

Sierra Club Oral History Project

SOUTHERN SIERRANS II

Thomas Amneus	New Directions for the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter
Irene M. Charnock	Portrait of a Sierra Club Volunteer
Olivia R. Johnson	High Trip Reminiscences, 1904-1945
Robert R. Marshall	Angeles Chapter Leader and Wilderness Spokesman, 1960s

Preface by Robin Ives  
Introduction by Paul Clark

Interviews Conducted by Staff and Associates  
of the Oral History Program  
California State University, Fullerton

Sierra Club  
History Committee

1977

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## PREFACE

This volume of Sierra Club history ranges from the music of thrushes and a violin in the Sierra Nevada, to profound controversies that threatened to split the Angeles Chapter and the Sierra Club itself.

Olivia Rolfe Johnson provides memories of John Muir and life on early Sierra Club High Trips. Irene Charnock preserves much of the close companionship of the local club trips sponsored by an earlier Angeles Chapter.

Tom Amneus and Bob Marshall were active in the club at a time when the nation was obsessed with the Communist conspiracy and when many within the Angeles Chapter feared the infiltration of radicals, blacks, and foreigners. Bob accomplished much during his term as chairman of the Angeles Chapter to turn it away from these concerns and towards a new era of environmental responsibility.

Both Tom and Bob had an important impact on the chapter through their leadership. Both were active in the best club tradition in outings as well as the environment. Bob has since become inactive, but Tom continues to lead outings for the club to this day. My earliest memory of Tom is of his consideration on the trail towards a novice hiker. I admire each of them greatly for their integrity, their foresight, and their courage to fight for unpopular positions when the need arose.

Bob, in addition to the man of action who led the fight to save San Geronio as part of the new wilderness system, was an analytic philosopher of the environmental movement. He was one of the clearest thinkers about the future of the Sierra Club. His analysis led him to be the first to speak out in public about the dangers to the club from the charismatic leadership of David Brower. He suffered many personal attacks because of this. As a side effect, one prominent director of the Sierra Club was defeated in a club election because he shared, while completely unrelated, the last name of Marshall.

I believe that Bob was correct, and that the club owes its present democratic structure and possibly its survival to the fight that he began. The struggle was bitter. For political reasons, Bob was denied recognition for his past major services to the club. I am glad to see in this volume, that he has received at last some of the recognition he deserves.

Robin Ives  
June, 1977

## INTRODUCTION

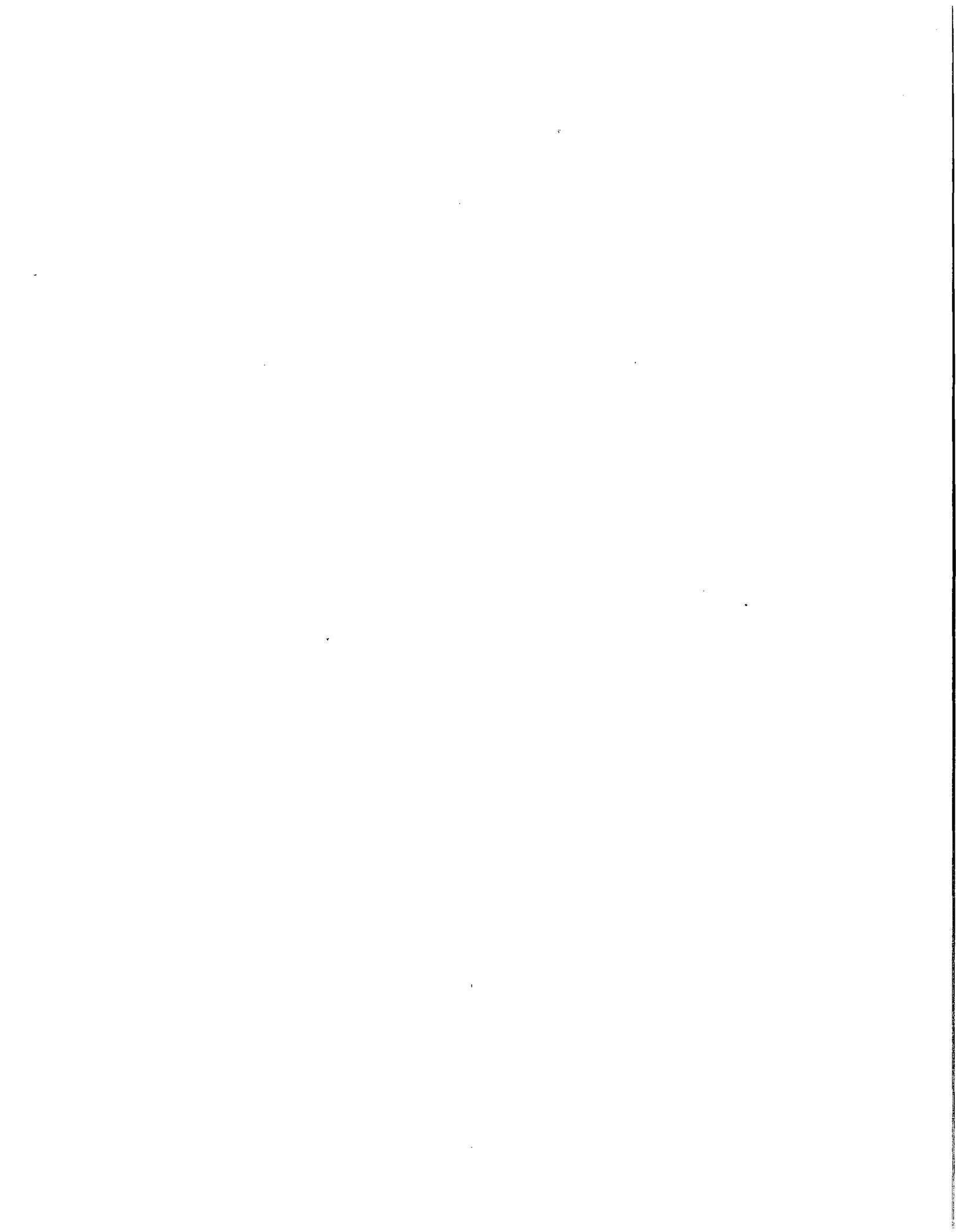
These four oral history interviews, comprising this second Southern Sierrans volume, represent the product of the Sierra Club Project of the California State University, Fullerton, Oral History Program. Shortly after the completion of the first Southern Sierrans in May, 1976, the Sierra Club History Committee expressed a desire to continue this joint CSUF-Sierra Club oral history effort in southern California. Funds were then allocated by the Sierra Club Foundation, and CSUF Oral History Program staff approval for the project followed. Thus the Sierra Club Project became a functional part of the oral history program, alongside the already standing projects that make up the OHP.

With these formalities accomplished, four OHP staff members and associates volunteered to interview long-standing members and prominent leaders of the Angeles Chapter. Paul Clark, Reed Holderman, Terry Kirker, and Eric Redd--all Sierra Club members themselves--selected Irene Charnock, Bob Marshall, Olivia Johnson, and Tom Amneus as their interviewees. The interviews were transcribed and edited by the CSUF Oral History Program staff and then returned to the interviewee for examination and approval. A final edit was given the transcripts by Shirley Stephenson, the associate director of the OHP. Finally, these oral documents were forwarded to Ann Lage, who then completed the tasks necessary for this publication.

The writer would like to use this opportunity to express thanks to all those who participated in this project, including all interviewees, interviewers, members of the staff of the OHP, and the Sierra Club Foundation. In particular, Dr. Arthur Hansen, Shirley Stephenson, Ron Larson, and Rick Patton deserve special thanks. Also, the writer would like to voice appreciation for the kind patience and cooperation of Ann Lage, without which this and other southern

California endeavors seeking to preserve the  
historical heritage of the Sierra Club may not have  
come into being.

Paul Clark, Director  
Sierra Club Project  
Oral History Program  
California State  
University, Fullerton  
March, 1977



THOMAS AMNEUS

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NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE SIERRA CLUB ANGELES CHAPTER

An Interview Conducted by  
Eric Redd

Sierra Club  
History Committee

1977

SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	iii
EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTEREST	1
Background and Career	1
The Raja Yoga School	2
Paradise Peak, 1955: A Trip to Remember	5
Boundary Peak Search for Foley and Parkinson	7
Sierra Club Offices	10
CLARIFYING CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP POLICIES	11
A Membership Profile	11
An Attempt at Racial Discrimination, 1959	12
Club and Chapter Response to Racial Prejudice	16
Discrimination and the Loyalty Oath Petition	19
ISSUES AND EVENTS OF THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES	20
Supporting Dave Brower, 1969	20
Political Involvement: Peace and the Environment	21
Disasters and Near-Disasters on Club Trips, 1971	24
The Angeles Chapter Today: Dedicated to Conservation and Non-Discrimination	29
APPENDIX	32
INDEX	36

## INTRODUCTION

Tom Amneus is a former chairman of the Angeles chapter of the Sierra Club. When Tom Amneus joined the Sierra Club during the mid-1950s, it was largely an outing organization based on the format of a private club. Mr. Amneus was instrumental in changing the club into a wide-ranging body based on conservationist principles. His entire life has been a reflection of an abiding respect for nature and an appreciation of life. Mr. Amneus is a retired civil engineer, residing in the Eagle Rock area of Los Angeles.

During Mr. Amneus's chairmanship of the Angeles Chapter he guided this second largest chapter in the Sierra Club through a period of deep racial controversy. The following interview recounts and analyzes this period of tension. Mr. Amneus also reflects upon some significant adventures and misadventures in the outings program. Many of the friends and acquaintances that he mentions became leaders in the environmental movement in southern California.

The following interview took place on January 4, 1977, at Mr. Amneus's home in Los Angeles, California. The interviewer was Eric Redd, an oral historian and Sierra Club member employed by the California State University, Fullerton, Oral History Program.

Eric J. Redd  
California State  
University, Fullerton  
February 17, 1977

## EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTEREST

### Background and Career

Eric Redd: Why don't you tell me a little bit about where you were born, your education, and how you got into your career.

Tom Amneus: I was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1907 and lived in various cities near Boston for my first thirteen years. Then we came to California where I was educated for five years, 1920 to 1925, at the Raja Yoga School in Point Loma, which was established by Katherine Tingley. She was the leader of the Theosophical Society at that time. This was a very interesting period of my life. They had great opportunities along the line of music, art, and drama, as well as the usual education. It was a very beautiful place, and many prominent people came there.

After leaving Point Loma in 1925, I lived in Lompoc and later in Oakland. While in Oakland, I went to the University of California [Berkeley] and graduated as a civil engineer with honors. I was a member of four honor societies: Chi Epsilon, the civil engineering honor society; Tau Beta Pi; Sigma Psi; and Phi Beta Kappa. I received the Tasheira Award for the highest grade point average in the junior class, which should include the senior class, too, because I got all A's in the last year. I was given the junior membership by the American Society of Civil Engineers. They present this membership each year to one of the graduates from the University of California civil engineering class.

TA: After that, I worked as a surveyor for a while, as chief of the field party for the city of Oakland. Later I was in structural engineering work. I worked three years on the design of Howard Hughes's big flying boat and some other planes he had. After leaving Hughes, I worked on buildings and bridges with various architects and engineers, the state of California, the Los Angeles City Bridge Division, and the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety.

Before I decided to be an engineer, I had studied to be a musician but eventually gave that up, although I've played in the Oakland Symphony Orchestra and the Highland Park Symphony Orchestra as a violinist. Since I joined the Sierra Club in 1955, I've been fairly active with the mountaineering groups and have enjoyed this very much. It's been an important part of my life.

#### The Raja Yoga School, 1920-1925

ER: Tell me a little bit more about your high school in Point Loma. What was the name of it?

TA: The Raja Yoga School, and the meaning of the Raja Yoga School was to bring about a royal union of all the faculties of the students. They felt that children should be educated so as to develop their moral, their mental and physical faculties, so that they would be rounded out in all ways. In other words, they didn't want to develop people just intellectually, or just artistically. They felt that a human being should be developed on all three lines.

They had some distinguished people there--people from all over the world, as a matter of fact--and they had made a very beautiful place. They had orchards there that were considered pioneers in certain respects in California. Abbott and Orange Clark, who were brothers, were very well-known orchardists there and are mentioned in Emmett Greenwalt's book, The Point Loma Community. There is quite a lot of detail about it in there. Of course, I knew them quite well. A. G. Spalding, the sporting

TA: goods manufacturer, built a house there, and his widow was still there when I was.

In the mornings, after getting up, we had breakfast in what was called the refectory, which was similar to a cafeteria. We would eat in large groups, and then most of the younger boys would work in the garden. There was what they called a "Brownies Garden," which had mainly flowers. Then they had vegetable gardens down near the ocean, where vegetables were grown for the community. They had fine orchards which provided oranges, persimmons, avocados, and just about any kind of fruit that you could conceive of that would grow in southern California. After working awhile in the garden, they would come back to their homes.

They had different groups. The boys lived in one area; they had what they called the "Lotus Homes." There would be one group in one building and another group in another building. There must have been about eight or ten of these buildings, most of them circular in shape. At that time, they would practice their music or study, and there was quite a racket going on when they were all practicing. In my particular building, some of them would be in the basement playing wind instruments, and others would be playing the piano. It was not always too easy to hear.

At the same time, others would be studying for their classes. In the afternoon we would go to classrooms in the academy building and have the usual classes, which were rather concentrated. At various times in the day there would be teaching in music. They had teachers who were capable of teaching just about any instrument. They had a very good orchestra, a chorus, and a band, and they would play at various times. They had concerts, sometimes once a week, sometimes not quite so often.

I can remember when Percy Granger was there as a guest, and he treated us by playing the piano. I remember him playing "Shepherd's Hey" as an encore. They had quite a well-known musician, Feodor Kolin, who came in somewhat toward the end of the time I was at Point Loma. He was a very fine composer, talented, and after leaving there, was active in the movies. He

TA: would improvise music as he looked at the scenes that were being displayed. He was an extremely talented person. Albert Spalding, the violinist, was an adopted son of A. G. Spalding. He was around quite a bit, and the older members of the community knew him. Maude Powell, another famous violinist, was friendly with many of the people there.

ER: Were your parents members?

TA: Yes, my parents were members of the Theosophical Society.

ER: What did they do in San Diego?

TA: My father, when he was at Point Loma, worked part of the time in the orchard and in the construction department. He also taught mechanical drawing. That was principally what he did.

ER: Did you get environmental training in high school? Is that where you got your environmental background?

TA: Not specifically as such. Of course, we were taught to appreciate what was beautiful and to take care of it and make things grow, and not to destroy things. But it wasn't discussed in the manner of trying to save the redwoods and things like that. They didn't get involved with outside things.

They were very involved in trying to abolish capital punishment and also were opposed to war. In the early days, they tried to do what they could to keep war from starting in general terms. Katherine Tingley had peace conferences in Sweden and in Europe before World War I and tried to stress the importance of peace as much as she could.

ER: When did you first become aware of the environment, then?

TA: I had always been interested in the environment. Of course, I had heard about the big controversy about Hetch Hetchy long before I joined the Sierra Club. It disturbed me to see something like that destroyed. I was interested in having land set aside for future generations so that everything wouldn't be built over and destroyed by so-called Progress. This form of

TA: progress would be justified simply by saying, "We need it for our economy, and we've been doing this for years. People have always said there won't be anything left, and there's always been something more."

That used to bother me before I ever knew about the Sierra Club because, eventually, things are going to be rather scarce in this world, the way we're using them up now. It's not right for us to make all this big splurge here, and then leave nothing for those who are coming after us. They're going to need it.

#### Paradise Peak, 1955: A Trip to Remember

ER: I'll just ask you a few general questions about your involvement with the club. When did you take your first backpacking trip?

TA: My first backpacking trip was in 1955. This particular group I was going with was led by Frank Sanborn and Owen Blackburn. They used to have real interesting write-ups in the Angeles Chapter's schedule. I'd look at those and think, "Gee, I'd like to go on that." This was actually the predecessor of what is now called the Sierra Peaks Section, which was established later in the year I joined, 1955.

My daughter Elsa [age sixteen] and I went up with two other Sierra Club members. We spent Friday night at the Hospital Rock campground and were supposed to meet at the ranger station at eight o'clock Saturday morning. We got there about two minutes past eight, and everyone had left. By inquiring around, we found that they had gone to a certain roadhead, and by hurrying there, we caught them before they had gone and then continued on to camp with them.

There were a number of people who have been quite active in the club since, who were on that trip. There was Pat Meixner, who later became Pat Gentry when she was married, and Don Clark, who was quite active in the ski mountaineers, rock climbing, and the Sierra Peaks section.

TA: We went up to one of the forks of the Kaweah River, north of Paradise Peak, and spent the night. There was some rain and a little snow. One of the members didn't have any protection from this, and as we happened to have a couple of small plastic tents, we lent him one of them. We got up bright and early the next morning and started to climb Paradise Peak. Frank Sanborn was pretty well-known for being a very strong, fast hiker, and after a little while, we started getting into snow. The trail which went up toward the peak began to be covered by snow so we lost it. So we started going straight up the mountainside.

My daughter was beginning to get sort of tired; she gritted her teeth and growled, "What's he trying to do, kill us?" After a little while she got to feeling rather unhappy and started crying a little bit, so we decided to sign out with the assistant leader, which we did. Some of the others had already started back, so my daughter and I went back toward the car.

On the way back, there was a small, about six-inch diameter log that went six or eight feet across a stream, which wasn't very deep. Below it was a waterfall with maybe a three-foot drop down to a pool, and below the pool was a big waterfall. I can't remember for sure, but it must have been fifty or seventy-five feet high. Anyway, she hesitated at going across this log, although she should have kept moving fast. She fell right in and went into the pool off to her left. I had decided I had better be ready in case something happened, and I had my pack off; however, my camera was still on me when I jumped into the pool after her. She had a waterproof bag on her pack, so she couldn't touch the bottom, and I could just barely touch the bottom. I shoved her over to one side, and then she helped pull me out.

We were good and cold and wet. This was in May, and it was pretty cold. We had a rather cold trip back to Los Angeles because we didn't have a complete change of clothes, which we should have had. Anyway, that was a trip to remember.

The subsequent trips were much more pleasant. One of the early trips was up to Trail Peak out of Horseshoe Meadow, southwest of Lone Pine, California.

TA: A number of the early members of the Sierra Peaks Section were along on that. We had quite a pleasant time. There was a fair amount of snow.

While I wasn't a charter member of the Sierra Peaks Section, since I had just joined the club in 1955, I became a member of it shortly after. I have been on many peak climbs with this group and have led a fair number for them. I've enjoyed that group a great deal.

#### Boundary Peak Search for Foley and Parkinson, 1959

ER: Tell me about the Boundary Peak search in 1959 for Francis Foley and Burl Parkinson.

TA: Francis Foley and Burl Parkinson were fairly active in the Sierra Club in the climbing sections. Burl Parkinson had only been a member about a year, but he was really enthused about climbing peaks. He had just one more emblem peak to climb before he could get his desert peaks emblem, and he had attempted to climb Boundary and Montgomery two times previously. Both times there had been bad weather, and he couldn't make it. So, this time, he and Francis went up, and he was pretty well determined he was going to climb these peaks.

Well, it had been bad weather a little earlier. They had gone up to, I think, Fish Creek or Fish Camp, northeast of Boundary Peak, where we usually climbed from in those days. He had left his truck somewhat below that; he hadn't driven up all the way that far. On the morning they were going to climb, the weather cleared up somewhat so they decided to make a try for it.

According to what we found out later, they had climbed both peaks, but they did not come back from the climb when expected. Relatives of Francis Foley phoned up to inquire if anyone knew about them. They phoned on Monday night after this weekend. Nobody knew what might have happened to them, but it was known that they had gone to climb these peaks. So a number

TA: of us went up there to help search for them. I was chapter chairman at the time and active in the climbing groups, so, naturally, I was involved along with Frank Sanborn, who had been the originator of the Sierra Peaks Section; Jerry Keating, who was very active at the time; and Bud Bingham, Don Clark, George Shinno and his son, Jon Shinno, and some other people as I recollect. Jerry Keating was a journalist, working at that time for UPI.

The search had been put under the direction of the sheriff in the area, and we weren't just allowed to go up there. We had to wait around China Lake or Ridgecrest for quite a long time before we were allowed to proceed to Bishop. After that, we were allowed to drive on up to the usual roadhead. Jerry Keating went up in a plane with a pilot to the area and made a search from the air, so he didn't come with us on the ground search. We went up to the roadhead and stopped at the usual campground. We got there early enough so we could do some searching the afternoon we got there.

Jon Shinno, the son of George Shinno, was a very strong hiker. While some of us were traversing the area down below, he went up quite high. I remember that he climbed up and over a snow cornice, and after a while he came back and gave us a signal that he'd found something. He had found the two climbers there in the snow. I think he saw Burl Parkinson's blue parka in the snow and had found the two of them there dead. Of course, he was just a young boy, probably something like sixteen or seventeen years old. Finding the dead climbers was a shock to him which his father wasn't too anxious to have him undergo.

We went back to camp then, and while we were there the China Lake rescue group, led by Carl Heller, who had organized it, came in. When they found out that the men were dead, they left because their purpose was to save lives and not to bring out dead bodies. There were three people who felt they could stay up there; the rest of us had to return to work. Those three remained, and the Marines up at the winter training camp, which I believe was up around Bridgeport, were to come down to get the bodies out.

TA: While they were waiting there, there was an incident where the sheriff of that county in Nevada became somewhat unhappy with the publicity that had been coming out in the newspapers. Our three members who were left up there were a little concerned, but they pointed out to the sheriff that they weren't responsible for what the papers said. The newspapers were liable to say most anything. That, apparently, made things okay.

The Marines came up, and I remember Frank Sanborn mentioning that they were very well-trained and disciplined and in very fine condition. They went up and got the bodies and put them on some sort of a sled, I believe, and took them down to where they could be taken out in vehicles.

As far as I know, no one was sure just what happened. They said that Francis Foley was behind Burl. Burl was a pretty powerful man, while Francis was quite light in weight. Francis still had a hold of Burl Parkinson's belt. In other words, he probably was following along behind Burl, and something happened. There had been some thunder at the time, and I always wondered if there could have been a lightning stroke near enough to have stunned them, and then after being stunned they had frozen. I was told by Andy Smatko, who had seen the coroner's report, that there was no sign of any strike from lightning.

That was quite a shock to us who knew these people pretty well, and it led to the formation of a rescue committee in the Angeles Chapter. I stayed with that for several years, and we had practices in the field, taking litters down over cliffs and learning how to bilgeri and take weights up cliffs by mechanical advantage and so on. George Shinno has remained active in the rescue committee up to the present time, though I don't believe they go on field trips anymore.

ER: I was reading in the chapter news, the Southern Sierran, that you were in on one of the first anti-litter efforts at Mount Whitney and Lone Pine Peak.

TA: Yes, when I was chapter chairman, we organized a trip to clean up the trail all the way up to the top of Mount Whitney, and we got help from the Union Oil Company on it. They had an article in their magazine.

TA: I have a copy of it which had pictures of us doing this and a write-up on it. Incidentally, Burl Parkinson, who was killed in May of 1959, had agreed to organize this and to head the thing, and, of course, when he was killed we lost him. At that time Trudie Hunt, who was one of the active members, agreed to take it over, and this was, I think, quite successful. It was one of the earlier cleanup efforts, and I think it got some good publicity. Since those days, the trails are much less littered than they used to be. It has been a gradual thing, but at that time there was lots of littering going on. People didn't even worry about it too much.

#### Sierra Club Offices

ER: Tell me about being elected to office in the Sierra Club. What was the first office you were elected to?

TA: I would have to look up the calendar for that. I believe the first office I held in the Sierra Club before 1959 was with the Natural Science Section, which I wasn't particularly qualified for. While I was taking the safety test for the rock climbers, one of the men who was giving the safety test had been the chairman of the Natural Science Section. He had to get a replacement and so he asked me to do it, and even though I wasn't qualified, I agreed to do that. That was in the year 1958. I wasn't elected to it; it was just one of these jobs that had to be filled.

ER: What were some of the other offices you had?

TA: In 1959 I had been elected to the Sierra Peaks Management Committee, where I served as vice-chairman. In 1961 I served as treasurer for the Sierra Peaks Section. In 1963 I served as alternate officer there, and I've had a number of committee assignments with them after that.

## CLARIFYING CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP POLICIES

### A Membership Profile

Eric Redd: I wanted to ask you about the membership in the fifties. Here in the Angeles Chapter and the Sierra Peaks Section, were the members mainly middle class or upper income? Were they white? Were they any one religion?

Tom Amneus: I would say that, in general, they would have been mostly professional people and people of that class. There would be some working types like electricians and carpenters, but most of the members would be people like engineers, teachers, college professors, physicists.

Most of the people were white. Around the late fifties, George Shinno, who was Japanese, became a member, and he was very highly regarded. His son, Jon Shinno, was also one of the tigers of the Sierra Peaks Section. There had been, previous to that, some Jewish people in, but in this chapter there were no blacks--they were called Negroes in those days. There was no qualification requirement by the club for any item such as religion or race.

ER: Were they any one political party?

TA: No, they were all political parties.

ER: Was there any predominance of the Unitarian Church?

TA: No, I would say that they would be quite a minority.

ER: I understand that in 1959, there was a morals incident involving a withdrawal of membership. Someone was kicked out of the club for morals.

TA: I heard something about that. I wasn't in on it, but in the course of this incident involving a black woman, this was brought out. I don't know exactly what had happened, whether it was indecent exposure or something of that sort. It was something along that line, I believe, but I'm not sure because I didn't get in on it. It was handled by the membership committee.

#### An Attempt at Racial Discrimination, 1959

ER: Maybe you could go into this racial matter in 1959. Some of it has been mentioned already.

TA: To do this, it would probably be best to start from quite a ways before that because one thing leads to another. When my wife and I first joined the Sierra Club, like many other new members we went around to some of the Sierra Club lodges, particularly Harwood. At one of these new membership meetings at Harwood, one of the people who was quite influential in the chapter, and whom I believe many people would have considered "Mr. Angeles Chapter," came up to my wife and asked her, "How would you like to have a nigger sleeping next to your daughter?" My wife was sort of surprised by this and said, "I wouldn't like that." Of course, she might not have particularly liked anyone sleeping next to her daughter, but the way it was put, she reacted in this manner.

This was not too long before an election was held for the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee for those who were to hold office in 1959. This particular member who talked to my wife had been one of my sponsors. He was quite active in supporting me as one of the candidates during this election and had urged people to vote for me, amongst others.

It turned out that I was one of the four who were elected, and we met at headquarters, which was then in the auditorium building in Los Angeles, and decided who the various officers were to be. Various people

TA: were willing to take some of the positions, but for lack of anyone else being willing to do it, I finally agreed to be chairman of the Angeles Chapter. This was done on a Tuesday, December 2, 1958.

The Saturday following, this member who had spoken to my wife asked if he could come over to my house and talk with me. In the course of the conversation, he happened to mention that it was very important who we had to be chairman of the Angeles Chapter Membership Committee. The man who had been holding this position had been elected to the executive committee at the same time I was. So, I said, "He'll probably be pretty busy on the executive committee; there will be lots of things to do." This member said, "Well, that isn't so important. The membership committee is much more important. You know, some people want niggers in the club."

And I said, "Well, I can understand that there are a lot of people who would be disturbed by this. There is a certain amount of prejudice, but then there are a lot of other people who probably wouldn't feel that way about it. If some qualified person, who was well thought of and who would be an asset to the club, had joined or was proposed for membership, then I couldn't see why they shouldn't be a member just as well as anyone else. If it was done in such a way that we got someone that people could appreciate, they would gradually realize that it was another human being, and they wouldn't think about their race anymore."

"It used to be that they had the same prejudice against other races and that they let people in at that time, like our Japanese member and a number of Jewish people. They were very highly thought of, and I feel that the same thing could happen here."

This apparently shook up this person. I've always felt that he talked with my wife, asking this question of her to check us out to see whether we were okay, in agreement with his ideas. Then he found out that I was, I guess, something that crawled out of the woodpile that he didn't expect. He was sort of disturbed. I said, "This thing has never come up before; at least, I have never heard of it, so it probably wouldn't happen." He left shortly after that.

TA: I didn't hear anything more about it until February, when the membership chairman phoned up and said that a Negro woman had applied for membership in the club. She was a schoolteacher and appeared to be a highly qualified person, and nobody had anything to criticize about her, except, possibly, that she was black. I said it seemed that she would be a suitable member as far as I could see.

Knowing the feeling of the club at that time, I got busy right away and wrote a letter to the board of directors mentioning that this black woman had applied.\* I think I called her a Negro at that time; black wasn't used appreciably in those days. I said that I couldn't see how anyone could refuse to accept a Negro as a member in the club for any reason except a reason that would be valid for others, or words to that effect.

This letter was directed to the board of directors, and they asked [Executive Director] Dave Brower\*\* to reply, which he did. He supported my stand; this issue had come up before, and it was the club's position that there should be no discrimination on account of race or creed, color or anything of that type.\*\*\* I took this letter and read it to the next meeting of the executive committee. Present at that time was the man that had spoken to me about what he called "niggers" in the club. After I read it, he said, "Well, that may be the position of some directors, but I know personally it's not the position of all of them." Well, it happened that there was one director down here who disagreed with the rest of them, but outside of that it was unanimous.

The Angeles Chapter had always been somewhat in opposition with San Francisco, having a certain amount of friction with them. At that time in the Angeles Chapter, many of these people who were looked up to as the important people in the club--the most vocal of them--insisted that this was a social club, not a conservation club, and for that reason they had a right

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\*See Appendix, p. 32.

\*\*David R. Brower, Oral History in process.

\*\*\*See Appendix, p. 33.

TA: to say that a Negro shouldn't be allowed into it. That happened to be the position of some of the people who, at that time, had more or less a very important voice in the chapter. That's been entirely changed now. They are very different in their outlook now. There is no resemblance of any of that now. They are perfectly open and free.

ER: When this black woman was admitted, was she very active?

TA: Apparently, she had not been very active prior to joining. She had been on a few hikes, and after she applied she went to one of the Sierra Peaks Section meetings. One of the complaints they had about her was that she did not come to the membership committee meeting at the cafeteria where they had dinners on Friday nights.

At that time, all prospective members were asked to appear before this membership committee. Now, this was not a club requirement, but the Angeles Chapter put it in such a way to these new members that they felt it was a requirement. They all came down to--it was Green's Cafeteria at the time, as I recollect it. They would come down there, and the membership committee would have someone talk with them. Then they decided whether they liked their looks. Then they would send the recommendation to the Sierra Club Membership Committee in San Francisco as to whether they should be accepted or not.

This is my opinion, but I've also known it to be expressed by others, that if they got a pretty girl down there, she would get sponsors in a hurry, and there would be no big investigation of her background. However, this being a black woman, a Negro woman, there was a lot of investigation. In any case, the membership committee down here insisted her sponsors were members of a certain group, which was associated with a certain church in Los Angeles, and that this was undesirable.

They also insisted that the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] had sometime previously phoned the club and asked what they were doing about getting Negroes into the club. There was criticism of one of the sponsors, that he wasn't of good character. They felt that the Negroes were trying to push themselves into the club simply to

TA: get into it as a matter of policy, rather than as a matter of interest in the conservation goals of the club.

ER: Was this woman active after she joined?

TA: I believe she was out once or twice, after the big fuss that was raised about her joining. As far as I know she was not out very much afterwards. I think she dropped out.

ER: Is there any percentage of active black members in the chapter now?

TA: I don't know how many there are. I know one member in the Angeles Chapter, Stag Brown, who is very active. He's a very fine hiker, and he leads hikes in Griffith Park and leads other hikes for the chapter. He's very well-accepted by everyone. I met a black person up at the Mount Lowe campground, who had brought a group of underprivileged boys there on a weekend. He mentioned that he was a member of the Sierra Club. There are not very many, but there is no rule about trying to keep them out now. There would be no effort whatever in that direction. They would be accepted on the basis of what they are, rather than their color, at this time. There would be no problem.

#### Club and Chapter Response to Racial Prejudice

ER: Why don't you tell me about the incident at the ski hut involving race?

TA: At a meeting for new members, which was held at Harwood Lodge and at the San Antonio Ski Hut in early May of 1959, the member who had been my sponsor and who was opposed to Negroes in the club very strongly, spoke in the presence of some of the newcomers. Among other things, I am told, he said that he had sponsored something on the order of 140 members into the club, and of these, there was only one of whom he was ashamed--meaning me.

Later, a pretty good number of the new members and some of the membership committee and my hiking

TA: companion, John Robinson, had gone up to the San Antonio Ski Hut. When John Robinson defended the admission of a Negro into the club, the membership committee members who were there became very angry, and there was a very heated argument about it. At the time, according to John Robinson, some of the people there had said that this church and the organization to which the sponsors and the applicant, the Negro applicant, belonged was either a communist front, or subversive, or words to that effect.

I was told that this had been said by my old sponsor. When I heard about this, it bothered me because this person had been put on a nominating committee to suggest names of people who were to run for the next executive committee--to run the chapter for the next year. It might be quite embarrassing or possibly legally dangerous for the club to have a person who allegedly had made such remarks on this committee.

In the course of what had gone on before, I had written San Francisco and the board of directors. Nathan Clark,\* who was one of the directors and who lived in the Los Angeles area, had become president of the club for the year so that he could deal with this problem down here. So I checked with him and asked him if he thought it was wise to leave this member on the nominating committee. He felt that it would not be wise.

So I phoned all of the members of the executive committee, except one, and told them what had supposedly happened at the ski hut and that these words had been used with respect to the church and the organization. I also mentioned that I had talked with Nate Clark, the president, and he had felt as I felt, that it would be unwise to have anyone on the nominating committee who may have made remarks of that type. They agreed with me that it would be best not to have him on.

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\*Nathan C. Clark, Sierra Club Leader, Outdoorsman, and Engineer, Richard Searle, interviewer, Sierra Club Oral History Project (Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1977).

TA: I attempted to phone this man, but I learned that he was away for a couple of weeks. When he returned I did contact him. I told him that he had been alleged to have said certain things about this Negro woman and her sponsors, which indicated that her church and/or their organization were either a communist front or subversive, and that, in view of this, it would not be advisable for him to be on the nominating committee. I explained that would be tantamount to the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee accepting those ideas, since people who were on this committee would be picking people to run.

I also told him that I had checked with Nate Clark, the president of the club, and that I had phoned the various members of the executive committee and that they agreed with me. So I said that for this reason I was going to appoint an alternate. I said that Nate Clark had told me that the board of directors was going to hold a hearing on the matter and that if this hearing cleared him he could serve on the nominating committee but if not, that he should not serve. He didn't deny anything that I alleged that he had said at that time, but he said he was disgusted with the members of the executive committee for going along with this. That, I thought, was the end of it.

Awhile after that, he apparently got to thinking that he had not been treated fairly and accused me of condemning him without a trial. He began to write letters which were sent out to several hundred members of the chapter. Every week or two there would be another letter coming out saying how badly he'd been treated by me and the club president and that he demanded a hearing. After a number of these letters, we finally decided we would give him a hearing, since the board of directors wasn't getting around to it.

He first refused to come to the hearing that we had arranged at chapter headquarters. A later one was arranged at the cafeteria in downtown Los Angeles, where both sides could bring their own witnesses and have this hearing, and he did agree to go to that.

They had both sides making their statements with no great conclusion coming out of it, except that one side denied they had said anything about communists. However, one of their witnesses said it was a beautiful day there, and the word communist was flying

TA: around. So I'm pretty sure that was done, because I've known John Robinson ever since 1956; he is about as honest a person as you can imagine, and he wouldn't make up such a thing.

I'm convinced that such words were used, and the other side claimed they weren't. During the course of this hearing, one person involved, who had been associated with the police department, claimed that the organization that these people belonged to had been cited by the Tenney Committee some eighteen or nineteen times as a subversive front, or something to that effect.

#### Discrimination and the Loyalty Oath Petition

TA: Later, they came out with these petitions.\* Have you seen the petition? I'll show you the petition later. This issue that the whole membership of the club was to vote on in order to keep communists out of the club was a direct result of these hearings, because some of these people said that all Negroes were communists or communist influenced because of their position in society, and that that was a good enough reason to keep them out of the club.

ER: So this led into the loyalty oath controversy.

TA: This led into the loyalty oath controversy. This same person who was my sponsor was the one that pushed this loyalty oath thing.

ER: So did everyone vote on the oath?

TA: Oh, yes, it was thoroughly defeated.

ER: There had been a loyalty oath controversy earlier in the club's history, hadn't there?

TA: Not that I'd ever heard of. I don't know about any.\*\*

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\* See Appendix, pp. 34-35.

\*\*In May, 1949, Sierra Club Board unanimously disapproved a recommendation from a chapter membership committee that all applications for membership carry a loyalty oath (Sierra Club Board of Directors minutes, 5-7-49).

## ISSUES AND INCIDENTS OF THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES

## Supporting Dave Brower, 1969

Eric Redd: I wanted to ask you about David Brower being dismissed as the executive director in 1969. I understand you sided with Brower.

Tom Amneus: Yes, I was on the side of Brower because I had such a high opinion of him. Now I do believe that he probably did some things that weren't just right. In other words, he pressed the club very hard to go on with his publishing program, which was keeping them short of cash. When he went ahead and pushed this, I believe, against the desires of the board of directors, I don't think he was in the right.

Nevertheless, I hoped that he could remain in the club as executive director because I felt he had done such outstanding work and had such good ideas. I felt that this publishing program should be settled in such a way that the club wouldn't get into financial trouble in the future or would try to avoid it.

ER: Were you in the ABC [Aggressive Brower Conservation] group, the pro-Brower group?

