

Then different people would talk about the interesting experiences they had had, and that made it very nice. Ansel Adams wrote several plays for the campfires--one I remember was called "Trudgin' Women". (pg 4)

Early High Trips / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

We wore long divided skirts and middy blouses. No woman wore pants. They wore skirts to the knees and boots to the knees. That was 1912. In 1913 they began to wear something a little more comfortable. In 1912 we hiked over the Kearsarge Pass. My friend and I rented horses. I had my costume made for the trip. I had bloomers made out of some kind of black material and a cotton skirt and a Russian blouse so my figure wouldn't show. (pg 5)

Early High Trips

On Climbing Mt. Rainier: There were seven men, and I was the only woman. I made it to the top successfully. (pg 6)

Marjory Farquhar

Marjory Bridge Farquhar, "Pioneer Woman Rock Climber and Club Director" an oral history conducted in 1977 by Ann Lage in *Sierra Club Women I and II*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1976.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Early High Trips / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender / Proximity to male Club members / Environmental elitism

Abstract

Marjory Farquhar was an active Sierra Club member, skier, and mountaineer who served as Bay Chapter executive from 1934 to 1937, and as an elected member of the Sierra Club board of directors from 1951-1955. Born in the Bay Area in 1904, Farquhar's family encouraged her and her sisters to explore the outdoors. She joined the Club in 1929 on the summer High Trip to the Sierra and developed an interest in rock climbing, which led to meeting her husband and rock-climbing partner, Francis Farquhar. In 1933, she became the first woman to summit Mt. Whitney. Her oral history addresses leadership, gender, and environmental elitism within the Sierra Club. She describes the outdoors as a kind of gender equalizer, notes the importance of natural spaces in facilitating personal growth, and suggests ways that traditional roles for women limited her leadership involvement. She also notes how access to the natural world can ignite a passion for conservation. Farquhar believed that outdoor activities instilled responsibility for conservation.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Proximity to male Club members

Her sister had met her husband on one of the Sierra trips, so she specifies that "Being young, I always remembered that that was where you got a man. (pg 2)

Outdoor empowerment / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

On being asked about whether her upbringing would be considered unladylike, she responds, "I don't know. Mother might have objected, but Dad wouldn't listen to her.... She didn't think it was particularly ladylike, but he said it was good for us, and I think he was quite right. My mother did believe in having her daughters independent and individuals. (pg 4)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

On being married: I will admit that my active rock-climbing days disappeared, really perhaps for two reasons: one because I went into the baby production business, and the other because of the war. (pg 22)

Early High Trips / Outdoor empowerment

In response to the question, do you think the purpose of the High Trips was building people interested in conservation?: I think it did an awful lot, I mean terrifically. You couldn't help but absorb it, and just like Colby's original plan in trying to get people--if they knew what they were talking about they could fight for it, but just unseen and not understood. (pg 33-34)

Legislative process

...to the idea of having chapters all over--I was afraid that the tail might get too big for the body, and then, diplomatically, I thought that perhaps we should have worked through other clubs and that all clubs should do things in their own localities, rather than the Sierra Club try to take them all over. But of course, they didn't, and the Sierra Club has done an awful lot. (pg 36)

Proximity to male Club members

And of course Dave [Brower], with his vision of conservation and what should be done and his eagerness--it seemed like a very good idea to have Dave as executive director. As I say, it was just too much of a load for a president to carry; he had to have help. (pg 39)

Environmental elitism

[The Southern California Sierra Club Chapters] were awfully sticky about their membership. They were awfully snooty about it, and they wouldn't take a person in until the poor person had been to dinner at least two times and been passed all around and introduced. (pg 41)

Environmental elitism

In response to the question, and you don't recall any problems with racial discrimination in this area, in the north?: No. Only in [The Southern California Chapters] because they had their little--they needed two people as sponsors, I think, to sign on their things, and they had to go to the dinner parties. We were far more loose up here. I don't really remember anything- I just remember myself once thinking, 110h, there are no Japanese or Chinese here--I wonder if I know anyone who would like to join?11 But I never got around to it. There was no consciousness on my part, because there never had been anyway; I'd never bothered. (pg. 42-43)

Proximity to male Club members

Dave [Brower] himself, I think, is a very sensitive person--let's see, his mother was blind, wasn't she--yes, blind--and well, Dave was very sweet and gentle and came along in the Sierra Club and came to be a very good climber and very intently interested in conservation. As I say, the war effect was very strong on him to fight for it. I think he just got to the point where he thought that God had sent him to save the world. (pg 44)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

Our home was the host center, and it tied in with the Sierra Club because so many of the American Alpine Club members here are Sierra Club members. (pg 48)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

In response to: You mentioned to me one time something to the effect that family responsibilities interfered with some of the life goals--or maybe that's just what I read into it. Did you ever have that feeling?: It just got to the point where I couldn't do everything, and I felt it was more important to be a social hostess and help Francis in that respect than to follow the photography. After all, I couldn't compete with Ansel anyhow, and so [both laugh] I might as well leave it. (pg 50)

Leadership, labor and gender

While discussing how she was treated within the Club in relation to her gender: I just felt I was as good as anybody else, and I never felt I was either--anyway. I mean I just was accepted as me--because I don't remember holding back. (pg 51)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

I never thought of it as a men's Club; could you say that now? There are mostly men on the board, and there always were; but there were an awful lot of women that did other things--I mean the Bay Chapter, and different committees, and an awful lot of work. Maybe some of the harder work was done by the women. (pg 51)

Ethel Rose Taylor Horsfall

Ethel Rose Taylor Horsfall, "On the Trail with the Sierra Club" an oral history conducted in 1981 and 1982 by Ray Lage, *Sierra Club Women, Volume III*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1982.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender / Early High Trips / Environmental elitism

Abstract

Ethel Rose Taylor Horsfall was a generous, intelligent woman who dedicated much of her life to educating immigrants. Born in Iowa in 1888, Horsfall traveled to California as a schoolteacher for adult immigrants. She loved hiking and the outdoors and discovered the Sierra Club searching for companionship on outdoor ventures. Eventually, she became a seasoned High Trip backpacker. Horsfall's oral history provides insight into the joy and comradery of the Sierra Club's early High Trips, as well as how the trips provided a means for women to challenge social and gender norms.

Selected quotations and thematic tags

Leadership, labor and gender

Horsfall taught immigrants English for over 30 years in the Bay Area. She answers a question on the wide variety of people in her classes: I had the garbageman, the sea captain's wife, the waitress~ the streetcar operator--even two teachers. Yes indeed, it was humanity; I found people interesting, and that they had something to give. They really had affection to give, and an appreciation of the services that they were given in the school. Not only did I lead them in the classroom, but I organized excursions taking them to city hall, Alameda courthouse, and to Sacramento. (pg 3)

Early High Trips / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

We had a section assigned for the girls when we reached camp. Then there were sections for the marrieds and the men. (pg 6)

Early High Trips

On describing social events on the High Trips: There were those who carried little teakettles wrapped in a bandanna, dangling in a little bundle from the knapsack. On the trail these men and women who had the little teakettles would make tea, and as you came hiking along you'd hear them go, "Come and have a cup of tea!" They were delightful events of the hikes. We also had the candy pack train--that's what Judge [Clair] Tappaan called it. Either your family or your friends would send you goodies after you'd been out

perhaps about two weeks. Then there would be stylish tea parties, which were invitational affairs. You'd put on your best bandanna. (pg 7)

Early High Trips / Environmental elitism

People brought bandannas that they had acquired in Europe and various places in the world. These would flutter, and we would have special refreshments and a delightful time. It was the social event, and you didn't miss it. (pg 8)

Early High Trips / Outdoor empowerment

People seemed to have time for each other, and there wasn't really a class distinction. (pg 13)

Environmental elitism

In response to the comment, One charge that has been often levelled at the conservation movement--groups like the Sierra Club, Audubon Society and Friends of the Earth--is that they're elitist and composed almost strictly of upper middle class or upper class people who are not really speaking for society as a whole: What you say is news to me. We had a woman, I remember, who was a doctor of medicine. Of course there were many teachers and women who came in with their husbands. Maybe they brought children. (pg 14)

Outdoor empowerment / Environmental elitism

I must say that the social life afforded me by the Sierra Club meant a very great deal to me. I came out here, as I told you, in '21; I didn't have my teaching work out here for several years. It meant a great deal to me to make contacts with men and women who were interested in fresh air and hiking and maybe having dinner together when the trip was over. Of course, the mountains gave you an enlargement of your horizon, and as you say, deep thoughts and thoughts that you would share with others rather freely. (pg 19)

Kathleen Goodard Jones

Kathleen Goddard Jones, "Defender of California's Nipomo Dunes, Steadfast Sierra Club Volunteer" an oral history conducted in 1982 by Ann Van Tyne in *Sierra Club Nationwide Volume II*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1984.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender/ Legislative process

Abstract

Kathleen Goddard Jones was a determined public servant who served as the Sierra Club Council's first chairman and dedicated much of her life to preserving the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes along the Central Coast of California. Jones developed a positive relationship with the outdoors while growing up in Santa Barbara in the 1920s, which continued throughout her adult life. She was introduced to the Sierra Club by photographer Cedric Wright in the 1920s, but Jones soon married and moved to live in New York and abroad. In 1949, upon returning to Santa Barbara with her second husband, Jones finally joined the Club and, that year, attended her first High Trip. Jones soon co-founded the Santa Barbara Sierra Club chapter and served as its chairwoman. Later, Jones became one of the original delegates to the Sierra Club Council, as well as its first chairman. She was an organized, friendly leader who built relationships with many municipalities and businessmen as a means to protect natural spaces from development. Notably, she thwarted PG&E's efforts to build a nuclear power plant on the Nipomo Dunes in Santa Barbara. Jones's oral history reflects the persistence in Sierra Club activism, as well as details of legislative process she engaged in.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Outdoor empowerment

At the age of twelve I began to really hike, to go to the higher peaks and to learn to sleep outdoors and to cook outdoors, and to find that this was something that was important to me at that time and has continued to be one of the most important facets of my whole life. A kinship with the earth, a spiritual refreshment from moving easily along trails and over the contours of the earth. (pg 2)

Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender

And Preston did tell me what went on at the board of directors meeting. Then he said, "And now, I am leaving the chairmanship and you are to be the next chairman of this chapter." And I said, "Oh, no. I don't feel that I have enough information about the Club, probably not enough leadership expertise." And he said, "Oh, yes, you have." So that is what happened. The election was held, and I became chairman of the chapter. (pg 6)