TA: I believe I was. I didn't work hard at it. I, more or less, coasted along at the time because I was fairly busy with other things. I'd been involved with antiwar work on the Vietnam War and had enough of my energy taken up with that.

Political Involvement: Peace and the Environment

ER: What has been the biggest environmental problem that you've seen in your years of active conservationism?

TA: This would be a question of whether it had strictly to do with wilderness areas or whether it had to do with the country and the world as a whole.

ER: I mean the country.

TA: The country as a whole? I think at the present time the most dangerous thing is this question of nuclear power. I don't believe it's going to be possible to store radioactive wastes for, as some say, actually hundreds of thousands of years. I think that's a burden that we should not dump on the future generations. If we can't solve the problem and find a safe way to dispose of these and know that it's safe, we have no business producing these wastes. I think that's the important thing at the moment.

There are many other things in the way of pollution, and these artificial flavorings and colors, and pesticides, that are important. But this nuclear thing is so much more dangerous, in my opinion, that I think it's the biggest item. Of course, there is the question of war; if they can't start cutting down their armaments, they're going to have a nuclear war one of these days, and that'll be the end of things.

ER: Could you tell me about the early days with Friends of the Earth?

TA: I haven't been active with Friends of the Earth except as a member. I joined it, and I have written letters when they requested it and made a few donations, nothing very much. I feel they're doing very good work and their magazine, Not Man Apart, has some very valuable information in it. I haven't been active in meeting with them in any manner.

ER: You're in Common Cause, too, aren't you?

TA: Yes.

ER: Have you been active with them?

- TA: I've maintained a membership there, and I write letters when they request them, and that's about what I've done there. I haven't actually gone out and done any special work on it.
- ER: How about SANE?
- TA: SANE is similar, except, of course, they were opposed to the war. I was in groups that were associated with them, like the American Friends Service Committee and groups against the Vietnam War. I went out and picketed and leafleted and all that and went on most of the marches that they had here and in San Francisco from the earliest days, when the Women's Strike for Peace would have a call for people to come down to Pershing Square to leaflet, to picket or something. Maybe half a dozen people would show up, and a couple of us would stand on the street corner and hand out leaflets. Then, of course, it grew. At times there would be a few hundred, then a thousand, then hundreds of thousands, and that was quite a satisfaction.
- ER: You were politically involved with environmental causes also, weren't you? Like "Yes on Proposition 15," I understand you were with the movement for it.
- TA: Yes, I organized about a dozen precincts in this area, to get people to walk the precincts. I walked two of them myself. I swore I wouldn't walk any more precincts after the campaigning four years ago, but figured I had to.
- ER: What was "Yes on 15?"
- TA: That was the bill which would have required a number of things. One, the Price-Anderson Act passed by Congress placed a limit on the insurance that could be collected in case of a nuclear disaster. This insurance was some \$500 million, the greater part of which was provided by the U.S. Government, and a small part by the utilities. In case of an accident, the reimbursement might be as low as a couple of cents on the dollar. If nuclear energy were as safe as the proponents claimed it was, they should be willing to insure it fully, and that Price-Anderson Act restriction would have to be lifted. Also, methods for safe storage or disposal of radioactive wastes would have to be proved.

TA: The safety of the various systems like the coolant system and emergency cooling systems would have to be checked by actual tests, to the satisfaction of two-thirds of each house of the California legislature before more plants would be allowed to be built. There was one further requirement, I should remember. If these requirements could not be met, then gradually, the nuclear plants would have to be phased out.

ER: Have you encountered much community opposition in the management capacities you've had with the Sierra Club?

TA: When I was chairman, I would say, no. We had good relations, as far as I'm concerned. There was this question with the sheriff up in the Nevada county, but I think that he was pacified. I wrote a number of letters thanking the people in Nevada for the help they'd given in this rescue, and they were very friendly.

Recently I've seen some of these bumper stickers that you see on the cars which are not particularly complimentary to the Sierra Club. I suppose some of these people are those who want to ride roughshod over the desert and have trail bikes and destroy some of these areas. Naturally, they'd be in opposition to the club. You're pretty near bound to have that happen.

Of course, there are people who have commercial interests. For instance, we had this hearing about the Palmdale airport a couple of years ago, for which I had written a report on the earthquake and flood dangers. There were people, many of whom did not live in the area but did own property there, who were very critical of the Sierra Club and made some rather nasty remarks, but their interest was obviously financial. If the airport moved in there, their property would have gone up in value, and so I don't think that their interests were selfless. They were very much concerned with their own profits.

ER: I also want to ask you about how you perceived the Sierra Club National Headquarters interacting with the local southern California chapters. Does the national organization listen to the southern California groups?

TA: I haven't been in the executive committee, of course, for about seventeen years. At the time when I was on the executive committee, there was a lot of friction between these people who had, more or less, control of the chapter and San Francisco. They had the feeling that San Francisco didn't listen too much, but I think that that has changed to quite a degree. I think they cooperate very well now, as far as I can judge.

ER: How would northern California not listen?

TA: For instance, on this item of having a Negro woman joining the club. They felt that they would not listen to that. They felt, down here, that it was more of a social club than a conservation club, whereas, San Francisco felt it was more important as far as the conservation aspect was concerned. Down here they felt that they didn't have sufficient representation on the board of directors. These were things of that type that they would be unhappy about.

ER: Did you know many of the national leaders?

TA: In the outings program?

ER: Well, in any of them, any of the programs.

TA: Yes, I knew quite a lot of them in the knapsack committee and a few of them in the High-Light because I was on these two trips. I've been at at least one of the outing committee meetings and met a few of the people there, but I don't have any close acquaintance with them. I've met a lot of people in connection with the knapsack committee.

#### Disasters and Near-Disasters on Club Trips, 1971

ER: Where are some of the bigger hikes that you have been on? Have you been on any extended outings?

TA: The summer outings have trips that are usually about nine days long, if you call that a big outing. I've led a number of knapsack trips for the national

TA: outings--the first one in 1958 and the last one this past summer--and I've enjoyed that very much. I've assisted on quite a few too. Generally, it's been in connection with the knapsack subcommittee, although I helped out on a couple of High-Light trips with overnight backpacks that they wanted to have in conjunction with that.

One of them was pretty near a disaster on Mauna Loa in Hawaii. I don't know if you are interested in that or not.

ER: Sure.

TA: This was in early April of 1971. There was a High-Light trip to Hawaii. Gordon Peterson had led a trip previously that I had assisted him on, and he recommended me to be the knapsack leader on this High-Light trip. He had been knapsack leader previously on it. There were two overnight trips. One was practically at sea level and no particular problem there except it was quite humid and hot. For a given elevation gain, the amount of hiking effort seemed to me to be twice what it would have been in California.

The second outing was to go to the top of Mauna Loa. We were to be brought up to as far as we could get in jeeps. Then we were to hike over to a hut that was on the rim and then later go around to the high point of the rim. This, as stated to me, would be a very easy trip, nothing to it--four miles or so, a thousand-foot elevation gain. We were left off at about twelve thousand feet by the jeeps, and the hut was somewhere on the order of thirteen thousand. When I got permission at the ranger station on Hawaii to take a group there, they said, "You won't have any problem. The only problem will be too much sun, possibly." Anyway, everyone was told to bring warm clothing because it could be cold there, and we started out.

We left the jeeps and headed cross-country for a while because there was no trail, and we had to go on a compass bearing. It was blowing pretty hard, and it was cold. We sat down in a sheltered place, had lunch, and then took off. Luckily, I landed right on the trail intersection where we meant to take off for the hut.

TA: By that time, it was beginning to snow, and the wind was blowing so that you couldn't look into the wind or it would cut your eyes. After a little while one of the women who had signed up to go on this trip and had written about all the hiking she had done around Zermatt, Switzerland, like she was real experienced, was having trouble. Some of the other members had to take her pack and carry it between them. Then a couple of others got on each side and held her elbows. I was looking back there and saw the people dragging her along.

It looked like Napoleon's retreat from Moscow-- snow blowing through there and people hidden by the snow and the wind. I figured I'd better go back and see how this woman was getting along. She didn't look good: her face looked like a corpse, and she had icicles on her eyebrows and eyelashes. I took her elbow to give her a little assistance. It was as if I was lifting a feather--there was nothing there, no strength at all.

We found a place that was moderately sheltered from the wind and got her in a sleeping bag. One of the men had a two-man tent, and we put her and the sleeping bag in this tent. There was one other woman there, who had been told to bring warm clothes--long trousers--but had come up in shorts, and she was in a bad way and had become very cold. We had to put her in a sleeping bag in the same tent. The rest of the party continued on to this hut, which luckily they found, and this fellow who had provided the two-man tent stayed with me. I gave him my tube tent which we set up. He got in that, and one of the fellows who went on to the hut had left me his tube tent. He had a special way of putting up this tent with strings tied on all over it, and in this terrible wind it was in the worst tangle you ever saw in your life, so I couldn't get it up at all.

In the meantime, I had to get something for the people to eat. The fellow in my tube tent was safely in his sleeping bag, and I got the stove out in the entrance to the tube tent and finally got it lit. I was lying out in the snow in the wind. Finally, I got a little bit of lukewarm soup ready. We also had a half-frozen orange for dinner that night. That was it. By that time I had managed to get that tube tent

TA: up in a rather poor manner, but by then I could just barely get in it. I had just about had it.

During the night I could hear one of the women in the tent who was snoring like a buzz saw. I figured she was in pretty good condition because anyone who could snore that hard couldn't be very weak. The other one I couldn't tell much about, but by morning she seemed to be all right, too. They were moving around, and the weather had cleared up. In some places there was close to a foot of snow on the ground.

I went up to the hut there on the rim, and we got three of the strongest hikers to go down and get help. The friend who had loaned me his tube tent and a friend of the woman who had gotten so cold and was so weak agreed to stay with them. We left a stove and food, and they were pretty well fixed. Then the rest of us hiked out down to what they call the Red Hill Hut, as I remember.

On the way down one of the women in the group stumbled, and they hollered to me, "Come on back, something's happened." I came back, and this woman had stumbled and hit her forehead on a rock and was bleeding all over her face. We cleaned her off, and luckily she wasn't seriously hurt but looked pretty bad. We bandaged her up. Her pupils were the same size, and her pulse was normal. She insisted she was able to walk, so after bandaging her up and taking her load we got down to the Red Hill Hut, where we managed to get something together for dinner. On these High-Light trips they weren't too interested in backpack type foods. We had things like string beans. It wasn't too easy, but we got by.

That evening a U.S. helicopter flew over the party on the rim and dropped a note that help would be coming in the morning. The next morning the ranger dropped off in a helicopter near us. I talked to him for a while. Then he and another ranger were dropped off about three miles from the rim because the helicopter couldn't land any higher. It wouldn't have been able to take off. Then they hiked up to the rim with oxygen and led the people out to the jeeps which had gone up to pick them up, and they got out okay. One of the women said that one of the rangers

TA: used more oxygen than this woman, who was supposed to be weak.

When we got down they all insisted, and the write-ups insisted, that these people were sick from the altitude. They weren't sick from the altitude. No one was nauseated, and there were no symptoms of difficulty in breathing or anything of that type. It was simply cold. There was a blizzard up there, but you couldn't get that out in the publicity. It was written up in the paper. I guess Hawaii is supposed to be sunny, and they didn't want to admit it, but they had a blizzard up there. In any case, the victims came out okay, except they had to pay for the helicopter. They were fairly well-fixed financially so there was no problem there. I guess they thought it was a big adventure. I won't forget it in a hurry.

ER: Were you on the hike in Baja California where the Angeles Chapter had two people severely injured?

TA: No. John Robinson led that in 1971. I've heard about it, but it would be secondhand. Did you get anything from John Robinson on that?

ER: I think we must have, but tell me what you heard.

TA: I know the two places where it happened. It's been described to me. There's one place coming down from the mountain, El Picacho del Diablo, where if you make a detour around some rocks and go down, you have it fairly easy getting down into the canyon below. There was a large group, and they didn't have enough leaders. They couldn't keep too good track of them so they got spread out.

One fellow came to where he was supposed to detour around, and he saw the people below and figured he could get down there. So he jumped about fifteen feet and landed and tipped over and broke his collarbone. I've been down that way. You can climb down that way, but you have to be careful; this fellow just jumped. He should have climbed down.

The other fellow--it was a place where they had been roping people down over a fairly steep place. You can walk along the top to get down, but to help them out they had a rope. This one fellow had got down within about one or two steps from the bottom.

TA: Apparently, he tripped or did something to that effect, when he was practically at the bottom, and broke his leg. This fellow, a very nice fellow incidentally, had been on a hike with me up in the west fork of the San Gabriel River, and on that hike he had broken his leg. It involved a lot of boulder hopping, but it seemed to me he's susceptible to that kind of a break. His bones must break very easily because he was almost on the level when this happened.

I don't believe it would have made any difference who had been the leader there if someone had been let down very close to where it was level. The other fellow, if they'd had someone along to tell him not to jump, but you would expect that people who had climbed El Picacho del Diablo would know enough not to jump something like ten or fifteen feet. They're apt to kill themselves.

The Angeles Chapter Today: Dedicated to Conservation and Non-Discrimination

ER: When you were chairman of the Angeles Chapter, it required two sponsors to join the club?

TA: Yes.

ER: And now you don't need a sponsor?

TA: That's what I understand. I haven't sponsored anyone for ages. I think in the Angeles Chapter's schedule they have forms that, as I recollect it, don't require anyone to sponsor them. I haven't been paying any attention to it, but that's my understanding.

ER: How do you feel about that?

TA: Well, considering what the Sierra Club is, it doesn't particularly bother me. I think it's probably fair enough. It's better than what they used to have. They used to go down and look people over to decide whether they liked their looks or not. I think if a person is interested enough in the club to join it and participate in the activities, and if they get

TA: along with people, that should be sufficient. If they don't get along with people, then they'll probably get unhappy and won't stay around anyway. As far as I'm concerned, that's good enough.

ER: That's all I have, Mr. Amneus. If there's anything you want to say, feel free to say it. If there is something I didn't ask you that is pertinent to your experiences with the club, please volunteer it.

TA: As far as this controversy about the Negro woman applying to the club, the Sierra Peaks Section, which is an outdoor climbing section, was very strongly opposed to any discrimination. That's where I got a lot of support against the people who were on the other side. Generally, I think that's true. People that are out in nature don't worry so much as these people who are in the lodges, attending the social functions more than the climbing functions.

That's about all I can think of, except that the Angeles Chapter should no longer be thought of in the way it was twenty years ago. They have a group of people now on the executive committee, in charge of affairs there, that are very dedicated to conservation and nondiscrimination. They are totally different, so I don't think that this experience I went through could possibly happen again.

ER: No, we know that. Thank you, Mr. Amneus.

TA: You're welcome.

APPENDIX

LETTER, TOM AMNEUS TO SIERRA CLUB BOARD, 2-19-59

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SIERRA CLUB Angeles Chapter

704 Auditorium Building  
427 West Fifth Street  
Los Angeles 13, California

2440 Yosemite Drive  
Los Angeles 41, Calif.  
Feb. 19, 1959

Board of Directors  
Sierra Club  
1050 Mills Tower  
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Sirs:

The chairman of our Membership Committee, Orville Miller, informs me that a negro woman, a schoolteacher, has applied for membership. She is apparently a very fine person.

Before stating my position on the matter I will present, as well as I can, the situation which will have to be faced in the Angeles Chapter.

There is strong sentiment both in favor of, and against, admitting negroes into the Club. Some members state they will resign should a negro be admitted. If we do not admit this woman we would plainly have no excuse except that we are trying to avoid ill feeling and possible resignation of members who are against such admissions.

I certainly would not like to see the Chapter broken up by dissension, ill feeling and resignations, but I cannot see how a Club which is working for preservation of our scenic resources can discriminate against anyone because of race, creed, or color. Membership in the Club should be based on the individual's intrinsic worth. Some state that the negroes make a practice of getting a few individuals into an organization as a matter of policy. Whether or not this is true I feel that the only course we can pursue is to assure ourselves that the applicant is sincerely interested in the purposes of the Club, is of good moral character, and otherwise desirable and then vote on this basis only without considering race.

Ten years ago there would doubtless have been agitation against people of Japanese ancestry. We now have two Japanese members who are active on committees in the Sierra Peaks Section and I know of no one who is held in higher esteem than they are.

I don't think this problem can be, or should be avoided even though it may cause great difficulty. I will appreciate receiving your comments and advice. The matter will doubtless come up at the Membership Committee meeting Friday 27. I hope I may receive your reply before then.

Sincerely,

/s/ Tom Amneus, Chairman  
Angeles Chapter

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RMLeonard to DRB 2/21 - Brower I admire his letter and we should tell him so.

In accord with your discussion with Bestor please rush a brief cordial answer to him for the Board.

/s/ Dick

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REPLY, DAVID R. BROWER TO TOM AMNEUS, 2-24-59

SIERRA CLUB LETTERHEAD  
San Francisco

February 24, 1959

Air Special

Mr. Tom Amneus  
2440 Yosemite Drive  
Los Angeles 41, California

Dear Tom:

Your letter of February 19 is being duplicated and sent to all members of the Board, who I am sure will admire your careful thinking and presentation as I do, and who understand the complex personal reactions that occur in such situations.

The question raised is one that the Directors have discussed from time to time in the twenty-one years I have been following their proceedings. I can safely say their thinking on the question has paralleled yours. There was no need for special resolution because the By-Laws already cover the matter in Article XIX, Section 1: "The membership of the club shall consist of persons who are interested in

advancing the purposes of the club as stated in its articles of incorporation." The only other restriction is based upon age—upon the assumption that an individual who is less than 12 years old is a little young to have determined for himself his interest in the stated purposes of the club.

I might add parenthetically that any present members who would seek to apply other tests, in conflict with the United States Constitution and with the club by-laws, and who feel they would have to resign if a color test were not applied—such members have already waited too long, for the club crossed that line long ago. There is no more pioneering to be done!

Membership in the club has already been extended to citizens of other countries and to human beings of many races (including the four recognized colors) and is presently shared by them. It is also presumably shared by people of many different religions. This is a presumption because the application form makes no provision for distinctions of this kind. It is the general philosophy of the Board that we do not aggressively seek the kinds of membership that will demonstrate religious or racial diversity as diversity, nor aggressively seek membership of any kind. The club is open to people of integrity who come to the club with an interest in advancing its purposes, period.

On behalf of the Board, let me express appreciation for your excellent letter.

Sincerely,

David R. Brower  
Executive Director

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PROPOSED LOYALTY OATH FOR SIERRA CLUB MEMBERSHIP, 1960

Board of Directors  
SIERRA CLUB  
1050 Mills Tower  
San Francisco 4

In accordance with Section XXII of our club By-laws, we the undersigned, request that the following proposed amendment to our by-laws be submitted to the club membership for adoption at our next general election.

We also respectfully request that you include in the ballot envelope the arguments which are printed on the reverse side of this sheet.

PURPOSE:

1. To establish the position of the SIERRA CLUB on the issue of communism.
2. To restore to our By-laws the former requirement that a sponsor should state that he personally KNOWS an applicant, that he believes him to be of GOOD CHARACTER, and interested in supporting the PURPOSES OF THE CLUB.
3. To restore to our various CHAPTER membership committees their former duties of making investigation regarding an applicant's character and his qualifications for membership.

PROPOSAL: To change ARTICLE XIX (Membership) as follows:

SECTION 1

The membership of the club shall consist of persons of good character, 12 years of age or older, who are interested in advancing the purposes of the club. No person who advocates the overthrow of the government of the United States by force, or who is affiliated with any group which advocates such action is eligible for membership in the SIERRA CLUB.

SECTION 2

All applications for membership shall be addressed to the secretary of the club at its principal office. Each application shall be accompanied by the admission fee and the dues prescribed in ARTICLE XVII. Application shall be in writing and shall be signed by the applicant, and shall contain a statement that he is aware of the purposes of the club, desires to support them, that he does not advocate the overthrow of the government of the United States by force, and is not affiliated with any group which advocates such action.

SECTION 3

Each applicant shall be sponsored by one member of the club in good standing and more than 21 years of age, who has been a member for at least one year. The Sponsor shall state that he personally KNOWS the applicant, that he believes him to be of good character, and interested in supporting the purposes of the club; that he also believes that the applicant does not advocate the overthrow of the government of the United States by force and that he is not affiliated with any group which advocates such action.

SECTION 4

Within 15 days after receiving an application, the secretary of the club shall notify the Club membership committee, and shall refer the same for investigation and recommendation to the membership committee of the Chapter in which the applicant resides. Within 40 days of receipt of such reference, or within such further time as may be allowed by the Club membership committee or the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, the Chapter membership committee shall make its recommendation as to such application to the Club membership committee.

When, after making investigation, the Chapter membership committee shall have recommended the rejection of an application, the Club membership committee shall not override this recommendation without first obtaining the consent of the Executive Committee of the chapter in which the applicant resides, or should such consent be refused, by obtaining the consent of the Board of Directors. Upon receiving a favorable recommendation from the Chapter membership committee, if no protest against his admission has been received from any member of the club, the applicant shall be elected to membership. In all other cases the Club membership committee by majority vote shall take action on the application.

SECTION 5 (unchanged).

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### ARGUMENTS FOR THE AMENDMENT

1. As a conservation club, the one most important thing with which we should be concerned is the preservation of our AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE. If we were to lose this, the fact that we had picked up tons of tin cans, prevented the cutting of many beautiful trees, and thwarted the attempts to build certain undesirable dams — all these activities (while good in themselves) would seem to our children to have been only a terrible and wicked waste of time and energy.
2. In these critical times it is only fitting and proper that our SIERRA CLUB should stand up and be counted with other loyal American institutions. The excuse, "It is our policy to be neutral on all such questions" does not apply. If it does, it is high time that we change our policy.
3. The argument that a Communist applicant will not have the slightest objection to perjuring himself is beside the point. The fact that a good law is broken does not make it a bad law. We will at least have established a CLUB POLICY. It is within our power to do this and it is our DUTY.
4. In April 1959, Amendment No. 8 made it unnecessary for a "sponsor" to state that he personally knows the applicant, believes him to be interested in supporting the purposes of the club, and believes him to be of good character. Were you informed of this fact before you voted at that election? WHY should these very reasonable requirements have been DELETED from our By-laws? The vast majority thought we were merely voting on a question of whether we should have one or two sponsors. In view of the repeal of Section 5, Article XI by Amendment 5, April 1959, there would be no conflict between that Section and this proposed amendment.
5. It is impossible for each member of the Club membership committee to make a personal investigation of each applicant. They MUST depend on hearsay information. Would it not be wise for them to respect the recommendation of their fellow Sierrans who are working on the local Chapter membership committee? These are the ones who will be obliged to "live with" the new member and who must answer to their fellow chapter members if he should prove to be undesirable. Under this proposed amendment the Club membership committee, (an appointed committee,) would be required to obtain the approval of the (elected) Chapter Executive committee, or of the (elected) Board of Directors, before overruling an adverse recommendation of a local Chapter membership committee, which is in a position to make a personal investigation.
6. According to our existing by-laws, after an applicant has paid his \$12.00 the ONLY legal reason for rejecting his application would be to Prove that he was not "INTERESTED in supporting the purposes of the club." How would you go about PROVING this? Furthermore, and this is important, after an applicant has paid his \$12.00 if we have absolutely no character requirements as prerequisites for membership, then it might be extremely difficult for us to rid ourselves of a member who was guilty of the most repulsive and revolting of practices. Some say that such matters are 'none of our business', that we are "ONLY A CONSERVATION CLUB". This is UN-REALISTIC. Example — Through intimate fraternal association on our 2 week Summer Vacation trips many of us have come to know those who have later become our closest and dearest friends. Is this undesirable?
7. The argument that that it will cause us financial loss is beneath contempt. We neither NEED nor do we WANT the Communist's \$12.00. The added respect that our taking this action will give us in the eyes of every decent American will far more than compensate us for any possible loss of revenues.
8. J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the F.B.I., says, "A determined effort is being made to infiltrate and take over EVERY club and organization which might conceivably exert any propoganda influence." Many fine American institutions have said, "Nothing like that could possibly ever happen to us." When they finally did wake up, it is too late. This must not happen to us!!
9. Our Sierra Club is very dear to the hearts of all of us. Please vote and appoint yourself a committee of one to see that your friends do likewise. Remember, we must get a 2/3 majority "OF ALL THE BALLOTS CAST". (Our by-laws do NOT say of all those who voted on this particular issue.) He who is not for us is (TWICE) against us. Watch and beware of him who says, "This danger is only imaginary". This statement is the Communist's No. 1 weapon. Also, beware of that man who seeks for any reason to prevent the submission of this entire proposal to the vote of the membership. The passage of Section 1 without the "teeth" which are contained in Sections 2-3 and 4, would be little more than the uttering of some high-sounding platituda, and would accomplish exactly nothing.

Amneus, Elsa, 5-6  
 Amneus, Thomas:  
   childhood and education, 1-4  
   employment, 2  
   joins Sierra Club, 2  
   conservation philosophy, 4-5, 21  
   and peace movement, 4, 20, 22  
   club outings, 5-7, 24-29  
   Angeles Chapter offices, 8, 9, 10, 12-13  
   and chapter membership policies, 12-20  
   and Brower controversy, 20  
   political involvement, 22-23  
 Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club:  
   changes in, 15, 29-30  
   executive committee, 12-13, 17, 18, 30  
   friction with club headquarters, 23-24  
   loyalty oath, 19  
   members, description of, 11  
   membership committee, 12, 13, 17  
   nominating committee, 17, 18  
   outings, 5-7, 28-29  
   racial discrimination in, 12-19  
   rescue committee, 9  
   Sierra Peaks Section, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 30  
   social nature of, 14-15, 24  
   See also Sierra Club; Southern Sierran

Baja California, 28-29  
 Bingham, Bud, 8  
 Boundary Peak, 7-9  
 Brower, David R., 14, 20  
 Clark, Abbott, 2  
 Clark, Don, 5, 8  
 Clark, Nathan, 17, 18  
 Clark, Orange, 2  
 cleanup trips, 9-10  
 communists, 17, 18  
 conservation, 4-5, 21, 22-23, 30  
 El Picacho del Diablo, 28-29

Foley, Francis, 7-9  
 Friends of the Earth, 21

Gentry, Pat, 5

Harwood Lodge, 12, 16  
 Heller, Carl, 8  
 Hunt, Trudie, 10

Keating, Jerry, 8  
 Kolin, Feodor, 3-4

loyalty oath, 19

Meixner, Pat. See Gentry, Pat Meixner  
 mountaineering, 2, 5-7, 7-9, 24-29  
 Muana Loa, Hawaii, 25-28

NAACP. See National Association for the Advancement of  
 Colored People  
 National Association for the Advancement of Colored  
 People (NAACP), 15  
 Negroes, 11, 12-16, 17, 18, 19  
 nuclear power, 21, 22-23

outings. See Angeles Chapter, outings; Sierra Club,  
 outings

Paradise Peak, 5-6  
 Parkinson, Burl, 7-9, 10  
 peace movement, 4, 20, 21, 22  
 Peterson, Gordon, 25  
 Point Loma, California, 1, 2-4  
 Point Loma Community, The, 2  
 Price-Anderson Act, 22

racial discrimination, 11-20  
 Raja Yoga School, 1, 2-4  
 Robinson, John, 17, 18, 28

San Antonio Ski Hut, 16, 17  
 Sanborn, Frank, 8, 9  
 Shinno, George, 8, 9, 11  
 Shinno, Jon, 8, 11

- Sierra Club, 2, 4, 5
  - Brower controversy, 20
  - membership policies, 14, 15, 17, 19, 29-30
  - opposition to, 23
  - outings, 24-28
  - relations with Angeles Chapter, 14-15, 23-24
  - See also Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club
- Sierra Peaks Section. See Angeles Chapter, Sierra Peaks Section
- Southern Sierran, 9
- Spalding, A.G., 2, 4
- Spalding, Albert, 4
  
- Theosophical Society, 1, 4
- Tingley, Katherine, 1, 4
  
- Vietnam War, 20, 22

IRENE M. CHARNOCK



PORTRAIT OF A SIERRA CLUB VOLUNTEER

An Interview Conducted by  
Paul Clark

Sierra Club  
History Committee

1977

SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	iii
ANGELES CHAPTER LEADERSHIP AND PURSUITS	1
Childhood and Youth: "In Love with the Mountains"	1
Joining the Sierra Club, 1937-38	3
The Chapter Executive Committee and the <u>Southern Sierran</u> , 1940s and 1950s	4
Local Outings: A Social Aspect	7
High Trips and Base Camps, 1939-1940s	9
CONSERVATION BATTLES AND CLUB CONTROVERSIES	14
Conflicts Within the Club, 1940s	14
Opposing the San Jacinto Tramway	15
The Dave Brower Controversy	17
Custodian of the Angeles Chapter Records	18
The Sierra Club, Past and Future	20
APPENDIX	24
INDEX	25

## INTRODUCTION

One of the hallmarks characterizing the Angeles Chapter has been the great importance placed upon local social and outing activities, as well as conservation issues. Since joining the Sierra Club in the late 1930s, Irene Charnock has closely participated in both of these aspects of the Angeles Chapter. This retired Los Angeles County social worker developed early in her life a vigorous love for the out-of-doors. This appreciation in turn spawned in her an abiding concern for the preservation of nature. It was within the Sierra Club that Irene found expression for her love of nature and her concern for its preservation.

Irene served on the southern California branch of the club's conservation committee (1951-1966) and as the branch committee's secretary (1952-1956). Irene was elected to the Angeles Chapter's Executive Committee and held the offices of treasurer (1947-1948) and chairperson (1958). Besides these duties, Irene found time to be the subscription manager for the chapter's newsletter, Southern Sierran, from the publication's earliest days almost to the present.

The following interview with Irene, interestingly, was held in Room 432 of the Auditorium Building, Los Angeles, a former headquarters of the Angeles Chapter. Irene retains a portion of these old facilities as a storage room for her considerable collection of Sierra Club memorabilia. The interview was conducted on August 4, 1976, by Paul Clark, a Sierra Club member and graduate student in the Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton.

Paul Clark  
California State University,  
Fullerton  
February 23, 1977

## ANGELES CHAPTER LEADERSHIP AND PURSUITS

Childhood and Youth: "In Love With the Mountains"-

Paul Clark: Irene, could you tell me a little bit about your early life, about your family and where you grew up?

Irene Charnock: I was born in southern California [10-12-1898] and grew up in Pasadena. We had relatives who had a homestead on Palomar Mountain. My father owned the land where the present observatory is. It wasn't worth much then. He sold it for a team of horses. The mountain to me was Palomar. We always went-there.

I lived in the shadow of the San Gabriel Mountains. We loved to see the Echo Mountain Observatory searchlight come down and flash its way over north Pasadena where we lived. A few times I rode on the old Pacific Electric Railway that went up to Mount Lowe, but I never hiked up there until later on in my life. The family had a ranch over in west Los Angeles. My grandparents came here in about 1881. The street is now called Charnock Road after the place. They don't own it now. The depression hit them and they lost the ranch, all but their own home.

PC: Was this your grandparents?

IC: My grandparents. They had two sons--my father was one and my uncle the other. My uncle stayed there. It doesn't matter about my father except he planned to stay there, but the little gal he married turned out to have asthma--my mother--and she couldn't live in

IC: that climate. So that's why we went over to Pasadena. We loved the out-of-doors and the beauty of everything. I grew to love tremendously every bit of the beauty of the out-of-doors. Although that might be a latter thought, still and all, when the bulldozers came in, I hated them as much as anyone. Still do, too.

I went to Washington elementary school in Pasadena for about eight years. In high school I went to a boarding school in La Jolla--Bishop's School. The Episcopal Church controlled it. I went to what would be junior high school today in Hemet. We lived there for three years. And that is a place where I learned to almost worship San Jacinto Peak. It is so beautiful from there. When the club had this battle with San Jacinto, I felt that was my dearly beloved place, too. By the time of the San Jacinto battle, I had been up to a lot of mountains.

PC: When did you climb your first mountain? How did you get involved with that?

IC: Before I joined the Sierra Club, I was associated with a club called the San Antonio Club, beginning in about 1921. Their purpose--it still exists but not the same format--was to see that Mount San Antonio was not called Mount Baldy, but you know--semifailure. Another purpose they had was to climb to the top of each one of peaks like San Gorgonio on the first of January, a hard day, and put a plaque or something up there about it.

I could not belong to this club because I was a female; it was only a men's club. The chairman and president was Will Thrall--a peak in the San Gabriel Mountains is named after him. His daughter, Rosalind, was my roommate in college, and through my acquaintance with her and all the rest of it, I climbed about forty peaks, I imagine, before I joined the Sierra Club. This would have been in southern California someplace, wherever the San Antonio Club went.

We went by ourselves, also. When we were not too old, in our teens anyway, her father taught her a great deal about safety and how to take care of the mountains, not to start fires and all, so we went by ourselves, with a backpack. By the way, Will Thrall knew more about the San Gabriels than any other person ever did. One time we went on a three-week backpack before the road was in the mountains, the same route of the Angeles Crest when it was a trail.

PC: What was it like in those days?

IC: Beautiful! Wonderful! You just can't imagine. So I fell in love with Buckhorn, and that's where we headed for. Buckhorn is on the slopes of Mount Waterman. It's a lovely place. Every year we went up there on these trails.

### Joining the Sierra Club, 1937-38

IC: So there I was, and the reason I didn't join the Sierra Club--I knew about it all this time--was that I wasn't sure I wanted to. I didn't have any specific reason for it other than I liked what I was doing. About that time in 1937 or 1938 I thought it was the thing to do because they were a much bigger club than we were, and I wanted to work in conservation by that time. So, that's why I joined.

For two years I didn't go on any outings with the Sierra Club. I hardly knew they had them. I finally found somebody that wanted to take me on outings. There were people that wanted to fill their cars because it was the depression time. So I had many lovely rides to wonderful places every weekend. We climbed in a lot of places. That was the early days. Now do you want to know about the Sierra Club?

PC: Perhaps we can go back a little. What college was it that you went to?

IC: UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles]. Three years; didn't graduate, though. It wasn't really stupidity exactly.

PC: What did you do as far as working after that?

IC: I taught school for two years. Then I took a civil service exam. I worked for Los Angeles County for thirty-four years.

PC: What did you do?

IC: Social work. I liked the county work. I was very well-suited to it. I was working in the clerical division; I was head supervisor in various places and did all kinds of interesting things.

PC: Such as?

IC: Well, whatever was needed. You know what you do when you're in charge of clerks: teach them how to do their work, give them ratings; you hire new people and fire them. It was more interesting in San Fernando where I started to work because we had a little tiny office with me as the only clerk.

Lots of times we went on interesting trips out in the country, not exactly for the county, but just to see social workers' things. Sometimes the car wouldn't run, but I liked the job very much. I don't think that had too much to do with my conservation purposes, except when I worked in El Monte we finally got a phone in the office to Los Angeles. It was cheaper for me to use that phone than my own to call on club business. I guess everybody does that.

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. They had hired a schedule chairman who just didn't do anything but play around. The chapter chairman found out--he asked people like me what we were doing. He found out I knew more about it than anyone else, so that's how I got to be the schedule chairman. I liked that job, too. I liked all the jobs I had with the club, almost every one I had.

After I had become a member, not long--two or three years--I informed the proper people that I wanted to be on the conservation committee. Not very many people come right out and say that, but I did want to. So Ralph Mocine, one of the most marvelous people in the whole world, arranged it for me. This was at a time when the chapter was very, very limited in what they did on conservation. Most of the work was done in the main club. Someone from San Francisco would come down and be the chairman most of the time, but people in the chapter were called the Los Angeles chapter of the conservation committee, or something like that.

The Chapter Executive Committee and the Southern Sierran, 1940s and 1950s

PS: How long were you on the executive committee in the Angeles Chapter?

IC: I was on it several times, beginning in 1947. I liked doing treasurer work awfully well, so I was the treasurer of the chapter four different years, 1947 and 1948 and two later dates. I also volunteered for the job of assistant treasurer when somebody else was the treasurer, and I used to do all the book work. Then I became chapter chairman in 1958. These are elected jobs.

By then--I wanted to get this in somewhere--I knew maybe five hundred members of the club very well. We wanted to start a chapter newspaper. The ski mountaineers had started a newspaper called The Mugelnoos in 1937 and here it was 1946. So Dorothy Sandstrom, now Dorothy Granger by marriage, wanted to start a chapter paper. Her background was writing and journalism anyway, so she became the first editor. In a few years I became the circulation manager, and one year I was the editor. But for years Dorothy did all the work on the Southern Sierran. She's one of our supreme people that you would love to interview. She's moved up to the Eureka area in northern California, far away. She is really a lovely person. She knows what to say about lots of things.

PC: Can you tell me how she got the Southern Sierran started?

IC: Yes, the chapter members met then in different ways than they do now. Today they have groups everywhere, but in those days the only place that the whole chapter met was at the Friday dinners, which were started in 1923 by the Cooks, by the way. Another person thought Phil Bernays did that, but Ed and Betty Cook did everything to get it started. I've read this in the minutes, too.

So at that time, every bit of the executive committee work--not their own meetings, but every bit with all the members--was always done at the Friday dinners. If you were schedule chairman at a certain time, and you were working on it, you brought all your papers into the meeting. If you wanted to ride with anybody, you went there to ask for it. If you wanted to give a ride, you got your partner there. If you wanted to become a member, you went to the membership committee table to apply for membership. Almost every bit of the club work was done there.

IC: Now it's a different group, mainly a group of old-timers. We don't publicize that because if we don't get some young people in, we'll be dead. You have to have a changeover. Sometimes young people come in, but they are mostly new members, and they go to everything like all new members do. They only go there once--too many old people, they say. I think the programs are superior at the dinners as far as the pictures go. It's nice.

Getting back to the Southern Sierran, Dorothy Granger organized the paper at the Friday dinners. She said we were going to have a paper; this was two or three months ahead of the fact. We even had someone ahead collect the dollar to pay for it. The subscribers got numbers: one, two three, four, five, six, seven, and so on. Every once in a while, after it was going--this is jumping ahead and I'll be back--we did all kinds of interesting things to get the people interested in being subscribers because at that time they had to pay to subscribe. We would have something like a lottery to put these numbers in, and the people whose numbers we drew would get something free, like a subscription.

At first, we didn't know what to call the paper, so we had a contest to see what name they wanted. The Southern Sierran was the name that was most popular with those who submitted suggestions. The person who won the contest and received a free life subscription was Ed Peterson. He was the first one to mail in his choice of "Southern Sierran." When the Riverside Chapter published theirs he did the same thing for the Palm and Pine. Ed sent his choice in there first, too.

As the paper developed, local group reports--we had several groups by then--committee reports, and anything that people thought was interesting were sent in to the editor. We had a great lot of news about persons. That's how this article about me got in the paper, although that was the last one that was ever written.\* They had a trend that the future editors would disregard personalities. Every living soul that we knew in those early days was completely disgusted because all they wanted in the paper was to know what their friends were doing. They could read about conservation in the Sierra Club Bulletin, they said.

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\*See Appendix, p. 24.

IC:           However, I consider it a good paper today. I helped to be the circulation manager on it for a long time. I liked that job, too. I got acquainted with lots of people. When they wrote in and said something interesting, or they did like something, or they didn't like something, I wrote back all kinds of things they might want. People all over the country took that paper, so it was interesting.

PC:           So it was kind of social, not conservation, in tone?

IC:           It wasn't entirely social, but we were much more social than now. Do you know Bruce Cook? He has met with me and read the old schedules because he wanted to see what the club was doing in the old days. He obtained the impression that what they were doing then was sometimes better than what they're doing now. He's a new member, too.

#### Local Outings: A Social Aspect

IC:           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. We all went out in the street and said, "What shall we do tonight?" Mostly, they went to a place to dance. That's when the dance craze was on; they don't do that now. Then they went out ice skating afterwards, too--whatever there was to do. They didn't just go home. We knew each other awfully well.

              After an outing, we'd always have people over to our house for dinner. This is kind of interesting about how the outings have changed. We always put on a super program around the campfire, so every car on their way down, if they hadn't done it before, had to get ready to put on a program and memorize what they were going to say on the way down. We did singing every time, staying up until after midnight all the time.

PC:           This is at the hostess's house after the outing?

IC:           She didn't have to be a hostess. The leader of the trip was the one who said you had to have a program, but everybody wanted to anyway--something interesting.

IC: If they were good at it, they put on some skits. We put on all kinds of skits and everything at some of the week long trips we took. When we went to Havasu Canyon we had all kinds of performers who could sing songs. This socializing seems like a good idea to me.

They really can't do it quite so well today. The places to go where you can be out all by yourself are diminishing. We went to lots of places where nobody had ever been before. We would go out and case them the weekend before, so we knew how to get there, and then take the crowd. It was scheduled, but nobody had been there until the leader went there first. It was lots of fun. I tried to go to all of the palm canyons in the Coachella Valley. There are about forty or fifty.

As far as mountain climbing is concerned, we climbed the mountains around, but there wasn't a Hundred Peaks Section yet. Of course, I knew these people quite well who later formed the Hundred Peaks Section. I belonged to the Hundred Peaks Section, but to be truthful I got forty of the hundred before I was ever in the club. I got the other sixty sometime later. They're a nice crowd, too. Before I did that, I belonged to the Desert Peaks Section. I enjoyed that a lot.

PC: How long were you a member of the Desert Peaks Section?

IC: I'm still a member. I had to quit going when I got kind of old. They were really severe climbs. Same thing with all the high peaks in the Sierra.

PC: How long has the Desert Peaks Section been in existence?

IC: It was founded by Chester Versteeg in the mid-forties. Chester was an interesting person; he is dead now. I went out on some private trips, you might say, with him. Because he had climbed all the fourteen thousand-foot peaks, and all the thirteens, all the twelves, he said, "What can I do? Let's go and climb a ten thousand. There aren't many people that go up them." He thought it would be a good idea to have seven desert peaks. From the one you were on, you could see each of the other six peaks. So for a while that was good--if you went up those seven peaks, you were a member of the Desert Peaks Section.

IC: They went up around White Mountain and some of those in that area. They had a White Mountain group, people who had been there. In those days it was forty-four miles round trip to go up to the top and back. Now you can ride to the top. White Mountain is a fourteen-thousand-footer, so you count that one in your fourteens, too.

I was sick going up that. The altitude usually gets me over ten thousand or so, and I could hardly walk. We had a good leader. This could apply to anyone, but he said, "Just go slowly and take a half a foot length step each time, and you'll make it." So I did. As soon as I got to the top and started down, the illness was all over. It was just the going up. Last time I went anywhere in the mountains was a little tiny climb up towards Mount Whitney. I guess I must have gone up about two miles [laughter]. I was staying with some friends that have a cabin up there. I miss the mountains like anything.

High Trips and Base Camps, 1939-1940s

PC: Did you go on any of the High Trips?

IC: Yes, about 1939, 1940; then the war came, and they stopped. I had a "boyfriend" then, and we went up in the Sierra every summer. We were the only people there.

PC: During the war?

IC: During the war. I guess he had some "C" coupons [laughter]. He liked to go on horseback, so we rented some horses. We went for three or four years. Then the war got over with, and the club went full blast. I then found out how nice base camp was. I went on that a number of times.

PC: Do you remember any of the club leaders on these High Trips during the thirties?

IC: Dick Leonard was the leader on the first one. Oliver Kehrlein was the leader on another one. About that time--I think it was 1942--Oliver thought it would be a good idea to found Sierra Club base camp outings. You can just stay at base camp the whole trip, or you can go on hard hikes nearby, whatever the various

IC: leaders and people want to do. That proved to be very popular. I liked that too, but I didn't go immediately. I just didn't seem to have time. In my book, I have about fifty-eight hobbies listed. I can't really keep up with all of them. Oliver was the poetic type and very domineering, but we accepted that because we loved the beauty of the country and talked about it so much.

Then we had Cliff Youngquist afterwards, and Cliff was more of a realist. Both of these people are dead now. He always thought about the money. I don't think that Oliver paid a lot of attention to the money. Of course, it costs money to buy things.

We had a marvelous cook. Everybody that ever went on any of the trips with Dean Curtis as cook found that they completely changed the grub that they used to have on those early trips. In base camp you could bring in more supplies anyway. They were able to save a lot of the wood. I think Cliff did this by bringing in these propane things, so we never had to use any wood except just to keep warm at night. We would never cook by it. But the early outings brought all their wood stoves along.

I had an interesting experience in the High Trip of 1940: interesting and tragic. A boy that I was going with [Vincent Smith], whom I was very fond of, died of a heart attack in the mountains. I went out with his body on horseback thirty-five miles from where he died. We went to the Mineral King valley. It was quite a long horseback trip, but I never became tired. We took his body down to the funeral parlor. I was not a relative, so they took care of him in Los Angeles.

People on that trip had different opinions about the cause of my friend's death. This man, at least, got to the top of Forester Pass, over 13,000 feet. He reached the top more quickly than the rest of us. I was a slow getter, but I never became tired. We think that is what killed him. He carried twenty-five pounds on his back, camera and all. He was very sick-- I could tell that--when he got to the other side. We had twenty-six sick people on that trip, and we went down to a lower camp. However, this one sick man didn't tell anyone about his problems; if he had, he might still be alive.

- IC: Another much older man died on that High Trip, too. But he let people know in a hurry that he was ill--he had a wife. They all got out except these two persons. I imagine some club members learned from this. They should not always be the great hero and climb too fast. I hope that those who read this will take that to heart. There is not any sense to that type of climbing.
- PC: Could you tell me about your base camp adventure with your appendicitis problem?
- IC: This was base camp, 1946. When we got into the first camp, it was sort of hot in the sun. I really didn't feel good, but I didn't know what was the matter with me. I made the mistake, I said later to myself, of telling somebody I didn't feel well and would they like to bring a drink of water to me. It didn't take this person very long to tell the camp doctor about me. They put me in bed overnight and put ice packs on me.

Unbeknownst to me the committee met, and Doctor Crowe,\* the head doctor, said that I would have to be sent out. He said that he didn't have any way to operate on me, and it was very likely that an operation would be needed. The only thing he had was his pen knife. So in spite of all this, I wasn't afraid of his pen knife because I was convinced that I would get well. However, all the people in charge of base camp were the bosses, and you have to go if they say so, so I went out.

When I left they told me, among other things, to notify my doctor when I got to Los Angeles, which I did. I caught a bus down in Bishop, and by the time I was on the bus I had no pain left. When I reached Los Angeles, I had no symptoms left. I called the doctor and an ambulance was sent out. I answered the doorbell, and the ambulance men asked where the patient was [laughter].

I said, "I'm it, but I'm not sick; I don't need a ride in any ambulance." They became convinced, you know, but one said, "Well, here we are. We've got to

---

\*Harold E. Crowe, Sierra Club Physician, Baron, and President, Richard Searle, interviewer, Sierra Club Oral History Project (Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1975).

IC: have somebody in the ambulance. Won't you please ride in it?" So I did. I went to the hospital and they found no symptoms and they didn't operate.

They were semiright, because in six months I had some of the same symptoms, and I went to the hospital. They really found a red-hot appendix then, and they operated on me. By the way, Dr. Crowe did mention also that I would be happy to have it operated on because then I'd never be worried about going in the mountains again. This was good advice.

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. I went over Bishop Pass five times. I think I could go there again if I set my legs to getting used to going there. Every time I went by there I had to get out in a hurry because somebody was waiting to take me out at the other end in a car or something like that.

Last time I went over that pass [in 1942] some people picked me up on the Muir Trail. That was a fascinating trip. They had three burros, and they went around heating their food on the campfire because of the heavy rain. They had umbrellas, and they held these umbrellas over damp wood until a fire started. They had a good tent and it rained every single day. At least we didn't get wet, but we parted company because I had to go over Bishop Pass, and they continued on the north fork.

I think it only took me from where we were--we were way down on Palisade Creek--and it took me five hours to hike out. I think I was up at the pass before two o'clock, and it didn't take any time to get down from there. I was a real good hiker in those days. My friends called me the female John Muir because he liked to go by himself, too. I wouldn't mind doing that now, but I don't know whether I would fall over.

I'm a bookworm, by the way. I have too many books, but I have lots and lots and lots of books about mountaineering and places like that.

PC: Talking about books, did you know Glen Dawson?

IC: Yes, I know him. Do you know something about Glen? He became a life member the day he was born. His father was the club president; so he made his son a life member. That's how he got to be a life member; nothing wrong with that. Glen's a real mountaineer.\*

PC: Did you go on any trips he was on?

IC: No, too hard for me. I studied rock climbing, and I wasn't afraid of heights at all. I just found some of the other hikes more interesting, perhaps. But I couldn't have gone with Glen because he was already a mountaineer by the time I knew him.

---

\*Glen Dawson, Pioneer Rock Climber and Ski Mountaineer, Richard Searle, interviewer, Sierra Club Oral History Project (Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1975).

## CONSERVATION BATTLES AND CLUB CONTROVERSIES

### Conflicts Within the Club, 1940s

Paul Clark: Do you remember the loyalty oath question that was in the Sierra Club a long time ago?\*

Irene Charnock: Oh, yes, I remember we had it on the application during the war. I had no real part in that. I just remember that they did that for a while. I know that you were interested in some of these other questions [involving conflicts in the club], and I was quite aware of many of them, but I really took no part in them.

One time [in 1945], Ansel Adams and others up north decided we were too playful a chapter and in the directors' meeting they decided to expel us, maybe from the club.\*\* I was a brand new member then, and I only heard about this. Our chapter got excited about it, and a few would not speak to Ansel Adams or have anything to do with him.

---

\*On May 7, 1949, the Angeles Chapter Membership Committee recommended that all applications for membership within the Sierra Club carry an oath that the applicant was not a member of a subversive organization. The recommendation was unanimously disapproved by the Sierra Club Board of Directors (S.C. Board of Directors Minutes, 5-7-49). See Tom Amneus interview for discussion of 1959 proposed loyalty oath.

\*\*See Minutes of 12-1-45, Sierra Club Board of Directors.

IC: Later, I met Ansel and admired him very much. He was just listening to somebody else and did what they told him to do, so it never happened. We didn't get expelled, but that was a big moment. Ansel apologized afterwards; he's a pretty nice guy. I hope he doesn't die for a long time. One of my very favorite books is a book about his life covering up to 1938.\* It was Part One, so I hope they do a Part Two. Maybe they're waiting until he passes away. His life is really interesting. Did you know that he started out to be a professional musician?

PC: Yes, I did. What kind of music do you like?

IC: I don't like anything except classical music. I just love it. I don't say that I did not care for the countrified music we always had at our campfires. That's a different thing, but I mean for myself. There used to be a song called "Goodnight Irene." I was usually kind of late to a campfire. The songs were maybe already on, and Arnold Wall would see me coming and start with this song. They would make up some verses about how bad you were around town; it was kind of fun. People have sad endings. Arnold had a stroke, and he can't sing or talk. He was the leader of all our campfire singing for years and years.

PC: This is on the Sierra Club High Trips?

IC: No, on the local trips. On the High Trips and base camps we mostly had people, as far as I know, from the Bay Area and that way you became acquainted with people from other chapters.

#### Opposing the San Jacinto Tramway

PC: You said before that you were very concerned about the San Jacinto Tramway. How did you get involved in that?

IC: Because they wanted to put this tramway up there, and the club decided to oppose this. That's when I was secretary of the conservation committee [1952-1956].

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\*Nancy Newhall, Ansel Adams: The Eloquent Light, vol. I (Sierra Club, 1963).

- IC: I have all those minutes here. I thought for a while we were getting along well with it, because the promoters didn't really have the money that they wanted to spend on it. Consequently, they wanted the state to be in on it. The state didn't want to be in on this either. Nevertheless, somehow or other after my time, they built the tramway. I hated that because that was a lovely place to be wild up at the top.
- PC: What did the conservation committee do about this when you were secretary?
- IC: They tried to get the usual legislators to be on our side and oppose it legally with motions in the House. That's what they try to do today: try to get the government to be in on it; and even if you get in the losing battle, try to limit the amount of territory that can be despoiled. To some extent we did that because you still have to hike by the other route through Round Valley. I'm peculiar about this, I won't go back there again ever, but I believe that the campers can go to Round Valley on their own.

We went on a real dilly hike up there before the tramway. It was easy, in a way. We hired some mules to take our dunnage up to Round Valley, but from there we had to hike nineteen dry miles to Palm Springs. It was a trail then. The bad thing about this was that the trip occurred in June, when Palm Springs gets to be about 115 degrees. At Round Valley there was ice in the water.

We had some greenhorns along on this trip, and we almost had a catastrophe because when we got down about four or five miles from Palm Springs, we were already in very hot weather. Our leaders, the Hendersons, hurried--they were really good--and got down in a hurry to Palm Springs and kept walking back up the trail to rescue these fainting people. I kept my water under cover in my knapsack, and I never took but a drop at a time. I had no trouble whatever.

- PC: Did these people run out of water?
- IC: Sure. One young couple drank all their water in the first mile or two to keep from carrying it. They didn't need it up there. They were told not to, but they didn't pay any attention. We got down, and we had arranged to eat dinner up at this grape ranch--Guasti. We had to call them to hold off for hours

IC: because we had to wait for the people to get down. We had a lovely chicken dinner there, which was fun. Everything is always fun when it gets all over with. Nobody died, just had a bad time with the heat.

That trail, I believe, now runs through some wealthy person's backyard, and they cut it off where it exits. The other end of the trail, at the top of the tramway, is all chopped up with whatever they did with it there. I suppose the middle of that trail is still there. The grade was always the same. If you've ever been on a long hike where the grade is the same you'll find the next day your muscles are sore in certain places.

#### The Dave Brower Controversy

PC: How did you feel about the Brower controversy? Do you care to talk about that?

IC: I realized that the board [Sierra Club Board of Directors] up there was correct in not wanting to let him have the job he had [executive director], because he was too extravagant. Anyone who has been a treasurer knows that you just can't live on deficit money in a club. Brower spent quantities of money on books--the very best paper, the best artwork, the very best of everything. Of course, he won a marvelous award on his first [Exhibit Format] book, the one about Thoreau, you know. Later on [1969], they fired him, I guess.

I used to have a personal feeling about him because he did a lot for the club. He was on the first High Trip I was on, too. Things like that. He was a marvelous mountaineer. During the war he taught mountaineering to the army troops--all kinds of good things. Later on, when Dave was named one of the club's honorary vice-presidents, he was expected to go to meetings again. I'm glad that they did that for him. That's my personal feelings. We had to do something. Dave was very much interested with what he wanted to do. He was the boss, so it didn't worry him about money at all.

He's working hard on his Friends of the Earth now. We all wondered how Friends of the Earth managed to get along, but they seemed to survive somehow. I bought some of their books, too.

## Custodian of the Angeles Chapter Records

PC: You have sort of hinted at what you have here. Could you describe some of the Sierra Club records you keep in this room?

IC: I have the minutes of the main club's conservation committee when I was secretary. I have tried to get a collection of the minutes of the Angeles Chapter. I don't keep them in this room, and I haven't been able to get the minutes for the last two or three years, but I have all I could get hold of.

PC: What other items have you been able to collect?

IC: Treasurer's records. I have all the treasurer's records I could obtain for about every year up to the time I quit being assistant to the treasurer. The last time I acted that way they gave all the material to me. It showed that they didn't want it very much. They're funny that way.

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. Today, they just keep a copy or two and read it off. In the old days, we used to give everyone a copy; every member of the executive committee received a copy of everything that was done. They knew about every bill that was paid. Now, it is not prohibitive that they do this, but nobody takes the time to tell them or put it in the record. Dorothy did that.

There are lots of people that don't care much about past things, just the issue of the day. Of course, there's a lot to do on conservation. Our chapter is very active in that now.

PC: Do you have very many issues of the Southern Sierran like the one you were showing me?

IC: Yes, there are three issues in this office, plus my own private one at home. I kept those at home until last year. I decided to bring them down here and get some cheap help to sort them out and put them in book form. We really can't bind these because different editions had different amounts of space on the left side. So I would just take some tape and have them by years. They held together that way.

PC: How far back do they go?

IC: To the beginning, every one. The beginnings, but not the endings. I haven't been able to get all the recent copies, when they changed it to a newspaper. I'm not doing anything with the chapter office now. I could have, with great effort, gone over there and gotten three or four copies every time. I think my sets end about 1972. We used to keep a set in the chapter's office, but when people wanted a copy they would be thieves and take one out. So I thought if the office wished a set--they don't have a copy now--they should hide it someplace.

I also have a complete collection of the Angeles Chapter schedules. That is in my personal collection. These boxes have some treasurer records. They need sorting. I thought I would get a lot done in my old age. Here's a little dissertation on being older: it seems as if you do more things than you ever did before. It seems as if you have less time, and your work accumulates more. So that's the way it is.

PC: Could I look at this? [Takes a copy of the Southern Sierran]

IC: Yes.

PC: Here they note a Burl Parkinson as the chairman of the Pasadena group.

IC: I guess he was. Every group elects officers every year. The interesting thing about Burl was that, later on, he and another boy--they were desert peakers--were climbing Mount Montgomery and Boundary Peak up in the White Mountains. They were on their own, and it was icy on the north side where they were. They slipped and fell to their deaths. People down here who knew they were going on the trip didn't know what had happened, but they thought something must have. So a lot of rescuers went up there, and they found their bodies. It took a while because they didn't know just where the accident occurred, or that there was an accident. There was a mighty good number of rescuers.

PC: What did he do for the Sierra Club?

IC: I don't know that he did anything for the club in the way of work, except take offices. That's work. I don't think he had been a member a very long time, maybe two or three years. That was one of the tragedies of it. People become entranced with mountain climbing if they've never done it before. That's what he was. This is one of the peaks to get a badge in the Desert Peaks Section. My friend Peggy [McLean], another girlfriend, has been up there, too. She says that it's quite a deal. You have to go through on Boundary, and then you climb up quite a slope to get to Montgomery and back over Boundary again.

### The Sierra Club, Past and Future

PC: To conclude our talk, is there anything you'd like to say about the future of the Sierra Club and how it has changed over the years since you've known it?

IC: I haven't said very much about my feelings toward the club. I like what they're doing now much better than I liked what they were doing a few years ago. For a while it was touch and go for the club. I really thought they were going to be completely broke. They are getting along pretty well with the Sierra Club Foundation, and I think it does have a future.

As you probably know, the club lost its tax-exempt status.\* They had been living always on the tax-exempt status, especially in all the kind of mailing we did. I don't blame them; they really had a bad time of it. It was about the time that Dave Brower was a problem, because they knew they didn't have much money.

At least I can see that they haven't yet lost their tax-exempt status on the foundation. So they are using the foundation all they legally can for expenses.

---

\*In 1966 the Internal Revenue Service ruled that contributions to the Sierra Club were no longer tax-deductible because of its substantial legislative effort (Sierra Club Handbook, 1967, p. 55).

IC: They can use the foundation's money publishing books, if they're the right kind of books, but they can't use it to run the office. Of course, that's one of their biggest expenses.

I felt that it was all right to increase the dues. That's what the members voted to do, so they must have felt the same way. Of course, the dues are much more than when I joined. They had a life membership in 1939, I believe, of fifty dollars. They had a whole lot of life members, like the Joneses and other friends of mine. It was hard to take a life membership out then before it was too late. It was still the depression, and I was broke enough that I couldn't afford fifty dollars. So in 1954 I had more money by working at a better job, and I bought myself one. I think it was a hundred dollars then. Now it's five hundred or more.

However, the board of directors will give you a free life membership if you have been a dues-paying member for thirty years. So some old-timers are getting it that way. They're useful, I'd say. Some said they couldn't do anything, but they can at least write their congressman. That's the main thing that they should be doing: writing congressmen and senators, people that can do something. The club tells them what to do. All they have to do is do it.

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. It has been with Mineral King.

PC: What are your feelings in regard to Mineral King?

IC: Oh, I love Mineral King. I think that it's a crime to build a highway into Mineral King! All they have to do is keep the present dirt road. That's all they have to do. The National Park Service would be in charge of the road if Mineral King becomes a national park. We tried that for some years, and they would not do it. They said it was because of too many mines. However, now they are being persuaded that they may be the savior of Mineral King.

If the National Park Service doesn't take over Mineral King, we will get a state highway with at least two big lanes. People will rush up there. As Mineral

IC: King is, very devoted people can go up there and see a wilderness. One of the problems is that much of Mineral King is privately owned. This always gives the conservationists trouble. The National Park Service attempts to buy this land in the national parks, but they will never have all the money in the treasury to buy all that land.

Back to the club. There is today a chapter in every state, and the chapters are doing much of the work. The chapters are allowed to do more. 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. I think the Angeles Chapter is held in good opinion for the work it has done. Even the smaller chapters today are doing all the work they can. We do try to convince people that the Sierra Club is a decent organization. We are trying to do something for the benefit of posterity, not for ourselves at all.

PC: I would like to thank you very much, Irene, for taking a little of your time to be interviewed today for the Sierra Club Oral History Project.

IC: Thank you for thanking me about it because I felt bashful about all this.

APPENDIX

**SOUTHERN SIERRAN**

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**PERSONALITIES**

IRENE MINERVA CHARNOCK

--Mary Galton

Probably no more appropriate place to be born could be chosen by our chairman than the present site of Palomar Observatory. This wonderful starlit mountaintop homestead was later sold by her father for a team of horses. But it requires more than living in the lowlands to dim the spark, once lit, which keeps the spirit in the heights, and draws the feet to the mountains again and again for inspiration. In fact, at a very early age, Irene had moved again, from Charnock Road in what is now Palms, to Pasadena where a large two story house with vast multi-gabled roof provided play area with training in exposure, heights, and climbing.

The love for climbing and rock scrambling, and the awakening to the wonderful world of nature began to mature later at La Jolla, where she attended the Bishop's School for Girls. It is through the eyes of one born in California, who has watched the encroachment of man with his matches and cement mixers crushing the native beauty, and driving back the deer and the wildflowers, that the need for conservation became apparent to Irene who came into the Sierra Club twenty-one years ago, seeking kindred spirits to help stop the unnecessary disturbance of natural areas. Irene thinks in terms of Conservation.

It is to her desert homestead, on a mountaintop next to Joshua Tree National Forest and inaccessible except by Jeep, that she goes for inspiration. Not the little Jeep which she used to build the house with the help of friends. It was with remorse that she parted with the little Jeep for the station wagon with more room for a load.

Someday, perhaps, she may retire to this homestead. This will be headquarters. There will be a quiet place for writing. Then there will be more time for trips, and more time for the Sierra Club. That will be the day when she will be able to fulfill her dream of creating a recorder committee, a historian, to lend continuity to the Sierra Club.

(Retiring means leaving the position of head clerk with the County Bureau of Public Assistance at the El Monte office where she admits having been for a "long time.")

There is scarcely a job in the Sierra Club which Irene has not done, including being chairman of the Natural Science Section, several times on the Executive Committee, the Schedule Committee, and work on the Southern Sierran.

In the hobby department are included the 20 year old Persian cat, Ana Belle, Hi-Fi music, piano,

and gardening. But the most unusual interest that lends balance to this lady John Muir is the joy in refinishing furniture. She likes people, but also she loves to camp and hike alone. This serves not only to shed the mental cobwebs of civilization, but has gotten her over the hump of fear--fear of the dark, and hidden fears of the unknown. She was so thoroughly rid of fear that Dr. Crowe found it necessary to persuade her to leave Base Camp when suffering from appendicitis by telling her, "If you don't go out, I'll have to use my pen knife to operate. That is all the equipment I have here."

Instead of being a doctor and saving lives, as was her earliest ambition, Irene now devotes her time to saving those wilderness areas for the joy and inspirational health of future generations.

\* \* \* \* \*

**NATURAL SCIENCE**

--Marvin A. Pistrang

The twenty birdwatchers and fellow-travelers who caravanned down the coast to Maxton Brown Sanctuary November 16th were amply rewarded by a fine showing of migrant, wintering, and resident waterfowl. Of the two groups, birds with wet bottoms and watchers without, the former showed much less concern over the blustery weather.

Bolsa Chica's morning light revealed an unusually large congress of Marbled Godwits and Willets attended by small groups of Avocets, a scattering of Dowitchers, Killdeer, and uncounted assorted sandpipers, with Snowy and American Egrets in their usual aloofness haunting the outer fringes of the group. In spite of the wind, flotillas of Pintail and Ruddy Ducks, Coots, and Grebes (Eared and one Westcon) were on the water, with Ring-billed Gulls and Forster's Terns active above. A small flight of Snow Geese was a surprise dividend.

Maxton Brown Sanctuary provided a brief respite for lunch where much closer views were obtained of Shoveller Ducks, Mallards, some Horrible Hybrids, and the ubiquitous Coots. Farther out, in deeper water, were more Ruddies and a veritable gabble of Grebes.

After a short hike around the Eucalyptus grove (Audubon Warblers and a somewhat crownless Ruby-crowned Kinglet) and a distant view of Marineland's (?) wandering Flamingo, most of the group reconvened on the way home at the Pleistocene fossil locality above Newport Bay. Even the most casual collecting in the semiconsolidated sand yielded marine invertebrates ranging from robust clams and whelks to minute bryozoan colonies. It was a full day by the time the sun went down.

\* \* \* \* \*

*from the Editor*

I wish to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Also, since this ends one year of service as Editor of the Southern Sierran, I wish to thank all of the Associate Editors who have done such a fine job in sending articles for the paper.

\* \* \* \* \*

Deadline for January is the 3rd.

\* \* \* \* \*

**PASADENA REPORTS**

--Shirley Sargent

A wave of vocal nostalgia swept over the 100 plus Sierra Clubbers viewing Bob Wilde's splendid collection of photographs of Mt. Lowe, the famous Incline Railway and the Alpine Tavern. For the benefit of younger, memory-less members, until 1938 Mt. Lowe was to Pasadena what Disneyland is to Orange County.

Burl Parkinson's slides illustrated the building of a monument on Mt. Baden-Powell. (Gus Hamilton is leading a hike there December 21.) The pictures proved that if you rub Boy Scouts together--presto, there's energy enough to pack 9,000 pounds of raw materials to the summit.

Pasadena Group, via an unusually orderly railroading job, elected the following officers at their November meeting:

- Burl Parkinson Chairman
- Bea Wheelock Vice-Chairman
- Margaret Di Stafano Secretary
- Charles Nies Treasurer
- Don Minassian Alt. Officer
- Lynn Banks Hosts & Refr.
- Ruth Bates Schedule

\* \* \* \* \*

## INDEX

- Adams, Ansel, 14, 15
- Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club:
- changes in, 6, 7, 18-19
  - conflicts with club headquarters, 14-15, 22
  - Desert Peaks Section, 8-9, 20
  - executive committee, 4, 5, 18
  - Friday dinners, 5-6
  - Hundred Peaks Section, 8
  - loyalty oath, 14
  - outings, 3, 7-9, 15, 16-17
  - records, 18-19
  - social nature of, 7-8
- See also Sierra Club; Southern Sierran
- Angeles Crest Trail, 2
- Baldy, Mt., 2
- Brower, David R., 17
- Charnock, Irene:
- background, education, 1-3
  - joins Sierra Club, 2, 3
  - mountain trips, 2, 12
  - conservation work, 3, 4, 15-16, 21
  - Sierra Club trips, 3, 9-11, 15, 16-17
  - employment, 3-4
  - Angeles Chapter leadership, 4, 5, 18
  - chapter records, 18-19
- conservation, 3, 15-16, 18, 21-22
- Cook, Betty, 5
- Cook, Ed, 5
- Crowe, Harold E., Dr., 11, 12
- Curtis, Dean, 10
- Cutler, Dorothy, 18
- Dawson, Glen, 12-13
- Desert Peaks Section. See Angeles Chapter, Desert Peaks Section
- Friends of the Earth, 17

Granger, Dorothy. See Sandstrom, Dorothy

Hundred Peaks Section. See Angeles Chapter, Hundred Peaks Section

Kehrlein, Oliver, 9-10

Mineral King, 10, 21-22

Mocine, Ralph, 4

Mugelnoos, The, 5

outings. See Angeles Chapter, outings; Sierra Club, outings

Palm and Pine, 6

Palomar Mountain, 1

Parkinson, Burl, 19-20

Pasadena, 1-2

Peterson, Ed, 6

Riverside Chapter, Sierra Club, 6

San Antonio, Mt. See Baldy, Mt.

San Antonio Club, 2

Sandstrom, Dorothy (Dorothy Granger), 5, 6

San Gabriel Mountains, 1, 2

San Geronio, Mt., 2

San Jacinto, Mt., 2, 15-17

Sierra Club, 2, 3

    Brower controversy, 17

    changes in, 20-22

    conservation committee, 4, 15-16

    loyalty oath, 14

    outings, 9-11

    tax deductible status, 20-21

See also Angeles Chapter; Riverside Chapter; Sierra Club Bulletin; Sierra Club Foundation

Sierra Club Bulletin, 6

Sierra Club Foundation, 20

Smith, Vincent, 10

Southern Sierran, 5, 6-7, 18-19

Thrall, Rosalind, 2  
Thrall, Will, 2

Versteeg, Chester, 8

Wall, Arnold, 15

Youngquist, Cliff, 10



OLIVIA R. JOHNSON

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HIGH TRIP REMINISCENCES, 1904-1945

An Interview Conducted by  
Terry Kirker

Sierra Club  
History Committee

1977

SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	iii
JOHN MUIR AND THE 1904 HIGH TRIP: A CHILD'S VIEW	1
A New England Family	1
To Yosemite by Stagecoach	2
Yosemite Valley Camp	3
Adventures with Charlie Tuck	5
On John Muir's Knee, 1906	8
ON THE TRAIL WITH THE SIERRA CLUB, 1930s and 1940s	10
Revolt in the Women's Camp	10
Comfort on the John Muir Trail	12
Around the Campfire: Ansel Adams and Cedric Wright	13
High Trip Traditions: Tea, Tap and the Pennyroyal Society	15
FITTING THE FAMILY PATTERN: A LOVE OF NATURAL THINGS	19
Appreciating and Preserving the Out-of-Doors	19
Son David with the Club in 1945	21
Harold Crowe: Doctoring in the High Sierra	25
Grandmother Walks and the Orchid Trail	26
INDEX	29

## INTRODUCTION

The same eager curiosity and love of life which drew John Muir to the eight-year-old Olivia on the first High Trip to Yosemite is evident in this interview with Mrs. Olivia Rolfe Johnson. She shares her vivid memories of those days, Charlie Tuck, the Chinese cook on those early trips, and many stories of later High Trips in the thirties and forties.

This interview, recorded on October 26, 1976, took place in Mrs. Johnson's unusual and beautiful authentic adobe house in Brentwood. Although our times in the Sierra Club and the high country didn't always coincide, Mrs. Johnson and I found we shared memories of some of the same trails and lovely places.

As the interview shows, Henry Rolfe was one of the early members of the Sierra Club, and his interest in conservation was carried on by his daughter. Outside of her full life as wife and mother, Mrs. Johnson devoted much time to causes from Save-the-Redwoods League to Save San Francisco Bay, as well as much work with the Garden Club and the Girl Scouts.

Terry Kirker  
Fullerton, California  
March, 1977

## JOHN MUIR AND THE 1904 HIGH TRIP: A CHILD'S VIEW

### A New England Family

Terry Kirker: Mrs. Johnson, I wonder if you could tell us something about your father's earliest joining of the Sierra Club and a little bit about how he came to be involved.

Olivia Johnson: A child's memory is very spotty. I really don't know how my father [Henry W. Rolfe] came to join the Sierra Club. I do know that he had been a professor at Cornell and that many Cornell young men, with their wives, had gone up into New England and had bought what they called abandoned farms.

They were old farms that New England men had struggled to make a living on and then had been happy to leave and go west to where there was more fertile land and easier conditions. Many of them had simply walked out and left their lands and their old houses. Father had eventually bought four of these old farms, of about a hundred acres each, making one large piece of land on which he had two houses that were livable, one for himself and one for a farmer, and two that had gone into the cellar holes.

I know that he was deeply interested in plants and trees and botany. His very dear friend from Swarthmore days, Olivia Rodham, was an eminent botanist. Father knew just where the first ladyslippers, the pink cypripedium, would bloom, and just where the first violets would be found next to the beech trees; his background was one of loving natural things.

OJ: I have a letter that was written on his first trip to Stanford, which I think must have been late in 1901. He had been teaching then in Chicago--I don't know just what university. I had gotten the mumps, which had abscessed, and the doctor had said, "If you wish to keep your little girl, you will leave this climate." Just at that time a call came from Dr. [David Starr] Jordan, who was gathering his faculty largely from men who had been at Cornell, inviting Father to come to the classics department at Stanford. He had gone out to look the field over and to rent a house and make arrangements for his family to come.

His very dear friend, Guido Marx, in the engineering department at Stanford, had gone with Father up into the Tahoe region, staying at Glen Alpen Lodge near Fallen Leaf Lake, with the purpose of looking over available Forest Service land, to choose a site for the Stanford settlement of professors' summer homes, which eventually became the Stanford hill, in back of what is now the Stanford alumni camp.

They did lease the property that Uncle Guido and Father liked so much. My uncle Charles Wing's cabin was started there in 1911 and pretty well completed in 1917. That is all I know about Father's being interested in the Sierra; but I know that by 1904 he was a member of the Sierra Club, and we were going on the 1904 High Trip.

To Yosemite by Stagecoach

OJ: I have a diary written at that time, in which it tells of Mother's struggles to make sleeping bags and to make a tent with flaps that closed in front so they could be protected. I don't remember anything about the preparation to go. My memory of the trip begins with stopping overnight at the Wawona Hotel, I believe.

The next day we started out on one of the great stagecoaches--an open thing with three or four seats, and I was miserably sick. The action of the coach dashing around the curving road made me very sick at my stomach, and I was not a child to suffer in silence. The whole stagecoach had to suffer with me.

OJ: Finally, the stage driver turned to Mother and said, "I can cure her if you'll let me." Mother indicated that she would be only too glad to let him. So the stagecoach was stopped, and he got out, and I got out with him. We walked to the back of the stagecoach, and he told me to take hold of the edge of the box where your feet went--you climbed up and you stepped over a rim, and then there was the inside of the stagecoach.

I took hold of the edge of this box, and he said, "Now hang on tight and don't let go." He got back into the driver's seat and whipped up the horses and off we went. It was a dirt road, and of course, very dusty. By the time the horses and the wheels had gone over it, there was considerable dust coming up in my face. I was not about to be left stranded on a Sierra road, so I ran for all I was worth.

After a long period of my running and gasping in the dust, he stopped. He came back and said, "Now come along." He took me up and put me next to him on the front seat and gave me the ends of the reins to hold so that I was assisting him with the driving until we got down into the valley.

I remember two things happening on that trip. One was that we passed a little opening, a grassy glade by the road, where a blue jay, a stellar jay, was peacefully eating a still-alive goldfinch. That seemed to me very unfair; I didn't think nature was doing as it should at that point. I have never really loved stellar jays since.

The other memory is of driving by a cut in the road. From the side of the cut bank a rattlesnake leaped out at the stagecoach. It struck at the upright that held one of the seats and fell to the road, instead of striking in among people's legs. But it caused considerable amusement for one small girl.