Leadership, labor and gender

At the end of two years, I was asked to accept election to the chairmanship for a third year. Cicely Christy talked to me about this and really rather urged me to accept. And I felt very firm that Sierra Club offices should pass around. I was not for long tenures on the board of directors, nor long terms for chapter chairmen. I felt that the Club was doing such a creative job that leadership should constantly make itself flexible to receive input from new minds and new enthusiasm, even of new members, because I remembered how new I was to the whole Sierra Club concept when I came into the chairmanship of the Los Padres Chapter. (pg 7)

Leadership, labor and gender / Pioneering activism

My philosophy, which I spoke about at that time frequently, was, "We of the Sierra Club Council are the housekeepers for the Sierra Club. Let us take everything in the way of internal affairs off the hands of the board of directors, everything related to chapters, everything we possibly can that is internal affairs. (pg 9)

Leadership, labor and gender

And, oh yes, I do want to mention that from the moment I became active in the Sierra Club, from the Los Padres Chapter days, I decided that the media was important. (pg 10)

Leadership, labor and gender

But one thing also which I personally believe in and tried to explain to the chapter at that time and follow through on was the fact that I believed we should make friends with public entities such as the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. (pg 16)

Leadership, labor and gender

Then, as I left the speaker's table and was going down through the room, a man came up to me, and then there were four men with him surrounding me; and the man who approached me said, "Are you Mrs. Jackson of Paso Robles?" And I said, "Yes. And he said, You're the one who has been putting some items in newspapers about the plans of PG&E for an atomic power plant down in the sand dunes, in that wasteland down at the south end of the county, the sand dunes?" And I said, "Yes, who are you?" And he looked around at the other men and he said, "We are PG&E." (pg 21)

Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender / Legislative process

In speaking to someone criticizing her tactics in approaching PG&E to not build an atomic power plant on the Dunes: I do not have the scientific background for understanding the hazards of nuclear waste, the threats of nuclear power, but I believe that this campaign can be won on the things that are there and that I do know and that I can recognize. I am going to work on the scientific values and the scenic beauty of the Nipomo Dunes. I am going to do my best to get to know the people in PG&E, and I want them to know Sierra Club people, and I am going to suggest that all of us try to educate - PG&E to change their plans and leave the land of San Luis Obispo County alone; eventually, hopefully, dispose of their dune land, and leave it for state park acquisition to be added to what shall be one of the greatest coastal state parks in California, the Pismo-to-Point Sal complex. (Pg 24)

Leadership, labor and gender

When asked to describe other female leaders of the Club: Cicely--Christy, with her warm, quiet wisdom, her long experience with the Club. Charlotte Mauk, with her spiritual understanding of Club goals and her awareness of Club politics, if you will, which never seemed to have interrupted anything that I wanted to do, anything I believed in. I feel that I have traveled through some difficult passageways--between, was it Scylla and Charybdis?--at any rate, difficult passageways in Club politics and passed through unscathed. I feel that they haven't ensnared me in any way. (pg 26)

Helen M. LeConte

Helen M. LeConte, "Reminiscences of LeConte Family Outings, the Sierra Club, and Ansel Adams" an oral history conducted in 1975 by Ruth Teiser and Catherine Harron in *Sierra Club Women Volume I and II*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1976.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Proximity to male Club members / Early High Trips / Environmental elitism

Abstract

Helen M. LeConte, daughter of Joseph Nisbet LeConte, came from a long line of influential academics, outdoor explorers, and Sierra Club advocates. Born in 1904 in Berkeley, California, Helen LeConte began camping and exploring the Sierra Nevada mountains with her family when she was seven years old. While never formally involved with Club leadership, she remained a staple hiker and Sierra Club High Trip attendee. Her oral history details her family outings as well as High Trips she attended throughout the 1920s and 30s, including memories of influential Club members such as William Colby and Ansel Adams.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Outdoor empowerment

In 1915, we went up the Ledge Trail to Glacier Point, just my father and myself. It was like climbing a mountain for me, because there was no trail built. It's just a wide ledge--very rough--quite a scramble for a little girl. (pg 4)

Outdoor empowerment

I always heard about the mountains, ever since I can remember. (pg 5)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Early High Trips

Yes. Of course, the wives by this time were not able to rough it , really. So this was pretty luxurious camping, compared with packing off with knapsacks. We had everything--a little wood burning stove--and we built a table so we could sit. They got stumps of dead trees, sawed them off, and made chairs to sit around the table. (pg 7)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

In response to the question, what did women do during the day [on these camping trips]:
They'd go for little walks, and botanize, and talk, and read. They brought lots of books.
There was lots to do. (pg 7)

Outdoor empowerment

I climbed my first real mountain that year--Mt. Dana. It's not a bit difficult but it's on the main crest of the Sierra with a tiny glacier on the east side and a great view all around. It's directly above Tioga Pass on the east side and is 13,050 feet high. (pg 9)

Early High Trips

We boiled the potatoes and fried the onions, and we always had a side of bacon and an Edam cheese, a great big one. Maybe we had ham, I don't know; canned things, canned fruit and vegetables; and lots of hardtack! Of course, flour, sugar, salt, some kind of lard, macaroni and rice. Knorr's dried soup we called "Dynamite" because it came in long packages, just the size and shape of a stick of dynamite. (pg 11)

Early High Trips / Environmental elitism

It's so social! You have your little group and you can get off away from the rest. We always had tea or bouillon cubes for hot soup. One of the pleasures of the day! (pg 12)

Early High Trips / Environmental elitism

Cedric used to play the violin at the campfire, and he always brought a pupil, and he would arrange music so that all kinds of things that weren't written for two violins could be played by him and his pupil. (pg 14)

Early High Trips

Most of the people were older people. At least I thought so then. but they were probably only in their thirties and forties. I was the youngest person on that trip. Now the trips are almost all young people--teenagers and young twenties. But I don't think there were any very young people on that trip. (pg 18)

Early High Trips

After Ansel and Virginia stopped going and that whole group didn't go on the trips any more, I found new friends, and one of the nice things about my little group was that we

had the Pennyroyal Club. When we were in the parts of the Sierra where the pennyroyal plant grows and also where there was snow, we would have a pre-dinner gathering. (pg 20)

Early High Trips / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

LeConte discusses a trip when men were caught watching the women swim naked: Oh, and I can remember when, after Mrs. Huber got so shocked about the men over here going swimming and the girls there. Ansel and Virginia decided that we'd have to have a morals committee--a joke committee of course. Virginia was going to be the chairman. and we were going to see to it that there was no hanky-panky going on. (pg 22)

Outdoor empowerment

They were all men, except one girl, who came from Illinois, and she'd climbed in the Alps-- Switzerland. She was really good! (pg 23)

Proximity to male Club members

I wish I could remember some of the funny old men of the mountains that we'd meet on our little trips. They ran their horses there in the Kings River Canyon, before it was a park. They used to just spend their summers there in the Kings River Canyon. (pg 30)

Proximity to male Club members

I have some pictures of the Porcupine Flat camp. Here's Mr. Moffitt sitting on his bed, which he made for himself. I forgot to say that James Moffitt usually came on these High Trips. Not to Yosemite, but to these trips along the Tioga Road and Tuolumne Meadows. (pg 37)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

While discussing her older female family members adventures in the Sierra: She had to dress formally. But she did wear trousers, bloomers, when climbing mountains. She didn't want anyone to see her! (pg 40)

Proximity to male Club members

Ansel was a very unusual young man. When he was young, he was so mature in many ways. Of course, he was crazy about photography, even though he thought that he was

going to be a musician. And he loved the mountains so much that it was a very pleasant combination. (pg 46)

Proximity to male Club members / Environmental elitism

In response to the question, Can you characterize the kinds of people these were who liked the mountains and liked to go on these trips?: Well, they were sophisticated intellectually; they thought that nature was beautiful; and they loved the freedom of it, the simplicity, and yet they had lots of luxuries on these automobile trips. This wasn't really roughing it. They seemed to me to be all intellectuals. Now that I think about it--you were asking about the different classes of people who belonged to the Sierra Club--it never occurred to me what they did, or what their social position was, in society or anything, or what their class was. They were all middle or upper class. (pg 50)

Amy Meyer

Amy Meyer, "Preserving Bay Area Parklands" an oral history conducted in 1981 by Galen R. Fisher in *Sierra Club and the Urban Environment, Volume II: Labor and the Environment in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1960s-1970s*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1983.

Thematic Tags: Pioneering Activism / intersectionality / Environmental elitism

Abstract

Amy Meyer was active Bay Area environmental advocate who played a key role in establishing the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Meyer was born in 1933, in Brooklyn, New York, and grew up there before moving to Oakland to pursue a Master of Fine Arts degree from the California School of Arts and Crafts. She joined the Sierra Club in the 1960s while working on the Golden Gate National Recreation Area because the Club provided an organized platform for activism to remediate and preserve the area. Meyer's numerous environmental leadership roles included vice-president of San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission, vice-chairman of Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) Advisory Commission, co-chairman of People For a Golden Gate National Recreation Area ("Piffgunnura"), and board membership in SPUR (San Francisco Planning and Research Association). During the 1960s, many conservation projects came into conflict with labor movements competing for public funds. Her oral history explores the relationship that developed between the labor movement and the environmental movement in the Bay Area.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Intersectionality / Environmental elitism

So we have never been, none of the work I have ever done, has been alienated from the labor movement. But it has not been in very close quarters with people from the labor movement. And the reason appears to have been, phrased by reporters and those who knew our organization, "Well, it's just that most of you have a little more time and money than other people and labor and minority people (whom we tended to lump together)." (pg 3-4)

Intersectionality

The feeling was--always the message taken to any group that would have a group of laboring people in it--people you would call working stiff--would be "You're going to benefit more than anybody from this park, because it's going to be accessible to you; it's going to be free; it's going to be easy to get to." (pg 6)

Intersectionality

I think that we're headed for less money altogether in the public sphere. So you're going to have competition for that money. When you come to something like public transit you're going to find a tremendous opportunity for alliance among the inner city labor and conservation. (pg 12)

Intersectionality / Pioneering activism

In the area of environmental health, it seems to me, the labor movement and the environment movement have a tremendous goal to pursue in common; anything that could be done about it ought to be. And how far that's been pursued I: don't know. Certainly there's a lot of work being done in environmental medicine these days. (pg 14)

Susan Miller

Susan Miller, "Staff Support for Sierra Club Growth and Organization, 1964-1977" an oral history conducted from 1981-1982 by Becky Evans in *Sierra Club Nationwide Volume II*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1984.