Yosemite Valley Camp

OJ: The next memory I have is of the camp in Yosemite

OJ: Valley. We had gone up a little early, because Father and Mother wanted to get acclimated. I don't remember a great deal about it, but I remember sleeping out under the big trees on the pine needles. There were bears around, and they seemed interesting but not worth considering very much.

It was the year that President [Theodore] Roosevelt had finally decided the national parks must be preserved, that the sheep must not be allowed to do any more harm in the pastures. He had ordered the shepherds to keep the sheep out of the national parks for several years, and they had paid no attention at all. They had simply sent the sheep in over little-known trails, little-known passes. They continued to ruin the meadows of the national park. So that year Roosevelt decided that the time had come for action, and he had sent troops in and ordered that the shepherds be seized and jailed, that the flocks be scattered, and that as many sheep be butchered as could be used for meat.

The Sierra Club had been given two or three carcasses. I had watched with much interest as they cut a little sapling and lashed it between two great trees, way up high, and hung those three carcasses from the sapling. That night I was awakened, simply stiff with fright, because there was an appalling screaming going on. Father said, "Oh, don't worry about that. That's just the mountain lions screaming because they can't get to those carcasses." So many times I have had people tell me that mountain lions are silent animals, that they don't make any noise, but I remember vividly that they can make considerable noise.

I remember that there was a great deal of muttering over bringing babies on club trips, and Father and Mother decided that this had better be stopped right off. There was a pretrip walk scheduled to climb to the top of El Capitan, and they signed up for it, with me. I did just about as a dog does--up the trail, down the trail, and back again. I must have walked at least twice what everybody else did and reached the top completely fresh and full of bounce, when all the others were considering themselves pretty well spent. It stopped the talk about babies in camp.

We sat down to rest on the glaciated rocks at the top of El Capitan--I don't suppose near the edge, but close enough so that you knew that the great curve of

OJ: the glaciated rock went down into the valley. There was a good deal of scree on it. I don't know whether it was spalling or whether scree had washed down, but there was a great deal of gravel, and Mr. Colby, who was the leader of the trip, had warned everybody to be very careful: "The most dangerous thing in the Sierra is scree on granite, and be careful."

We were all sitting around in this group, and Mr. [William E.] Colby was telling us about the mountains and the trip, and so on, when two young men--they must have been college freshmen or sophomores, as they were pretty young and pretty callow--came racing down towards the group, and as they reached us they set their feet and slid on the scree and then sat down near us.

Everybody was very much frightened, as they had meant them to be. Mr. Colby stood up and lit into those two young men. I have never in all my life heard such cold, savage, murderous talk as Mr. Colby gave those two. They looked more and more crestfallen, and the group looked more and more pleased, and he finally said, "If I see anything resembling this in the future, you will go out no matter where we are."

#### Adventures With Charlie Tuck

OJ: The next thing I remember is the long, long pull up to the edge of the canyon, I believe, more or less up the Yosemite Falls, up that wall of the canyon, and out of the canyon. It was a murderous day, and I remember being pretty tired when we got to camp. Mother's little tent was set up and we were all settling down, when up came Charlie Tuck, who had been the cook during the precamp week that we had been there in Yosemite. He went to Mother and he said, "Girl child, she walk, not good. She lide with me." And he turned and departed.

Mother went around and consulted with Mr. Colby and various people and they said, "Yes, that would be perfectly all right. If Charlie Tuck has invited her to ride with him, surely, that's all right." So Mother cut off one of the flaps of her homemade tent and made a case for my bed pillow, and that was my

OJ: saddle. And I "lode" behind Charlie Tuck, which was perfectly divine. I felt very superior because he always left camp very early. I see in these photographs that one of the horses he rode was a brown horse, but the old white horse was the one I remember. Mother would see me off every day.

I don't quite understand how Mother and Father were able to let me do it, because I arrived in camp hours before they did, and I was not a child to sit under a tree and wait. Father had been a very close friend of John Dewey and had imbibed very much of his philosophy, and he believed firmly that you do not curb the growing personality. My personality had not been curbed at that point; circumstances curbed it later, but not Father and Mother very much. They must have known--if they didn't, they very soon found out--that a child in a new camp will get into all sorts of situations that could be dangerous. But here you have it again, they had always allowed me to go wherever I wanted to go, so they allowed it here.

I remember once going with Charlie Tuck's two assistants--he had two Chinese boys with him--to a place where they had camped before. They went running off to the clump of trees where they had had their personal camp and were very much gratified to find a pair of Chinese embroidered slippers they had left there the other time. Much chatter over that.

Then another time, and I think it must have been when we went down by the Tuolumne River, in Hetch-Hetchy Valley, there was a deep, deadly, boiling river with great green eddies that looked as though they would suck anything under. There had been a bridge, and there were the two great riders, two great hand-hewn beams across the river, but the planks that went on them to make it navigable were still piled on the bank. It was early in the season, and they hadn't put them in place yet.

On the trip there was a man who was an ardent fisherman. He was a deaf mute; he could neither talk, nor could he hear you. But I had had long years of being in New Hampshire with an old New Hampshire handyman, a Mr. Newcome, who said, "She can go with me if she doesn't talk!" I had spent days trailing behind

OJ: Mr. Newcome, doing whatever he did. I had nobody to play with, and I loved to help chop trees and plant potatoes and so on. So I was perfectly used to going with somebody who didn't talk and didn't wish me to talk, and I used to tag along with this gentleman [the deaf fisherman] with great joy.

On this particular day when we arrived by this frightful river, which I knew was terribly dangerous, we crossed on one of the riders, one of the great beams, and went to the other side where there was a tributary coming in. My friend was catching fish, and I was acting as protector of the fish, playing around and having a very beautiful time. Poor Mother arrived in camp and asked where I was, and the Chinese boy simply pointed across the river. I don't know why Mother didn't wait for the dark to bring me in, but she felt she had to go and find me, and she was deathly afraid of heights and deathly afraid of running water. I know now what it cost her to cross that frightful rushing water. Later, the pack trains came in, and I watched the horses try to cross the river, not at that place but higher up and entering it at one place and coming out way, way downstream because the current had washed them so heavily.

Later, I don't know where it was, but someplace Charlie Tuck and I were riding the white horse over granite with scree on it. The horse was going very, very slowly; I thought much too slowly. I thought it was extremely dull, and I gave the horse a kick. A burst of Chinese came out, and I was a little bit concerned but not very deeply. That night Charlie Tuck appeared at Mother's tent again, and his sentence this time was, "Girl child, she kick; she no lide." So the next morning Mother came down with me, and he said, "She lide if she no kick." So I went on "liding" but I did stop kicking. I could see when the inevitable had arrived.

I remember one other thing about the Hetch-Hetchy Valley. I do remember how beautiful it was, what a noble place. One night we were at supper when a nice young man came up with a letter in his hand, and he said, "Are you Mrs. Rolfe?" Mother said, "Yes." The man said, "Well, here's a letter for you; it was pinned to the bridge." My mother's sister, Marian, had married Andy Brown, who was a professor of engineering at Stanford, and he loved horses and loved to

OJ: do things in a rather primitive way. They had hired a buckboard and had started from Stanford, driving across the valley and into the Sierra, and had been in the Hetch-Hetchy Valley about a week before the Sierra Club got there. Aunt Marian had wanted to communicate with Mother, so she had simply written a letter and pinned it to the bridge, for Mrs. Henry W. Rolfe with the Sierra Club. That was kind of fun.

#### On John Muir's Knee, 1906

TK: Could you tell us a little of your early memories of John Muir?

OJ: Unfortunately, I have only the one memory of John Muir. I don't remember him on the 1904 trip at all; I know that he was on that Sierra Club trip. My memory of John Muir was when he came one evening to our house in Palo Alto. I think he was speaking at the university that night. He came down on the train and came to the house for dinner. He arrived there a little early. My mother was taking care of my little sister, and Father hadn't got home from the university yet. So John Muir, with his long, beautiful white beard and his sweet, smiling face, settled down in the living room, to be quiet until they came.

I came wandering in, and he immediately invited me to come over and see him and began telling me stories of the mountains. He remembered me from the 1904 trip and began talking about mountain things that he knew I would love to hear. Then he pulled a notebook out of his pocket and said, "Come on over here and let me show you this."

I went over and sat on his knee while he showed me his notebook that had in it the drawings that I have seen reproduced in books more recently, of the paths in the dust where little feet had made tiny little tracteries. Then there was a pit, and after two or three feet, the little tracteries would begin again, and again the pit would come. He asked me if I could think what that was, what had caused it. I don't think I did; I don't think I was smart enough to do that. He told me that it was a grasshopper that

OJ: walked along for a while and then got bored with walking and jumped, and then came down again into the dust.

I remember Muir as a very dear, gentle, smiling person, full of stories and full of affection for a little girl. The only thing that I remembered with some trepidation was that his beard tickled my face; I wish to goodness that I remembered more, but I don't. I do have a diary that my mother and father insisted on my writing, always, of course, to dictation. In 1906 there's one mention of Muir--I say, "Mr. Muir came to dinner tonight." But I have no further memory of that occasion.

## ON THE TRAIL WITH THE SIERRA CLUB, 1930s AND 1940s

### Revolt in the Women's Camp

Olivia Johnson: My husband [Harry R. Johnson] and I did a great deal of camping with burros. Albert and Eleanor Marshall often joined us. We started when the Marshalls were engaged. Of course, they couldn't go on a camping trip alone until they were married, so we went as chaperones. It became a habit, and we had a lovely time doing it. But when Mr. Johnson, who was a consulting geologist, got a job, he gave up any plans that had been made for the summer and went and did the job. I would check quickly to see whether I could join the Sierra Club High Trip instead of the pack trip that we had planned together. So I went on a good many Sierra Club trips alone, and simply camped in the women's camp.

This particular time we started from--my memory of geography and place names is not accurate, and I may be giving false information, but I hope this is correct--we started from the Giant Forest and went down into River Valley and then climbed up by Hamilton Lake to Five Lakes Basin, as I remember. I think it was on that trip that we came to Moraine Lake and were camped on the edge of the lake. The women's camp was right on the edge of the lake, and my camp was in the heather where the water was slapping the gravel six feet away. I heard it all night; it was a lovely sound.

There was a little low point of land that gave some protection to the women's camp from the commissary. One morning I was lying there enjoying the

OJ: sunshine and the fact that we were at leisure that day, when Dot Pepper\* and a friend of hers came by and said, "We're going swimming. Won't you go with us?" And I said, "Yes, I'd love to." They were going skinny-swimming, and we all piled into the water and swam out. I knew perfectly well that as we got out into the lake we would be visible from the commissary, but, after all, a head sticking out of the water doesn't tell whether you have a bathing suit on, or whether you don't have a bathing suit on.

So we were swimming around there and having a perfectly beautiful time and feeling very modest, when Dot, whose good spirits could get away from her once in a while, all of a sudden gave a wild whoop in imitation of a seal and pushed herself out of the water and then "blub-blub-blub-blub-blub-blubbed" down into the water.

Well, when you're swimming and you send the front half of your anatomy down into the water, you know what part of your anatomy comes out of the water. Dot had two very beautiful round pink biscuits, and each time she would give one of these whoops, she would dive into the water and up would come the pink biscuits. I realized that this was getting a little complicated and turned around and went paddling back to the shore. I wondered what was going to happen.

We all got dressed and went as a group in to get our breakfast. It was just at the peak of breakfast time, and most people were in the commissary. Mrs. [Walter] Huber was there, dressed in a khaki Norfolk jacket, khaki knickers and good Sierra boots. In her left hand she had a tin plate of pancakes and in her right hand a fork. She was brandishing the fork in the air and saying in a loud, firm tone of voice, "This should never have happened! This is disgraceful! This should never have happened!"

Tap [Francis Tappaan], who was the head of the trip that year, was saying quietly, "There are 360 degrees to a circle. You don't need to look in any

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\*Dorothy Leavitt Pepper, High Trip High Jinks, Terry Kirker, interviewer, Sierra Club History Project (Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1976).

OJ: one place at any one time." Then Mrs. Huber would trumpet again. The whole thing was very dramatic: half the camp was sort of giggling and looking at us with sympathy; the other half was being outraged with Mrs. Huber.

After we had had our breakfast, we went back to camp to settle in and think things over. One of the women that I admired and loved almost more than anybody else in the Sierra Club was Miss [Virginie] de Fremery. She was a very beautiful, gentle, rather frail, patrician lady, of an old San Francisco family, as I understand. She came around to camp, quietly saying to every person there in the women's camp, "I find this situation intolerable. I suggest that every woman in camp go swimming in the nude at eleven o'clock." Quietly, she went from one camp to another. At eleven o'clock, every woman there, in the nude, marched into the water. We had a beautiful swim. We marched out again, put on our clothes, and came in to lunch. There was no more conversation about-"This should never have happened." That was one of the vivid memories of Dot Pepper.

#### Comfort on the John Muir Trail

OJ: We had many interesting memories of camping along the John Muir Trail in the early days, but not memories of the Sierra Club. I'll tell you one anecdote because I think it is enchanting. Albert Marshall, who was a painter and very dear to a great many of the club members, and his wife were old campers, very careful campers. They did all sorts of things that one didn't usually do. For instance, Eleanor Marshall was famous for her dried apple pies on a pack trip. Algie would chamfer off the top of a log, and we would tack a piece of canvas on it. It became our molding board for rolling out pie crust, or for kneading bread, or any of those things. Then we would cook our products in the reflector oven.

When we were in camp for two or three days, Algie would take the pack saddles from the burros and set them up against a rock so that as you sat around the fire with your feet towards the fire, your back fitted into the place where the burro's back usually

OJ: fitted. To soften the whole thing, he would then take the canvas that covers the packs on the burros and fold it so that you sat on the canvas with your feet on the canvas, around the fire.

One day we were camped on the John Muir Trail when a very charming elderly gentleman, a thin, ascetic man, quite apparently a professor of some kind, and his maiden daughter were camped nearby. They had gone backpacking with very light equipment. We invited them to come and have dinner with us. They came to camp, and I had made bread, fresh baked bread, and Eleanor had made an apple pie. The men had been successful with their fishing, so we really had a magnificent dinner.

This darling old gentleman sat there with his back comfortably supported and his feet comfortably warm, and over and over and over exclaimed, "My word! but this is pleasant, Bessie. My word! but this is pleasant, Bessie." That phrase became a camp phrase that we used all the time.

Around the Campfire: Ansel Adams and Cedric Wright

OJ: I remember many of the people that were colorful-- Ansel Adams, for example. On one trip that I went on, Ansel was the master of the last campfire. The last day of leisure before we started out on a trip, we had a play and everybody came in costume. I had no costume of any kind, but I had taken a bathing suit, just a basic black bathing suit that covered one decently, and I took the bathing suit and sewed to pretty well the whole of it, the leaves of skunk cabbage, pointing down. I became a green nymph, and that pleased Ansel Adams very much.

The night before Ansel's play, the campfire was held in a tremendous ring of trees, a very wide ring; there was no danger of the campfire igniting the trees, because the opening was so widespread. The fire was put out in the morning. The embers had been doused in water; there were no coals. Several of us made sure, and I'm sure the management had made sure.

OJ: One young lady had been camped beside a log, and she had tucked her watch, at night, into a little crack on the log, and when she got to the next camp she realized that she had left her watch there. She went to the packers, and they had a horse they could let her take. She rode back and got her watch and then returned to our camp, just as Ansel's play, this last big party that everybody had been looking forward to, was breaking up. She came with the announcement that the fire that we had had the night before in the big open ring of trees had ignited the roots of the trees.

Though the surface was out and there were no embers on the surface, there were wisps of smoke coming up from the lines of roots all around. Apparently, the fire was traveling back to the trees, and there would be major trouble. So, on top of this day's trek and a big party, the men volunteered and went back and spent the night digging up the tree roots and putting out the fire, which I remember as a very dramatic episode.

I have another campfire memory that I would like to speak of, of Cedric Wright in a base camp at Shadow Creek, just below Ediza. The camp was within that beautiful grove of firs, just after you come over the lip of Lake Ediza. In the evening, around the campfire, we often had music, because Cedric had brought his violin with him. The first evening that he was asked to play, when we first got there, it caused me a great deal of amusement. Those great fir trees were full of thrushes, hermit thrushes, and they would sing as the twilight came and night closed down, sing divinely, a wonderful chorus. And then, after it began to get dark, there was silence.

This time it was just the gloaming--the light was fading--when the campfire was lit and Cedric started to play his violin. As he started to play and this thin, lovely thread of music rose up into the air, first one and then another, and then another of the thrushes woke up. They said to themselves, "Hey, look out. This is my vicinity. You just get out of here; I'll have none of this." All the thrushes all around came out in this most vigorous chorus, demanding that their environment be kept inviolate.

The other memory that I have of Cedric Wright,

OJ: that always amuses me to think of, is his kindness when we were starting off early on a day's trip. This was on the High Trips. There would be a very early call, and you were supposed to pack your dunnage and take it in as you went to breakfast. But I often found that when you took your dunnage bags in as you went to breakfast, you stood in line a long, long time. So I had formed a habit of getting up very promptly, rushing in and getting my breakfast, then going and gathering my things together. I'd bring my dunnage bag in just as things thinned out. I could get it checked and be off in the same amount of time, but with much more ease.

But Cedric didn't understand this, and it happened several times that when he would come by my camp, he would see that I had gone to breakfast, and my things were all around; the bag that we made up and kept all our little needments in, tied to a tree, was still on the tree, and my sleeping bag hadn't been rolled. He would think, "Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear," and he would gather up everything that I owned and dump it into the middle of my sleeping bag, firmly roll it up, chuck it into the dunnage bag, and take it and check it for me. Then he would tell me that he had done all this, and I would wait with dread for that night when I opened up an unholy mess. Cedric was quite a marvelous person, Cedric and Ansel.

#### High Trip Traditions: Tea, Tap, and the Pennyroyal Society

OJ: Paul Payne was an old geologist friend of my husband. He lived in Brentwood Park for a long time. We used to know the Payne family very well, and I was always tremendously amused by Paul Payne on the Sierra Club because he was deeply interested in the mountains and the things that he found beautiful and so satisfying in the mountains, but his secondary interest was his hatred of Elsie Bell Earnshaw. One of the royal entertainments at club trips, when Paul Payne was on the trip, was his spluttering and fuming at Elsie Bell. I must say that I sometimes shared his feeling.

I remember one time when the club had been going over a particularly difficult pass and they knew it

OJ: would be a great effort for everybody. We got up in the early, early morning, when it was pitch dark, and left camp just as the light began to filter in, with directions to "Pound the trail for the first few hours; don't stop and rest anywhere until you get over the hump."

Then we got down to a pleasant place by a stream, with a nice woods, and the rest of the way to camp was downhill and easy. We had been told that when we got here we might stop and rest and revive ourselves for the final stroll into camp. Both Elsie Bell Earnshaw and Paul Payne had arrived. I think Paul Payne's daughter, Maya, was with him at that time. Each of the two, Elsie Bell and Paul, had set up a camp and built a nice fire, and they had tea water boiling. They sang out to people as they came down after this difficult climb, "Come and have a cup of tea with us."

Each camp had its fire, but it also had its fireworks. Elsie Bell was cussing Paul Payne for being such a nosy old thing; it was her job, she said, to receive people; and Paul was spluttering at Elsie Bell. It was my last memory of both of them, as a matter of fact. I had forgotten that one entirely, but they were very great characters.

I always admired young Tap [Francis Tappaan] very much for the way he handled trips. He had such an interesting philosophy; he believed in certain things being done and certain routines being held, but he wasn't ever savage about them. I have seen him firm, but I have never seen him savage.

I remember once when we were camped on the sandy plateau where you come over Forester Pass. You see Milestone, the last camp before you reach Crabtree Meadow, across the sandy plateau. I happened to have been slow and lazy in getting off that day. It was an easy day, and I had taken it easy and had gone around camp gathering up tidbits that had been left.

Tap was doing the same thing. I realized after that, that he always did it; he always went around through the camp where people had thrown aside a pair of socks and had forgotten to pick them up, you know. He was gathering up the odds and ends and muttering that he couldn't quite see why people were so careless.

OJ: It was a thing that I often did; I used to be head of camping for the Los Angeles Council of the Girl Scouts at one period, when we were opening Camp Osito. They had a rule that you didn't have a camp name until it was given to you. So I was just Mrs. Johnson, which was very austere and very difficult.

When I went walking around the camp for any purpose I always used to grab a paper bag, and as I walked I would see a gum wrapper or some piece of tinsel or something that shouldn't be on the trail, and I would pick it up and put it in my paper bag. Then, when I got back to camp, I would throw it in the refuse. So I gradually earned my name; I was known as Magpie. I was being Magpie at the camp when Tap was there.

The Pennyroyal club! I think that Harry and I joined the Pennyroyal club when we were at a base camp at Glacier Lake across the divide from the Minarets and from Lake Ediza. We had gone in early with Joan Ludwig. Jerry Galwiss was in the commissary, setting up the camp. He was a great friend of Joan Ludwig's; he had suggested that she come in early, and we went along with her. We spent the night at a little hotel down in the valley and then went with the packers, who were taking supplies into camp. We enjoyed being there very much, seeing the camp set up.

Later, when the camp members came in, there was being held a very shining meeting of the Pennyroyal Society. The [Harold] Crowes, I remember, were there, and Bill and Murphy Evans, and we were inducted into the Pennyroyal Society, and really deserved membership, because we possessed the old Sierra Club cups with the raised letters, "Sierra Club of California." Not just raised "Sierra Club," and certainly not stamped "Sierra Club." But the ritual of preparing the Pennyroyal julep, I've always enjoyed very much.

TK: Dot Pepper mentioned that, too.

OJ: Did she tell you how to do it? With the spoon on the letters, mashing it all?

TK: Yes. Lovely.

OJ: I remember once being camped, not with the Sierra Club, but at Lodgepole in the Giant Forest. We came into camp just after the Sierra Club left. I think

OJ: they had their camp at Wolverton. We were tramping those areas after they had been there, and we collected eight or ten Sierra Club cups that had been dropped in the stream at a slightly difficult place to fish them out. People had just gone off and left them and collected another that night from the commissary. For a long time we had about a dozen Sierra Club cups. Half of them were very badly rusted, and I washed them and brought them home, but I didn't do anything more to them.

Just this last summer I took them up to Palo Alto and gave them to one of my grandsons, who is very much of a mountain man. He was simply enchanted, because they had the raised letters. He is a very fine mechanic and has entrée to many machine shops. He was going to take them in and sandblast them, remove the rust, and have himself a treasure of half a dozen old Sierra Club cups.

## FITTING THE FAMILY PATTERN: A LOVE OF NATURAL THINGS

## Appreciating and Preserving the Out-of-Doors

Terry Kirker: Were you ever active in any of the political activities of the Sierra Club?

Olivia Johnson: No, I've never had anything to do with that at all. Of late years, Mr. Johnson had a very serious nervous breakdown, just at the time of the Second World War--Pearl Harbor. He had been doing a great deal of field geology. He was, other geologists said, a genius at knowing from the surface manifestations what lay below. But he was not a mathematician. It was just at that time that the electric charge, indicating what lay below the earth's surface, came in and really made over geology. So the man who tried to do his finding of oil from surface indications was really obsolete.

Mr. Johnson hadn't realized that this was coming on because for a year he had been doing a tremendous lot of legal work. He had worked with the Geological Survey years and years and years ago, just after the earthquake at Stanford, and had a very vivid memory of much of the early development. He was used a great deal as an expert witness and had been doing this legal work all the year that the electrolog was first coming in.

All of a sudden, with Pearl Harbor, the in-fighting with which he was concerned as an expert witness stopped. He found himself high and dry because he was not a mathematician and not an electrician and wasn't fitted to interpret the new geology. It threw him into a very serious nervous breakdown, and after that we did gentle things. We went to Europe with a car and that sort of thing, but we weren't able to do

- OJ: any more of the mountain things. So my recent contact with the Sierra Club hasn't been as close as I wish it might have been.
- TK: Was your association with the Sierra Club responsible for your work in Save-the-Redwoods and all those other things later?\*
- OJ: Oh, I think so. I think the whole thing is a picture. In my grandmother's diaries, she speaks of a teacher who was particularly precious to her when she was a little girl of four, who had a botany book and told all the little children that walked to the little red schoolhouse--this little girl of four walked a mile to school every day--she told the children that if they would pick the flowers and bring them in and show them to her, she would tell them the names.

Grandmother describes two or three of the flowers that she found, learned the names of, and loved. She tells later of living in a rather bleak house in Ayer, where they took an end of the piazza, put glass around it, and raised flowers there in the wintertime. It was very precious to her; I think to all our family, flowers and plants and growing things have been extremely precious.

So, the Save-the-Redwoods League came naturally. [Col. Charles B.] Wing, whom we spoke of having worked with the saving of Point Lobos and having done so much in gathering property for the state parks, used to be deeply interested in the Big Basin. When I was a child in Palo Alto, I remember his going down. He would gather volunteers, students at Stanford, and they would

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\*Mrs. Johnson has been a member of the Planning and Conservation League, the Wilderness Society, California Tomorrow, Keep Lake Tahoe Blue, and Save the Otters. She has worked to establish a Santa Monica Mountain Park and has gathered memberships for Save San Francisco Bay. "I have done, over the years, a great deal of talking about the redwoods....have collected members for the Save-the-Redwoods League, and have badgered clubs to which I belong into giving fairly large sums to the league on a yearly basis." [from her response to Sierra Club History Committee questionnaire, 10-19-72]

OJ: go down for two or three days to fight fires in the Big Basin, when the call came that help was needed. So it's been part of the family tradition, all that work, that sort of thing.

#### Son David With the Club in 1945

TK: Are your sons still members?

OJ: No, I don't think either of the boys are members. My son, David Johnson, was very much interested in camping; he had a long camping tradition. I recall an event involving David--he was born in 1927 and he must have been seventeen or eighteen, so it would have been 1945, something like that. He was devoted to Cedric Wright. He loved Cedric Wright very much. Cedric had had a hernia operation, and the doctor said that he might go on the Sierra Club trip, but he must not do any carrying. He must not carry cameras at all. He called my son David and asked him if he would like to go on the Sierra Club High Trip with him, as his pony. He would do all the carrying, and go wherever Cedric went.

So David spent a month doing that and had a perfectly delightful time. The trip that year went to Crabtree Meadow and to Mount Whitney. Ben Fish had come in from Ventura with his own horses, a riding horse and a pack horse, and had joined the club at Crabtree Meadow. The horses evidently were used to more companionship than they got some days. One day when much of the club had gone off on exploration trips and the camp was pretty empty, these two horses, that were used to being part of the human family, came into camp.

They found it a little dull. Then they discovered that there was a perfectly lovely game they could play. You went from camp to camp. and you took the sleeping bags in your teeth, and you shook them. You shook and you shook and you shook and you shook, and if you shook long enough and devotedly enough, the feathers began to fly. Then you dropped them and you went to the next camp. So Ben Fish and his horses were not particularly favorites in that period.

OJ: Anyway, Cedric Wright decided that he wanted to take photographs of the top of Mount Whitney at sunset and at dawn. It hadn't been done at that time, and he wanted very much to do this. The long trail had been built, and the club was coming up for an early morning sunrise trip. They were going to climb during the night, up the easy trail and arrive there, more or less, at dawn. But Cedric wanted to go up the day before.

David, as his pony, was in charge of cameras and the commissary. Cedric's daughter--I don't remember her name--decided that this sounded like fun, and she'd go too. David gathered together enough fuel to cook a very meager breakfast and supper, and the commissary had given them the food to take. Ben Fish had volunteered to ride up with them and take the provender and their sleeping bags and all the rest of the gear. Then the club would come up the next day, and the packers would bring their stuff down. A good many people were riding up and the packers were coming.

All went well; they made their camp in the little old stone house up there and got things ready for the night. Then they did their photography until the light failed. David was just heating up their food for the night, and their sleeping bags were laid out, when they saw, coming up the trail, a man in slacks, tennis shoes, and a T-shirt. He was sort of staggering. They found out afterward that it had been the first time there had been anybody at night on the top of Whitney for thirty-five years.

Anyway, the man was very far gone with exhaustion. They divided their food with him, gave him a quarter of what they had. They all slept cold, slept close together, in order to give him some warmth, to share their warmth at night. The next day one of the first people that came up was [Dr.] Ed Wayburn.\* They told him of this man, and Ed Wayburn came and examined him and said, "Well, I think you're all right. It's been a close call, and you're very lucky that somebody was here, because if you'd had a night of exposure, I

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\*Edgar Wayburn, oral history in process.

OJ: don't think you'd have pulled through. "But," he said, "I think the packers will be up here later, and you can ride down with us. When they go out for food, we can see that you get out."

The young man said, "No, I'm not going to ride down with you at all. I'm going down to Independence, Lone Pine." He was a student of geography at the University of Chicago, and he and three companions had come west for the vacation. When they got to Lone Pine they had been very snooty, and they had asked somebody, "Anything worth seeing around here?" They had been told, "Yes, the highest mountain in the United States, the highest point of land in the United States, right up here." "Oh, where is it?" "Well, it's that mountain up there." "Can you climb it?" "Yes, you can climb it." "How do you climb it?" "Well, you drive up to Whitney Portal and you take the trail and you climb."

So these four young men had started off. One of them had a knapsack, and he put the food and the sweaters into it, and they took turns carrying it. The others got tired. But this man said he had started up Mount Whitney, and he was going to go. So he had walked on ahead of them, without his food and without his sweater, and had arrived at the top of the mountain.

Ed said, "Well, if you feel you must do that, spend the day up here lying on one of the sleeping bags in the sunshine, keep yourself warm and drink quantities of tea loaded with sugar. If you save your energy and build it up with the sugar, at the end of the day, when the packers start down to camp, ride down to the pass with them and then from there you walk down. You'll probably get there all right."

There wasn't anything else to do if the man wasn't going to do what he was told. That was the only thing to do. He said, "I don't like tea, and I don't like sugar, and I certainly am not going to spend the day lying here in a sleeping bag." Whereupon David, who thought the sun rose and set in Ed Wayburn, admired him greatly and still does, almost to the point of idolatry, said, "You poor goose! You have the best doctor in the Sierra here to tell you what to do, and you nearly lost your life because you were foolish, and you're going to stay here and lie in the sun on a

OJ: sleeping bag, and you're going to drink hot, sweet tea all day; and you're going to do it because I'm bigger than you are."

David stood over this idiot all day long. I don't know whether he held his nose--I wasn't there--but he certainly made him drink the hot, sweet tea. At the end of the day, when the packers saw him up onto a horse and took him down to the pass, he never said thank you to Ed Wayburn, and he never said thank you to David, and he never said thank you to Cedric Wright. He did say, "Thanks for the ride," to the packer, got off the horse, and started down the mountain.

Nobody knows what happened. I've always chuckled over that. David has a way of seeing things are accomplished, but he doesn't do it quite so primitively any more. It was effective.

When David's boys came to scouting age--he had known Harold Crowe,\* of course, all his life--he remembered vividly Harold Crowe saying that young boys do not belong walking long miles with heavy packs on their backs. He went with the Boy Scouts one summer on a trip in which they covered 150 miles.

When he got home, he said to the other scout people, "I will never go on such a trip again. I think that to send boys under a heavy pack where they walk ten miles a day seeing nothing but the dirt under their feet, and landing at camp so tired that they can't enjoy the mountains, is a crime, and I will have no part of it. But I will go in and establish a camp at Shadow Creek, near Lake Ediza, manage the camp for two weekends and a week"--or maybe it was three weekends and two weeks--and see that the boys are able to know the mountains. We will organize it so that the boys can go out on one-day trips or two-day trips and really know the mountains, know that region."

He did that for several years. They took along a good many parents--it was quite a big group of

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\*Harold E. Crowe, Sierra Club Physician, Baron, and President, Richard Searle, interviewer, Sierra Club Oral History Project [Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1975].

OJ: fathers who went--and two or three boys would go and climb over toward the Minarets and a group of perhaps a dozen would climb Ritter or Banner, or they would go off in small groups and spend the day quietly fishing. But not as trail-pounders, which he thought was very bad.

Harold Crowe: Doctoring in the High Sierra

OJ: Harold Crowe has been a great part of our lives. I don't remember how we met him, but it was so long ago that it just seems one of the things that are. He went with us once--Dot Pepper and Kate Smith, and Harry Johnson and Olivia Johnson, and the Crowes--to the Palisades camp. Norman Clyde used to stay the winters up at Palisades and guard the upper lodge, and there was a little lake below that upper lodge house. Dot Pepper, Harry and I, and Kate Smith were camped at the lake, and the Crowes, who didn't wish to be quite so vigorous, were staying up at the lodge. We all had our dinners at the lodge.

Kate Smith had a heart attack. Harold took her up to the little lodge, and she was in bed there. I remember his calling down early one morning, whooping to draw our attention. When Dot Pepper and I stood out in the open to hear what he had to say, he said, "I don't think we're going to get her out." He said, "She can't walk down, and there's no other way of getting her out. I think we're going to lose her."

A few hours later, the son of the man that owned the pack station at the foot of the trail came up with a pal of his and two horses. Harold heard the horses on the trail and ran out, saw these two boys, and with great skill painted to them the picture of this wonderful woman who was dying because of the altitude, and that he couldn't get her out, and her life could be saved by being got down to the valley.

These two boys, of course, responded immediately, and Kate was bundled into her clothes. I remember she had on a shirt that was made of the [camouflage] material that we developed during the war for the jungle combat troops--that ghastly green-leaf stuff, you know, olive green and blue green and all the other

OJ: things, the most sickening print. Kate was about the color of the green print. She sat on top of the horse--she had her feet in the stirrups--and she was hanging on to the saddle with her two hands. Her face just green-white, her eyes half-closed, she was swaying back and forth, managing to stay on.

Where it was possible, some person walked beside her to help hold her on, but the trail in a great many places was simply a little trail cut in the steep hillside, and there was no way of walking either side of her. She had to hang on--it was a question of dying of heart failure on the top, or dying of falling off a horse on the cliff. So they got her down. The two little boys were justly proud of saving this woman's life. And Kate was got down to the hospital and lived.

Harold was a very wonderful person in the way he took care of all the emergencies that arose. I believe he told me that nine times he had taken somebody who had misjudged what they could do, and he had got them out of the mountains before they died. In the meantime, when there wasn't any emergency, he was marvelous at a campfire, with his anecdotes and the funny stories he told. A very delightful person.

#### Grandmother Walks and the Orchid Trail

OJ: There is one story about Norman Clyde that I would like to add. I was so much interested in Dot Pepper's saying that Norman Clyde had not always been included in the climbing trips of the very efficient mountaineers. I don't doubt that's true, but I wasn't an efficient mountaineer so I wouldn't know. But he did institute something that I remember vividly, and again it was from a base camp trip near Shadow Creek.

He instituted Grandmother Walks, and they were posted as Grandmother Walks. They would not be very hard; they would not include a great deal of rock climbing, but they would go to the lovely places that you saw around you and wished that you could reach. He had only one absolute rule; he would not take anybody on a Grandmother Walk who had not learned to rappel down a rock face.

OJ: So here were all the grandmothers, Livie Johnson included, out learning to rappel down a rock face. My trouble was that I found it extremely stimulating, exciting, and I would like to have rappelled a good deal. He also was very anxious that you learn to leap from boulder to boulder, without stopping to teeter and balance yourself, because having an instinctive balance meant that you could move fast over a boulder field. If you had to stop and touch it with your fingers and wobble back and forth, it took a great deal of time.

He was a very pleasant director; he was firm, and he would very smartly say no if you were doing something foolish, but he was very good at cutting steps in icy snow fields and directing people, remembering to direct people to start with the right foot, or whichever foot was proper. He added a very nice element for older people to the base camps, that I appreciated tremendously.

One other item comes to my mind, that I always found very amusing. This happened on one of the trips in the thirties. I don't know just where it was; it was in fairly high country, more or less timberline country. We were going to be going over a pass that day. It was a high pass and arduous and zigzagged in the hot, bare granite. There was an easier way of going that the animals couldn't follow but that walkers could follow perfectly well. However, the management was afraid of sending people who really didn't know the mountains very well out to follow a trail that could only be described in general terms. So they had instituted what they called the Orchid Trail.

The Orchid Trail was very easy to follow. You'd go out of camp, and you'd see hanging from the branch of a tree a nice, long, waving strip of toilet paper. Then by the time you passed it you'd see ahead of you another waving strip of toilet paper. In this way, the track was marked from vision point to vision point, clear across the pass and down to where you could see very easily just where you were going.

The theory was that the following winter, in the first windstorm, the toilet paper would dissolve and be lost and not leave any blaze on a tree, or anything

OJ: confusing like that. I know that the Sierra Club did buy their toilet paper at the greatest advantage, and I imagine the first year they did this the toilet paper was orchid color. The year that we were there, I think it was all green. But I think that's the way the Orchid Trail got named. That is the end of the things that I remember particularly.

TK: Thank you very much, Mrs. Johnson.

## INDEX

Adams, Ansel, 13, 15

Boy Scouts, 24

camping equipment and apparel, 2, 5-6, 12,13, 18

Clyde, Norman, 25, 26-27

Colby, William E., 5

conservation, 20-21

Cornell University, 1

Crowe, Harold. 17, 24, 25-26

de Fremery, Virginie, 12

Dewey, John, 6

Earnshaw, Elsie Bell, 15-16

El Capitan, 4-5

Evans, Bill, 17

Evans, Murphy, 17

Fish, Ben, 21

Galwiss, Jerry, 17

Girl Scouts, Los Angeles Council of, 17

Hetch-Hetchy Valley, 6, 7-8

Huber, Mrs. Walter, 11, 12

Johnson, David, 21-25

Johnson, Harry R., 10, 19-20

Johnson, Olivia Rolfe:

family, 1-2, 6, 20, 21-25

1904 High Trip, 2-8

memories of John Muir, 8-9

on private camping trips, 12-13, 17-18, 25-26

Sierra Club outings, 1930s, 1940s, 10-28

conservation organizations, 20

Ludwig, Joan, 17

Marshall, Albert, 10, 12-13  
 Marshall, Eleanor, 10, 12-13  
 Marx, Guido, 2  
 Moraine Lake, 10  
 Muir, John, 8-9

outings. See Sierra Club outings

Payne, Paul, 15-16  
 Pennyroyal Society, 17  
 Pepper, Dorothy Leavitt, 11-12, 17, 25, 26

Rodham, Olivia, 1  
 Rolfe, Henry W., 1-2, 6  
 Rolfe, Olivia. See Johnson, Olivia Rolfe

Save-the-Redwoods League, 20  
 Sierra Club, 2, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17, 19, 20, 28. See also  
   Sierra Club outings  
 Sierra Club outings:  
   1904 High Trip, 2-8  
   1930s, 10-20, 27-28  
   1945, 21-25  
   base camp trips, 26-27  
   campfires and entertainment, 13-14  
   mores, 10-12  
   women on, 10-12  
 Smith, Kate, 25-26  
 Stanford University, 2, 7  
 Tappaan, Francis, 11, 16  
 transportation to the Sierra, 2-3  
 Tuck, Charlie, 5, 6, 7

Wayburn, Edgar, 22, 23, 24  
 Whitney, Mt., 21, 22-23  
 wildlife, 4  
 Wing, Colonel Charles, 2, 20-21  
 Wright, Cedric, 14-15, 21, 22

Yosemite Valley, 3-5

ROBERT R. MARSHALL

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ANGELES CHAPTER LEADER AND WILDERNESS SPOKESMAN, 1960s

An Interview Conducted by  
Reed Holderman

Sierra Club  
History Committee

1977

SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	iii
SCHISM IN THE ANGELES CHAPTER, 1959-1960	1
Family, Education, and Early Outdoors Experience	1
The Battle Over Membership Policies: Racial Discrimination and the Loyalty Oath	4
The Angeles Chapter, 1960-1965: Intrigue, Bickering, and Uncontrolled Growth	10
CHAIRING THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE, SOUTHERN SECTION, 1962-1965	14
The Challenge of Advising the Board of Directors	14
Defenders of the San Gorgonio Wilderness Mineral King and the Changing Board: A Crucial Turning Point	18
	25
ANGELES CHAPTER CHAIRMAN, 1965-1966	31
Facilitating the "Blossoming" of the Chapter	31
Bylaws Revision, 1967	37
A Self-Evaluation	41
EARLY ANTAGONIST OF DAVID BROWER	43
Brower's Offenses: Hubris, Defiance, Financial Mismanagement	43
Publicizing the Controversy: The "Xerox Circuit"	49
Unsuccessful Candidate for the Board, 1968	54
Ending a Decade of Involvement	57

REFLECTIONS ON PEOPLE, ISSUES, AND IDEAS	60
The Sierra Club Council: An Essential Element	60
The Forest Service: An Uneven Organiza- tion	62
Some Outstanding Club Leaders	64
Some Significant Changes in the Sierra Club	65
Vocations and Avocations, 1960s	67
On Nature, the Value of Wilderness, and Politics	69
APPENDIX	76
INDEX	88

## INTRODUCTION

The following interview with Mr. Robert R. Marshall covers a decade of fascinating Sierra Club history (1958-1968). Mr. Marshall provides a perceptive and frank account of his involvement in club controversies, ranging from the loyalty oath petition in 1960 to the Dave Brower "affair" of the late sixties. In addition, he discusses in depth the political dynamics within the Angeles Chapter, which he chaired in 1965-1966, and his work on a wide range of conservation issues as chairman of the southern section conservation committee and leader of the Defenders of San Geronio.

Mr. Marshall's thoughtful comments comprise a valuable historical record of the Sierra Club in the 1960s, a crucial decade of growth and change in the club, the conservation movement, and American society at large. The interview was conducted on November 1, 1976, for the California State University, Fullerton-Sierra Club Oral History Project. I wish to express my thanks for the cooperation of Mr. Marshall and the assistance of the staff of the CSUF Oral History Program and the Sierra Club History Committee.

Reed Holderman  
Fullerton, California  
March, 1977



## SCHISM IN THE ANGELES CHAPTER, 1959-1960

### Family, Education, and Early Outdoors Experience

Reed Holderman: Good afternoon, Mr. Marshall. I would like to begin the session by having you discuss your early life with particular attention to your parents' background, your birthplace, your early childhood, education and things like this.

Robert Marshall: Okay. My mother was born in Indiana, and was a Texan, really, for the most part. My father was a Canadian. As a matter of fact, he was a pretty old man when I was born; he was about sixty. I was born in Salt Lake City in 1935; well, there goes my age. We moved out of Salt Lake City down to Pomona, California, in 1944. It was before the end of the war because my father retired. He had suffered a nervous breakdown and settled onto an orange grove. So most of my schooling turned out to be in Pomona before the college level. I went through the whole school system in Pomona and finally ended up going to college at Cal Tech in Pasadena.

Now, I guess, it's about time to get into where I go tromping up and down hills. That turns out to have started when I was a Boy Scout. Back in my records, the first time I did anything of any real consequence was up at the Boy Scout camp in the summer of 1949 when I took a try on good old San Gorgonio or Old Grayback, which was the great goal for everybody back in those days. This was before the days of the "Poopout Hill" Road. We actually did it on a one day basis, which meant it was about a twenty-one mile trip from Jenks Lake up and back. Supposedly, I shouldn't have been able to make it, but I did, to everybody's astonishment, including my own. That was it until 1955.

RM: Nothing much happened until I went to college and fell into sort of a "bad crowd." I refer to them that way. A couple of friends who wanted to go places and I felt like recreating my old triumph a couple of times. We'd get a topographic map and say, "Here's a good goal," and pick something like San Gorgonio or San Jacinto or San Antonio and look at it and say, "Here's a good way to go." Then someone would say, "Oh no, look, this way is harder, let's try that way instead." And they would say, "Yeah, yeah, let's go that way." Then someone would say, "Here's a harder way yet; this is even more of a challenge. Let's go that way."

On that basis we ended up trying to go to San Jacinto from Chino Canyon, which was before the days of the tramway, and there was no trail. We went up on the north ridge and were darn lucky to get as far as Long Valley, especially since we had run out of water about three hours before. We were lucky because there was still some snow on the ground, or that would have been that. Also we ended up getting stranded up above 11,000 feet on the western side of San Gorgonio, in February, one night in the darkness. We had a few lucky ones. So, when I finally got away from that crew by graduating in 1957, I decided, well, now this is pretty good, but there ought to be a little more sense about this thing, a little bit more rationality.

So, one of the first things I did when I got out of college was look up the Sierra Club, which I had at least heard of, and I discovered that they had this number listed in the phone book. I went down to the Angeles Chapter office at the Philharmonic Auditorium office building, saw the schedule, bought one, and it was like a kid being turned loose in a candy store. I started going on all sorts of things right and left, and finally, by about January 1958, I decided that I would be an honest man and join the club; so I did. By that time, I wasn't a kid anymore, so maybe that answers the question.

RH: Why did your parents leave Salt Lake City and come to the Pomona area? Was it primarily due to your father's illness?

RM: Yes, they wanted to retire into something and bought an orange grove because my father was sort of an agriculturalist--actually, animal husbandry. His position was

- RM: the executive secretary of the National Wool Growers Association. So, by buying an orange grove, he had something to come down to and have an active retirement.
- RH: Why did you decide to enroll at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, and what was your area of study there?
- RM: I wanted to be an engineer, so I ended up being an engineer. My degree was in electrical engineering. I don't know why I wanted to be an engineer.
- RH: When did you join the Sierra Club, and what were your reasons for joining?
- RM: The exact day I can't pin down tighter than about January of 1958. Basically, the reason was because I was going on all their trips and meeting all of these people; it seemed like sort of a dirty trick not to go ahead and join.
- RH: So you went on a number of outings, then? Is this how you became involved in the administrative and political end of the Sierra Club?
- RM: Some of the first people I ran into, by virtue of sharing a ride up to a hike out in Mineral King, were Tom and Trudie Hunt. Trudie was destined to be a chapter chairman in another couple of years down the pike. About mid-1958, when I finally got my first genuine two weeks' vacation as a real employed person, I decided to take one of them on a great experiment and go out on an eight-day knapsack trip. It was one where the group planned a knapsack trip, an experiment which the outings committee dropped later because it didn't seem to be worth the trouble.

This one was a southern California group planned trip, which meant that the leadership was down in southern California, and it was primarily for people in southern California. Months in advance the group would get together to map out the itinerary, plan menus and stuff like that, jointly, instead of just going and having things done. The leader of that trip was Tom Amneus, and he too was destined to be a chapter chairman, as a matter of fact, the next year. The Sierra Club has always been characterized by, "if you don't

RM: watch out, you get sucked into everything." It's not hard at all for it to happen.

#### The Battle Over Membership Policies: Racial Discrimination and the Loyalty Oath

RH: How did you get sucked up into administrative matters? You became involved in several controversies in the Sierra Club. The earliest was over the loyalty oath. When did this loyalty oath come up and what role did you play in the controversy?

RM: I think we need to have a little bit of background on the loyalty oath. It's amazing how people have forgotten about it. It's no accident that the Sierra Club is called a club. In fact, it really was. Even when I joined in 1958, you had to have two sponsors who vouched for you personally. On top of that, at least in the Angeles Chapter, you had to meet with the membership committee, and they presumably did some investigating and then decided whether or not to approve you. It was in every sense of the word a club, at least it was historically.

The Angeles Chapter, which after all was the oldest and still is the oldest chapter in the club, was the last holdout for continuing the club's membership practices. It traces its roots back further than any of them. Well, I didn't mind this stuff, being fresh out of college. I didn't have any particular problems.

About this time, I don't know exactly when, there was a real breakthrough when the first Jew joined the Angeles Chapter. I don't know too many of the details of it, except that Dick Sill was one of those who participated in creating this breakthrough. He got his start down here too. A few years later the first Oriental joined, and I don't know any of the details of that one either. I never asked, and I was never told, except that he was a damn good man and made a major contribution to the chapter. It wasn't a particularly pleasant experience for him joining.

The old guard powers that be, if you will, would seem to center at the regular Wednesday night meetings at Green's Cafeteria in downtown Los Angeles, with a

RM: side bunch of activity from the Pasadena group which went way back. We were a little bit worried about some of the things that were going on. The chapter itself was getting up to about four thousand members at that point, and that's an awfully big club. The membership committee had to be responsible for the personal integrity of four thousand people, which is a little bit hard to do.

The rest of the club had already decided to get away from this sort of thing. The decision to go "national," I believe, had already been made, and it was having its impact in these ways too. In other words, the decision to go "national," which I think gets picked up on in other parts of this whole history, had several implications--one of which was a change in membership strategy and moving away from being a true club. The people in southern California didn't particularly feel comfortable about this.

As Tom Amneus\* told me later, he had fallen into their good graces. He had been nominated and successfully elected into the chapter's executive committee. He related one conversation to me. I don't recall the exact details, except it went something like this. One of these people sidled up to him and said, "How would you like it if a big Negro sat down on the sofa next to your daughter and started talking to her?" He was startled at the nerve of the question as much as anything. He hadn't ever thought about that, and he gave a snap answer, "Oh, I don't know if I'd like that at all." On that basis they thought he was safe. He ended up being elected chapter chairman in 1959.

It was during 1959 that the first Negro applied for membership in the Angeles Chapter. I know I'm supposed to say black, but this is history and the term wasn't even in use then, so she was a Negro, Negress--that makes matters worse, doesn't it? I met her; she was a school teacher. She knew what she was getting into. The people who sponsored her didn't. Any person at that time who wilfully joined a club like the Sierra

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\*Thomas Amneus, New Directions for the Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, Eric Redd, interviewer, Sierra Club Oral History Project (Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1977).

RM: Club just to prove to the people who sponsored her that they didn't realize that there was going to be trouble, has to be classified as sort of an activist, a person that an old reactionary is likely to get a little worried about.

Sure enough, it all broke loose like crazy during Tom Amneus's chairmanship of the chapter, and they sure picked wrong about Tom because he was a very dyed in the wool liberal. He was quite shocked that anybody would suggest that she be excluded simply because she was a Negro. That was really about the only reason anybody could offer. He'd have none of it and immediately took the matter to San Francisco. I think the first reply came from Dave Brower.\* It was something to the effect that he would resign from the club if he thought that somebody was being excluded for this reason.

She was, in fact, not the first Negro in the club as a whole. There had been a couple who had snuck in without any notice in several other chapters somewhere along the line. I don't know any of the details because nobody paid any attention to it at the time. So, the members of the executive committee who were not willing to let the issue settle at that, being very disturbed at what their chairman was doing, made a couple of discreet inquiries to members of the board-- some of the older ones in particular. They discovered that there wasn't any sympathy for their position from the board either. One or two were, but in general, the board refused to support that kind of a thing. The lady ended up becoming a member of the Angeles Chapter, not terribly active; we never heard very much from her since then, which is no big surprise.

Nonetheless, the fears were starting to get aroused because, for one thing, the local membership committee was being overruled. About this time, a year after the trip Tom led, I knew him better, and we were all chasing around in the hills. Trudie Hunt was in on this fully, and we had lots of fun talking about these things around campfires and on the trail, generally forming a group of young turks. The funny part of it was that most of the people in these young turks were older than any of the people in the old guard, except me; I wasn't that old.

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\*See Amneus, appendix.

RM: In 1960 I ended up being the chairman of the anti-litter committee, really great. Oh, it was something to do. Trudie Hunt had gotten the thing going the year before. The idea of clean-up trips had been started about the year before that by Fred Eissler in Santa Barbara. I think Trudie went on the first clean-up trip and thought it was a neat idea. She thought the chapter ought to be doing it and tried to organize a clean-up trip or two. She did it for a while, and, what do you know, I ended up doing it because it was something to do. I was having fun and looking for things to do.

I was also a member of the Committee for the Hundred Peaks Section, because most of my activity was running up the hundred peaks. It's a great game, but a lot of people take it seriously, which is sort of dumb. Meanwhile, the issue of the blacks was not really quite that dead; it seemed to have been settled, but the uneasiness was still there.

Another couple got sponsored for membership about that point. The name of Mead Kelsey comes back. It isn't really very important. They were nice upstanding people, except that they were members of the Unitarian Church of Los Angeles and a little bit firebrand, somewhat radical and activist. But once again nothing really to get excited about, except that some people saw red because the Unitarian Church of Los Angeles had been brought up in the House Unamerican Activities Committee hearings--even though McCarthy had been discredited by then--and had had some rather unkind things said about it. One interesting difference with this particular church was that it had decided to go to court in defense of its good name, and it won.

Once again, in the case of the Kelseys, this was the only thing that I heard substantive that anybody could claim against them. Personally, I don't think that they were that radical. I doubted very much if they were Communists, and quite frankly, I didn't care. I wasn't as worried about what people were as what they did--that was what mattered. However, once again, the membership committee crowd got very worried about this because at the same time they were getting more and more pressure from San Francisco to quit passing judgment on people. The rate of growth was such that there wasn't a chance that they could pick up on it.

RM: I believe there was a challenge here, but once again it didn't meet with any real sympathy from Mills Tower. A gentleman by the name of Walt Heninger decided that was just too much for him, and he started going after it but good. Where he didn't really have very much luck yelling "Negro," he found he could have some luck yelling "Commie," with this crowd. What it really was, more than anything else, was that the membership committee feared the thought of being turned into a totally different function and being no longer an approval body.

Some real rabble-rousing went on. The chapter tended to polarize quite a bit. Tom Hunt was a professor of philosophy at Mount San Antonio Junior College, and that will automatically tell you where his head was at. I never really knew that much about Tom Amneus's background, but there wasn't any question about where his head was at either. I was a fresh young idealist out of school. There were a number of others like us, especially people active in the Sierra Peak Section, which had been growing up more or less despite the membership committee, down at Green's Cafeteria. Green's Cafeteria went out of business about now, so they had to move to Clifton's Cafeteria.

So we all started electioneering. In fact, this electioneering started before the loyalty deal really hit. During 1960, because nobody else would take it, I ended up being chairman of the chapter's conservation committee, and on that basis during 1960, I was also nominated for the chapter's executive committee. If you think the electioneering that went on at the club level later was anything, you should have seen what went on in the chapter. Postcards and flyers were going out all over the place, forming of slates, hanky-panky on the nominating committee, scheming about this, that, and the other thing.

For example, when the nominating committee was under the control of the old guard, they would nominate, if there were four people to be elected, exactly the four that they wanted and about eight or ten people from the so-called young turks, thus dividing the young turk vote among extra candidates. Then the rest of us all would be standing by with our petitions ready to go to get our slate. We actually had candidates requesting

RM: that they not be voted for, so as not to let the dilution strategy work. In fact, when all things were considered, the whole thing was kind of disgusting. But it went on for some time. In my first year I didn't get elected, I hadn't done anything, but it was kind of interesting electioneering.

In fact, the loyalty oath issue ended up being settled so far as the club was concerned toward the end of 1960. The board of directors was confronted with a petition which was handily signed. It would have changed four sections in the club's bylaws. Despite the fact that it required a fairly simple statement that the applicant was loyal, etc., that really wasn't the significant operating part about it. It was a sort of watered down loyalty oath of the sort that was just now finally beginning to fall out of favor. The significant operating part was in Section Four, where the chapter membership committee once again received full say over who could or could not be a member. That was really the operative part of it that would make things work.

Heninger's arguments tended to be pretty wild and wooly. The board, in presenting this issue, decided that it was important enough to confront it strongly and held a special election in November, 1960, on just this issue. The board considered about two or three paragraphs of very short argument opposed to the amendment, which was passed unanimously to accompany the ballot. As a matter of fact, there was a member of the board at that time who was nominally sympathetic with these people, but the board's argument against the amendment was so delicately worded that he found it impossible to vote against it himself. To present the arguments for, the board simply took the broadside that Walt Heninger had supplied with the petition and reproduced it photographically intact. It ended up with about four times the area on the ballot arguments.\* The amendment lost handsomely, and as far as the club was concerned that was the end of it.

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\*Loyalty oath petition reproduced in Amneus, Appendix.

The Angeles Chapter, 1960-1965: Intrigue, Bickering,  
and Uncontrolled Growth

RM: But as far as the chapter was concerned, that was not the end of it. The people were still afraid. So, we had the old guard and young turks battling it out, and the irony of it is that most of the young turks were older than the old guard. So the battle dropped back to the executive committee in the Angeles Chapter. We settled down everywhere else, except in the executive committee in the Angeles Chapter.

Looking back on it once again, it was funny because for a couple of years there was a clear pattern. There would be a hard-fought election with all kinds of accusations and dirty tricks flying back and forth. Unfortunately, it had a tendency to occur on both sides. The executive committee would get seated; it was sort of split. Early in the year they would settle on some issue to have a big knock-down-drag-out battle about. Finally, they would settle it one way or the other.

One year, for example, it was the editor of the Southern Sierran, which was the chapter publication. Another year, sadly enough, it was the chairman of the conservation committee. That's when I lost it, as a matter of fact. After they got this one thing off their chest and sort of established the balance of power for the rest of the year, everybody was so tired and smarting from all the wounds that they would be very polite. Nothing else would happen for the rest of the year until it came time to try again the next year. Then the nominating committee would be appointed, and all sorts of strange things would happen. The schemers would all get together back in their corners and try to win the battle and fail.

This was going on for a great many years. In 1960, I was on the ballot. In 1961, after being unsuccessful in the election, and because nobody else would do it, I ended up with the chapter conservation committee. In 1962, I lost the chapter conservation committee, but interestingly enough, as a chairman of the chapter conservation committee, I was ex-officio member of the southern section of the club's conservation committee, which preceded the Southern California Regional Conservation Committee. At that time it was a branch of the club's conservation committee, which was advising the board of directors.

RM: In 1962, I was asked to take on the chairmanship of the southern section, which almost floored me, because it turned out to be a rather prestigious position and helped ease the smart of being booted out of the chapter conservation committee chairmanship. That was also the year that the San Gorgonio battle started up again. My recollection is that it was January of 1962 when we first got a little hint that an industrialist by the name of Alex Deutsch thought it would be a great place to build a ski lift. We had a special insert in the March Southern Sierran, and we were off and running.

Meanwhile, the executive committee was still fighting its little games, and not much was happening. In 1960, instead of being nominated to the 1962 executive committee, I got to be one of the conspirators on the nominating committee. In 1962 I was nominated again for the executive committee in 1963, partly because of my role as chairman of the southern section, which was a position in which I found myself occasionally representing the club, and partly because of my getting going on the San Gorgonio battle. I got elected to the executive committee.

San Gorgonio was an interestingly popular issue among most people in southern California. We felt it would be, when we got into it. That year the executive committee went through another couple of battles, and I served the two-year term with nothing much happening. I believe by now I have overshot the answer to your question, which was how I got into things.

RH: Going back on some of the items you mentioned, you said that some of the people in this Hundred Peaks Section took it too seriously. In what respect did they take this too seriously?

RM: There were places where you could bag eight peaks on the Hundred Peaks Section list in one day, if you scheduled things right. Some people felt that was really a dreadful cop-out. How could anybody consider that a serious accomplishment? Well, the answer is that the people who first cooked up the Hundred Peaks Section saw it as a game. The fact that some of the peaks were very hard and some were very easy didn't bother them at all.

RM: The Hundred Peaks Committee used to argue about whether or not such and such a peak really ought to be added to the list. The list was supposed to take into account everything in the non-desert area of southern California that was over five thousand feet, because you had to draw the line somewhere. We used to have arguments about how much above the ridge did a bump on it have to be, to be allowed to qualify as yet another peak. They kept arguing about adding new peaks to the list, and it turned out that the whole thing was a game. Most people took it that way.

I finally earned my emblem by climbing the one hundredth one. I don't remember now when, but it was pretty early. I went to a lot of trouble to make sure that my hundredth peak was "Folly" peak. I was enjoying it immensely, of course, but I didn't take it seriously.

The Desert Peak Section got started because the Sierra peakers who were gung-ho types couldn't go anywhere in the winter. The Sierra got all snowed in. The kind of climbing that they liked to do wasn't practical, and they didn't feel like sitting on their you-know-whats all winter. So, they went out and started finding difficult desert peaks to climb.

RH: You mentioned that the loyalty oath came to a national referendum and that it was soundly defeated, but that there were still intrigues and discussions in the Angeles Chapter. What date would you use to terminate the loyalty oath controversy in the Angeles Chapter, and why was it terminated?

RM: That's rather easy. First of all, the intrigue, etc., that I mentioned, never really got very specific. It was never really quite clear what people were really fighting for. Except that one of the things we were concerned about was that while all of this bickering was going on, nothing else was happening. Quite frankly, I think the thing ended in January of 1965, when I got elected chairman of the chapter, which couldn't possibly have happened in those days unless everybody was willing to say, okay, enough.

During this period of five years you would have to describe the executive committee of the chapter as ineffective. The chapter was just going on its old merry way, going like crazy, and groups and sections were forming just because people wanted to do things.

RM: You might think of it as uncontrolled growth, and yet they were really going along quite well. The San Fernando Valley Group got started during this period. There were one or two other activities and sections starting to get organized. I believe we picked up the Orange County Group. The San Fernando Valley Group was by far the most significant in time.

In Dick Searle's interview, you'll notice some mention about it, because he entered the club about this time through that door. He mentions that they were rather unhappy about some vague things that seemed to boil down to a feeling of being neglected, and they wanted to secede and form their own chapter. Well, they were neglected; as a matter of fact, so was everybody else. The truth of the matter is that this was a blessing in disguise, because if they weren't being encouraged, they also weren't being hindered or harassed either.

The whole club, but in particular the chapter, was really blossoming during this period that the executive committee was sitting around licking its wounds. It was essential to put an end to this, if for no other reason than to preserve the chapter. There was a possibility that it might have split apart. I don't think it was ever a serious threat, but if the executive committee had continued to sit there ignoring all the time, I think that things could have fallen apart.

PH: So your shuttling in and out of conservation committee chairmanships was directly related to this schism over the loyalty oath?

RM: Right. Once only. I got on in the first place because nobody else would do anything. There wasn't anybody to take on the conservation committee. I was chairman of the chapter's conservation committee for only one year. I got booted out of it, but then took over the southern section and just stayed there. In fact, I was chairman of the southern section until about 1965.

CHAIRING THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE, SOUTHERN  
SECTION, 1962-1965

The Challenge of Advising the Board of Directors

Reed Holderman: Could you elaborate on your duties as southern section chairperson for the conservation committee and the kind of issues that you were involved in?

Robert Marshall: Yes, that's really kind of important. However, for the sake of being historical again, I was the chairman. The southern section of the club's conservation committee at that time was primarily an advisory agency studying and recommending conservation policy to the board of directors. Occasionally, it included some implementation.

Implementation was one of the things the staff at Mills Tower sometimes handled for us. Also, implementation was delegated to the chapters, and as a matter of fact, implementation was always delegated to chapters by implication if nothing else. It turns out to have never been a problem with the Sierra Club because there was always somebody around who wanted to work on a given project, and all you really had to do was let them.

The southern section was sort of the junior branch of a deliberative body which was being relied on very heavily by the board of directors. Rather than being an activist committee, it was a deliberative committee, which was something a little bit strange and different. It was a role I found kind of fascinating. The challenge of being able to do your homework well enough to be able to recommend and defend a position to the board of directors for the club as a whole to adopt, was not that easy to do because the board was rather fussy about it.

RM: In those days, they were extremely thoughtful. Nobody brought up points of privilege in board meetings. The directors never brought up, on their own, some issue to be discussed unless it was genuinely an emergency issue. If a director brought up an issue and proposed a position on it, and it had not been presented to the conservation committee for study, other board members would just simply put a stop to it and make sure it went through the committee. Major issues were discussed extensively on a pro and con basis, with "devil's advocate" positions being taken. It seemed as if the club's board wanted to make darn sure that it was in a position to defend any position that it took. However, once they made up their mind, they could really go.

The southern section was the junior arm of the committee, which was responsible to this sort of thing on a conservation basis. Its membership was substantially ex officio. Any directors who happened to reside in southern California, the chairmen of all chapters within the southern California chapters, and a number of members at large, who were chosen fairly carefully. They were usually people who were able to recall back twenty years.

In this position, I was representing issues and trying to propose and iron out issues for the board which had more than just the interests of southern California issues in mind. It didn't matter whether it went out beyond chapter boundaries or not at that time. Also, we had some coordination to do, and it was a communications channel back. So in 1962, I started having direct contact with the board of directors and what was going on in the national level, because the chairman of the southern section attended board meetings. I got my round trip transportation paid, too, all eighteen dollars of it. I held that office until 1965.

That was my only real office of any consequence in the club, except being a member of the executive committee, until I was elected chapter chairman. A few months after that I stepped down from the southern section because enough work is enough. So it wasn't quite a matter of going on and off.

I gather I was building a reputation during that period. I found that I was changing quite a bit, because the business of being responsible to that

- RM: board of directors was a hell of a challenge. It really would test your reasoning power, degree of responsibility, and the amount of homework you're doing daily. I thought it was delightful. The experience made you do a lot of thinking. One of my real regrets, worse than the Brower problem, was when the board changed its character and quit relying on its committees.
- RH: What kind of issues did the southern section of the conservation committee take up and what would the board of directors deliberate on?
- RM: We averaged about twenty active issues at one time. This was before Earth Day. The environmental movement itself had not really blossomed yet. The Sierra Club was a bit of a specializing organization, although it liked to refer to itself as a conservation organization. It was a preservation organization, especially in wild areas, wild lands and wilderness, national parks, etc. That was its historical role; that was the role it was still trying to get into. We didn't get into battles over city parks.

The anti-litter effort was not really a recycling project at all. It was just an attempt to call people's attention to the fact that the old method of burying cans in the back country was no longer adequate. It was a public relations ploy to get an attitude changed that was no longer satisfactory with regard to back country usage. We were hot and still trying to nail the last coffin nail in the San Jacinto tramway, which we lost. There were issues of sanitation salvage logging going on, beetle infestations, usage of areas and lands of Anza-Borrego State Park. There was just no shortage of them.

We had an issue come up again over Mineral King, which was rather pertinent and a bit of a turning point. Back in 1947 and 1949, the board had actually voted to approve the eventual development of Mineral King as a ski resort area. Part of my job was to implement and follow board policy. There had been a great deal of argument about it. It was part of an attempt to compromise and part of an attempt to avoid building a trans-Sierra Mammoth road. It seemed like a reasonable thing to do. Mineral King had been left out of Sequoia National Park because it had been heavily

RM: logged around the turn of the century. It was felt to have been disturbed as far as natural areas were concerned.

In those days, resort ski areas weren't really very much of a blight on the landscape. It just involved building a road up there, and there already was a road up there in Mineral King. This road was a doozer; it took two years off of your life to drive, but it was fascinating. It already existed, so the Disney plans to build at Mineral King go back quite a ways. They go back to this time when we first heard noises about it. The Kern-Kaweah Chapter wanted to deal with the problem and put a stop to it.

I found myself treading a delicate line, trying to take care of their legitimate concerns, because times had changed. I also tried to be consistent with standing board policy, which I had every reason to believe the board would probably stay with. We hashed that thing around for about a year and a half and finally ended up returning with a sort of a compromise position, where we wanted to reserve the right to put specifications on how the development would occur. In fact, we had gotten so far as to draw up a list of restraints that should be placed on the development; not only Disney but the U.S. Forest Service were very interested in this. I thought they were very severe and stringent restraints. Something fell between the cracks, and the board ended up reversing their old policy, and away we went. Maybe they were right.

But this was the general kind of thing we were getting into--a great deal of discussion, proposals for extensions of wild area, reclassification of primitive areas, a certain amount of coordination with national battles. The Grand Canyon controversy was getting going during this period. When I turned the files of that committee over to my successor, they filled about four file drawers.

RH: Who was your successor?

RM: Robin Ives, who eventually ended up being chairman of the Angeles Chapter.

## Defenders of the San Gorgonio Wilderness

RH: Did you get involved in the San Gorgonio issue through your participation on this particular committee, or was that something happening outside of the southern section?

RM: That depends on your viewpoint. The southern section certainly was interested in it, because the club had a strong position on it--had had it before--and it was right up the club's alley. However, when things started to heat up, after about a year, some of us decided that for one thing the Sierra Club had started to become the center of taking flak from the skiing interests. The Sierra Club had been in a position of opposing the ski area interests recently in other locations, especially at Mammoth. It had happened at one or two other areas, where the club had been successful in trying to hold back on some ski development. The skiers were very uneasy about this and saw us clearly as a big bad boogey man.

Some of us thought that it would be much better if the Sierra Club didn't have to take a central role in the San Gorgonio battle. So we formed an organization called Defenders of San Gorgonio Wilderness, and, despite what some people think, it was not a front organization for the Sierra Club. The fact that there was quite a bit of overlap was not that important, because we had no trouble at all separating things. We didn't have total overlap.

Just a handful of us set it up in about March of 1963; we launched it by having a little flyer asking for donations and anything else anybody would give. We tried to circulate it about as widely as we could. It was mailed as an insert to the Southern Sierran, for example. It finally got to moving a little bit. We put out the first publication in about March. Basically, we just put out a newsletter whenever we thought there was enough stuff to put out. I did a full set of them, as a matter of fact, because I helped myself into being in the position of editor, so that I could have the fun of making them the way I wanted. The club, of course, was interested and active.

The president of the Defenders of San Gorgonio Wilderness was a gentleman in San Bernardino by the name of Joe Momyer. It's spelled M-O-M-Y-E-R, and I

RM: used to kid him about not knowing how to spell his own name. Nobody who sees it for the first time pronounces it quite right. Joe was not at that time active in the Sierra Club, although he had been some years back. It turned out that he was a participant in the battle over that area in 1939, when a similar proposal had come up. He had also been briefly a director of the club. That was all pretty much behind him.

Joe was getting pretty well along in his years and held a high position in the San Bernardino post office. Joe had the marvelous knack of being someone everybody liked, and vice versa. He would agonize over these decisions. Even after he was president of the Defenders, he did a lot of soul searching on whether he was really justified in taking this position because he loved ski touring and downhill skiing. He thought everybody ought to be able to have experience at both.

The vice-president was Neale Creamer, who was a fresh, young attorney in Los Angeles, who was also active in the Sierra Club from an outing standpoint, but had no offices and didn't particularly want to get into any. The secretary was Alice Krueper, who became the secretary of the Riverside Chapter, which is now the San Gorgonio Chapter. I got to be treasurer because we figured that most of the money was probably going to go to the printer. Since I had already helped myself to being editor and was going to publish a newsletter, we figured that we ought to put the two together. We got Harry C. James, who had a lot of good connections, to put together a big prestigious advisory board for us. We ended up with a lovely list of people who were willing to go on a letterhead. We didn't want to do anything bad with their assistance, but we didn't really ask them to do a whole lot.

We set it up and got going as best as possible and scrupulously maintained our independence from the Sierra Club all through the battle. We coordinated, yes, and the fact that the editor and treasurer was the chairman of the club's southern section helped the conservation committee coordination quite a bit. Quite often the Defenders would go on a different tack from the Sierra Club and vice versa. We didn't really feel any obligation to follow board policy.

RM: The advantage of having a separate organization was that, first of all, we could get the Sierra Club off the hook. Second, the Sierra Club was somewhat of a loaded word in many respects. Being an organization which took many other stands, we felt that there ought to be an organization which never did anything except fight on this one issue, so that people wouldn't have to ally themselves indirectly or directly with other issues. It turned out to be a strategy that worked beautifully. It was very necessary to do this, and keeping the independence of the Defenders was an essential part of it.

As a matter of fact, from a coordination standpoint, we ended up coordinating much more with the Wilderness Society in Washington, D.C., for a couple of reasons. First of all, the executive director of the Wilderness Society at that time was a man named Howard Zahniser, who had been out for the 1939 hearings, too. In fact, Howard Zahniser once spent the night on Joe Momyer's living room floor during those hearings. Zahniser was one of the greatest preservationist advocates this nation has ever seen, largely unsung. The Wilderness Bill is his own personal monument, more than anything else. Of course, a lot of organizations went into it too. It took something like eight years to get that thing through Congress. But he was the one who fired it up, got it going, kept it through.

He was the kind of man who, no matter what you did or no matter what happened, you could never get to say anything unkind about anybody, even the opposition, even behind their backs. That was the kind of advocate he was. He didn't quite make it; he passed away less than a year before the Wilderness Bill was passed. Besides having a personal knowledge of the area, and a personal knowledge of the controversy, he was very disturbed at the fact that this issue was being raised just at the time the Wilderness Bill was coming along.

San Gorgonio, being a wild area, was one of those areas which was automatically to come in under the system, and it started having things clouded. As a matter of fact, the way the proponents of the ski area were going was to try to argue for an amendment to the Wilderness Bill, which would specifically exclude an enclave within the San Gorgonio Wild Area. First of all, the idea of an enclave was scary. Second, the

RM: idea of having this bill start out with an exception written into it was also scary. In fact, that's what made San Gorgonio a national issue, which it really was.

Locally, I mentioned that I'd been up on the back of Old Grayback when I was a Boy Scout back in 1949. It turns out that down at the base on the north side of San Gorgonio was the largest concentration of organization camps west of the Hudson River in New York. About half of the fifty thousand visits each year at that time were by kids. There was a very, very wide base of people throughout this whole part of the country who had been to San Gorgonio when they were young. They remembered it fondly, blisters and all. Maybe they'd never gone back, but it was a very important and crucial experience for them and an important time in their life.

If you were a kid, it was your first touch with nature, even though the area was suffering heavily from overuse. There was a very broad base of largely unorganized sentiment for this particular area. We figured that somebody ought to tap it, and the best bet was to have a new organization. We did. The Defenders were active until about 1967 when finally, after going through several layers of that issue, it was put to rest.

After the Wilderness Bill got passed, the San Gorgonio amendment was voted on, on the floor of the House of Representatives. Despite the fact that the local congressman was for it, we actually succeeded in getting that amendment defeated, which was almost an unheard-of thing. The Senate had already refused to put it in their version. The Wilderness Bill went to conference committee and a most incredible thing happened. Even in the conference committee an attempt was made to put that amendment back in, which is definitely against the rules, because neither house had voted for it. Nonetheless, that almost happened.

Then, when we thought we were really in good shape, the next year we got hit with a brand new bill by the freshman congressman in the area, whom we had thought was on our side. Ken Dyal introduced a bill to accomplish this outside of the Wilderness Bill, and we started going around again. That ended up with two days of field hearings held in San Bernardino, which was really quite a riot. In fact, I ended up organizing "testimony" for that. I should put that in quotation marks because, despite our best efforts, it wasn't possible to organize it.

RM: We had something like 170 statements by people who wanted to get in on the record. Unfortunately, the testimony was being abbreviated down to two minutes and finally thirty seconds by the end of the day. They gave the proponents one day and the opponents one day. The proponents filled it out very nicely-- slick and organized. Us opponents had things pretty well in hand for about the first forty-five minutes, and we took it upon ourselves to present the introductory and attempted to summarize the forthcoming testimony. Then we started getting everybody through, and it degenerated. It turned out, however, that was in our favor, because the issue really was what the people of the area wanted. The fact that the sentiment was so strong that it couldn't be organized, did get across.