Thematic Tags: Leadership, labor and gender / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Legislative process

Abstract

Susan Miller was a key staff member of the Sierra Club from 1964-1977, a period of rapid growth, expansion, and organizational upheaval. She became the namesake of the annual Susan Miller Award, which honors outstanding administrative contributions to the Club. Miller joined the Sierra Club in 1958 and graduated from UC Berkeley in 1961 with a degree in biochemistry. After a few years of working in bacteriological and biochemical research, she joined the staff of the Club in 1964. From her positions in the Club's member services department and as assistant to Executive Director Mike McCloskey, the board of directors, and the council, Miller's work provided stability to the Club's organization during those changing times. Her contributions to the Council's Internal Organization Committee helped lay the guidelines for the Club's structural integrity in the 1970s. Miller's oral history provides insight into the important changes the Sierra Club underwent and how female leadership played a foundational role during that growth period.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Leadership, labor and gender

I had grown more in my own sense of strength within the organization. When he left, I started as director--actually at that time it was called membership secretary; I took Opal's place in the beginning of 1967. (pg 4)

Leadership, labor and gender

I stuck my long neck out as usual and would make statements at those meetings, but I also was very careful in that the next Monday after a board meeting I would have a staff meeting of my department, and I told them, from the very first time I did it, "There's going to be a lot of stuff going around the grapevine, and I don't want you to be getting green grapes." So I did try to make very sure that people in my department had as full a picture as I could give them of whatever had gone on. (pg 5)

Legislative process / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

...then in February of 1972 came "Black Sunday" because it - was "Black Sunday." There were two board meetings, two weekends in a row, because they could not resolve the

problems. Fortunately, I was not secretary of the board at that time. I felt sorry for Margaret Arbogast. (pg 7)

Leadership, labor and gender

On her responsibilities on the council: My job was about half chapter services; at least 75 percent was simply keeping the records of the leaders' names and addresses and the various committees, chapters, groups, that they were president or secretary of or whatever. (pg 13)

Susan D. Morrow

Susan D. Morrow, "Susan D. Morrow: Sierra Club President and Council Chair: Effective Volunteer Leadership, 1980s-1990s" an oral history conducted in 1992 by Ann Lage, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1994.

Thematic Tags: Pioneering activism / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Intersectionality / Leadership, labor and gender / Legislative process / Environmental elitism / Proximity to male Club members

Abstract

Susan D. Morrow served as president of the Sierra Club from 1990-1991, and before then, she volunteered at all levels of the Club, including as a council member from 1979-1985, and on the board of directors from 1985-1995. Morrow was born in June 1946, raised in New England, and joined the Sierra Club in 1971 with her husband. Since her book, *One for the Earth: Journal of a Sierra Club President* (1992), provides a candid account of her Sierra Club presidency, this interview sought to examine topics not well covered there. Her oral history explores the development of her outlook and her leadership style as she climbed the ladder of Club leadership positions. It offers insights into the inner workings of the top management circle of volunteers and staff in the Sierra Club.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Outdoor empowerment / Environmental elitism

Well, I had a sense that this particular part of the Maine coast was a sacred place, that it was important to me that it never change or that it always be there and that it not be spoiled.... Yes, it was definitely an emotional sense that this was sacred ground, and it's still my sacred place. And of course, over the years there have been changes to that place, which I have never come to fully accept. There are some places--they seem like they are special wild places that should never change. (pg 2)

Intersectionality / Pioneering activism

In response to a question about the background of people who work in the Connecticut legislature and help re-elect their representatives: It's the same old mixed bag of people. A lot of them have gone on in the environmental movement to have responsible policy-making jobs. ... there really were more women than men. The people from the League of Women Voters, and from all kinds of local groups that are still there, still working. [*Are they primarily middle-class, college-educated types?*] Yes. Sort of the same (pg 6-7)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

We bought the old house, and we gardened, and we canned and so forth and so on. But during that time, I was getting more and more involved in the Sierra Club, which eventually in the mid-seventies drew me more and more to Hartford. (pg 8)

Intersectionality / Pioneering activism / Legislative process

Well, I guess sort of the fundamental notion of the Sierra Club is being the people who--. People are out there talking about radical change, and people are out there lying down in front of bulldozers and so forth and so on, and that's important, and part of me goes with them when they do that. But then the Sierra Club comes along and mops up. We take all that excitement and that concern and figure out how to focus it on the public policy process, and how to make changes, how to take that- -I usually, when I have to speak to groups, I speak in terms of that we're like a big magnifying glass, and we figure out where the concern is and then we focus it in the right place to light a fire. (pg 10)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

How she helped developed and facilitated a leadership training seen by some as "touchy-feely": The idea was that leaders know what they are doing from the get go. Yes. I mean, I still get feedback. People will say, "You know, I went to that training session back in '87, and it really changed my life." Or, "You know, I went to that one back in '84, and I remember what so-and-so said, it really made a difference to me as a leader." Just basic leadership skills. Teaching people how to develop ownership in the people that they're working with, and how to delegate, how to recruit and inspire and reward and organize volunteers, and how to get them. (pg 22)

Leadership, labor and gender

It was interesting, when I was council chair, Michele Perrault was Club president, and Carol Lee Baudler was SCCOPE [Sierra Club Committee on Political Education] chair, what was SCCOPE at that time. So I remember, this raised a few eyebrows that these women were all in charge, which was great fun. (pg 27)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender / Environmental elitism

But it seemed to me that the reason that there were so few women is more a function of the fact that in order to be president, you have to be able to completely reorder your life, where you have to be able to have the kind of support at home that you can essentially put your home life second for that time. And women have not had that luxury. Women have been the support system; they've been the supporter, never mind the supportee. So

in order for women to be president of the Sierra Club, you have to have a very strong support system at home. (pg 30)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

And yet, I imagine at the most fundamental levels of the Club--we have an expression in my house, "The rooster crows, but it's the hen that lays the egg." And I have a sense that women are doing a lot of the day-to-day, hands-on grunt work at the local level. (pg 31)

Harriet T. Parsons

Harriet T. Parsons, "A Half Century of Sierra Club Involvement" an oral history conducted in 1979 by Ann Lage in *Sierra Club Women Volume III*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, 1981.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender / Early High Trips / Environmental elitism

Abstract

Harriet T. Parsons was a Sierra Club volunteer who served on the editorial board for the *Sierra Club Bulletin* and on the Club's Library Committee. She joined the Club in 1927, and became an avid rock and ice climber in the 1930s. Parson volunteered for the *Sierra Club Bulletin* in 1939, became associate editor from 1942-1954, served on the editorial board until 1963. As part of her volunteer work on the Library Committee, Parsons catalogued, shelved, planned acquisitions, and arranged displays for the Sierra Club Library from the 1940s-60s, before a paid staff person took over the Club's growing collection of books, documents, journals, and visual arts. Parsons's interview shared insights to her work as a Sierra Club volunteer and included memories of Club leaders and mountaineers such as Ernest Dawson, Charlotte Mauk, and Norman Clyde.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Outdoor empowerment

Oh, it was a big machete. Yes, and a scabbard too. I loved it because I have always loved knives and that kind of thing. I am not very blood thirsty but I have always liked it. (pg 4)

Outdoor empowerment / Environmental elitism

It was the outdoors we were interested in when we were together. It is true, I think, that a great many people on the board were conservatives and die-hard Republicans, fine men. (pg 6)

Outdoor empowerment / Early High Trips

You had an ice axe or an alpenstock. I had an alpenstock to start with, and then graduated later to an ice axe. But everybody carried some sort of an alpenstock or an ice axe, because you glissaded down the snow when you came off the mountains, and sometimes you glissaded on your feet, and sometimes on your seat! You would put little patches on the back of your pants so they wouldn't wear them through to a hole. I can see now some of them sewing on something before we went up Saint Helens so that we could slide down without ruining our pants! [laughs] It was a good experience. (pg 10)

Outdoor empowerment

On women in climbing: "There always had been women in climbing. And as far as I can see they are just as good as the men, in many ways, and apparently they are proving themselves now. (pg 11)

Outdoor empowerment

Was it considered eccentric for women to climb: "No, not eccentric. But people were sort of surprised sometimes when they heard that I climbed mountains: "Oh, goodness, do you?" But those were people maybe whose activities were not that type. (pg 12)

Outdoor empowerment / Leadership, labor and gender

In response to the question: Our perception today is that women were much more restricted in the past, and so I am trying to verify this: It seems to me that I have just been lucky, because I don't think in the Sierra Club they ever restricted them! Women just climbed. There were a lot of women climbers in the Sierra Club. There was a group of physical ed people at Cal--Caroline Coleman and Eleanor Bartlett, and Mary Alvarez, then Marj Farquhar, Doris Leonard, to mention a few, and Annie Nilsson. (pg 12)

Leadership, labor and gender

In response to: The Yodeler was a magazine the women ran. What was its purpose?: To tell people what was going on, like the Yodeler now. It was to tell how things were going on up at Clair Tappaan Lodge, reminding people of any special outing or something, what people were doing, little incidental things. People would write up trips they had gone on--maybe weekend trips or skiing trips, things like that, and reminders. It went into a certain amount of conservation, but it was mostly activities. (pg 18)

Outdoor empowerment

In response to: It seems, like you say, that there wasn't a lot of emphasis on conservation when you were doing the activities, and yet somehow, these activities developed an interest in conservation? Yes, yes. That is what John Muir meant when he wanted people to get out in the mountains and see what it was like out there, so people would then work towards saving it. (pg 19)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

In wartime, old men were on the board as well as two women. They were pushed to be on it and did not volunteer. Parsons discusses one of the women, named Charlotte Mauk:
She was very active, very good, and then she continued. She was very well known too because she went on all the High Trips and was on commissary and did the cooking--a lot of that. She was really in charge of the commissary on most of the High Trips, and it was remarkable how she did it because she was very heavy. Did you know her?"

Environmental elitism

On the elite membership of the Southern CA chapter, asking if it came up in the North:
"It probably did, but did it come up on the board? I remember somebody asking me, not too many years ago, if there was any feeling about it. She said, "I have a very nice friend who is black, who would make a nice member." I think we have some black members. There has never been any push to get them though, which I think is too bad. (pg 24)

Dorothy Pepper

Dorothy Pepper, "High Trips High Jenks" an oral history conducted in 1975 by Terry Kirker in *Southern Sierrans, Volume I*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1976.

Thematic Tags: Early High Trips / Environmental elitism

Abstract

Dorothy Pepper was a veteran of many Sierra Club outings and hikes who was well remembered for her abilities to spark laughter and song around the campfire. Pepper was born in 1905 in Chicago and raised in Los Angeles, where she later worked as an elementary school teacher. She joined the Sierra Club in 1926 to attend that year's outing to Yellowstone National Park. From the mid-1920s through the late 1960s, she remained a faithful participant on yearly High Trips. Her lively and entertaining account of forty-five years of Sierra Club outings reveals a light-hearted side to the Sierra Club and includes relaxed portraits of Club leaders such as Clair and Francis Tappaan, Ansel Adams, Cedric Wright, Joel Hildebrand and many others.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Early High Trips

I loved everything to do with the out-of-doors. We went back to Iowa about every other summer to visit. One time when we came back, when I was ten years old, we stopped at the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. (pg 2)

Early High Trips / Environmental elitism

On wearing bandanas on the High Trips: One of the first things that attracted my attention at the campfire when we all lined up for dinner was that they all appeared with a bandanna around their heads in gypsy style. They were beautiful and in all different colors. They wore them tied around their heads and the knots hung down the back. (pg 4)

Early High Trips

Now I should tell you about the clothing in those days. People wore sweaters and shirts, but the pants were something else again. They were the sort of thing that the men wore overseas in the First World War. They were khaki pants and they laced at the knees. Julie had some tailored so they buttoned at the knees. We wore wool socks that came up to the knees and boots or tennis shoes or some kind of gear like that. (pg 5)

Early High Trips / Environmental elitism

On the cook that attended the High Trips: "They paid him five hundred dollars to come on this trip, and they furnished him with a horse. He was not a cook, he was a chef -- a French chef. The first thing they did when they got into a camp was to build him a kind of platform out of rocks. (pg 5)

Early High Trips / Environmental elitism

They took along a baker, and he would walk from camp to camp carrying yeast in a bag. When they got to camp then they would set it all up, let it rise, and they made all the bread and biscuits. (pg 6)

Early High Trips

The food was fabulous. It really was. Dan would make French pastries and I would help him. He would make a marvelous pastry and he would line muffin tins with the dough... For breakfast we had homemade hot cornbread with butter on it, bacon, beans that we'd soaked and cooked, and dried fruit which had been cooked overnight. In the days that we stayed in camp, we had hotcakes. (pg 10-11)

Early High Trips / Environmental elitism / Leadership, labor and gender

Dr. Jane was one of the first women doctors on the trip. We always had a doctor with us. (pg 19)

Early High Trips

It really is the most beautiful pass in the mountains because it is a gradual climb up, but when you get on the other side, it is almost straight down. It just zig-zagged all the way down. When we got down to the other side, we got great big cheers from a group of people who were waiting for us to break the pass open so they could get across. I have since been up Forester a couple of times. When I have been up that area I have walked up there and skinny dipped in one of those lakes with the snow in it -- just right in and out. It was something. That pass is one of my favorite places in the mountains. (pg 31)

Michele Perrault

Michele Perrault, "Michele Perrault: Sierra Club President 1984-1986 and 1993-1994, Environmental Educator, and Nature Protector" conducted by Roger Eardley-Pryor in 2018, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2019.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Legislative process / Intersectionality / Environmental elitism

Abstract

Michele Perrault twice served as national President of the Board of Directors for the Sierra Club from 1984-1986, and from 1993-1994. Perrault was born in the Bronx, New York on May 8, 1941, and received her B.A. from Hunter College. She worked in New York as an environmental educator with the Wildlife Conservation Society at the Bronx Zoo and as a middle school science teacher. Beginning in the late 1960s, Perrault volunteered with the Sierra Club for many decades at every level, including as chair of various local, regional, and national committees; election to the Club's national Board of Directors for nearly twenty years; and as the International Vice President of the Sierra Club. Perrault also served as a board member of Earth Team, Green Seal, and Greenbelt Alliance. Her lifetime of environmental activism includes three U.S. Citizen Advisory Commissions under three different U.S. Presidents, as well as appointment by the U.S. Department of State as a delegate to several Arctic Treaty Consultative Meetings in locations around the world.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:*Outdoor empowerment*

I was always very happy as a child. I could roam freely. I could ride my bike up and down all the hills and the flats. My parents could leave me outside on the stoop as a young child, four and five, and not worry about being abducted, and all those things. (pg 2)

Outdoor empowerment

We were not a privileged family. My father was a fireman. He later became a lieutenant and a captain. Neither of my parents went on to college, due just to the circumstances of the time. But my mother was a librarian. And so all of those experiences were part of my upbringing and made me feel privileged in a different way. (pg 3)

Outdoor empowerment

Although the upbringing was important because we talked about God's world, and I associated it with nature. And I liked the hymns that talked about nature and God's world. I also liked the aspect of doing unto others as you would have them do unto you kind of thing. So I was always very people orientated and cared about people. (pg 8)

Outdoor empowerment / Intersectionality

I always felt strongly about the outdoor education program, and that, of course, was part and parcel of a major thread that ran through my life, on trying to encourage environmental education in a broad way for all schools. And at the time, people needed to be encouraged to think about environmental education or outdoor education. In some cases they were separate issues, but they were really one and the same. Some people who would do outdoor education didn't really think of environmental education as opposed to the issues of pollution, the broader things—clean air, clean water. (pg 9)

Pioneering activism

Well, they were all men, in the forestry school. It was on the Syracuse campus, but it was the New York State College of Forestry. So they found another woman, Stephanie, and we roomed together. (pg 15)

Leadership, labor and gender

I know in the first year that I was there they showed three women on the staircase. I don't know who the third woman was—they must have found her after they found us. But I also looked at all of the teachers, and there was one woman. All of the other professors in the forestry school were men. (pg 16)

Intersectionality / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

Eventually, I realized that I wasn't reaching the whole child. I was not getting at the children with a one-shot deal in a big auditorium full of kids, that I really wanted to influence them much more to care about the environment. (pg 21)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

Well, I would have stayed longer in the zoo. But when I went to get a raise, the director said to me that I was "biologically viable."... he meant that I was going to get pregnant, and why should he give me a raise? There was no #MeToo then, no #MeToo generation people. (pg 23)

Leadership, labor and gender

They love animals. So David Sive said, "Well, you know"—and we were also were trying to save the land so the school could have it. And so we actually ended up doing some video with the owner of the land, to try to see if we could—they let us use it for the animal Club, but in the end we didn't get it for the school. But I remember the activism aspect of trying to save that piece of land for the school. So David Sive said, "You know, you're really good. You really should join the Sierra Club." I said, "What is that?" And so he brought me in to the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club in New York, and made me the education chair for the Atlantic Chapter. And I remember the very first thing I did. There was a woman named Nancy Matthews, and she had me stuffing envelopes. (pg 26)

Pioneering activism / Intersectionality

We ran thirteen years of workshops for teachers—I did, I was the teacher there. But [Joan and Hy Rosner] they were my mentors for doing these programs for teachers. And they had dancing, they had cultural programs, they allowed children to come, and we provided educators for the children of the teachers. And so their model I then took and put into the Sierra Club. (pg 29)

Intersectionality

I joined the League of Women Voters there, and they had a very broad sense of citizenship. It was not just the environment, but it was all of the other things that affect civic life, including politics, although they didn't get into endorsements. (pg 30)

Legislative process / Leadership, labor and gender

You have to have a belief system in what you want to cherish, what you care about. And then you have to have the stamina to keep it going, because sometimes, as it turns out, these battles can last years. (pg 33)

Intersectionality

You can't do the environment separate from the rest of what you're learning. And what are the laws, and how do they interact? How do they interface? (pg 36)

Intersectionality / Environmental elitism

So they were going to hire me to direct the program. And then I was notified by this same professor—would I mind if this woman who was of a racial background, would I let her be the director? Because they were trying to bring diversity into the programs. And I said, "Okay." [laughter] And so—her name was Ossie, I forget what her last name was. I have pictures of her in my albums of teaching together. We got along fine. And it was fine with me. I just believed that that was an important thing, to increase the ability of people of color to move up in professions. (pg 40)

Intersectionality / Environmental elitism / Leadership, labor and gender

...the whole issue of opportunities for people of color was a big thing for me. The [Sierra] Club didn't have enough people of color. So the first two people [of color] that ever became directors the Club were because I brought them in. They were people of color. ... And so it always made me smile when people started talking about, "Oh, we have to enrich the Club with people of color." Well, you know, you bring people in! (pg 40-41)

Leadership, labor and gender

And then of course I ran a very big program eventually, where they hired me to do workshops around the whole state on growth issues. And so I was paid a salary to run them, in conjunction with the community colleges, under a grant from [Massachusetts Foundation for] Humanities and Public Policy, in Massachusetts. (pg 43)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

It's just—you have to come from a place [where] you care, and you have to feel immersed in it, and the caring drives you. (pg 46)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

And if I had to take [my children] to meetings, making sure they had things they could do, being aware of what was important for them—not just being bored at some kind of meeting. (pg 47)

Outdoor empowerment

And I discovered caddisflies, which build homes out of rocks and stones or twigs, depending on what kind of caddisfly they are. They were in the stream there, and I collected them in a little jar and took them back. And that had a big impression on me, because I ended up being the stream teacher for the programs at the Watson Ecology

Workshops and the Clair Tappaan Lodge workshops they eventually created in California. (pg 53)

Intersectionality

What was important about that—and again, what was important about the workshop philosophy—was that you didn't just do environmental, but you combined the social aspects of how living was more than just the environment. It was—what did you do for a profession? What was the school situation around you? Who were the makers of policy in the community? Who cared about transportation issues? Who cared about whether people had livelihoods? It was the whole rounded—what we then later began to call more a sustainable livelihood. And they didn't use the word sustainable, but that was really what they were doing. (pg 58)

Outdoor empowerment

People don't always think about that; they just think we have to do math, we have to do reading, we have to do—and they don't necessarily think about well, how do you bring the environment into it? Because kids love field trips. They love going out in the environment, and people are often surprised—I remember just many times people, when you show them what you could do by taking kids out—oh, they got so excited! (pg 64)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

On trying to hide her pregnancy at the Watson Ecology Workshops: Right, and I tried to kind of hide it, because I didn't want people to think of me as any different than anybody else. (pg 70)

Leadership, labor and gender

So with another guy, Bill Noble, I created the California Environmental Network, modeled on Nancy Anderson's New England Environmental Network. And we ran workshops down in Southern California and Northern California. We created the California Environmental Network. (pg 78)

Leadership, labor and gender

I became chairman of the national Education Committee for the Sierra Club as my first big position nationally. (pg 79)

Pioneering activism

But I loved creating solutions to problems. I would read about these projects, and I would say, "Well, it makes common sense to do this," or "Why is that law so isolated that you can't do this particular solution?" And so I loved finding solutions to things. (pg 79)