There was one last gasp bill after Dyal finally admitted that he had made a mistake and didn't really want his bill pursued. As a matter of fact, he was a one-term congressman. Most political observers in the San Bernardino area felt that his turnabout on the San Gorgonio issue was what cost him his career, which will give you some feel about the degree of sentiment in San Bernardino.

From my standpoint, although the Sierra Club was being active, etc., we tried to make the local San Bernardino organization the focus of it. We had a heck of a lot of coordination and help with the national organizations, because they all had something at stake. As a matter of fact, we had the New York Times take an editorial position on our side, and several other papers sprinkled throughout the country. It was a strictly southern California issue, but it was a popular one; its timing with the Wilderness Bill, Wilderness Act, made it a national issue. It was done primarily outside the Sierra Club.

RH: What was the circulation of your publication, and was it entitled The Defender?

RM: We just called it The Defender, and circulation varied. It came out every once in a while. It was a lot of work to put it out. You had to get your energy up to put the darn thing out. We usually ended up not going to bed one night, the night before its release. The Defender had a hard core mailing list at the end of the run of five thousand people. We started out with

RM: about two or three thousand copies. At one point, I think we had a print order on one issue of fifteen thousand copies. There were two times when the hearings were coming up that we got every cooperative mailing list we could. We did pay the postage on it, and we took address labels from everybody to get the doggone thing out just as wide as possible. I think fifteen thousand was the one we hit getting set up for the field hearings in San Bernardino, but there was also a field hearing in Las Vegas that we got a big issue out for.

The strategy, and one of the reasons we had a publication, was because we had seen that the way you win these battles is by getting good information out. These things are value issues. It's not really a question of where the truth lies. In fact, that was one of Ken Dyal's big mistakes when he introduced his bill. He claimed that it was a strategy for getting the facts out. There weren't any facts. All the facts involved were arguable. It was a value judgment. From a politician's standpoint, the fact was what did the people want.

We just saw it that way. We took a two-pronged approach. It's not unique; I think it works in most issues. You argue factually every place you can. You rebut the opposition's arguments every place you can, because the truth of the matter is that there is a lot of obfuscation going on and a lot of what I refer to-- or what a friend of mine used to refer to as--"upon these conclusions I base my facts." But in the final analysis, these things are not really factual questions. It's a matter of taking the vote on some kind of a judgment of value. However, if you don't keep the factual issues detoured or neutralized, it is too easy to cop out on a value decision, so what you have to do is keep your real reasons in the forefront.

We would get mushy about all the kids, etc., unashamed. At the same time, we would get heavily into what I used to refer to as the "and anyway, so there" type arguments to show that the opposition's arguments didn't hold water. At the San Bernardino hearings, for example, we had an economic analysis prepared that indicated that the cost of opening San Gorgonio to San Bernardino county economically was greater than the benefits. It was being held up as

RM: a great economic boom. It probably would have been more expensive for the county to open San Geronio because the competition would have put a pretty nasty strain on the development around Big Bear Lake. Undoubtedly, some of them would have gone under at least for several years, because they were only barely making it, some of them. The county had already spent the money for providing services to Big Bear. Providing services at San Geronio would have been an expensive proposition. For one thing, it would have been the highest road south of Mammoth, and they would have had to keep the thing clear of snow. That obligation would have fallen on San Bernardino County.

You can argue these things, but we tried to make sure we always argued on two levels. We never told anybody what to say when writing letters, but one of the little features of The Defender was what we referred to as the action box, which was a box, a black bordered box. It gave the names and addresses of people who we wanted to get letters because they were the places to put the pressure on at a given time. But we never told anybody what to say in those letters. We never circulated petitions because they don't really cut much weight on the national level. We learned a lot about how you fight these bills, and I think we astonished almost everybody when we actually won the darn thing.

We ended up spending approximately twelve thousand dollars. We don't know how much was spent against us, but a wild guess is that it was somewhere around fifty to a hundred thousand dollars. The largest contribution we ever received was five hundred dollars. Originally, the average contribution was about two dollars. Toward the end the average had gone up to about five dollars. We took in about twelve thousand dollars and used it.

RH: Do you know who introduced this amendment in the conference committee when the Wilderness Act was in Congress?

RM: It was Biz Johnson. Rather strange. He had no personal interest in it at all. Biz Johnson was a long-time congressman from northeastern California, Mono and Inyo counties. He was from the east side of the

RM: Sierra; he liked ski areas and just liked to see them everywhere. He just took a personal interest in it. He was the one who finagled, actually hornswoggled, Ken Dyal into introducing the bill. He told him that someone was going to introduce that bill anyway. There were other congressmen around who were going to introduce that bill, and if Dyal introduced that bill, he would at least be able to control the hearings and where they were going to be held.

What he didn't tell him was that congressional courtesy said that nobody ever did a local issue like that over the wishes of the local congressman. If Ken Dyal had said no, the other bills which might have been introduced wouldn't have had a chance in the world because they wouldn't even be considered--which is exactly what happened two years later when Jerry Pettis, who is still there, was elected. The same thing was tried on him; he didn't fall for it; the bills were introduced; he said no; and they were never taken up in committee.

#### Mineral King and the Changing Board: A Crucial Turning Point

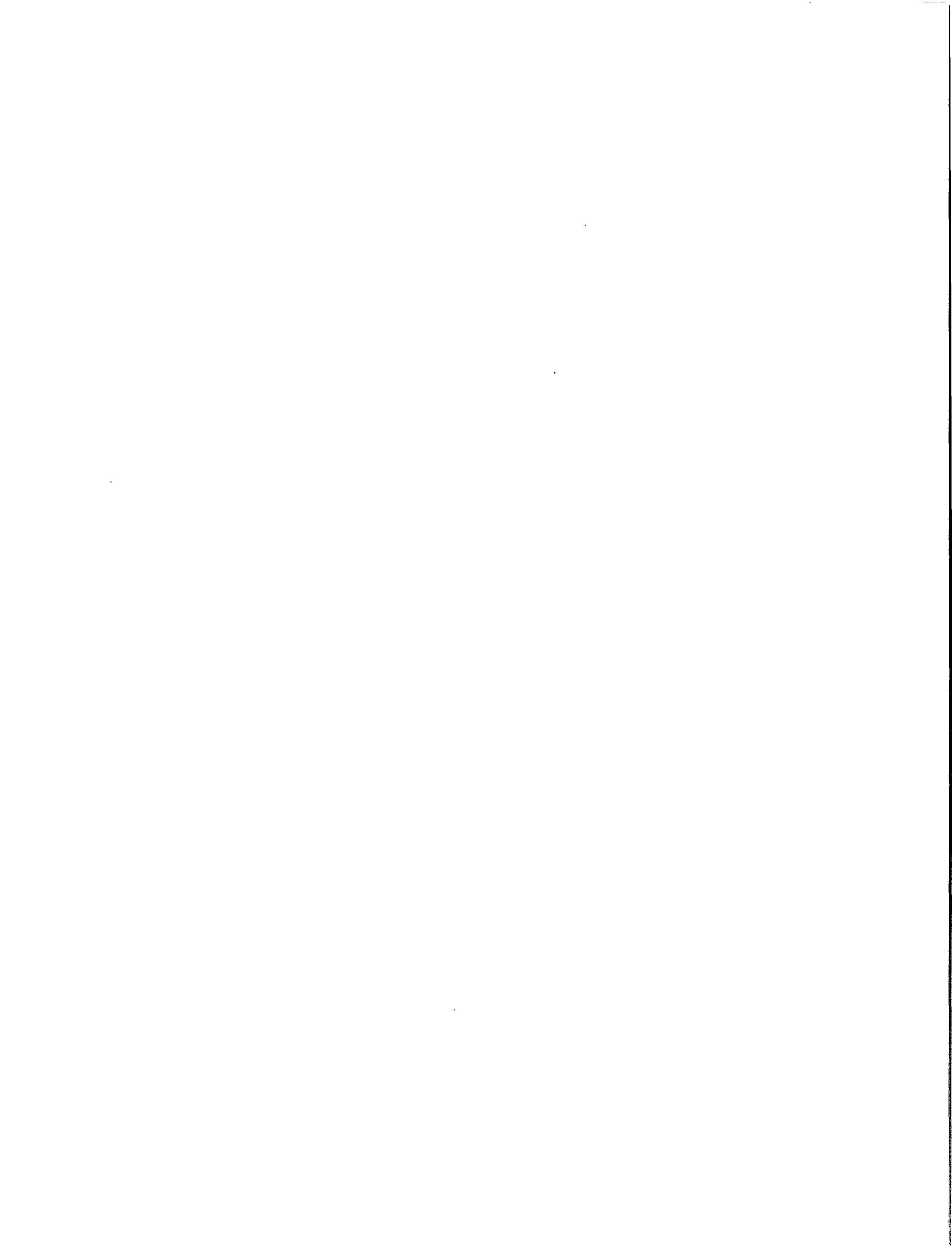
RH: You made some remarks earlier about Mineral King. You stated that there were some constraints placed upon development in that area by the board of directors, apparently because of popular demand from other agencies. Could you elaborate on this?

RM: No, we were about to propose constraints, the southern section conservation committee. Those particular files I passed on to my successors. So, I wasn't in a very good position to go back and review them. I wasn't terribly proud of my activity. The Kern-Kaweah Chapter first came up with a motion of opposition, and I had sort of divided sympathies on this thing as chairman of the southern section. Quite frankly, I pussyfooted around on it for a while and finally decided it was time to face this thing directly.

I sat down with Kern-Kaweah and showed them the problem, the board policy, and origins of the board policy. There was a policy guide out which was

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Note: There is no page 26 in this interview.



RM: extremely helpful, giving the history and truth of the actual details of board policy. I found that they were very much interested in approaching it this way, and so the southern section group got active and started to develop a position with which, hopefully, we could have our cake and eat it, too. We could be consistent with this old policy and avoid what could appear to be a knee-jerk opposition stance, where "of course you are going to oppose everything."

As a matter of fact, Mineral King was coming up at the same time as the San Geronio trouble was going, and they did tie together. It was a case where the club might all of a sudden be in a position of opposing both of them at the same time. It was also beginning to come under some flak for being a "no matter what you want to propose, the Sierra Club will try to stop you," kind of organization, which bothered some of us. There were good reasons for it. If the Sierra Club thought it was okay, why should the Sierra Club take a position in favor of something that was going to happen anyway. It wasn't that much of a judge. The club was a special interest group advocating a special viewpoint.

We felt it might not be a bad idea to see if we couldn't control development here where development already existed, to the extent that there were summer cabins in the area and logging scars were still quite conspicuous on the hillside, even after about fifty years. The road wasn't much of a road, but you could drive up and camp, and it was in the National Forest area where you were not in Sequoia Park property. It was a roadhead for a number of important trails to Sequoia. One of our conditions was that these trails be untouched. One of these trails, for example, was a perfect choice for a beginner-intermediate ski slope. When Disney indicated that was fine by them we thought we probably had a real basis for having some cooperation going.

We hashed out within the southern section a motion which would be consistent with old board policy. It would spell out in detail restrictions which we thought would make something quite easy to live with. For example, there was an absolute minimum on removing trees. No structures should be above the tree line that didn't absolutely have to be there. The idea was that if you looked at the bowl from outside, you would very likely not notice any new development. We had

RM: quite a number of these, and thought we had a pretty good package and presented it to the board.

I missed that particular meeting [May, 1965]. The board, under urgings of Martin Litton and David Brower, and some others, decided instead to reverse their old position and go in to opposition to it totally. I had mixed emotions about this. I had invested quite a bit of effort and energy as chairman of the southern section; so had some other people. In fact, Kern-Kaweah Chapter was upset about it, too, because they had set up a working relationship that they thought was going along pretty well.

In retrospect, especially now after all this time has gone by, maybe they did the right thing, but it worried me because things were changing. The board that I had trained myself for and had tried to prepare things for didn't seem to be there anymore. It was starting to branch off on its own. It was relying more on individual directors, who were new and who were somewhat more radical than I had seen before. It is my recollection that this had been the last meeting for Mr. Robinson. He had certainly earned the right to retire and just simply refused to let himself be renominated for election.

Bestor Robinson\* was considered by the Brower forces as sort of a black sheep of the board because he was always arguing against everything. It turned out that you had to watch him in action for a couple of years to see what was going on. Bestor clearly considered himself as the best person to play the necessary role of devil's advocate. I had seen him many times take a position in favor of some kind of development, or against opposing it, and ask really searching questions until the proponents had been forced to face up to the issue and put it on the table. Once they had made their case, Bestor would just simply, quietly stop. Sometimes he acted on his convictions. He was the one last example of the previous board.]

The preceding board was one which, for example, would not take a stand on a reserve for the Tule elk because historically they didn't think they knew

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\*Bestor Robinson, Thoughts on Conservation and the Sierra Club, Susan R. Schrepfer, interviewer, Sierra Club Oral History Project (Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1974).

RM: anything about wild life management and thought that was an area of expertise they were not blessed with and, therefore, should stay out of. If any member of the board had a special issue they wanted to bring up, other members would insist that, unless it were an emergency, it be referred to the conservation committee for study and recommendation before they'd even let the thing be discussed.

When Bestor left, this really only left Dick Leonard,\* and he now found himself in sort of a minority position. He also found himself with less time and energy to apply to the board. His practice was making more demands, and so Dick Leonard took a lesser position for several years, which was rather regrettable. These are the people who believed in the Sierra Club at the national level being an organization having procedures set up to make sure that they had the best thought possible behind their decisions.

I was a bit jolted when they reversed themselves on Mineral King. By itself, it wouldn't have been that much of a deal, but this began to happen more and more. Edgar Wayburn\*\* was president about this time, or just before then, and had come into the national level through the chairmanship of the conservation committee of the club as a whole. I was responsible to Edgar Wayburn for a while as the chairman of the southern section. He had a tendency to bypass the conservation committee, which he had once been responsible for, and which, when he was chairman, he had thoroughly supported the intent of always getting things back to it. It turns out that this was a beginning.

(It seemed to me it was a watershed when Bestor Robinson left. I'm not saying it was all that much his doing, but it was clearly a good demarcation or changing point. The board was in the process of turning loose of its committees as advisors. We now found ourselves in an era of personal diplomacy, instead of a reasoned kind of judgment and argument,

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\* Richard M. Leonard, Mountaineer, Lawyer, Environmentalist, Susan R. Schrepfer, interviewer, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley, 1976.

\*\*Edgar Wayburn, interview in process.

so far as presenting positions to the board for the purposes of establishing club policy was concerned. More and more the board argued these issues in the meetings instead of letting the committees argue them and then debate it later.

Board members, notably Martin Litton and Fred Eissler, who were newly along, would bring up things out of the clear blue sky and insist that the board consider it and take a position on it right away-- things which the conservation committee had never heard of and which didn't get referred. It was kind of a disturbing trend to see start up. So, from a personal standpoint, Mineral King was part of a little bit of a turning point. Maybe it was the right thing to do. I suspect it was, but it was only one of many issues.]

RH: So you attribute the board's reversal on Mineral King to the changing composition of the members on the board and the attitudes they represented?

RM: Oh, yes. Because as little as a few months before this position came along, we were discussing what to do with the executive committee of the board. The southern section didn't present its recommendation on this thing to the board cold turkey. We did a great deal of consultation. As a matter of fact, the U.S. Forest Service had been in contact with Dr. Wayburn at the regional office in San Francisco wanting to know what the club was going to do, and Wayburn actually stuck his neck out consistent with established policy to the Forest Service at that time. He ended up with egg on his face, too. We had been doing a great deal of background work before this thing was ever presented, and it all sort of got washed down the drain.

## ANGELES CHAPTER CHAIRMAN, 1965-1966

### Facilitating the "Blossoming" of the Chapter

Reed Holderman: When did you become Angeles Chapter chairman?

Robert Marshall: January of 1965.

RH: Would you please discuss in detail why you undertook this position? Please mention the scope of your activity, and things that you consider achievements during your tenure of office. And in short, a broad analysis of your job, your feelings about it, and your perceptions while in office.

RM: Well, it won't be short, because here is the other side of my activity. Maybe you could say I was in love with the Angeles Chapter because what had been happening was like turning a kid loose in a candy shop. Unless you've actually seen that activities schedule--and it is still every bit as good as it was then: 120 pages covering four months of activities in six point, five point, even four point type, because we had to cram it in awfully tight.

At one point during Trudie Hunt's chairmanship of the chapter, it got so bad for the very active people that they actually requested the various sections not to schedule trips on the same weekend. They didn't like to have to miss one because there was another one they wanted to go on more, which I thought was a big mistake. It didn't last very long. It was that kind of a surplus of riches. It was almost fattening.

RM:           What was happening in the chapter was that, while the executive committee was sitting on its duff licking its wounds, activities were getting started. People who liked to do river touring, for example, or go on burro trips, had just gotten together and were starting to do it. People who wanted to meet in the San Fernando Valley were getting ready to do it. On the Palos Verdes Peninsula, in Orange County, or the San Gabriel Valley, people were just doing things because the executive committee wasn't there to stop them. They hadn't heard "boo" from the executive committee, and, with the blossoming of the chapter and the club as a whole, everybody wanted to get in on it and enjoy and accomplish things.

Of all the organizations I ever saw, it was the least bothered with people on ego trips, etc. People were motivated to participate because of the results of what they did, not their own personal esteem and prestige. But it was a little bit scary to think that this whole thing could be compromised because the executive committee wasn't doing anything.

By virtue of my chairmanship of the southern section, and occasionally taking on club positions and being conspicuous locally, and the beginning involvement of the San Gorgonio battle, etc., I started to apparently build up enough of a reputation. By the second time, and the third time that I ran for the executive committee--this time as an incumbent for reelection--I managed to come in with the most votes. However, the executive committee was still somewhat split. I don't remember exactly how it happened that I was elected chairman, but I thought it would be neat because I had a bunch of ideas that maybe the time had come to go ahead and finish watering the Angeles Chapter and really let the blossoming occur. I thought I knew how to do it; the time was ripe and I knew how to do it.

The secret of doing was not just to let it happen but to set up an organizational basis under it that would permit it to continue, which would reduce or eliminate dangers of collapse which were going along. It seemed pretty obvious to me that, except for Walt Heninger (who had become somewhat a dropout from the activity after the loyalty oath issue was defeated--I believe his health was failing, and I don't recall more detail), most of the other partisans had really

RM: done rather a good job of getting back together. After these years of acrimony on the part of the executive committee, of which I was a part for two of them, the truth of the matter was we were beginning to develop a very real and healthy mutual respect for each other--the people who had before been at each other's throats. We were thinking, "These guys are really much more sensible than I thought. These weird radical ideas that were floating around--they really don't hold them without some reservations that are sensible and rational."

As was usually the case, we had a tentative election of chapter officers at the December meeting, which wasn't legal because the executive committee didn't exist until January the first. We did this for one thing, to give the chairman a head start on the appointment of committee chairmen which was one of the first jobs that had to be done. I was nominated and elected chairman by a one vote margin. Dick Searle\* was on the committee then. He was elected vice-chairman. The other offices I don't quite recall, but these two were the important ones. I believe I started checking around immediately on committee chairmen.

There was something about that election that struck me as a little bit suspicious and could be possible grounds for potential criticism in the future. I still was considered kind of dangerous in some areas, and I figured that there was a real possibility that we would get some knee-jerk fears started up again. In fact, quite frankly, one of the things I wanted to start out doing was not rocking the boat at all. On some excuse or other, the first thing I did as chairman in the January meeting was to declare the previous election null and void and make them vote it over. It wasn't legal for the committee to elect its officers when it didn't exist yet. Basically, what I was going to do was give them a chance to say no to my selection. I wanted to know if they were really sure, because I was going to take advantage of this to start doing things.

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\*Richard Searle, Grassroots Sierra Club Leader, Paul Clark, interviewer, Sierra Club Oral History Project (Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1976).

RM: One of the first things I did was reappoint every existing committee chairman who was willing to serve another year, despite the fact that they were a mixed bag as far as the old battle lines were concerned. Typical, it turned out they were good people. Everybody was fitting into the realities in the present situation very nicely. The wounds had healed, at least I thought they had, and it turned out that it was true; they really had healed.

Another very shrewd move was the fact that Dick Searle was elected vice-chairman, and he was a natural administrator, still is. I'm not, and I wasn't then either. It was much more fun going around making public presentations and being the philosopher, arguing about how organizations ought to be done and how battles ought to be fought, getting mushy about kids walking up San Geronio and other things like that. We had an awful lot of ideas in common, and the vice-chairman is usually a bump on a log, or had been a bump on a log, just like the vice-president of the United States.

So we hit upon the bright idea in the first meeting. I assigned him the task of taking care of intra-chapter relations, because he had wanted to try putting together a chapter advisory council, which was quite frankly patterned on the Sierra Club Council. We had so many centers of activity; some of them were feeling left out. As a matter of fact, they hadn't said anything to the executive committee or vice versa for about four years. They were feeling left out; some were wanting to get regional geographical representation onto the executive committee, which was just out of the question. The executive committee had nine members, and there were far more than nine centers of activity. There was no way to do it.

It struck me as sort of silly. You don't take care of disagreements by trying to balance out the opposing sides. You take care of disagreements by eliminating the disagreements, by resolving them, and if you're going to do that, all you need is people with good faith. You don't need to have some kind of a balance. We decided we weren't going to get anywhere by fighting. It was time to start cooperating. The chapter advisory council was a great start.

RM: We had to tack the name advisory on it for two reasons. First of all, we didn't want it to sound like it was a council, and second, the bylaws didn't permit giving it any kind of authority at all. But, by appointing the vice-chairman of the chapter to organize it and set it up, with the chairman paying attention to it by making sure that anything it had to say was on the agenda of the executive committee and was dealt with in the detail and depth it deserved, this official authority wasn't necessary. I was sure that people would quit worrying about these things, and communication lines would reopen, and sure enough, they did like crazy.

I started using the chairman's column, the "Chairman's Corner" in the Southern Sierran, for little essays about how volunteer organizations ought to run. I started making a point of hitting all of the chapter group and committee meetings I could, just to say hello and get some first hand experience on what was going on --meet these people, let them meet me, let them know that it would be kind of neat if they felt like coming down and sitting in on some of these other meetings to hear what we had to say. Instantly, people started working together; no more talk about secession.

Dick Searle, being a magnificent administrator, made sure that all the work got done. I went around trying to bolster people's spirits and boost their morale. The philosophy that I was preaching was that, in an organization like the Angeles Chapter, all you really had to do was make sure that anybody who wanted to do something, had an opportunity to do it. I wholeheartedly detested the "conservation is spinach" philosophy that some people had gotten into. This was the belief that the Sierra Club is a conservation organization, and therefore everybody should work on it. I hated that. I didn't believe that anybody should have anything to do with a conservation issue unless they really wanted to. I felt that the wanting to would take care of itself.

I hated this argument which sometimes arose over which was more important, the outings or the conservation, which is a pile of nonsense because there was no point in trying to rank them, one to the other. There was no reason to treat them as some kind of a mutually

RM: exclusive thing. Anybody who wanted to do anything worthwhile ought to have an opportunity to do so, and we ought to make it possible for them to do it.

Dick Searle had his theory about activity areas of so many people. If you have more than a certain number of people, they can't work together. In other words, you only have so many people who know each other who can personally make things happen. I agreed with him to the extent that there was no question that the people who knew each other personally were the ones who were able to do things, because they could communicate. All the letter writing or broadsides you wanted to put out, or publications you want to put out, didn't communicate nearly as well as a postcard between two people who already knew each other, and therefore read between the lines as to what was really being said.

My real difference with Searle was that I wasn't willing to settle on his figure of three hundred. It seemed to me that it depended on what the project was, and it really didn't matter what the size of the group was, if you could let nature take its course. Then, the size of the group would probably be the best it was.

Another thing that you have to do in a volunteer organization is resign yourself to the idea that unimportant jobs probably won't be done. You can't afford to browbeat somebody into doing them, because they can just up and quit, and that's the way it ought to be. The real strength of a volunteer organization is that the only motive that anyone should have for doing something is because they want to see that something done. If you've got a lot of people who pick up on this, not only are you getting free man-hours, you are getting extremely competent man-hours.

This was what was happening to the Angeles Chapter. The wounds had healed. As a process of the healing of these wounds, we hadn't lost but about two or three active members in the chapter as a result of the loyalty oath defeat. I just wanted to have a chance to button that up and get it off and running, and make sure that we continued to go that way. I was tickled pink to get a chance to be chapter chairman.

## Bylaws Revision, 1967

RH: What about this bylaws revision? Was this in keeping with your policies?

RM: Yes, it was a chance to get the last word in. I was chairman for two years. I would say that the last six months of my second year was a bit of a dud. The chapter was running itself pretty well, but I felt that the time for the philosopher was over; that part of the job was done, and it was good that we had succeeded so well. It turned out that running the chapter, just taking care of the day-to-day work, was not a great big job. We already had some people who were very good at it. There was more to that idea of setting up Dick Searle as the vice-chairman in charge of that, because it seemed very likely as time went on that the chairmanship would be the job that he would take over. He would be in a beautiful position to step into the chairmanship. The best timing for it to happen would have been six months earlier.

After my term as chapter chairman, I took on the position of delegate to the [Sierra Club] Council. By now, it had become obvious that the bylaws of the Angeles Chapter were no longer adequate. Back when we had had the loyalty oath ruckus and all the rest, the bylaws had proved to be of not very great help in resolving strife. If bylaws don't do that, bylaws don't do anything. When your organization is running well, it doesn't make any difference what the bylaws say, you don't use them. But bylaws help you stay out of trouble or to get out of trouble if you get into it. They have to be written for the worst case, not the current case. We'd had a chance to try them under the worst case and found them rather lacking.

Also, they offered no real basis at all for the multicentered form of activity that the Angeles Chapter now had. There were some very real dangers associated with this encouragement of sections and groups and individual committees because by this time the chapter was up to about eight or nine thousand members. It was beginning to have a significant budget. We had a savings account that was the envy of every other chapter. We didn't have to pay for an awful lot. Our dues subventions tended to get banked, while other chapters were starving. It was almost embarrassing, but we managed to straighten that out later and get a better balance.

RM: Also, during this same time the difficulty with the finances at the club level had caused some people to do a little research into the law, and there really was a genuine financial liability. It wasn't clear whether California law permitted the board of directors to delegate custody of club funds. The Sierra Club was clearly a charitable trust under California law, and it wasn't quite clear whether the board really had the right to give the chapters custody of the funds of the club. It was, however, clear that the chapters did not have the right to do that again, to take it down another level. The chapters could not legally relinquish control of any of the funds even to entities in the chapter. Yet, most of the sections and groups had their own treasurers, etc.

There were some distinctions that had to be made of where funds came from. Only funds which came from dues, for example, could be spent on anything that would be entertaining to anybody, and funds from another source that was donated could not be spent for anybody's personal pleasure in any way, shape, or form. We had to maintain a separate fund, because some of the things we were doing could be construed that way--supporting, for example, buying emblems for the Hundred Peaks Section. That doesn't quite fit under the definition of things that a non-profit organization may do with donations from outside sources. You can pay for it with dues money, but you can't pay for it with other funds. And yet, we had a number of little treasuries floating around, and a delicate little problem if we decided to send the money back.

We had a rather difficult thing here, to establish clearly the authority, obligations, and responsibility to the executive committee because in more ways than one, the buck had to stop with the executive committee. This was the way it should have been, because you have to know where an issue is going to be resolved. The executive committee had to be accountable and responsible for the funds. We might be able to play some games as to actually where they were, but from a legal standpoint and from a practical standpoint, the funds had to be in the custody of the executive committee.

We had to have methods for resolving ruckuses, methods to make sure that the executive committee was fully responsible, and methods to make sure that

RM: nominations and elections would be handled fairly and correctly. If these methods hadn't been established, there would have been plenty of room for hanky-panky.

There were a couple of peculiar provisions in the old bylaws: like, a number of people could call for a chapter meeting, and the chapter meeting was a meeting in which all members of the chapter gathered. With eight thousand members, how are you going to do that? The requirements for putting issues on the chapter ballot by petition were not particularly realistic. You could nominate for the executive committee, for example, by twenty-five signatures. Anybody could do that. Maybe that's not so bad, but the purpose of the petition is to assure that the person nominated should have some reasonable chance of being elected. It's to prevent using nominations for frivolous purposes. Yet you also have to make sure that if you tighten up on the nominations or the petition requirements, that nonetheless, it is realistic for a group to be able to meet them. So there were a lot of weaknesses and loopholes and hazards that needed to be sewn up, and now were beginning to smart.

When I stepped down as chapter chairman, the executive committee thought that it was perhaps a little bit overdue to do this, and they figured that nothing would be better than to rewrite the bylaws in a committee composed of all the past chapter chairmen they could find. I was asked to do this, which, once again, I'd wanted to do--sort of a last statement of what I thought the Angeles Chapter ought to be.

In the process of digging up all of the past chapter chairmen, we ended up with a nice little mix of people, who had been on both sides of the old loyalty oath issue. I thought this was also good, because the problem here was to develop a set of bylaws that everyone would agree were the best thing to do. The idea was to make everybody happy. You're not supposed to be able to do this, but I think in the matter of bylaws, that's what you try to do. It turned out that we did succeed.

The strategy which I took was to make sure that nobody would be surprised. We took our time about it; we didn't hold anything in secret. We went through the stuff that was sort of easy with no problem. After all,

RM: there was now a uniform chapter bylaws from the club that had been approved in advance by the legal committee of the club, etc., which gave us a model with which to work. But, in many respects, we were doing some pioneering because of this business of having a mechanism whereby the groups and sections could be active, and yet still cooperate, so that we could have both the benefits of being big and the benefits of being small. While it was something that was beginning to happen in the other chapters, we had been doing it longer and had more experience with it than anyone else, so we couldn't just exactly adopt the uniform bylaws.

Where it was easy, that was fine. Where there was a little bit of debate or I thought there was any chance that anybody might not like something we were thinking and proposing, I would make sure that they found out about it in advance. We got their opinion in advance, before anybody started taking positions. We went through this for a while and ended up with a package of bylaws which we presented to the electorate.

By this time, I had started on the Xerox circuit and the anti-Brower campaign was going on. Although I had not yet unleashed the public blast that Brower should go, nonetheless, the Brower support grapevine was extremely effective and was beginning to paint me as a big bad man. So we actually went so far as to try to keep my name off the bylaws and out of the publicity, because it was much more important to get them passed. As far as minutes were concerned, and as far as the leadership corps of the chapter was concerned, there wasn't any secret about it. However, when it was presented to the membership as a whole, there wasn't anybody's name on it.

We presented the old bylaws and the new bylaws right together, side by side. Anytime I thought there was something somebody might think was a little bit suspicious, we commented on it, explaining why it was. Occasionally there were sales pitches, with anything that had been any kind of a controversy or consideration, we highlighted it until it was perfectly clear that in no way was anybody trying to put something over, and it worked. They were approved by a vote of about ninety-eight percent. They apparently lasted for a long time without being amended. I don't know if they've been amended to this day.

## A Self-Evaluation

RH: In Paul Clark's interview with Richard Searle, Searle said that you sparked the Angeles Chapter to get it going. What would you consider your most significant accomplishment with respect to setting the chapter apace? Would it be this mechanism in which full participation could be realized?

RM: I think it was just the attempt to build morale during the first six months to a year, when I made a point of hitting up all of the various meetings around once or twice. This action was just to let them know that the day of the executive committee's not knowing anything of what was going on, was over. I don't think I sparked it. I think anybody who pays attention to all of this interview will realize I am not given to false modesty, but I'm not going to take credit for that. The truth of the matter is that the chapter was ready.

I just happened to be lucky enough to come along at just the right time and have ideas that were consistent with what was already going on. It was sort of a case of opening the blinds and letting the light in and letting everybody see what was really happening. I had a very strong conviction that what was happening was good and, what do you know, I think it was. I think almost everybody agreed. So, all I really had to do was tell them that the old battle was over and that the executive committee was going back to being an executive committee--a group which saw coordination as its primary purpose. It wasn't anything else.

The Angeles Chapter had, in fact, become sort of a federation of a lot of groups interested in doing things, and that's the role the executive committee was going to set itself into. Anybody who wanted to do something should feel free to go ahead and do it. If we didn't like it we would yell, but they didn't have to ask us first. It was the setting up of a very permissive atmosphere, in which what had been going on for the last four years and had been building could continue.

In some respects, it's kind of ironic that, when the old guard got locked up in this loyalty oath thing, what they really did was guarantee a change would occur just that much faster. The old guard got so

RM: wound up in battles over the executive committee that they didn't notice what was really happening in the groups and sections; although anybody who noticed the membership figures was aware that something was going on. Someone watching the way the schedule kept on growing five, ten percent each year would notice that there was something going on. All I did was call people's attention to it and say, "Look, gang, this is what's been going on, and it's good, and we'd better keep doing this." I don't think that's quite the same thing as sparking.

## EARLY ANTAGONIST OF DAVE BROWER

Brower's Offenses: Hubris, Defiance, Financial Mismanagement

Reed Holderman: You were one of the first persons, as you mentioned earlier, to challenge the Sierra Club's executive secretary, David Brower,\* in the 1960s. This was an individual whom the general membership of the club perceived as a hero. Why did you become one of his early antagonists? What were your reasons behind it?

Robert Marshall: Because he was going to destroy the club. My connection with the national level of the club began in 1962. As I mentioned, the chairman of the southern section attended board meetings on the board's budget, not the chapter's or his own. I was very pleased to discover that there were some fine people up there, good heads, thinking very shrewdly with a great deal of integrity, etc. I got to start knowing board members--quite a number of them--and knowing them fairly well and even had a chance to meet, during his brief tenure, William O. Douglas, when he was a board member. As a matter of fact, I also wrote a number of letters for his signature in the San Geronio battle once. I suppose I ought to tell my grandchildren about that.

It started to become obvious that there were some things going on that weren't quite right. The book publishing program had gotten under way pretty heavily. The Mills Tower staff had begun to take a cavalier attitude toward the people out in the field

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\* David R. Brower, interview in process.

RM: in the chapters. A typical incident of this attitude was when the San Diego Chapter, which was conducting a mountaineering course and didn't like any of the textbooks around, typed up their own textbook. This was a huge job. There really wasn't much in the way of textbooks dealing with how to handle yourself in the mountains in those days. So the San Diego Chapter just went ahead and published their own.

They thought they had a rather good piece of work and sent a copy of it to Mills Tower. In so doing, they released the wrath of Brower on them for not having bothered to get the approval of the publications committee in advance, which was correct. The publications committee had the responsibility for approving all publications which had the Sierra Club name on them, regardless of what. It was done pretty heavy-handed, however, because it was a good piece of work. The publications committee did approve it, after the fact, it's true. I don't think they were intimidated into it, but it was kind of heavy-handed. The San Diego Chapter was smarting under that for a long time. It was just done without tact. That's about as good an example as any, I think. Other volunteers ran into similar problems. This was nothing to get excited about; there was nothing that getting a couple of people to meet each other in advance wouldn't have solved.

But, then we started to see a little bit of electioneering. I discovered that the executive director was manipulating a little bit of a grapevine to get his preference of candidates to the board elected. We saw a few people being nominated, prestigious conservationists from back east, people whom he had met in his efforts to crack the book market, which, of course, was in New York City. In the book production business, you end up going to New York. He had discovered that he could attract attention and made some new friends.

He figured these people with national prestige should be added to the board of the Sierra Club, and best of all, they agreed with him. Which is no great surprise, in view of the fact that they were complete strangers to the Sierra Club, which is a unique organization; nothing else quite like it existed

RM: anywhere in the country. In order to get these directors elected, he lined up a network of friends who would line up a network of friends and pass the word. Actually, I got involved in one of these networks at one time.

Then we started to see the other side of this, and it turned out that some of these publications were being handled a little bit irregularly. The publications committee was beginning to find itself being asked to approve a book project when the book already existed and was ready for the printer. On top of all this, for some strange reason, the publishing program refused to make any money, which is not so bad. The Sierra Club didn't start publishing books for the purpose of making money. They started publishing books for the purpose of persuading people. But they started losing more money than the club had, and things got pretty tight.

Things got a little bit hairy all around. The board tried to exert a little bit of control, the publications committee tried to exert some control, and an interesting pattern began to emerge. Any time an attempt was made to control the executive director, he retaliated by refusing to accept the control. One case, for example, was when he was specifically instructed by the executive committee of the board, which was meeting weekly in those days, not to place full page ads soliciting new members in the New York Times, because for one thing, it cost some money, and for another thing, they had been presented with it as a fait accompli, and it involved some policy matters.

The Sierra Club's membership turnover in those days was in the order of two percent, and the board had some doubts about coupon members. The membership turnover rate had to go up, and the club's strength wasn't in having all these extra people paying their dues. The club's strength was in having people doing things, a lot of us still felt. But after being told specifically not to do this, at one point Dave left the room and, within the hour, got on the phone and authorized directly to New York to place the ad, in direct defiance. There were patterns of things like this happening all the time, and all of this was going on with the electioneering and campaigning entirely by grapevine at this point, to get members whom he felt were sympathetic to himself onto the board. So that he would pretty well do what he wanted.

RM: This worried me immensely. It occurred at about the same time that the board was ceasing to rely on its committees, which was another thing that Dave didn't have a lot of patience for. It seemed to me that the value of the thoughtful volunteer organization was where anybody who wanted to do something, could come in and do it. They could have an opportunity to have their ideas filtered and tested and stimulated by some other really good minds, which was one of the things that happened to me with the southern section. They could learn how to be persuasive and learn how to do things. All this was being challenged.

In an effort to solve the lack of money problem at one point, a request was put out for dues increase. Dick Searle mentions this one. This was achieved only after the thing had been passed by the support of the leadership cadre, which used the Sierra Club Council as a point of meeting. I should get back to the Sierra Club Council somewhere here. But, we discovered to our great astonishment, that none of this dues increase was going to be returned in the form of an increase in subvention to the chapters. We felt like this was a bit of a sellout.

There was one other time when the executive director put out a fund appeal in the Bulletin, which had been considered by the executive committee but which had not been approved by them. He did it anyway, with an interesting little thing that the executive committee hadn't thought of, where the donor could check a box as to what was to be done with the money. One of the boxes was to go into a special fund which could be spent at the discretion of the executive director for opportunities "which will disappear if they are not met promptly." He got a letter of chastisement from the then president of the club, George Marshall\*(no relationship).

When you start realizing some of these things going on, and you see that attempts to control them were met with escalation of defiance and insubordination, a pattern began to emerge. If he had succeeded in what he was doing, the volunteers, at least outside of the core

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\* George Marshall, interview in process.

RM: that liked to work with him, were going to be out in the cold. There wasn't going to be money to support the chapters to do anything. In fact, there was an amendment actually proposed to abolish the Sierra Club Council [1968], which, of course, Dave supported, not too directly, but most of his friends supported it. Here was exactly the antithesis of what I had seen in the Angeles Chapter. I couldn't very well be expected to sit back and take this one sitting down, if I thought I could do anything about it at all.

There was another level in trying to control Dave, because he also had control over the club's purse strings to a very great degree. The leverage that he had with the publications program, by means of defying those who were trying to make certain of proper control over it, was quite sufficient to take the club completely down the drain from a financial standpoint.

I'm going to stick my neck out on this one, because it was hearsay at the time, but it was credible and I'm going to pass it on for whatever it was worth. If I'm wrong, I hope somebody will go ahead and swat me again as has happened in the past. At one point, the attorney general of California had a man assigned to keep an eye on the Sierra Club, because of the real likelihood that the attorney general would find it necessary to seize the club's assets. It's a very little known law in California that applies to a charitable trust. The attorney general actually has a special duty toward charitable trusts to protect the interests of those who donated to the trust in case of malfeasance or out-and-out ripoff.

The attorney general is required under California law to seize the assets to prevent their loss for improper purposes and for purposes other than the donor's intention. He doesn't get to put it in the state treasury. He has a choice of either returning it to the organization after a reorganization which he approves of, or donating them instead to another organization of similar purposes. It's only happened once in the history of the State of California. Gold Star Mothers after World War II got taken up by a couple of ripoff artists, and it turned out they had a fat treasury. These guys just started to drill a little hole in the bottom of the barrel and were siphoning it

RM: out. The attorney general was apparently considering the real need to do that to the club. The Sierra Club was technically bankrupt for a while because the normal definition of bankruptcy is, "Can you pay your bills if you liquidate all of your assets?" Most of our assets were books in a warehouse and were the type that didn't sell that fast. They were valued at their production price, and if you had to liquidate this, there's no way to get more than about twenty-five cents to the dollar. On that basis, the club's liabilities definitely did exceed its assets.

Worse, the permanent funds had been impaired. The permanent fund is built up of all of the life membership dues which get paid over the years. According to the bylaws of the Sierra Club, the principal of the permanent fund may not be touched for any purpose whatever; only its interest and earnings are available to the club's operation. In fact, I think the language was that they could not be impaired in any way, and yet we had bank loans on which, at least indirectly, the permanent fund was pledged. It was a violation of state law to do this.

These guys were playing with some pretty heavy losses, and every time an attempt was made to take care of some of these problems, it was seen by Dave as a challenge. He would then come back with a new act of defiance.

It seemed to me that we had two choices. You could either let him have his way and just decide that the Sierra Club is just going to turn into another organization where you have a strong staff financed by a big dues campaign, with a bunch of people sending in their money. This, I thought, would have been a dreadful loss. The other alternative was that you could try to resist this trend by attempting to control it, or let Dave destroy the club financially by his continued acts of defiance. It seemed to me pretty obvious that one of these two things was what was going to happen.

### Publicizing the Controversy: The "Xerox Circuit"

RM: In checking back, I had about a year and a half to two years worth of intimations of these things going on, none of which had been published at that time, but were beginning to come out. I think I had a little head start in seeing that the two choices were both unacceptable. I also had another thing going for me. Having just gone through the end of the great loyalty oath controversy in the Angeles Chapter, I had seen a good example of just how much people were capable of healing the kinds of wounds of this kind of divisiveness. I wasn't really afraid to see this thing have it out.

It really got started in about January of 1968, when I really began hitting the old Xerox circuit, sending out some letters on this, that, and the other thing. In fact, campaigning for the board was getting a little hot and heavy. I started hinting at some of these things, which weren't published yet, but I realized that it was not a very good deal because all I was doing was flapping dirty linen in public. Even though it was limited to some of the central club leadership, council chairmen, club chairmen, etc., anything that was printed at all was obviously public.

I got in a nice little exchange with Dave Pesonen,\* and started to go on record as thinking that things were rather bad and were not going right. I immediately found myself on the wrong side of the grapevine--the great Brower grapevine. This is why I mentioned that the bylaws rewriting was done with my name left out, so far as the printed publicity was concerned. Things kept getting worse and worse.

In fact, I can remember one incident that occurred in Will Siri's\*\* living room sometime before this, when we were discussing in advance what was going to be

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\* See Appendix, p. 83.

\*\* William E. Siri, interview in process.

RM: proposed for the Mineral King resolution to the board. Dave came by a little later in the afternoon. It was semi-social. He was kind of interested in knowing what we had finally come up with. Things were not terribly advanced at that point.

He was looking at Will--Will was the president at the time--and he was saying he had just come back from Washington. He said it was terrible what Anthony Wayne Smith had been doing to the National Parks Association, one of the national organizations. A few years back, the association thought he would really be a very fine executive director type. However, before Smith would accept the position, he wanted a five-year contract in which the Board of Directors of the National Parks Association didn't have the right to fire him. He was having fun with their name, taking on the Corps of Engineers, for one thing, in a very irresponsible manner, which had a profound impact on the credibility of the National Parks Association. After lamenting this, and pointing out what was wrong with it, he looked at Will squarely in the eye and said, "Will, that's what I'm going to do to you, don't let me."

I was just taking him at his words. Right or wrong, it was a pattern of compulsive activity, and it was leading to one of two outcomes, either one of which was unacceptable. Everybody else was scared silly; I wasn't. Foolishly, I went ahead and went about it anyway. I tried not to take too many liberties with the confidences that had been given me. I started out being very timid about it and pussyfooting around about what was going on, being very vague and mysterious, realizing full well that it is not a very convincing way of creating an awareness of Dave's activities. I realized full well that until these things started to be discussed, nothing could happen.

Dave was gambling that the board would not and could not fire him because of the fear that recall elections would invariably follow, which would have upsets throughout the club. Dave knew full well that, in the final analysis, this was the only authority they really had. So, he was taking advantage of that, and sure enough it was true, the board wouldn't fire him. They wouldn't even consider it. He was a very popular figure. He had charisma. The books were

RM: beautiful. They had gotten the Sierra Club to a point of new national exposure, and the clipping service was returning all kinds of flattering things that made lots of members feel good.

Indeed, Dave had accomplished quite a bit, and I don't think there's any way that anybody can make light of the contribution he was making. It's just that it seemed clear to me that a little bit further down the line, the price was going to be too high to pay. So I started in the Xerox circuit, batting things back and forth and circulating them enough that people would know there was something going on. I just sat back and let it escalate, and it began to escalate a little bit more.

Dick Sill was a member of the board at the time and was immensely helpful in this. He's a physicist at the University of Nevada in Reno; he is a very meticulous and thorough type worker who would run around doing research like crazy. He would come up with some very great detailed and elaborate documents which were very factual exposes of Brower, and his deeds, and exactly what the significance of them was. Dick Sill did all the research and I would publish some of his stuff and send it out with a summary and interpretation of it.

It seemed to me that the board wasn't going to be able to act; they were going to have to be forced into it. The only people who could force them into it was the membership--either force them into it or enable them to do it, because the board was afraid of what was going to happen to the membership. If the membership could assure the board that the termination of Dave Brower was what they wanted, the board could take the necessary action. Who knows, maybe if it had gone this far, Dave would decide to relent a little bit, and maybe he would accept control.

The way it was going, it had to head toward disaster; there was just no other way, in my opinion. Of course, not everybody agreed with me, but I was certain of it, and enough other people agreed to convince me that I wasn't totally out of my gourd. I felt it was necessary to make the issue public, and I wasn't the only one who was doing it. I was the one who finally decided to make it public outside of the club.

RM: I want to get my chronology straight here. I was chapter chairman in 1965 and 1966. In 1967, I was a past chairman, which is probably the nicest position in the Sierra Club. I now realize, digging back through my records [turns pages], it was in March of 1967 that I went public with the Brower unhappiness and wrote a letter to the editor of the Southern Sierran. I didn't really have any great position, but the letter finally said in the last line that the time has come for the Sierra Club and David Brower to part company. There are about four paragraphs above it which, reading back through, are so insipid and so timid that the conclusion appears to be totally unwarranted.

That was a chance I had to take. I felt that the process had to be started, and quite frankly, I figured I was the one to do it because whoever did start the process of getting a discussion, getting the idea out as a possibility, was taking a real chance on being crucified. In order to do that it should be somebody who had enough prestige and position that the opinion couldn't just be written off. As a past chapter chairman and past chairman of the southern section of the conservation committee and as a fairly noted, if somewhat fanatical, conservationist, and as a delegate of the council and someone who had been attending board meetings on a pretty regular basis for about four or five years, they couldn't do that.

And yet, my only position at that time was that of a delegate to the council, and it was very easy to get lots and lots of good people for that job. Quite frankly I was deciding that it was about time to turn some of my energies and life to other directions. I was not nearly so comfortable working with the board as I had been in the earlier days because the committees were no longer advising the board. It was getting wound up in a lot of this internal ruckus and internal strife of its own. I felt that I fit the bill perfectly, of the person who perhaps ought to be the martyr by starting this process.

Everybody else was chicken to do it; therefore it should be somebody who was somewhat irresponsible, because you just don't wave this dirty linen in public. My goodness, it'll give aid and support to

RM: the enemy. I didn't think so. I thought the club would probably do fine anyway and that there wasn't any way to resolve this without making it open to the membership.

Nothing had been published. I couldn't really get specific at all. I couldn't really spill the beans without violating confidences and taking real chances on committing, perhaps, libel. But I was gambling that once somebody did this, everybody would say, "Good God, what's going on?" Then somebody else would start trying to answer the question. Once the cat was out of the bag, the rest of the process would get going and would advance to the next step, which was absolutely essential, where the membership would force or permit the board to act depending on how the board decided to handle the problem.

So, in March, 1967, I wrote a letter to the Southern Sierran, and just in case anybody missed it--because it was a very easy thing to miss--I typed up a copy of it and sent it out to a couple of mailing lists to make sure the flak would indeed start flying. I had a couple letters come back. A response by Phil Berry in particular, was one. He had just recently become active and was chairman of the legal committee.

His reply said, "I am amused by this. May I reply not as chairman of the legal committee, but as an individual to your letters of March third,"--thereby making sure that everybody knew that he was chairman of the legal committee, but not bringing the legal committee into it. A very nice little ploy, I thought. A rather nice, moderate letter that sounded very lawyerly, like a lawyer chastising the other party.

I, of course, enjoyed it because it gave me a chance to respond in return, so out came the old ditto machine and a nice big two-page letter went out to probably around a hundred and fifty to two hundred people.\* It turned out his letter had been circulated widely, a fact which was not obvious from it. Then he replied back in turn, and this time he didn't circulate

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\*See Appendix, pp. 76-77.

RM: his letter. He really lit into me, but that was okay; I was expecting this sort of a thing.

#### Unsuccessful Candidate for the Board, 1968

RM: Somehow or other, toward the end of that year, I was nominated for director. It was pretty obvious where I stood. You can refer to other people's interviews for another perspective on issues, like the Diablo Canyon ruckus, which you almost had to see to appreciate the degree to which Brower and his supporters were literally brow-beating the board to death. In fact, we even coined a term for it. We said the board was being "Brower-beaten" by forcing reconsideration after reconsideration, even after the membership had said that they were supporting the board on that position. But even that didn't stop it. On and on. More and more people were beginning to see that there was something wrong. More and more attempts were being made at control and more and more failures, and more and more defiance.

It turned out that the members of the board of directors were personally liable for the Sierra Club's financial condition--a bit of a surprise, because not many people knew about that; in fact, there was only one attorney in the whole state of California that specialized in non-profit corporation law. As I recall it was Dick Sill and Ray Sherwin who had dug this out. It's sort of obvious that specializing in non-profit corporation law is no way to get rich. This fellow had been interested in it and was considered a very good attorney. It turned out that the trustees of a charitable trust, which is what the board of directors of the Sierra Club is, were personally responsible for the financial condition of the club. This was pretty scary. I think it managed to frighten a couple of them.

Also about this time, Ansel Adams\*--bless his heart--decided to speak out. One of Dave's long-time friends, he minced no words. Dick Leonard began to

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\*Ansel Adams, interview in process.

RM: get back in the action. But nonetheless, Dave was still riding high on his throne. Toward the end of that year I was nominated for the board of directors, and I thought, "Oh boy. They really do like punishment, don't they?"

So I accepted, realizing full well that, unless some miracle occurred, I didn't have a chance of being elected. But I thought, "Well, this would be a beautiful time to launch another blast." I had to keep the pot boiling because there was too much danger. In fact, the board was still trying to sweep this thing under the rug, hoping that it would go away, and it wasn't going away at all. They just weren't catching onto it. So I got back onto the Xerox circuit and did a little personal campaigning for the board of directors. I didn't necessarily say that my platform was that Brower should go. But it was, however, a letter of exposé of some of the misdeeds which were getting to more specifics now, because it turns out that other people were publishing the facts that had been disturbing me. Looking at it now [turns pages] it turns out that I was able to put together five single-spaced pages detailing summaries of misdeeds of the executive director. I was trying to take advantage of my position, to be blunt about it, in order to make sure that people kept getting information about Brower's conduct. This would keep the issue from being quieted because if silenced this trend would, in my opinion, have led to disaster.\*

I also wanted to make darn sure that if by some accident I did get elected to the board, that no one would have any doubts about the position I was going to take. It seemed to me that it was only fair. And also at this time I didn't want to be a director. I thought that it was going to be a rather uncomfortable place to be. It's much nicer to be an ex-something.

When you take a position like that you must change your perspective; you have no choice. I had realized that as chapter chairman. It happened to me as chairman of the southern section. I'd watched it happen to other people. There is no such thing as having a position of responsibility and then being an individual on the side who can disagree with that position of responsibility. You must change your perspective. I could certainly understand what was going on in the

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\*See Appendix, pp. 78-82.

board's head, and this is one of the reasons why I felt that the pressure had to come from outside.

And sure enough, I lost. As a matter of fact, it was so bad that George Marshall also lost. George Marshall was one of the country's really great conservationists who had been both president and secretary of the Sierra Club recently and was an incumbent director running for re-election. It was true that he had gotten himself onto Brower's enemies list because as secretary he refused to keep some of Brower's transgressions out of the minutes. He was very adamant about insuring that the minutes were an accurate record of all that was going on, for better or for worse.

However, I still think that the biggest reason that George Marshall lost was because he had the great misfortune to have the same last name as mine--even though, as I mentioned, we were not related. Despite the fact that he was deploring what Dave was doing, at that time he was still hoping to be able to control him and keep him. This is something I think a lot of people didn't realize.

So, I shot my wad, but it did succeed in doing one thing: more and more people were beginning to pay attention. More and more information was beginning to get out, and finally, a couple of years downstream, the resolution to terminate Dave as executive director did occur, and the healing began almost immediately. It had to be forced on the board by the election of a new group of members in order to make it happen.

I don't know whether there's any way to tell whether I did the right thing or not. I was sticking my neck out, of course, sort of in the perverse hope that it would get chopped off. At least in my one last gasp and swan song I would be able to do something unique. And it did get chopped off. Yet, what I had set out to do, happened, and the role that I had picked out for myself in that particular battle, I would say went pretty close to my own predictions.

It did have to go that way. If I hadn't started it, I think it would have resolved itself anyway, probably about as fast. But somebody had to, once again, point out that this sort of a thing had to be done. So, Dave and I went out together. He left about two years after [May, 1969].

## Ending a Decade of Involvement

RH: So your termination of involvement with the Sierra Club was marked by the 1968 board of directors election?

RM: A few months afterward--this is a strange incident--the annual organizational meeting of the board of directors in May, 1968, was held in Santa Monica--the board came south about every four years. It was an annual banquet of sorts, in which the usual awards are given out; it's done about once a year. I was never subjected to any kind of disciplinary action, and yet I sometimes refer to being drummed out. There is an incident that in my mind rates figuratively as a drumming out.

I am almost hesitant; I've been debating with myself whether or not to even mention this thing at all. There's a lot of speculation involved, and if I'm right, it's an injustice to some people. If I'm wrong it's sort of unforgiveable, but it was a fairly key issue, at least from my standpoint. For better or for worse, I'll just go ahead and toss it out, with enough qualifications, I hope.

I was sitting in the audience and Dick Sill, a good friend of mine, was sitting with me. He wasn't up at the head table for some reason or other; I'm not sure why. He was a director at the time. We got into the awards part of the banquet and a relatively new award--I think it was the second year it was being offered--for internal organizational service was being given. They started in with the citation, and Dick leaned over and said to me, "They wanted to give this one to you." This shook me up because I realized I was very persona non grata, and nobody dared have anything to do with me after what had happened.

Then the speaker started going through the citation. It was for service in healing the wounds during a period of dissension in one of the largest chapters, for building a base for greatly expanded activity, and so on and so forth. I started thinking to myself, "My God, they're going to do that. This is ridiculous. They can't do that." And it turned out they didn't. After finishing this, they then awarded it to Dick Searle, who was my immediate successor and my cohort in putting things together.

RM: It was not an inappropriate award by any means. But I figured that Dick Sill had been correct; what I had been hearing was a wee small voice from people I had admired and respected so far. It said they were grateful for what I had done so far, but they couldn't say so. Now I don't want to belittle this award of Dick's in any way, because he definitely had it coming. It's just that he got it a little ahead of time.

That was a bit of poignancy that was just a little bit too much for me because I felt that night as if the whole darn club was dead because the past was dead. These people--like Charlotte Mauk, who was on the awards committee, and Lewis Clark, I believe was on the committee--were people who I had immense respect for, in my opinion real giants. They were saying that they had respect back, but they were impotent. It was this that made me realize that the old club was dead. Consequently it came home to me that my role was finished in more ways than one and from more levels than one.

At the next meeting of the executive committee I resigned my position as delegate to the Sierra Club Council. It was time for the next team to move into position--a team which was already there. Dick Searle was one of the leaders of this team which would bring up the next phase of the battle. I figured that it would probably happen that the people who started this would have to drop out and let the next group come along.

It was obvious after that awards banquet that the time had come. So I figured, besides the fact that it was getting kind of painful, it was time to get out of their way and let them get at it. So in June of that year [1968] I resigned my last position, and it was the first time since about 1960 that I hadn't had a position in the club. The next team came in and did a fine job.

RH: What was the date of that campaign exposé that you had submitted while running for the board of directors? Do you still have that?

RM: Oh, let's see. [turns pages] The first one is December 4, 1967,\* the nominations hadn't even been

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\*See Appendix, pp. 78-82.

RM: announced. Dave Pesonen replied to it. As a matter of fact, it's kind of interesting. [Turns pages.] Digging through my files, I don't seem to have a copy of Dave Pesonen's letter back, but the final paragraph in my reply to him [January 31, 1968]\*says, "You also wonder if my being nominated to the board had anything to do with my December 4 letter. Of course it did; it is also a motive for this one." Nothing like saying it like it is. "I believe as you do that the members should know more about the candidates than what they are and what they were." Later, "If a great many voters agree that the members should control the club, then my efforts on the Xerox circuit may help to elect me. If they don't agree, then what I am doing will assure my defeat. Either way is fine, by me. I would be a very uncomfortable director if I couldn't be sure that a large number of members agreed with me on this important matter."

Quite frankly, I thought it was a good idea to make sure that this stuff got around before people cast their ballots. I wanted to make sure. But there was another factor about this. As I mentioned before, when you take on a position of responsibility, you have to adopt a different viewpoint. I wasn't going to be able to on this [Brower] issue. If I had allowed myself to get elected to the board without making my position clear--without making it impossible to be elected unless there was support for my position--I would have had no choice but to have adopted a "more responsible" position. I didn't want to do that; I didn't want to find myself in that trap. It would have been a very unpleasant and improper place to be. So I think it was the right thing to do, on several levels.

RH: Are you still a Sierra Club member?

RM: I took out a life membership sometime back. I scraped together \$150, and well, you don't resign life memberships.

RH: Do you participate in any Sierra Club functions?

RM: No. I've turned sedentary in my old age.

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\*See Appendix, p. 83.

## REFLECTIONS ON PEOPLE, ISSUES, AND IDEAS

## The Sierra Club Council: An Essential Element

Reed Holderman: In the modest biography the Sierra Club's history committee has provided me with, you are listed as having served as a chairman of the Sierra Club Council. Were you ever chairman of the Sierra Club Council?

Robert Marshall: I never was.

RH: You mentioned earlier that you wanted to get back to this topic of the council.

RM: I wanted to discuss the council a little bit, partly because it also ties in with the advisory council in the chapter. Some years back, some of the good minds in the Sierra Club had decided that there was a need for some kind of an organization beside the board of directors. They put together a bunch of "de facto" or "ex officio" type memberships and called it a Sierra Club Council. It had no powers at all, except to meet from time to time and tell the board what it thought and maybe to accept a couple of jobs from the board. It limped along rather lamely for quite a while, and like so many institutions it apparently was just laying in wait for the time when it was really needed.

The Sierra Club Council had one beautiful feature: it didn't have any responsibilities, since the bylaws didn't provide for it to have any. The council could afford to do what it wanted, because it couldn't be blamed for anything. One of the beauties

RM: of being an ex-chapter chairman, for example, is that you can say what you want, and you don't have to worry because, strictly speaking, you're not really representing anybody. It slowly developed into a forum whereby leaders from the volunteer level all over the club could get together several times a year. There was a travel budget for council meetings, which got to be pretty substantial; it was one of the other things that Dave ended up attacking.

During this period it was the council more than any other single place that was responsible for spreading the word against Brower. Not as a council, but as a group of people who got together and watched the board at work, who could see some of these things going on, and who could share the scuttlebutt. It became an extremely potent organization because it really was the method by which the cadre of the Sierra Club could keep up with what was happening. Without it, I'm sure that the Brower issue would not have been resolved. At least, not without a turnover. Brower knew this too, which is why he helped sponsor a move to emaciate the council, more than once.

We put one into the Angeles Chapter in the form of an advisory council, patterned on the same thing and for the same basic ideas. We gave it no authority whatever; it was up to the executive committee to pay attention to it. It was almost an exact model, and we saw one of its roles as being a safety-valve. As long as there was this group of people outside of the executive committee who could get together and compare notes--a separate place where there was a chapter-wide consciousness--it could also serve as a referee and make sure that the executive committee stayed honest. These were the people who had the communications back to the voters in the most direct manner--by direct word of mouth.

I think it's a very good strategy in any organization of that general sort. It serves almost as a police force. It doesn't do a darn thing until the time comes when it has to, and it rises to the occasion. It's a fearsome and wonderful thing to watch. The Sierra Club Council did that. I was only a delegate from the Angeles Chapter for a year-and-a-half and had no other position on the council. I loved to sit in on their meetings.

### The Forest Service: An Uneven Organization

RH: Based on your experiences, what are your feelings toward the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service, respectively?

RM: These may be a little bit dated. I never had any gripes about the Park Service. They were pretty responsible. Most of our efforts turned out to be with the Forest Service, which is a very uneven organization. For example, the Forest Service saved our neck, really, in San Geronio. They were the ones who tipped us off that there was something brewing, before anything had become public at all. They gave us a chance to get a head start. In a sense it was unethical, because they were supposed to be the judges in that controversy too. They were tipping us off so we could get our act together in time. Yet in other regions, in other forests--in the Pacific Northwest, for example--in those days the service was tipping off the other side.

It turns out that, when you look at what happened, the Forest Service didn't have a very strong central leadership. In fact it had been historically a matter of policy for the Forest Service to be responsive to local citizen pressures. In the early days of the Forest Service, in a lot of parts of the west in particular, they were very unwelcome visitors. They were considered carpet-baggers from back east, and they were made very unwelcome. As a purely defensive move, the Forest Service adopted a cooperate-with-the-local-people kind of attitude. At least enough to get them to tolerate you.

Consequently, if a regional forester happened to be a man with a strong personality, he would set the flavor of policy for that entire region. If the regional forester wasn't particularly strong, then the forest supervisor was a strong man and he would set it. I saw them carrying it all the way down to cases of significant policy which were clearly being set by the district rangers. So part of the trick of dealing with the Forest Service was trying to see, in a particular situation, who it was that really had the most say and to see what you could do with that person.

In the case of San Geronio, I think it was the Forest Service as a whole. Don Bauer was a pretty

RM: good strong man, and he was the one who was setting policy for the San Bernardino National Forest. But there was another point: San Gorgonio had been established as a primitive area in about 1937 or 1939, a decision which was challenged right away by people who wanted to put in some rope tows and stuff like that.

Primitive areas, after a few years, became an obsolete designation and were required to be reclassified as either wild or wilderness, depending on the size. The administration of the two was identical, but wilderness areas, being larger, presumably have to have a little more thought in them and so forth. The distinction was 100,000 acres. So after World War II, in 1945, while San Gorgonio was still a primitive area, the battle came up once again to open it up. It was a ruckus much like this one, except that it was decided entirely within the Forest Service. The decision was made by the regional forester, and Congress didn't get in on the act. In 1954 the reclassification study was done, very quietly, with no objections at all, despite the fact that there was public publication of it, as there had to be. No one requested a hearing and the entire area was reclassified with very minimal changes from primitive to wild.

So along comes Alex Deutsch, later in the sixties, and up comes this challenge again. I think what happened was that the Forest Service was in the position of having debated this issue three times and had agonized over what should happen to the area. Then, having decided, three times, that it should be left in some kind of wilderness management, they weren't about to let somebody come along now and casually tell them they were wrong.

In my experience most public officials don't like to make mistakes. But the one thing that they hate worse than making a mistake is admitting that they have. That's why it's so darned important to get involved in decisions before they're made, instead of challenging them afterwards. The Forest Service does that quite a bit; in some cases it works in our favor, and in some cases it doesn't. How's that for an evasive answer?

RH: That's good.

### Some Outstanding Club Leaders

RH: Which club members do you consider, in retrospect, to be outstanding in promoting the objectives and goals of the Sierra Club? Why?

RM: Oh boy, this can't be a complete list. Of course you have to define what you think the objectives are, because we haven't always all agreed on that. I think that in the Angeles Chapter Dick Searle and Robin Ives made a very remarkable contribution. Robin is a quiet fellow who can fool you sometimes. One of the things that astonished me, back in those days, was that all of a sudden out from nowhere appeared a basic mountaineering training course. It was huge, elaborately organized, very smooth-running, effective, and efficient. It occurred, it seemed like overnight. And what do you know? The chairman of this thing was Robin Ives.

On the national level there's no end of it; I've already spoken of what Dick Sill did in all of this mess. Dick Sill's an interesting guy; he's a professional pessimist--he always sees the worst side of something and then attacks it with awesome enthusiasm, which can only come from someone who realizes that he's trying to prevent the apocalypse. Things are never as bad as Dick Sill thinks they are. He realizes this, it turns out. It's part of his device for getting his energies up and going, and when he does they are extremely effective.

I have a fond place in my heart for Bestor Robinson. It took me a couple of years to realize exactly what kind of contributions he was making. I would say that throughout this whole big Brower mess there were very, very few members of the board who came out with their integrity really unsullied. Dick Sill was one of them. Ansel Adams was one of them. Dick Leonard was one of them.

The other major forces on the board in those days, at one point or other, took a route of expediency, which in the long run didn't do any good. I can't really give you a good list, but those are a couple of highlights. I'm not even going to say that they're things that are especially important in my mind, because they're just people who come to mind--oh,

RM: George Marshall is another one on the list of important people who happen to come to mind right now. Tomorrow I might start remembering that there were a lot of other people I inadvertently left out.

#### Some Significant Changes in the Sierra Club

RH: Over the years there has been a quantitative change in the Sierra Club. Do you see this affecting the club in a qualitative way?

RM: I did in my last days, because even though the CMC [Concerned Members for Conservation] was beginning to have some success in electing board members, and even though some people--for example Phil Berry--who were originally Brower supporters changed their minds rather quickly when they got on the other side and saw what was really happening, the business of not relying on committees for advice continued. The committees were all backed into a demise like the club's conservation committee. They were replaced slowly with the regional conservation committees which were not so much advisory committees as they had been. These regional committees have policy deciding and implementation powers delegated to them. The change is awesome.

Also, the board of directors was being quite a bit concerned about what they thought the members wanted them to do, something which didn't exist when I first came on the scene. The old board of directors was there to make the best judgments. They didn't worry about what the members thought; they were sitting there doing their job with a substantial and very thoroughly warranted self-confidence. That disappeared. Maybe it had to; maybe this is the way it should be. I often wondered whether it was possible for the club to go into this next era that way at all, even though that was what I was hoping would happen; that was one of the things I was fighting for.

All during the time that I was worrying about Brower, I was also worrying about change in the board and was well aware that they were two entirely separate phenomena that just happened to be occurring at the

RM: same time. I didn't know what to do about the latter; I wasn't even sure I should try. I didn't know what to do about the former; I thought I did, so I tried. And I figured that as long as the Brower controversy was in action, it wasn't really possible to do anything about the board anyway. It sometimes feels as if one or the other of us outgrew the other, the club or I, I don't know which.

As far as quality is concerned, I'm afraid that it would be a case of trying to compare apples with pears. It has kept the quality of being a volunteer-powered organization. So in that respect, we won. I think that probably would have happened anyway, because there was just too much energy down at the grass roots of the club. That quality has remained.

I deplored--I guess that's not too strong a word--another feature which came along here, when the environmental movement blossomed on the national scene and the Sierra Club, at least at the board level, took the attitude of, "My god! They're grabbing our game. We've got to run and hurry up before they run off with our game." Which I thought was a rather unbecoming position to take because the Sierra Club was, in fact, a specialist organization. It wasn't under any obligation whatever to try to generalize.

In that respect I remember the good old Defenders of San Geronimo Wilderness, which was effective by strictly sticking to its business. The fact was that the Sierra Club was a tool. One of the things that I put in one of "Chairman's Corners" when I was a chapter chairman was that it was a tool for people to use to accomplish things that they wanted to do. As Ansel once pointed out in a board meeting, "One of the biggest mistakes that you can make is to forget that it isn't the organization that matters, it's the organization's purpose that matters." All of a sudden it was a case of trying to save face by jumping on the [environmental] bandwagon and the strange feeling that it was a bandwagon that they had helped build before anybody else had come along. Not really--it was a different sort of thing going on.

If people wanted to work on something else, that the club wasn't active in, a logical thing to do is to do it through an organization that was active. Nobody

RM: was ever required to be active only in the Sierra Club or only in something else. Nonetheless the board did try to generalize, under quite a bit of pressure from a very large number of new members. Just because this old fuddy duddy didn't quite find himself willing to change that much, doesn't mean that it wasn't a good move. But it was a difference.

#### Vocations and Avocations, 1960s

RH: We have talked a lot about your Sierra Club involvement in the last couple of hours. What types of things were you doing for employment and leisure during that same period of time?

RM: Well, you can always guess about the leisure. It wasn't always very leisurely. When I got out of college, I spent about six-and-a-half or seven years as a nice, proper engineer doing circuit design, and some other kinds of design work. Then roughly about the time I became chapter chairman, I was having lots of fun--enjoying writing, finding people were responding to it, taking photographs and so forth.

I decided I would try something brave and daring and strike out, taking photographs and doing writing and delivering lectures, which made lots of spare time. What really happened was that nobody ever wanted to pay for these, so what I was doing was being unemployed and living off my savings. I think it was about a year and a half. The fact that this was during the time that I was chapter chairman made a lot of things possible. I wonder if anybody can do it who has to earn a living. Finally the money ran out and I started teaching good old electrical engineering at Cal Poly in Pomona.

I made the mistake of starting my own business on the side, and that can really take it out of you, especially if it isn't terribly successful. In fact, that was one of the reasons I thought it was about time to step out of the club. The business was requiring quite a bit of energy. In fact I thought I had neither the time nor the money to participate in club activities. I would like to have gotten back in, otherwise.

RH: What was this business that you had?

RM: I was setting type. I had this IBM Executive typewriter and was having fun preparing copy for some publications, notably for San Geronimo, and I decided that I liked it. I saw a nice new machine going around and thought, "Nice to have one of those, and if I did some work on it and sold that work, I might be able to pay for it." So I leased an IBM Selectric Composer, and one thing led to another and to another and finally led to the end of that. Meanwhile, even if I had wanted to get back into the club, the wherewithall to do it wasn't really there.

Quite frankly, it seems to me that nowadays things change too fast in the Sierra Club. It doesn't take long for you to go through a whole new era. It seems like a new generation comes and goes in maybe as little as five years. It was interesting that people who are active at any given time in the club don't know what happened three years ago because they weren't around. I suppose it's okay to lament it, but the truth of the matter is that this is probably one of the club's real hidden strengths. It's not necessarily a turnover, it's more of an add-on. Somebody finally steps aside and starts taking a breather, and nobody ever bothers to ask them what happened until this sort of a project comes along.

The new people come along, and if you want to do something in the Sierra Club, you find yourself doing more and more--very, very fast. This lack of historical perspective has sometimes caused problems, and other times it's been a real asset because you don't ever fall in the trap of getting into a rut. It's a tremendous force for innovation.

RH: Doesn't the old adage apply here, that if people don't know their history they're bound to repeat the mistakes of the past?

RM: Yes. But maybe what was a mistake in the past isn't a mistake any more. The arena in which all this activity is going on changes a lot, too.

RH: Are you still an avid backpacker? Do you get out in the wilderness very often these days?

RM: No, but I still have my good old Kelty pack, which was sold out of his living room in Glendale before he even had a store.

### On Nature, the Value of Wilderness, and Politics

RH: How would you explain your relationship with nature?

RM: I have written an awful lot on that subject. I'll break out one of my forty-minute slide shows, and show it for you [laughter]. My relationship, or other people's relationship, let's try both. In the process of taking longer backpack trips and so forth, about the first year or two, I made a most interesting discovery--it was actually possible to love a rock or a tree.

I used to kid that the John Birch Society was where Republicans went cuckoo, and the Sierra Club was where the Democrats went cuckoo, because it turns out that the club did--and I presume it still does--get a substantial amount of its energy from neurotic sources. In fact from time to time a real problem with the club is to keep down the level of misanthropy. It can get out of hand. New people who really have trouble relating with other people sometimes take out their pains by discarding other people and going into the wilderness and getting away from them.

I've got to admit to having started out that way, which is one of the reasons I can see it and respond to it so freely in others. One of the reasons I thought I could peg Brower was because I thought we probably had personality traits in common. Yet you do it and after a while you discover that it isn't really necessary to withdraw. After a while you discover that you can start taking feelings and putting them back toward people, too--come back and join the human race.

There are countless little ideas that I played around with. In fact, San Geronio was a beautiful opportunity to do this, because from time to time we'd toss in a little philosophical thing to help warm people up. We would write a short article on the wonderful subject of wilderness values. I used to

RM: enjoy writing about it immensely. I will refer you, to answer this question, to a couple of items in The Defender, which I might as well toss in.

Once in a while I get a little carried away, a trifle gushy. Try page four of The Defender, number five, dated April 30th, 1964. There is an essay titled, "Is Skiing Compatible with Wilderness?" Because at the time the skiers were arguing that they had a plan which enabled us to have our cake and eat it too, and they weren't going to hurt the wilderness values at all. In order to judge that you have to discuss what wilderness values really are. That one was not too bad. That may have been the one good one.

RH: Can you recapitulate what was the essence of that article?

RM: Let them turn back to the appendix [laughter].\* The Far West Ski Association had been urging skiers to write public officials telling them that "skiing is compatible with wilderness.... With proper qualifications, it is true, ski touring in the San Gorgonio Wild Area is compatible with wilderness values, but beyond this the engineering and construction marvels being proposed to eliminate as much of skiers' discomfort as possible would also eliminate the Dry Lake drainage as wilderness and seriously detract from the qualities of the nearby areas." See, I can't help myself; I start reading it.

Here's a good paragraph, "Consider what the word wilderness means...[refer to Appendix].

One other paragraph might help, "Is it important to have a place such as a wild area?..." [See Appendix]

This all boils down to being very vague and mystical; that's about right. The truth of the matter is that I am sort of a mystic about such things. I think that one of the chief values of wilderness ought to be an opportunity for a person to go back and realize that, whether he likes it or not, he is a part of this earth, and it is possible to feel welcome as a

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\*See Appendix, pp. 84-87.

RM: part of this earth. You shouldn't ever try to tell somebody exactly what they're going to feel, except to encourage them to have their own reactions.

I had hit upon the idea earlier--this business of having to decide whether or not to impose various kinds of projects [in wilderness areas]. It was so difficult to know whether or not to oppose such things, and got into so much philosophy. How do you sort it out? It dawned on me early in the game that one of the best tools was to examine the motivations of the person who was proposing making the changes. If they were reluctant to do it, probably it was okay. If they were eager to do it, if they wanted to do it, if it was somehow a show of force or a way to show that man was indeed still master over nature, then these people were not fit.