Pioneering activism

Just finding people when I would visit around and see what interested them, and how do you hook them in? How do you make your own organization more powerful by finding these people who can do these things? And how do you make a place for them to come in, because a lot of people don't know how to, sometimes, penetrate an organization. (pg 81)

Legislative process

Right. And so we had to read—you had to learn how to read them, you had to look for the holes in them. You had to find what questions should you ask? What's missing? So we became very good at reading impact statements. (pg 92)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

But you can imagine, here I am, I'm still pretty young, and I'm running a program with [a daughter]... and I broke my neck during the process... But I finished the program. And it was a wonderful experience because it put me into a position where I had to do a lot of management, which—I needed a little help. (pg 94-95)

Intersectionality / Legislative process

So the people had to be from the community, to talk about these matters, so that they, in the end, had a better understanding and knowledge, and they could make decisions at the community level. (pg 97)

Leadership, labor and gender

President Carter, through his National [Oceanic] and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, said, "Well, it would be helpful to have a citizen advisory to help us implement the Coastal Zone Management Program." And because I had done work in that very area, I was recommended to be on that along with Barbara Fagen from Cape Cod, from the League of Women Voters. (pg 101)

Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender / Legislative process

So that was our Bay Area Alliance. And of course, we had no staff for a while, and we kind of—five of us—kind of ran the thing. But talk about solutions! One of the simple things that hadn't happened was the five regional agencies that run the Bay Area had never met together. So we did dinners to get them together to talk! And we ran many, many symposia that invited people from all over the Bay Area, and they were well attended. (pg 107)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

And so my mother became conservation commissioner in the town. She didn't think she'd—"Well, how can I do that? I haven't been to college, how am I going to—?" "Mom, you're smart. You know you can do it." So she did it for almost ten years—even more, yeah. (pg 108)

Leadership, labor and gender

And so I became the chair of the West Coast coalition [on oil drilling] right away, and I was able to explain to them some of the things that we had done in the East Coast with our coalition, and how we had gotten all the various people together. (pg 113)

Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender

Perrault's methods in building environmental coalitions: Oh, just find out who are the leaders, who is responsible, who are the potential lawyers, who do you need to win the battle? How do you reach out, who has got the capabilities to do some of the press outreach? Who can be good speakers? What needs to be done? When are the times to testify? Who wants to testify? (pg 116)

Legislative process

I had to fight lots of bureaucratic Club stuff, like trying to get my workshop announced in the magazine, because, you know, we didn't have any funds. (pg 125)

Outdoor empowerment / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

No, I didn't really need an incentive to get involved. [laughing] No, it just— that was my purpose in life. The two major things was protecting as much of the beauty of nature that was in jeopardy, the coast being one of them; and the other was the environmental

education aspect, which then later grew into a broader concern about teaching for sustainable development as well. (pg 125)

Legislative process / Leadership, labor and gender

I learned a lot by sitting on that, and eventually I used that knowledge to help the Club force a biotechnology task force. [laughing] And by that point, I had known who some of the key people were that could advise the Club, because I had been reading so much about biotechnology in general that I became pretty much aware of it all. (pg 130)

Outdoor empowerment / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

On taking her children on horseback backcountry trips: Oh yeah, I carried him wearing that. And then I remember when he was two—two or three—he was on the pommel, and it kept hurting him, because he's sitting with me and he's bumping on the pommel. I had to put some diapers in front of the pommel, so he didn't get hurt while he's sitting there and we're on the burro. (pg 144)

Leadership, labor and gender

...I was the second woman president at all. Yeah, and then after that, many women became president. (pg 153)

Intersectionality / Environmental elitism

Well, promoters of—gay and lesbian members wanted to be able to have a hiking—they wanted to have a group for outings that would be called a gay and lesbian group. And so they started in the Bay Chapter, and that became a controversial issue within the Club, including my concerns as well about why would they want to isolate themselves and have something based on sexual preference as a hiking thing? ... Because we had our cause, which was environmental protection, and we were an environmental organization. We weren't one on human rights, to go that route. I didn't want to join our cause with your cause... (pg 159-160)

Wilma Poland

Roscoe and Wilma Poland, "Desert Conservation: Voices from the Sierra Club's San Diego Chapter" an oral history conducted in 1980 by Paul Clark in *Southern Sierrans, Volume III*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1980.

Thematic Tags: Proximity to male Club members / Early High Trips

Abstract

Wilma Poland, and her husband Roscoe, were active members of the Sierra Club's San Diego chapter in the 1950s and 1960s who played notable roles in the chapter's preservation of southern California wilderness. The Polands joined the Club in 1948, four years after the formation of this southern California chapter. Their oral history features them interviewed together, with the primary focus on Mr. Poland's service and accomplishments and Mrs. Poland supplementing with historical memories, including recollections of the High Trips the couple attended. Their work in the Club included efforts to eliminate inholdings in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park as well as their successful fight to prevent the channelization of Topock Gorge and other sections of the lower Colorado River. Their oral history reveals how their successes came from their sensitivity to nature, personal knowledge of areas to be saved, and persistence.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Early High Trips

On their first Sierra Club High Trip in 1952: "We had been bothered, too about the disposal of the trash. All of the garbage at that time was deposited in a hole and buried. This was what you did then when you went into the wilderness. The books you had instructed you to bury your garbage and your trash, even your tin cans. They were burned first and then buried. (pg 8)

Proximity to male Club members

One of my pet peeves was that many of the board members would not go to the desert even then, and we still are having problems convincing board members that the desert is a very important part of our ecology, the picture of our whole environment. (pg 13)

Ruth Praeger

Ruth E. Praeger, "Remembering the High Trips" an oral history conducted in 1976 by Ruth Sumner in *Sierra Club Women I and II*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1976.

Thematic Tags: Early High Trips / Proximity to male Club members / Outdoor empowerment / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

Abstract

Ruth E. Prager was an active participant in the Sierra Club outings program since joining the Club in 1921. Born in 1899 and raised in the Bay Area, Prager felt a calling to explore the natural world. Professionally, Prager was a social worker at the Presbyterian Orphanage for 19 years and, shortly after World War II, she served in the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in Europe. She became involved with the Club as a young woman while working as a waitress at the lodge in Yosemite. She recalls the classic High Trips of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the Club's early international outings in the 1950s and 1960s. In this interview, Prager notes how the outings program helped develop a committed and knowledgeable cohort of Sierra Club members, which became an important source of strength for the Club. Prager's interview also highlights how Sierra Club High Trips challenged traditional gender roles with women who were quiet leaders and avid hikers who took up just as much space in the Club as men.

Selection of quotations and thematic tags:

Early High Trips / Proximity to male Club members

When asked about women attending High Trips: "Oh yes. There were always more women than men... Camp was very different than from what it is now. The sexes didn't mix as they do now. (pg 8)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

I think there was a "morals committee" that watched out after the girls to see that we all behaved properly and were chaperoned. (pg 9)

Early High Trips

They used to make wonderful big campfires but now.... There just wouldn't be enough wood now, with so many on the trails. (pg 15)

Outdoor empowerment

Conservation of course is the big thing. We all have to preach it and practice it and write all the letters the Club asks us to when we have the time and the energy. I feel badly every time I go to Marin and see more roads and houses and less land and fewer flowers, but there really is still a lot of very beautiful land in and around California that you can see and can enjoy if you just make the effort to go out and hike. (pg 21)

Sally Reid

Sally Reid, "Serving the Angeles Chapter and the National Sierra Club, 1960s-1990s: Focus on Wilderness Issues in California and Alaska" an oral history conducted in 1993 by Judy Anderson in *Sierra Club Nationwide Volume IV*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1996.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Intersectionality / Legislative process / Proximity to male Club members

Abstract

Sally Reid was a Sierra Club activist who served as chair of the Angeles chapter from 1981 to 1982, and as an elected member to the Sierra Club board of directors from 1984 to 1990. She was born in New York City in 1919 and raised in Beverly Hills, California where access to the southern Sierra Mountain range bred a love of exploring the outdoors. Reid joined the Sierra Club in 1964 for hikes and outings, on which she met her future husband. She soon began organizing outdoor education classes for the Angeles Chapter. Her involvement developed into spearheading national campaigns, with the support and involvement of her husband, Les Reid. Sally Reid's oral history recalls her tenure on the board of directors as the Club expanded and began embracing issues including environmental justice, immigration and population, and labor. Reid also made contributions in wilderness preservation and legislation, working locally on wilderness for the Santa Monica Mountains; regionally for the California Wilderness Act in 1984, and the Los Padres Condor Range and Rivers Protection Act of 1992; and nationally for preservation of Alaskan wilderness and parks.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender

On her environmental outdoor education courses: I started the Angeles Chapter in organizing summer classes in the mountains of southern California--botany, birds, and so forth, as well as environmental issues, with assorted chapter activists doing the teaching--all paid participants received a unit in university credit. (pg 3)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

So I went back for year two, and it was obvious that they needed help with the class: they needed trips planned, they needed contacts made, they needed help with buying food, they needed help with fixing the food, and so forth. So I became the "little helper" on this. (pg 5)

Leadership, labor and gender / Intersectionality

We made some slides that we used at the end that said, "If you want to help with this, if you've enjoyed this beautiful program, write a letter to -at -" (written on a blank slide at the end). We always had papers and pencils and so forth. We probably did that once a month for several years. First a show on Mineral King and then one on the North Cascades. Those are the two that I think of right now, but there probably were others. So that's when we began to focus our outings and our fun and our pleasure with activism. (pg 7)

Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender

So I held out until they got desperate for somebody to work on environmental education. That was the first issue that I got involved with in the Club. That must have been in the early seventies. I can't do anything without getting quite involved in it. So I got very involved in that, and I began realizing how much we needed that environmental education for teachers. So I put together a whole series of workshops for teachers. That was the first time that was done in California. (pg 7)

Pioneering activism / Legislative process

On her collaboration with the forest service: I sent each of them a letter and said, "I've been asked to be the chair of a forestry committee, (or a wilderness committee or whatever we decided we were called), and I would like to meet all of you so that we can compare notes on the various forests, so when we operate in these different forests that we're working in, we can present a united front of some kind. (pg 10)

Proximity to male Club members

On supporting Dave Bower: But we took sides in that particular position. That was sort of Les's thing. I was kind of playing hostess and not involved with the issue on a substantive level at all. (pg 13)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Intersectionality

To be working for wildlands and trying to keep straight which I was doing when and how that all worked out together is hard for me. I was also teaching school [retired 1981]. So all that, up until '81. I don't really know how I worked all this out together because I was also raising four children, sending one off to the Vietnam War; things like that were all interwoven too. All this history. The son who went to Vietnam was very seriously burned and required a lot of help on my part. (pg 16)

Outdoor empowerment / Legislative process

My wilderness activism consisted of spending a great deal of time in the wildernesses and doing a certain amount of reporting or writing about them in the *Southern Sierran*, and going to absolutely innumerable meetings. (pg 19)

Leadership, labor and gender / Outdoor empowerment

On testifying to save parts of Alaska: Some of the people who were saying nobody but big strong men could go there. I'm very short, not a very big person, and so everybody was laughing in the audience. We had a lunch break or some kind of intermission, a couple of these oil men in their fancy suits--the place was full of men in business suits--were talking behind me and they said, "You're the little lady that backpacked in Alaska?" and I said, "Yes, I am," and they were laughing and teasing me and so forth. But that was kind of fun. I was proud, very proud I must say, to have been able to make some kind of impression on people so that people had really heard. (pg 21)

Leadership, labor and gender / Legislative process

[My husband and I] were both eligible to run and we were both asked to run. Les decided two things: One, that his hearing was getting bad enough that he probably didn't want to be on the board anymore and two, that it was my turn. So, that's the way we worked that out. (pg 23)

Legislative process

It seemed to me that the Club wasn't very well organized. Organization and procedure was something that I always thought was important in trying to run any kind of an organization. Both in classrooms and situations that were outside of school. (pg 23)

Intersectionality

That area has had a number of temporary names and we finally resolved it with the help of the Chumash Indians and it's now called the Chumash Wilderness. But that was something that we had done a lot of writing on over a period of years. (pg 30)

Leadership, labor and gender / Pioneering activism / Legislative process

On designating Los Padres National Forest as wilderness: I began to talk to Les about it and I began thinking that we ought to be able to do something with the condors. We ought to be able to get those condors free again, for one thing. And for another thing, we

ought to save their habitat, and we ought to name the legislation after them. So I began kind of thinking out loud, talking to myself. I began saying, "Condors, what do they do? They fly all over the place. Major distances. That's a range. They have a range, a huge range." I still was talking to myself. Condors range, that's what they do. So that became a phrase in my mind. Condors range.... They actually hung on to those phrases that we dreamed up together, Les and I, in our living room one night. (pg 35)

Intersectionality / Legislative process

Anyway, I made a presentation to them one night, out near Santa Barbara, and one man was really negative about it. He said, "How do we know we can trust you. You say you are trying to make this into a wilderness to help save it. How do we know what that means and whether we can trust you." I said, "Well, you don't really know whether you can trust me at all, except that Mike trusts me. He's the one that led me to you. I'm telling you, pretty straight, that I would like to name this area after your people. Because I think that it is your people's area and it should be named after you. The truth is that I haven't got the slightest idea what Congress will do because I don't speak for them. All I can do is go back to Washington and say the Chumash Indians want this area named after them. (pg 36)

Outdoor empowerment / Legislative process

We had a lot of tremendous opposition. I guess one of my happiest memories is a real tall motorcycle rider leaning over me and saying, "Sally Reid, we're going to keep that trail open, you just wait and see. That trail will not be closed." That's one of the biggest victories, is that trail, Johnston Ridge Trail, which went right down the center of the Sespe area, now is closed. And it will never be opened again. Not only is it a victory for the Sespe area, because it intruded so directly into the heart of the Sespe area, but it was also a personal victory to me because that S.O.B. who said that to me just didn't get what he thought he was going to get. I've never said a word to him since. (pg 39-40)

Marlene Sarnat

Marlene Sarnat, "San Francisco Bay Chapter Inner City Outings: Laying the Foundation for the ICO" an oral history conducted in 1980 by Karen Kenney in *Sierra Club and the Urban Environment, Volume I: San Francisco Bay Chapter Inner City Outings and Sierra Club Outreach to Women*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1980.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Pioneering activism / Intersectionality / Leadership, labor and gender

Abstract

Marlene Sarnat was one of the founders and first directors of the Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter's Inner City Outings program. Additionally, she served on the Bay Chapter and Loma Prieta Chapter executive committees and the national Outings Committee, as the Loma Prieta Chapter representative to the Sierra Club Council, and as legislative delegate for the Northern California Regional Conservation Committee. Born in the Bay Area in 1939, Sarnat got involved with the Sierra Club through her love of hiking and attended some of the later High Trips. Sarnat's interview discusses the details of the early Inner City Outings, the process of the Sierra Club adopting it as an official program, and the importance of granting equal access to the outdoors.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Outdoor empowerment / Intersectionality

Discussing the beginning of the Inner City Outings Program: The program had some very beautiful aspects. We watched kids from Chinatown who had been going out on Police Athletic activities, where, according to their stories, they had wound up scrambling for food, and who would come on our trips with little packages of food clustered away in their backpacks. After they had been out with us a couple of times, and we'd put all our food in a central area for the meals, we discovered that, one by one, these little packages of cookies, or candy, or something special, would start arriving for all to share. It was really very beautiful. There was a very nice opening up. (pg 3)

Pioneering activism

In response to "so then your organization was the first Inner City Outings?": As an official Sierra Club outing that I'm aware of, yes, and as one that was used as a model to carry across the country. (pg 4)

Intersectionality

At that point, Patrick Colgan, and Peter Perkins, and other people came into it and were interested in working with other groups. They got into Mas Vida, a Mexican-American group, and Peter started to work with a group of Indians. (pg 5)

Pioneering activism / Intersectionality

Quite often the community would have money, and they wanted to take the kids on outings, but they didn't know how to do it, So they would come to us and ask if we bought our equipment and perhaps provide transportation, they would supply their food. (pg 5)

Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender

Well, I initiated parts of the program, and just turned over the reins with time. At the time that the Sierra Club Council was considering making it an official program, one of my friends, Becky Evans, was at the council meeting. I was a council delegate at that time, and as we walked out the door she said, "I guess you are feeling like a grandmother right now." And it was really very appropriate because I didn't feel like a proud parent, but a grandparent was a really good description. (pg 6)

Outdoor empowerment / Intersectionality

I thought it was important to get more people to have the opportunity in the wilderness where they could perhaps experience the pleasures that I had experienced, and perhaps it would affect their lives in a positive manner. I also felt that many Sierra Clubbers led an isolated existence and were not aware of the problems and the concerns that were going on in the inner city, and I felt that this would be a dual learning experience. (pg 7)

Outdoor empowerment / Intersectionality

I pretty much decided that if one kids' life was affected by what we were doing in a positive way, the program was worthwhile. I think that when you look at the other side of the cultural exchange you have to sit there and smile. (pg 8)

Intersectionality / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

I guess what I'm attempting to say is that the values were the values of protection of the wilderness, but the kid wasn't jumped upon, it was done in a sensitive way, and the example was found later to bring it home to the kids rather than, you know, putting in a whole bunch of constraints, saying you can't do this, and you can't do that. (pg 9)

Intersectionality

We were aware of the fact that quite often families did not have money for insurance. Since the Club's insurance which we all used only covered the leaders, it was decided that the kids should have their own insurance. (pg 14)

Anne Van Tyne

Anne Van Tyne, "Sierra Club Stalwart: Conservationist, Hiker, Chapter and Council Leader" an oral history conducted in 1980 by Richard Searle in *Sierra Club Nationwide Volume I*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1981.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender / Legislative process / Environmental elitism / Proximity to male Club members

Abstract

Anne Van Tyne was an active Sierra Club member in her Los Padres chapter and nationally, including as chapter delegate to the national Sierra Club Council, as a member of the council internal organizations committee and the Club membership committee. Van Tyne was born in Chicago in 1904 and lived there until attending college in Southern California, where she first experienced hiking and consistent access to the outdoors. She joined the Sierra Club until 1962, and quickly became involved in the Los Padres chapter's leadership as an editor for the *Condor Call*. She played a critical role in organizing Club leadership development and centralized the Club's national involvement through the creation of the Sierra Club Council. Van Tyne's activism centered around accountability to corporate and government entities, and she remained a backbone of historical knowledge for her chapter and the general Sierra Club's involvement in recurring issues. Van Tyne's oral history details various aspects of Club history from the 1960s, 70s and 80s, including the formation of the Internal Organization Committee, the role of the Sierra Club Council in its formation, tough leadership decisions on the logistics of Sierra Club expansion, and the relocation of the Nipomo Dunes power plant.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Outdoor empowerment

And my mother was very much a city person. She came from Baltimore. My father was a printer. And apparently the printer's ink did rub off on me because I seem to get into things involving editing and writing and that kind of thing. (pg 2)

Outdoor empowerment

I should say that even though my mother was very city, and my father never wanted to have anything to do with the outdoors again, I would have given my eye teeth to have been able to go camping and things like that. (pg 2)

Outdoor empowerment

I came out to LA from 1931 to 1942 and I finally went hiking. (pg 2)

Environmental elitism

Well when we moved from Phoenix to LA, I didn't know anybody, because all the people I'd known I'd lost touch with, so we went to two or three or four meetings at Clifton's Cafeteria, meetings of the Sierra Club, figuring it was a way to get to know people... but [the people on the hike we attended] weren't very friendly (pg 4)

Leadership, labor and gender

The first thing I did in the chapter was about six months after I joined, when I volunteered for the staff of the *Condor Call* [Los Padres Chapter Newsletter]... in January of 1963 I got appointed to the chapter outing committee, in spite of the fact that I didn't know much. (pg 7)

Leadership, labor and gender

Then, also, in April of 1963, I became editor of the *Condor Call*. (pg 7)

Leadership, labor and gender

One of the things I remember most, it impressed me terrifically. Here I was, and I didn't know anybody, and the chairman of the Bay Chapter, Margot Gwnn, I'd never forgotten her name, kind of took me under her wing and saw to it that I had somebody to sit with the bank would introduce me to a couple of people at lunch, including Cicely, with whom, incidentally, I stayed that first time because I needed hospitality. (pg 8)

Leadership, labor and gender

All I can say is that there couldn't have been a better person, a mentor than Cicely. (pg 9)

Leadership, labor and gender

Yes, I pretty much had a free hand. I went to the executive committee meetings to get some idea of what direction the chapter was taking, so the *Condor Call* would reflect that, and the chapter activities. But I don't think anybody ever said you ought to print this you ought to print that. (pg 10)

Leadership, labor and gender

The base camp trip in 1965 was thanks to Kathy, who seemed to feel that I was a promising new member and should be encouraged and so she persuaded the chapter executive committee to recommend me for a Morley scholarship. I chose to go to base camp. (pg 11)