It's a back door approach to the problem, but it started me thinking that the crucial thing about wilderness was each individual's position toward it. Do you come as a conqueror, or as a friend? If you come as a friend we can trust you, and you will probably treat other people the same way. One of the major values of a wilderness experience ought to be for people who have not really gotten the knack of relating to and plugging into other people, to go out and practice. They can come back and be able to join society, to join the world.

Wilderness is defined as a place where man hasn't been. But man is part of nature and should be a willing part of nature. Wilderness is one of the best places that it can dawn on you that there are benefits, that there are rewards to being, willingly, limited by natural forces. If you do this, you can come back and fit quite nicely. That is a more successful answer to your question than I thought I was going to be able to give.

RH: On election eve, do you see any of the existing political parties implementing programs which would bring about greater concern for our environment or that agree with your particular ecological proclivities?

RM: Well, there went your pretense as a historian. This is one year that I'm not going to vote for either candidate for president. It doesn't matter; it's the Congress

RM: that is important. I've never really worried about that. In my own experience, you haven't ever really been able to peg parties, for example, one way or the other. The real impetus for all this has always come from Congress. The administration can do some help, but the administration, especially in this area, is almost invariably outweighed by Congress, if it wishes to act. It's always been a mistake to try to predict how somebody is going to respond to various issues, on the basis of their party. There have been good guys and bad guys on both sides, all the time.

I always go back to the old saw that it is not true that in a democracy the people get what they want, but it is true that in a democracy the people get what they deserve. Having stuck my nose into the political process on the national level, finding out some of the mechanisms whereby Congress functions and whereby decisions are made, I am impressed at how much a handful of people can really do. And if things don't go right, it's their own darn fault.

I am distrustful of idealistic congressmen. Ken Dyal was an idealistic congressman. It turned out he was naive. It seems to me that the pressures a person on the national scene, in political life, has to face are such that if he has the misfortune to find a deep meaning in any of these things, he won't be able to survive. I think that the politicians should be amenable to pressures, and I think those pressures should be applied. They're the judges. It's on the back of the rest of us to be the advocates.

I think that in the process of being an advocate it is extremely important that you realize that in order to be an advocate you have to take a distorted perspective. You might be arguing for something that's wrong. Therefore you have an obligation to do your advocating fair--play fair--so that if you're wrong it'll be possible to be defeated.

I think, for example, that you can see this philosophy going back in my discussion of the way I was tackling the Brower affair. I waited until I didn't have a position. I didn't publish things until they were a matter of public record--although I was,

RM: quite frankly, trying to force some other people's hands. It happens the same way on the national level.

I don't think there's any substitute for dealing with the political scene on an individual basis and simply getting to know your congressman or senator; they're very reachable. All the congressmen have field offices with deputies. Write him a letter-- don't let anybody else tell you what that letter should say, because those guys are very sensitive to dictated letters. They really know how to spot them.

I don't care what kind of reply you get; your letter will receive good attention, to the degree of thoughtfulness you put in it. There was a multiplier, a figure tossed around--this is just a rule of thumb, and my guess is that if anything the figure is larger now. Most congressmen are well aware that for every truly personal letter they receive, it's probably representing the views of about two thousand constituents. There's no question that if you get out and do a little bit of homework, you can run the country. It's not a simple matter of who you vote for; vote for the guy who's going to give you a fair listen.

RH: Are there any awards that you can recall, which were bestowed on you by the Sierra Club?

RM: Yes. One after-the-fact, in some respects. In 1969, the Angeles Chapter gave me the Weldon Heald Conservation Award primarily for the San Geronio work and the rest of it--a little bit after the fact--that one I've hung onto and cherished.

RH: Hoping to recapture my historical credibility, I have left a miscellaneous section. At this point you may discuss any area that I have neglected to cover or which you feel needs more attention. So is there anything that you'd like to throw into this tape recorder?

RM: I have a feeling I've already thrown in too much. [laughter] Nothing comes to mind right now. Maybe a few things I probably ought to take out. [laughter]

RH: I would like to express my personal thanks and gratefulness on behalf of the Oral History Program at the California State University, Fullerton, and the

RH: Sierra Club for allowing us time to conduct this interview.

RM: Thank you.

APPENDIX

LETTER FROM ROBERT MARSHALL TO  
PHILLIP BERRY, March 18, 1967

1936 N. Orange Grove Ave.  
Fomona, California 91737  
March 18th, 1967

Mr. Phillip S. Berry  
Berry, Davis, Lewis & McMerney  
1330 Broadway  
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Phil,

I genuinely appreciate your letter of March 14th. You have a very fine grasp of the complexities which lay behind my action, better even than that of many of the people who support my position. I owe you additional explanation.

You and I have similar background information. I think the primary reason we reach different conclusions is that I am extrapolating from that information where you, apparently, are not. I have examined the present trends to see where they will lead in the near future: I don't like what I see, and this is one reason I felt compelled to act. This kind of prediction is, admittedly, a risky business when the stakes are as large as they are, and this is why I have pulled punches. Predicting the future is risky. The only thing I know which is more risky is failing to predict the future.

In my letter of March 3rd, I confessed to what could be considered crimes. I was willing to be divisive although divisiveness is something I don't like. I was willing to jeopardize the career of a remarkable preservationist; indeed this was the promise on which the entire action was based. I also agree with you that there was impropriety in my allusion to confidential information. In the final paragraph of my letter, I implied that I acted in accord with what I felt was a higher propriety. Whether or not it actually is remains to be seen. If, however, future events establish that I was mistaken, I am completely willing to accept the consequences.

As I think you are probably aware, there is no sense in taking my complaints through conventional channels. The Board knows more of the details of my complaints than I do. I believe an important reason they have not acted more than they have is that they are not the ultimate authority. It is only partially true that the Board runs the Sierra Club. The members run it. They are at the top of the channels, and part of my complaint is that I am restricted access to the membership for myself and tries to delay the Board and Council action to them.

It might be said to be a heavy challenge, but I'm afraid she did not pick one up which was already down. The Club's politics have been moving at an astonishing rate, and I'm afraid you missed some of the events. Challenge-flinging began when Dave presented his petition to be a candidate for the Board of Directors. Dave himself made this clear at the December Board meeting when he said he wanted to run because he felt the Board was not in step with the membership. This challenge was greatly reinforced by the Diablo Canyon petition and the use which was made of it by Directors Hissler and Litton who, with Dave's aid, forced three consecutive reconsiderations of the original action. This can only be described as browbeating the Board. These events constitute the real challenge which was thrown down.

-2-

In case anyone failed to notice that these actions were polarizing the Club, Dr. Sill wrote to Directors Eissler and Litton, making it perfectly clear that a showdown was being forced and offering one last chance to avoid it. When Dave answered Dick Sill's letter, he was saying that a showdown was exactly what he wanted. I want to see it over with as soon as possible. To help do this, I must choose a position. I have reasons for my choice.

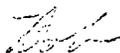
Dave Brower is nearly indispensable, but being indispensable is a condition which a man can approach but never reach. As you yourself admit, his greatness has been accompanied by some unwelcome freight---more specifically, a growing lack of humility which allows him to feel he can flaunt the trust which must be placed in an Executive Director. Because of his talents, past officers of the Club have tolerated his abuses to the point of being irresponsible themselves. They did so hoping it would be possible to control Dave enough that we could continue to have the benefits of his genius. Almost every form of control has been tried, and none of them has produced relief.

The Sierra Club's strength has been great enough to alter concepts in our society. While Dave has excelled in pinpointing the new concepts, credit for accomplishing the changes goes to a great many individuals who, using what they learned in the wilderness, have worked together in defense of the wilderness. They have worked together in order to grow together. They have formed relationships, fed by mutual respect, which have enabled them to test their ideas and mature their philosophies. By interacting with one another, they have become effective and capable of interacting with society as a whole. This is why we have the leverage to change the society. The inter-member relationships are a critical link in the chain. Dave poisons this link and, in the long run, is jeopardizing our ability to communicate with those outside the Club as well.

The sad irony is that David Brower, who otherwise understands and respects wilderness better than anyone, has no apparent understanding or sympathy for people, who, in the final analysis, are also part of the wilderness.

If we still have an enlightened dedication to wilderness, we have no choice---The Sierra Club and David Brower must part company.

Sincerely,



Robert R. Marshall

cc: Directors  
Council  
Brower  
Southern Sierran

1986 N. Orange Grove Ave.  
Pomona, California 91767  
December 4, 1967

Dear Sierra Club Leader,

I believe that the Sierra Club is at a point of crisis. Last March I wrote a pair of letters touching on this subject. Those letters were un-specific, for which I was criticized by both friends and detractors. However, at that time I felt that being un-specific was the wiser thing to do, and I still feel I was right. Being un-specific is no longer necessary or desirable.

Since last spring there have been two remarkable examples of the kind of organizational difficulty in which the club finds itself. Fortunately, most of the details are a matter of open record. I feel that it's important that you know of them.

#### Sierra Club Posters

At its September 17-18, 1966 meeting, the Board of Directors adopted eight administrative procedures. They are in the minutes of that meeting, but it's worthwhile to repeat them here in full:

(1) No contracts or agreements, written, oral or implied, may be made without the knowledge and consent of the President or his designee, except when expressly provided for in the budget or authorized by the Executive Committee, or pending a meeting of the committee by a majority thereof, and except when required for the normal conduct of club business, such as outings, production of books in accordance with a specific budget approved by the Publications Committee or the Executive Committee, printing of the Bulletin and other printing within the budget.

(2) No expenditures or commitments for expenditures exceeding Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) may be made without a signed purchase order (P. O.).

(a) P. O. for budgeted items, or items otherwise approved, and if within budget limits, may be signed by the Controller.

(b) P. O. for nonbudgeted items and for items exceeding the budget are to be signed by the President or his designee.

(c) The Executive Committee may delegate authority to sign P. O. when this is clearly in the interest of more effective management.

(3) Concurrence of the President is required in hiring a person for a permanent, senior staff position, or as a regional representative. Such a position is to be filled only when provided for in the budget or authorized by the Executive Committee.

(4) No expenditures may be made on a book or a film project beyond \$2,000 [increased to \$5,000 by the Executive

Committee on July 29, 1967] until the project has been specifically authorized for publication or release by the Publications Committee.

(5) No expenses are to be charged to promotion except those incurred for legitimate promotion of publications.

(6) A written agreement is required between the Sierra Club and authors, photographers, and consultants, signed by the person providing the service or materials and an authorized representative of the Club, and a copy is to be filed with the Controller. This may be a letter or memorandum if it clearly specifies terms.

(7) All contracts entered into by the Sierra Club, other than routine contracts, and involving more than \$2,000, shall be reviewed by a designated member of the Legal Committee before the contract shall be signed by a representative of the Sierra Club.

(8) No advertisements other than those related solely to publications and outings may be placed in the name of the Sierra Club without first being shown to and receiving the authorization of the President or his designee.

At its meeting last June 18th, the Board's Executive Committee learned that the Executive Director had started a project involving publication of 5,000 copies each of 25 different posters, to be sold for \$2.50 apiece. The exact financial details seem to be a matter of opinion, but it appears clear that each poster would cost 50¢ to print plus 30¢ each for wrapping, warehousing, etc.  $5,000 \times 25 \times 80¢ = \$100,000$ .

At the time of the June meeting, three of the posters had been completed, two more had been approved for printing, and four others were well on their way to the presses. All of this had been done without the knowledge of any of the members of the Executive Committee or the Publications Committee.

Ballantine Books had, according to Brower, made an attractive offer to accept any posters the club couldn't sell by September 15th, pay their production costs, and pay a royalty on those Ballantine was able to sell. This was an oral contract made without the awareness of the Legal Committee.

The Executive Director had violated procedures 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7.

All of this is reported in the minutes of the June 18th and July 29th, 1967 meetings of the Executive Committee.

In an "Analysis on Posters" circulated by Brower, he denied that any procedures had been violated. The financial arrangement, in his explanation, required little capital from the club since he expected sales to be well underway by the time most of the production bills would be payable. If this turned out not to be the case, the agreement with Ballantine could be invoked. What "catalyzing capital" was needed was, in Brower's opinion, legitimately chargeable to the promotions budget and his own contingencies fund. In addition, he argued, the Publications Committee

and the president had been ~~shown~~ some of the posters in advance, although, he admitted, they did not know of the quantities he had planned to print.

The club officials who saw the posters undoubtedly presumed that Brower was displaying posters for conventional book promotion, not samples of the major project he actually initiated. Regardless of the details of cash flow, that project would have been a \$100,000 financial undertaking for the club. This is comparable to an exhibit format book and was not in the budget. There was no consultation with those responsible for the club's finances or its publications program. A key part of the scheme was an oral contract which had not been reviewed by any attorney for the club.

Faced with the fact that the presses were already running, the Executive Committee first considered, then decided against, turning the entire project over to Ballantine immediately. They then authorized (actually acquiesced to) "not more than 10 posters." (Although this is the current policy statement, the back cover sheet of the September Sierra Club Bulletin offers 13 for sale to the members.)

Deciding whether or not to publish posters isn't as simple as evaluating the financial risk. Not only is there a limit on the capital available, there is also a limit on the time and energies of the staff which, for some members such as the Executive Director, must be divided between conservation, publications, administration, and other functions. The Board of Directors has the responsibility for deciding the relative importance of the unlimited number of projects the club should undertake.

The poster incident illustrates how the Board and its Executive Committee is unable to exercise this responsibility. The incident also illustrates (1) why the administrative procedures of September, 1966 were established, and (2) just how little good it did to establish them.

### Hooker Dam

From its early days, the Central Arizona Project included not only two dams within the Grand Canyon of the Colorado but also several other projects, one of which is a dam on the Gila River in New Mexico called Hooker Dam. The reservoir behind this dam as now proposed would flood over nine miles of the river within the Gila Primitive and Wilderness Areas. The Gila is the oldest of the National Forest wildernesses, and Hooker Dam, like so many others, now appears to be unnecessary even without considering the fact that it would invade a unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System, with all of the precedent problems which would accompany such an invasion.

The Hooker Dam proposal seems almost to have escaped attention in all the fuss about the Grand Canyon dams, but the Board did take notice of it last year long enough to place the Sierra Club in opposition to it. This policy was clearly reaffirmed by the Executive Committee on June 18, 1967.

Early this year, S. 1004 was introduced into the Senate by Senator Hayden (of Arizona) to authorize the Central Arizona Project without the Grand Canyon dams but with Hooker Dam and some others. While the club

accepts a Central Arizona Project without the Grand Canyon dams because it would reduce the justification and pressure for such dams, the club is opposed to including Hooker Dam as proposed. (Some of our members are developing the conclusion that we should oppose some other aspects of S. 1004 as well.) The Wilderness Society has spoken out against Hooker for some time.

So members in the Colorado Basin states were startled when, on July 7th, Southwest Representative Jeffrey Ingram sent a letter to the Grand Canyon Task Force giving reasons why S. 1004 should be passed. Although a footnote to the letter said, "Since Hooker Dam is very much Senator Anderson's project. . . he should be urged to request that an alternative to Hooker Dam be developed," the letter failed even to suggest seeking amendments to change the bill to protect the Gila Wilderness.

When staff members personally contacted Senators to support S. 1004, they made no significant effort to encourage removal of Hooker from the legislation, even though the Wilderness Society was seeking this action.

The Executive Director was questioned about these matters at the July 29th meeting of the Executive Committee. He defended the staff's activity on S. 1004 as part of a necessary compromise to preserve Senator Anderson's support for our position on the Grand Canyon dams. Senator Anderson, he said, was politically committed to Hooker Dam in his home state of New Mexico. Our support of S. 1004, Brower added, wouldn't aid its passage, but withdrawal of opposition would aid the next step in the Grand Canyon campaign. Brower's position was that the House was the proper place to oppose Hooker. (Ingram's July 7th letter cites House Interior Chairman Aspinall's position as, "No Grand Canyon dam---no bill." Adroit maneuvering by Senator Hayden has since forced reluctant Representative Aspinall to schedule hearings on S. 1004 early next year.)

The Executive Committee's discussion revealed a great deal of concern about the staff's approach to Hooker, with George Marshall in particular arguing that the issue involved at Hooker was too important to treat so lightly in the Senate, especially since there was good reason to believe it would be difficult to eliminate Hooker in the House and the Conference Committee. However, final action by the Senate was so imminent that it was impractical to try to change the position in which the club had been placed. (S. 1004 passed the Senate by voice vote nine days later.) The Executive Committee learned of the staff's actions at a time when it was too late to adopt any different course of action, a pattern also illustrated by the posters matter.

None of this implies that Brower and the staff personally support Hooker Dam---they don't. But the insipid opposition to it and Brower's willingness to "take a walk" on S. 1004 seems strange for a man who signed his name to a statement such as this:

We believe the club attained national prominence and gained at least half of its current members because it projected an image of resolute adherence to principle; if we now adopt the posture of an opportunistic trader, we must

expect not only to lose support, but to lose respect also.

(Sierra Club Bulletin, February, 1967. From the statement opposing the Board's policy on Diablo Canyon.)

In his minutes of the July 29th meeting, Secretary Marshall proposed a fairly detailed summary of the Hooker Dam discussion. Brower attempted to remove all references to disagreements with the staff's activities and, with one small exception, succeeded. At the time of approval of these minutes, Fifth Member Sill moved to substitute language close to that originally proposed. He was voted down by the other four members of the committee.

# # #

These two situations illustrate problems which are complicated; and, at this advanced stage in their development, only the members can resolve them by voting not only for Directors but also in bylaw change, referendum, and perhaps even recall elections which seem inevitable in the near future. I only hope that the members will have enough information to know how to act to achieve the kind of Sierra Club they really want.

Even Brower's supporters acknowledge that he is controversial, although they tend to think this originates with some Board members and other club leaders who are too reluctant to be militant or who otherwise lack vision. This kind of simplistic interpretation has been abetted by the club's officers when, in the name of harmony, they have remained silent about events which should have been controversial.

In my opinion, this kind of harmony is a self-destroying luxury the Sierra Club cannot afford.

Sincerely,



Robert R. Marshall

Distribution:

Board and Staff  
Chapter Chairmen and Vice Chairmen  
Chapter Group Chairmen  
Sierra Club Council

LETTER FROM ROBERT MARSHALL TO  
DAVID PESONEN, January 31, 1968

1986 N. Orange Grove Ave.  
Pomona, California 91767  
January 31, 1968

Mr. David E. Pesonen  
2323 Bowditch  
Berkeley, California 94704

Dear Dave,

In your letter of January 25th, you ask what my purpose is. My purpose is to do what I can to restore control of the Sierra Club to its members.

The members not only have the right to know what is going on in the club, it is essential that they know. They need to know what the club's leaders are doing---wrong as well as right. The members have been receiving lopsided information. My December 4th letter was an attempt to restore some balance.

The events I reported in that letter were also examined in much greater detail in a speech by Fifth Officer Sill before the Los Padres Chapter last December 5th. Neither of us has been challenged on the accuracy of the facts we reported.

Dr. Sill went further than my letter by analyzing the significance of these events. They are dramatic examples of a pattern: (1) The Board sets policy, (2) the staff violates it, and (3) the Board then condones the violation by letting it stand. The effect of this is that the Board has relinquished control of the staff. In doing so, it has also relinquished the members' control.

Many people think this is all right, yourself apparently included. Dr. Sill presented both sides of this argument and pointed out that many reasonable people believe that the Board should not try to exercise real control of the staff. We have an energetic and talented staff faced with daily conservation crises, and Directors with many other demands upon them trying to represent a large and cumbersome membership. These people feel it is better for the Board to lend prestige and support to the staff rather than try to direct it. Dr. Sill, however, feels that the members should control the club through the Board.

I agree. I have too much confidence in our members to feel otherwise. I believe that if we inform and listen to our members, we will be placing our trust far better than if we place it with any one individual. I believe the members should control the Sierra Club as much as possible, which is a great deal more so than they do now.

You also wonder if my being nominated for the Board had anything to do with my December 4th letter. Of course it did; it is also a motive for this one. I believe, as you do, that the members should know more about the candidates than what they are and what they were. There is a basic issue facing the club this year, and the members should know how the candidates feel about this issue and why. If a great many voters agree that the members should control the club, then my efforts on the "Xerox circuit" may help to elect me. If they don't agree, then what I am doing will assure my defeat. Either way is fine by me. I would be a very uncomfortable Director if I couldn't be sure that a large number of members agreed with me on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Robert R. Marshall

cc: Board and Staff  
Chapter Chairmen & Vice Chairmen  
Chapter Group Chairmen  
Sierra Club Council



Number Five

Published by the  
Defenders of San Gorgonio Wilderness

April 30, 1964

## Washington Wilderness Bill Hearings

### Controversy May be in Critical Final Phase

An important final step before committee consideration of the bills, the Public Lands Subcommittee of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee has scheduled Washington hearings on the 23 versions of the Wilderness Bill. The hearings, which are scheduled for the week of April 27-May 1, were supplemented last January by field hearings in Denver, Olympia and Las Vegas.

Organizations which were heard at the field hearings will not be allowed to testify again, and no testimony devoted exclusively to the San Gorgonio Wild Area will be allowed. It is the committee's view that this subject was thoroughly aired at Las Vegas.

It is not known how soon after the current Washington hearings the House Interior Committee will hold Executive Sessions to consider the bills. It could be almost immediately, or it could be delayed until near the end of this Session. The latter is perhaps more likely.

The majority of the witnesses testifying at the field hearings favored wilderness legislation, and it is widely felt that the committee will report out some form of Wilderness Bill during this Session of Congress.

The same committee did so during the last Congress, but the bill was so severely amended that conservationists had to oppose it. Among the amendments was one allowing the Secretary of Agriculture to eliminate a portion of the San Gorgonio Wild Area to allow for the development of a ski resort. Such an amendment is again being urged on the committee. Although this time the committee has had an opportunity to hear both sides of this issue at Las Vegas, it is not at all certain what they will do in this regard.

Should the committee recommend a bill without such an amendment, and should that bill be passed (a majority of the House favors wilderness legislation), the skiing interests would have to go through the President and Congress to invade the wild area. At present, they need only the consent of the Chief Forester.

However, the committee could recommend a San Gorgonio amendment. This could take one of two forms. It could specifically exclude a portion of the area, thereby ordering its development. Such an amendment would either have to be defeated on the floor of the House, or in the Senate-House Conference Committee. Or the amendment could be permissive, allowing the Secretary of Agriculture to permit development if he felt it was the highest use for the area.

The matter is now before the Secretary. Last fall the Forest Service denied the application of San Gorgonio Ski Lifts, Inc. for a special use permit, and they have appealed this decision to the Secretary. The appeal, which was delayed until April 1st, is apparently based on a plea to the Secretary to hold local public hearings on the ski resort proposal. As of this writing, there has been no action on the appeal.

An additional public hearing could be  
(Continued on Page Three)

### Deutsch Offers \$160,000 for San Gorgonio

In a poorly-disguised attempt to take advantage of American disappointments over the outcome of the Winter Olympics at Innsbruck, Alex Deutsch, Los Angeles industrialist, has collected pledges of \$160,000 to finance a training program for young  
(Continued on Page Two)

## The Defender

is published as needed by the Defenders of San Gorgonio Wilderness, a non-profit association devoted exclusively to the integrity of the San Gorgonio Wild Area. The address is P. O. Box 777, San Bernardino, California.

President	Joe Momyer
Vice President	Neale Creamer
Vice President	Earle Williams
Secretary	Alice Krueper
Treasurer	Robert Marshall
Chairman of the Advisory Board	Harry C. James

The Defender is edited by Robert Marshall; art work by Craig Reide.

## The President's Thoughts

The past year has been a challenging one for all of us in the Defenders of San Gorgonio Wilderness. For those of us fortunate enough to participate personally, it has been a fascinating year of challenge and response against resourceful and capable opposition. I am proud to say that there is real public support for our purpose, and that we have more than held our own.

This did not just happen. It is due to the drawing together of a talented and dedicated group of officers and workers, and to the inspiring support given by all of you who are members. Time and again we would have been stopped without the imaginative ideas, financial and letter-writing support of our members and friends.

There is a need and a place for every talent in this battle. For myself, I have hiked in the wild area since 1930 and have ski-toured and ski-mountaineered there since 1934. This fight has been a major concern of mine since 1938. To my delight, a majority of the experienced ski mountaineers whom I know have pitched in on our side in this battle. On the other hand, many newcomers, sensitive to beauty and aware of the mushrooming pressures of expanding population on open and wild lands, have contributed greatly with artistic talent, ideas and helping hands.

To all of you, officers, members, and



everyone who appreciates San Gorgonio, I wish to express deepest appreciation for a difficult job well started. If we all continue with the same ingenuity and effort, I have the warmest possible confidence that we will truly succeed in gaining firm protection for San Gorgonio, a "Rare Island of Wilderness in a Sea of Civilization."

Joe Momyer

## DEUTSCH OFFERS \$160,000 FOR SAN GORGONIO

(Continued from Page One)

skiers to prepare them for the 1972 Olympics. The money would come from 20 Los Angeles businessmen, each promising to supply \$1,000 per year for eight years. Unfortunately, the pledges have a stipulation that a "small portion" of the San Gorgonio Wild Area be opened for development for downhill skiers, as Mr. Deutsch has been advocating since 1961. His newest proposal has received a certain amount of coverage in eastern publications.

Certainly no such offer, motivated purely by a desire to improve the caliber of our Olympic competitors, would contain such a stipulation. A number of existing areas which are sufficiently close to Los Angeles and other population centers would provide better terrain and longer seasons for training. Some people within the skiing industry are already expressing concern over what is obviously an attempt to "use" the Winter Olympics.

## IS SKIING COMPATIBLE WITH WILDERNESS?

(Continued from Page Four)

comforts and conveniences of men have been made secondary to that which is natural, a visitor cannot help but see things in a different light. At the very least, he will have a new appreciation for the convenience of his car and the comforts of his home. But isn't even this worth having? At the most, the visitor may discover insights, impossible otherwise, which help him to understand his purposes in living.

San Gorgonio is attractive, it has natural features which make hiking and camping more pleasant, and it is nearby to millions of people. All of these factors enhance the importance of the wild area, but none of them constitute its essence. Its essence is the fact that those who come here do so with care, such that the next person may have the sensation that he is the first person ever to have seen this place.

**WASHINGTON WILDERNESS BILL  
HEARINGS**

(Continued from Page One)

called by the Secretary, although this would probably be prevented if a Wilderness Bill without a San Gorgonio amendment were passed before the hearing could be held. The committee's next actions are critical.

**ACTION BOX**

**1** The House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee and its Public Lands Subcommittee need your views on the Wilderness Bill and any amendments affecting San Gorgonio. Chairman of the committee is the Hon. Wayne Aspinall of Colorado. Chairman of the subcommittee is the Hon. Walter Baring of Nevada. Important: Send a copy of your letter with a cover letter to your own Representative. The address for all is: House Office Building, Washington 25, D. C.

**2** San Gorgonio Ski Lifts, Inc. has appealed the Forest Service denial of their application. The appeal is now before Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C. He should know how you feel and why.

people like yourself were able to help. Your help is still needed.

There are several flanks in the San Gorgonio battle. Most important is the concern of citizens like you, expressed to public officials. But also important is a source of information to educate your concern, and some means to contact public officials (and the public itself) directly to explain the issues. This latter area is where the Defenders of San Gorgonio Wilderness serve your concern. Your contributions make it possible to keep you and others informed, and expand the radius within which we can represent you in person.

Our appreciation to all of you who responded to our recent fund appeal. Because of your generosity the officers have been able to assure you that you will be represented in Washington, D. C. It has also made possible this issue of The Defender. Beyond this, however, we could be stopped.

Are you one of those who care, but who hasn't yet done as much as he'd like to? San Gorgonio is worth at least \$160,000 to Alex Deutsch. (See page one.) What's it worth to you?

**Why be Puny?**

**Multiply Yourself!**

One person can accomplish a lot. Several people can accomplish more together than separately.

Membership of the Defenders of San Gorgonio Wilderness is now over 1,000. This is a substantial base of informed citizens, and is also a strong, tangible force to public officials. Twice as many members would be twice as many informed citizens and twice as much force. Both are especially important right now.

Membership is easy, and it can be free. What about you? Have you bothered yet? How many people do you know who should but haven't? Make it a point to tell them they're needed. It helps more than money.

**Action Box Annex**

**Facts of Finance**

**Principal for a Principle**

The first 15 months of the San Gorgonio campaign has cost over \$2500. 82% of this has gone for printing and postage, producing over 50,000 copies of informative publications. This was possible solely because

***Defenders of San Gorgonio Wilderness***

Post Office Box 777, San Bernardino, California

I want to be on record as favoring the integrity of the San Gorgonio Wild Area. Please enroll me as a member and keep me informed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contribution (not required) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

## Is Skiing Compatible with Wilderness?

The April issue of Southern Council (of the Far West Ski Association) Chatter urges skiers to write public officials, telling them that "skiing is compatible with wilderness." Perhaps the idea is that if you say it enough it will be true.

With proper qualifications, it is true. Ski touring in the San Gorgonio Wild Area is compatible with wilderness values, but beyond this the engineering and construction marvels being proposed to eliminate as much of skiers' discomfort as possible would also eliminate the Dry Lake drainage as wilderness and seriously detract from the qualities of the nearby area.

It is true that none of the plans now being proposed would uproot the main trail from Poopout Hill to the summit, nor would they physically alter the campsites at South Fork (Slushy) Meadow or Dollar Lake. It is also true that Dry Lake could remain attractive after a ski resort were built there. But to say, as the skiers do, that because of this a ski resort and wilderness would be compatible displays complete ignorance of what wilderness is and why it is important. The real tragedy is that, if we assume skiers are honest and ethical, they don't even know that they do not know.

Consider what the word "wilderness" means. It means "a place man has not altered." It does not mean "a pretty place," nor does it mean "a place to hike and camp." At San Gorgonio, of course, man has visited a great deal and left some evidence. But the concept of a wild area is that, although we will visit the area, we

will make no more changes in it than are absolutely necessary. Usually this means that the visitor will have to do a little work.

But this means a great deal more. Our homes, our subdivisions and shopping centers; our roads, freeways and the cars we drive on them; all these things are built for the convenience and comfort of people. There is certainly nothing wrong with this, but in the process we usually ignore everything else. A wild area is established to preserve the "everything else."

An access road, a ski lift, a warming hut; all of these are purely for the comfort and convenience of people, and the concept behind their construction ignores everything else. When such a complex invades a wild area, that area suddenly becomes no different from all of the other developed parts of our landscape, even though it may be more attractive than the average.

Is it important to have a place such as this wild area? What can you take back from



San Gorgonio that is valuable? Certainly it isn't exercise, healthy tan (or sunburn), fresh air in the lungs or blisters on the feet. It is ideas. What kind of ideas? This depends entirely on what kind of a person you are, which explains why wilderness is so individual, and why the phrase, "wilderness values," means different things

to different people. In a place where the

(Continued on Page Two)

Defenders of San Gorgonio Wilderness  
Post Office Box 777  
San Bernardino, California

<p>BULK RATE U. S. POSTAGE PAID San Bernardino, Calif. Permit #1583</p>
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## INDEX

- Adams, Ansel, 54, 64, 66  
 Amneus, Thomas, 3, 5, 6, 8  
 Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club, 2, 3  
   advisory council, 34-35, 61  
   anti-litter committee, 7  
   bylaws revision, 37-41  
   Desert Peak Section, 12  
   electioneering in, 8-9, 39  
   executive committee, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12-13,  
     32-34, 38, 41-42  
   finances, 38  
   Hundred Peaks Section, 7, 11-12  
   loyalty oath, 4, 7-9, 12, 13, 36, 37  
   membership committee, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9  
   organizational structure, 32-36, 37, 41  
   outings, 31  
   racial discrimination, 4-7  
   San Fernando Valley group, 13  
   Sierra Peaks Section, 8  
   vitality, 31-32, 41-42  
 attorney general, State of California, 47-48
- Bauer, Donald, 62-63  
 Berry, Phillip, 53-54, 65, 76-77  
 Big Bear Lake, 24  
 Boy Scouts, 1, 21  
 Brower, David, 40, 69  
   club membership policies, 6, 45  
   contributions, 51  
   fiscal irresponsibility, 45, 47-48  
   independence from board of directors, 45, 46,  
     48, 50  
   Marshall's campaign against, 40, 43, 49-56  
   Mineral King, 28  
   publications, 44-45  
   Sierra Club Council, 61  
   termination as executive director, 56  
 bylaws. See Angeles Chapter, bylaws revision
- California Institute of Technology, 3  
 Clark, Lewis, 58  
 clean-up trips, 7, 16  
 CMC. See Concerned Members for Conservation

- Communists, 7  
 Concerned Members for Conservation (CMC), 65  
 conservation, 14, 16, 35. See also environmental  
     movement; specific conservation campaigns, e.g.,  
     San Gorgonio, Mineral King  
 Creamer, Neale, 19
- Defender, The, 22-24, 70  
 Defenders of San Gorgonio Wilderness, 18-25, 66  
 Desert Peak Section. See Angeles Chapter, Desert  
     Peak Section  
 Deutsch, Alex, 11, 63  
 Diablo Canyon controversy, 54  
 Disney. See Walt Disney, Inc.  
 Douglas, William O., 43  
 Dyal, Kenneth, 21, 22, 23, 25, 72
- Eissler, Fred, 7, 30  
 environmental movement, 16, 66. See also conserva-  
     tion
- Forest Service, United States, 17, 30, 62-63
- Gold Star Mothers, 47-48
- Heninger, Walter, 8, 9, 32  
 House Unamerican Activities Committee, 7  
 Hundred Peaks Section. See Angeles Chapter, Hundred  
     Peaks Section  
 Hunt, Thomas, 3, 8  
 Hunt, Trudie, 3, 6, 7, 31
- Ives, Robin, 17, 64
- James, Harry C., 19  
 Johnson, Biz, 24, 25
- Kelsey, Mead, 7  
 Kern-Kaweah Chapter, Sierra Club, 17, 25-26, 28  
 Krueper, Alice, 19

Leonard, Richard M., 29, 54-55, 64  
 Litton, Martin, 28, 30  
 loyalty oath, 4, 7-9, 12, 13, 32, 36

Marshall, George, 46, 56, 65  
 Marshall, Robert R.:  
   family, youth, education, 1-3  
   mountaineering, 1-2, 3, 7, 11-12, 68-69  
   joins Sierra Club, 2, 3  
   Angeles Chapter committees, 7, 8, 10  
   Angeles Chapter chairman, 13, 31-36, 41-42  
   club conservation committee, 14-17  
   San Gorgonio campaign, 18-25, 62-63, 69-70  
   Mineral King position, 16-17, 25-30  
   conservation philosophy and wilderness values,  
     27, 35, 69-71  
   bylaws revision, 39-40  
   anti-Brower campaign, 40, 43, 49-56  
   candidate for board of directors, 54-56, 58-59  
   awards, 57-58, 73  
   employment, 67-68  
   politics, 71-73  
 Mauk, Charlotte, 58  
 Mineral King, 16-17, 25-30, 50  
 misanthropy, 69  
 Momyer, Joe, 18-19, 20  
 mountaineering, 1-2, 3, 7, 11-12

National Parks Association, 50  
 National Park Service, 62  
New York Times, 22, 45

Pesonen, Dave, 49, 59, 76  
 Pettis, Jerry, 25

racial discrimination, 4-7  
 roads in National Parks, 16, 17  
 Robinson, Bestor, 28-29, 64

San Bernardino, 22, 23  
 San Bernardino National Forest, 63  
 San Diego Chapter, Sierra Club, 44  
 San Gorgonio Chapter, Sierra Club, 19

- San Gorgonio Wild Area, campaign to preserve,  
11, 20, 21, 27, 43, 62-63, 69, 70
- Searle, Richard, 13, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 41, 46,  
57-58, 64
- Sierra Club, 2, 3  
assets threatened with seizure; 47-48  
Brower controversy, 43-56  
Bulletin, 46  
changes in, 16, 28-30, 45-46, 65-67, 68  
club directors, 14-15, 28-30, 44-45, 50, 51, 54-55,  
64, 65  
conservation committee, 10, 14-15, 16-17, 25-30, 65  
Council, 37, 46, 47, 58, 60-61  
elections, 44, 54-56  
finances, 38, 47-48  
internal operations, 14-15, 28-30, 40, 45, 60-61,  
65-66  
loyalty oath, 7, 9  
membership policies, 4-5, 6, 7-9, 45  
Mineral King, 16-17, 25-30, 50  
publications, 43-44, 45  
relations between staff and volunteers, 43-44,  
46-47, 66  
San Gorgonio campaign, 18, 19, 20, 22  
See also Angeles Chapter; Kern-Kaweah Chapter; San  
Diego Chapter; San Gorgonio Chapter
- Sierra Club Council. See Sierra Club, Council
- Sierra Peaks Section. See Angeles Chapter, Sierra  
Peaks Section
- Sill, Richard, 4, 51, 54, 57, 58, 64
- Siri, William E., 49-50
- Skiing, 18, 19, 25, 70
- Smith, Anthony Wayne, 50
- Southern Sierran, 10, 11, 18, 35, 52, 53
- Unitarian Church, 7
- United States. For all federal departments and  
bureaus, see under the subject with which they deal,  
e.g., Forest Service, United States
- United States Congress, 20, 21, 24-25, 72-73
- Walt Disney, Inc., 17, 27
- Wayburn, Edgar, 29, 30
- Weldon Heald Conservation Award, 73

Wilderness, 63, 69-71  
Wilderness Bill, 20, 21, 22, 24  
Wilderness Society, 20

Zahniser, Howard, 20