Leadership, labor and gender

I wasn't Chairman, I was on the committee for 10 years. I finally got off because I said 10 years is more than long enough. I led a lot of trips, a lot, a lot of day hikes and backpacking trips, and I led three one-week trips in the summer for the chapter in the Sierra. (pg 12)

Leadership, labor and gender / Legislative process

As I said I was editor of the *Condor Call* until 1968. And at that time, I'd been on the chapter executive committee the year before, but in 1968 I became chairman and gave up the editorship, and I've been on the chapter executive committee twice since then. I was secretary in 1974 and vice chairman in 1975. I was always doing something. For instance, the Chapter Council was formed in 1964, and frankly, it was my idea. I felt that would help pull the groups in the chapter together. (pg 13)

Legislative process

On the chapter council's function within the Sierra Club chapter: Well, in a sense, to fill in the gaps, to do some of the things the chapter executive committee isn't going to be able to do because it has the responsibility of running the day to day activity. The council could take a look in depth at things like outings, like conservation education, like membership, and that kind of thing. And that is what the council has done... the council has never had final responsibility. They've only been able to make recommendations to the chapter of the executive committee. But the council did take on a number of projects. (pg 13)

Pioneering activism / Leadership, labor and gender

For the next five years we had a training course every year which I taught. Most of the time I had somebody as an assistant.... After that first year we made it a whole weekend. We stopped doing it on a lecture basis, and we had smaller numbers of people then, and we could do it more like a classroom discussion, that kind of thing. And we even got to the point where we asked people to do a little preparation beforehand to come in with the plans for a trip, either a day hike or an overnight trip. (pg 14)

Leadership, labor and gender

We would discuss at the end of the field trip how people felt about it and so on and what they learned, and there was a good deal of enthusiasm for the practice. After all, if you felt that they were making life difficult for you, you had a turn at doing it to somebody else. (pg 14)

Leadership, labor and gender / Legislative process

On the National Sierra Club Council, how it fostered discussion with chapters across the country: This is where you learn so much from people from other parts of the country, you find that sometimes they've had the same problems you've had and sometimes they've even found solutions to them that you can use. And that's encouraging to, to find you're not alone in some of the messes you've had. (pg 21)

Environmental elitism

There was a feeling that the outings committee was a very close little click, and that unless you were a part of that group, no way were you ever going to be leading a national outing. (pg 22)

Legislative process

The council began to gain influence, it began to get more response from the board and more respect from the board, and the formation of the Internal Organizations Committee [IOC], and the IOC's recommendation, had a good deal to do with this, too. Because that committee went on for-- well, it went on almost too long, but it's first years, we really did a lot of work. (pg 26)

Legislative process

There are a lot of real achievements over the years that the council doesn't always get credit for, The I&E conferences for one thing. The Wilderness Study Committee under Francis Walcott where the Club wasn't doing anything on this, and it was the council who established the Wilderness Study Committee, and got things moving, got a lot of people out in the field doing studies of prospective wilderness. Finally achieve recognition from the board and it's being made a board committee. (pg 28)

Leadership, labor and gender

They had all kinds of difficulties in the chapter executive committee that year. That was the year I was Chairman, I look back at that year and think what a lousy job I did. I didn't think so at the time but I do now. (pg 31)

Legislative process

Discussing the 1968 conflict with the Santa Lucia group, who tried to impeach Van Tyne when she met with a Forest Service supervisor in the middle of a conservation conflict: Yes, we were consorting with the enemy. We did not in any way commit ourselves one whit to Bill, we simply looked at it. That was all. But this was treason, high treason. (pg 32)

Environmental elitism / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

And I remember, I was kind of a hang-on in this, and not really considered part of the inner circle, and I knew that, but I still tagged along. And I remember suggesting at one point the desirability of open discussion on principles. Not on personalities, and that rather than this underground rumbling, let's bring it out in the open, but on the basis of principles involved. Well, I didn't get anywhere because I didn't have any clout. (pg 37)

Legislative process

On her work to shut down a proposed phosphate mine in Los Padres National Forest: So we started right in with a bang getting information, getting it out information also stirring people up pushing for a local hearing, which we got in July of 1971, and it turned into a two day hearing. Our committee worked very closely with Pat Weinberger down in Ojai, who did a marvelous job of mobilizing community support in opposition with the mine in the Ojai area. She and I worked very closely on this. (pg 49)

Diane Walker

Diane Walker, "The Sierra Club in New Jersey: Focus on Toxic Waste Management" an oral history conducted in 1983 by Claire Baruxis in *Sierra Club Nationwide Volume III*, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1989.

Thematic Tags: Outdoor empowerment / Pioneering activism / Intersectionality / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender / Proximity to male Club members Legislative process / Environmental elitism

Abstract

Diane Walker was the first conservation chairperson of the Atlantic Chapter's Southern New Jersey group and a founder of the Sierra Club's New Jersey Chapter. Walker was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1931, and raised by her grandparents in the Bel-Air community named after her grandfather, Alphonzo E. Bell. She attended college in New York and New Jersey in the 1950s, and she described her environmental activism as sparked during the *Silent Spring* era of the 1960s. Through her involvement with other civil rights issues of the time, Walker joined the Sierra Club to help catalyze and organize its work on toxins. Walker led numerous environmental campaigns in New Jersey, served on statewide commissions, testified at state and congressional hearings, and, through her volunteer work in the Sierra Club chapter office, taught many others to become citizen-activists for environmental protection. Walker's oral history discusses her work in wetland protection, the Pine Barrens, solid waste management, energy, air pollution, and nuclear policy, but it focuses on her involvement in toxic and hazardous waste management issues.

Selected quotations and thematic tags:

Outdoor empowerment

I was aware of my surroundings. I didn't think of it as my environment, or not being polluted. Nobody heard the word polluted or pollution back then. (pg 1)

Intersectionality

Then jumping a few years--and we will then go back, I think-- I did become interested in environmental issues and what was going on. I took courses. There were short courses given at Rutgers at some point back then--I guess in the early seventies--on solid waste management and water pollution control and various issues. They were short courses, three-day courses, and things like that. I also audited the course in ecology at Princeton. (pg 2)

Pioneering activism

I also, in '62, read Silent Spring. That was really a main trigger. I read that in the New Yorker and was profoundly moved by it and motivated by it, too, I suppose. And then seeing all the discussion on television and in the newspapers about that, and people lambasting Rachel Carson, and that guy from Rutgers, particularly, Robert White Stevens. I remember him. And I thought he was evil incarnate somehow, with his attitude and his expressions, these sort of nasty expressions about Rachel Carson. (pg 4)

Intersectionality

Very soon after moving to Princeton in the late fifties or early sixties, I guess, I got involved in the civil rights movement and actually became a volunteer certain times of the week, down in an office in Princeton, a civil rights thing. And I went on those marches and all. (pg 4)

Intersectionality

It's funny, you get interested in one environmental issue, and then you begin to read the papers, and other things jump out at you, too. (pg 6)

Legislative process

I began to write fairly often, I suppose, about different things. On the sewage outfalls, they said that, oh, they were going to add a lot more chlorine to the outfalls, or something. Then I asked the question, "How good is chlorine for the fish?" They wrote back and said, "Oh, it's no problem at all." I didn't really believe it, but I didn't know enough to know how to pursue that particular question. (pg 6)

Proximity to male Club members

I think [Dave Brower] may have somewhat run roughshod over the Club ideas or thoughts on those kinds of things. But I think he was very healthy for the Club at that time. He sort of forced them more into taking an out front, strong, forceful position on issues. (pg 10)

Leadership, labor and gender

We all introduced ourselves to each other. When I introduced myself, somebody said, "Oh, you had a letter to the editor about the Grand Canyon dams and the SST. Will you be the conservation chair?" (pg 11)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

I was raised by my grandparents. It was a very happy childhood for me, despite that, although there is a time when I don't remember anything. But my grandmother would say--I can remember when growing up: My dear, young ladies keep their knees together and wear white gloves and are not controversial. There were times at the dinner table or whatever, I would raise a question or say something or other and I would get this, "Don't be so controversial, my dear." (pg 11).

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Leadership, labor and gender

So I had a typical, I suppose, at that time, upbringing, as far as male/female attitudes, fairly Victorian in some respects, I guess. So, to overcome that and to get involved in public controversy and to speak in public, even, that was hard; I don't know that it was harder for me than it would be for young women today, particularly. It's always nerve-racking. But anyway, so I had that to overcome. (pg 12)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Intersectionality

In response to the question, Was being a woman an issue?: It was part of it. It was one of the things that was just sort of appalling. Fortunately, I'd had some experience with that in my civil rights work, in handling men making passes type things. In the legislature, they literally would chuck you under the chin. (pg 13)

Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity / Intersectionality

In response to the question, Has [inappropriate male politician behavior] changed?: Yes. They don't do that. They're not as obvious about that any more. I don't know that it's actually changed. And it's in part because I probably don't look as vulnerable now as I did then, either, and I'm older now, too. (pg 13)

Leadership, labor and gender

[The Sierra Club] was very supportive and encouraging. That was needed, for me to feel like I should do and could do. (pg 13)

Leadership, labor and gender / Intersectionality

All three of those guys were very helpful to me, very encouraging. They might offer some suggestions on how I might change the testimony. or "Don't forget to say this," or whatever. They were all very supportive and very encouraging. (pg 17)

Legislative process / Pioneering activism / Environmental elitism

That's a fair question, but I think it's the sort of thing where we wouldn't put ourselves in the position of saying, "You should build over here instead of over there." Our role, as we see it, if there is a particularly environmentally sensitive area, wetlands or a floodplain or a dunes, is to say, "You shouldn't build there." For, you know, all the environmental reasons. And it's up to somebody else to say, "Okay, don't build there. (pg 20). Part of the strategy was to make it a national issue, or point out that it is a national resource, and bring in the national groups. (pg 26)

Legislative process

So long as the state's involvement in issues is compatible with the Club's national policies, if there is a national policy. The national policies range from sort of broad things, "we're in support of clean air" kind of things, down to very specific details on particular things. So long as we sort of fall within the general policies, we can do as we see fit. (pg 26)

Intersectionality

Very soon, I didn't mess with it very much at all, because she clearly was on her own and trustable and all the rest of it. So Hope became the Tocks Island dam lady. Hope went to all the Save-the-Delaware Coalition meetings. I can remember, we would talk about what went on at all of the meetings. I think it very much was a cooperative thing on everybody's part, a common interest. (pg 32)

Intersectionality

Discussing the League of Women Voters' involvement in the Tocks Island dam issue:
That's right. That's still one of the league's concerns. There's a league person who I work with on occasion in Sierra. (pg 32)

Pioneering activism / Intersectionality

I'm not sure of the timing on all this, but at some point, either late sixties or early seventies, some of us were concerned about the lack of recycling in Princeton. We set up an organization at that time called the Conservation Coalition, which included me as Sierra Club and a bunch of other people from around the area. We organized and established a recycling thing. In those days it was volunteers manning a parking lot area for recycling on a Saturday morning kind of thing. We mapped out a whole program, and

our purpose was to reduce the volume of waste going to landfills for one thing, but our main purpose at that point was to be sort of a consciousness-raising thing, the fact that we were such a wasteful society in throwing everything away. (pg 38)

Pioneering activism / Legislative process

So some of us got together, we prepared a report to the legislature on solid waste in our effort to get further attention on it. I guess early on the legislature described it as a "crisis," and that was about the extent of it. The County and Municipal Study Commission did a report, and I think that came out in '73, on solid waste management. (pg 40)

Legislative process

So a group of us got together, actually I guess six of us, representing sort of the statewide or regional groups. We talked about what six issues we felt were the critical issues and agreed on what the six critical issues were, what their main points were, and what needed to be done, and where the state was failing. (pg 42)

Legislative process / Environmental elitism

On management issues in the New Jersey Environmental Protection Agency: Anyway, it showed that the problems weren't salary. I mean people always thought, "Oh well, we just have to raise salaries and everybody will be happy." That was not the case at all. It showed that there was deep resentment on the part of the technically capable staff on the way that they were handled and not told things and being left out and not understanding what was going on and so forth. Those were the kinds of things that disturbed people far more than salaries or the terrible parking situation or the way their desk was situated or any of that kind of stuff. (pg 47)

Legislative process

And this is the kind of thing that environmentalists, not only in New Jersey but elsewhere, you know, Sierra Club members who seriously want to solve problems in their state, need to be aware of. They need to know what the problems are in the regulatory agency so that they can better understand why things go wrong and why the environmental problems aren't being solved and why things fall through the cracks and so forth. (pg 48)

Pioneering activism / Women as nurturers and the cult of domesticity

I do my own little personal thing, it's second nature to me now to refuse a bag in a store. You go into a store, you buy something that's in a plastic bottle, say, and inside a box, and then they want to put it in a bag. And I sort of make a point in a friendly way and say, "No thank you, let's save paper." There's always somebody standing there, and I sort of figure it's just my little, teeny, itty-bitty plug or awareness thing to somebody that maybe they'll think the next time. (pg 54)

Intersectionality

On how she became involved with toxic substance concerns: Well, again it sort of ties together; there was my earlier work on sewers and the Clean Water Act and the Construction Grants Program and water pollution control and then the solid waste stuff. And then I understood the problems that were caused by both, by the sewer outfalls and by leachate from solid waste landfills, and I knew that what was then called industrial waste was going into the landfills. (pg 59)

Intersectionality

Oh yes. But on this it was clear we had a common interest, and the fact that I had somewhat of an entree from the union people who were part of Sam's group. (pg 61)

Leadership, labor and gender

Well, I guess I sort of spearheaded [the Toxics Coalition], if that's the right word, and got it sort of organized. Other people were in agreement but like in anything else it takes one person or a couple of people to do something and pursue it. (pg 63)

Intersectionality / Legislative process

So Skevin introduced a Cancer Control Act, and the idea had certain merit to it. It didn't address workers, and we wanted it to address workers as well. We felt that it was important that the workers be given some protection. (pg 64)

Legislative process

Here again. typical of the Sierra Club, you hammer away at something. and somebody finally comes out with a report that says sort of what you wanted to say, then you sort of snowball this whole thing and you pick out excerpts from that. The next time some hearing comes along or some occasion to publicly bring it out again, you quote from the report and you keep it going, keep that ball bouncing, as we say. And finally things do get done. (pg 66)

Intersectionality / Leadership, labor and gender / Legislative process

Oh, and sort of an interesting sidelight, or interesting to me or part of the Club--early on, the New Jersey chapter's leaders had been concerned because the national Club in its annual priority-setting had really neglected the East and all kinds of problems, and had not really dealt with pollution problems. It had more emphasized the national parks and wilderness and those kinds of things which, you know, is understandable. So a number of us, and I guess myself particularly, made a real effort to get the national Club to have at least one of their four board meetings closer to the East Coast...Then our next task was to go down there and lobby them, literally go to those meetings and push for a higher level of interest and resources put on pollution kinds of issues, including solid and hazardous waste and water pollution control and so forth. I mean, obviously they had an interest in these things, but they weren't among the ten priority issues. (pg 69)

Intersectionality / Pioneering activism

I had to stand up in the Sierra Club meeting and rail at them, I mean not really but push hard, that hazardous waste be one of the issues; it was not, even though on all their fundraising pitches and in all sorts of other things there was quite clearly an interest in hazardous waste. (pg 70)

Intersectionality

In response to the questions, How about labor people who were not traditionally with the Sierra Club in the past? Are they going along with the coalition on that particular bill?: A lot of labor groups clearly are. I mean we have a common interest in this particular problem. Anything to do with toxics generally we can be in agreement. You know, that's understood by all of us; we talk about it out front, that there are going to be things we're going to disagree on, but when we can work together, good, let's do it. (pg 72)

Map of Sierra Club High Trips Routes in 1922, 1923, and 1929

While conducting research for this project, I accessed a collection of Sierra Club pamphlets about early High Trip archived at the Sierra Club's William E. Colby Memorial Library. The Sierra Club sent these brochures to members to describe the Club's annual outing trip that year, including where they would go, what to bring, and how much it would cost. I designed the maps below to recreate routes walked by some of the female Sierra Club members cited in this document. To provide context for their interviews, I produced these maps by cross-referencing the annual brochure and route for a particular High Trip with the Club's member catalogs of who attended the High Trip that year. I marked the annual High Trip route in red, which you will find located within the black outline for the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Special thanks to Therese Dunn, the librarian for the William E. Colby Memorial Library for her research assistance and helpful anecdotes.

Ella Griffith
UC Berkeley Class of 2020
May 2020

Ella Griffith, "Map of Selected Sierra Club High Trip Routes in 1922, 1923, and 1929," Berkeley, CA: Mapbox, 2020.

Sierra Club High Trip routes in maps below:

1. Sierra Club 21st Annual Outing in 1922
Destination: Traveled partial way to Kings Canyon
Attendees cited in this document: Helen LeConte and Ethel Rose Taylor Horsfell
2. Sierra Club 22nd Annual Outing in 1923
Destination: Traveled to Yosemite Valley through Tower Peaks
Attendee cited in this document: Nora Evans
3. Sierra Club 28th Annual Outing in 1929
Destination: Traveled through Blantly Meadows, Reds Meadows, Garnet Lake
Attendees cited in this document: Helen LeConte and Ethel Rose Taylor Horsfell



1. Sierra Club 21st Annual Outing in 1922
2. Sierra Club 22nd Annual Outing in 1923
3. Sierra Club 28th Annual Outing in 1929

Close-up on hiking routes in 1922, 1923, and 1929



1. Sierra Club 21st Annual Outing in 1922
2. Sierra Club 22nd Annual Outing in 1923
3. Sierra Club 28th Annual Outing in 1929

Selected Photographs of Sierra Club High Trips, 1902-1926

Many of the digitized photographs selected here feature women participating on Sierra Club High Trips in the early twentieth century. All of these photographs come from Calisphere, an online gateway to digital collections at many of California's great libraries, archives, and museums. Calisphere provides free access to these unique and historically important artifacts for research, teaching, and exploration.



"Sierra Club outing, 1902," Photographs Selected from the Collections of the San Joaquin Valley Library System Member Libraries, Calisphere, 1902,
<https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/kt9w102380/> (accessed November 20, 2019).



"Mud Creek Glacier Album," Photographs from California State University, Chico, Calisphere, 1924, <https://calisphere.org/item/b6e19462735b3dbb67bc2464ab81c809/> (accessed November 21, 2019).



"Beginning of Knapsack Trip at J O Pass. Roll-call: Farquhar, Waite, Durst, Breed, Tyler, Adams, Macgregor, Stopple, Witter, Phillips, Marble, Wilson," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1925, <https://calisphere.org/item/881c6778f57251fa677f8691c3bda027/> (accessed November 20, 2019).



"Canoeing in the Sierra Nevada. Scenario by Lasky," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1925, <https://calisphere.org/item/891e476aa4c773bfff9fe391dd20b9f5/> (accessed November 20, 2019).



“Dursley Baldwin and Marion Montgomery at the Summit of Mount Woodworth,” Photographs Selected From California State Library System, Calisphere, 1925, https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CSL_INST/hbrh2d/alma990013991580205115 (accessed November 20, 2019).



"On the Way to Upper Geyser Basin. Mary, George, Jelly, Dorothy H, Gretchen, Rusty and Neill. The approved Meadoweer position," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1925, <https://calisphere.org/item/3857a37850b9fb81e9f3ea1e6d00efa6/> (accessed November 21, 2019).



"Portrait of a Lady in Rocky Circumstances," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1925, <https://calisphere.org/item/4332d963859e85fac7ee7926bfd3d14b/> (accessed November 21, 2019).



"Rusty, Francis, and Bob, above Glen Pass," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1925, <https://calisphere.org/item/27f48e2e26832329dfb54d4383fe2743/> (accessed November 20, 2019).



"Woods Creek," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1925, <https://calisphere.org/item/95c6dd1cc7397bdf75db6429d098b2b/> (accessed November 21, 2019).



"At Tower Falls. Gretchen, Bobby A, Helen, George, Nurmi, Rusty, Mary, Ollie, Jelly and Dorothy H.," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1926, <https://calisphere.org/item/62dab233206287167a99fb497032cdd4/> (accessed November 20, 2019).



"Tower Creek Country," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1926, <https://calisphere.org/item/61c4e8705e6d3d6c91760c8c1a224a3b/> (accessed November 20, 2019).



"[Along the Upper Yellowstone River. View 2]," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1926, <https://calisphere.org/item/7551d6cbd719e1740f055ffcd7c9004e/> (accessed November 20, 2019).



"[At the Dude Ranch. View 2. Climbing Party]," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1926, <https://calisphere.org/item/3112ceedf92f810d6b99575a0ad659bd/> (accessed November 20, 2019).



"[At the Dude Ranch. View 3. Knapsack Party]," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1926, <https://calisphere.org/item/3112ceedf92f810d6b99575a0ad659bd/> (accessed November 20, 2019).



"[Tea Party. View 1]," Photographs Selected From California State Library, Calisphere, 1926, <https://calisphere.org/item/e80422df071600f207e0c25081528edf/> (accessed November 20, 2019).

