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Marshall H. Kuhn

CATALYST AND TEACHER; SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH
AND COMMUNITY LEADER, 1934-1978

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MARSHALL H. KUHN

1916 - 1978

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Berkeley, California

San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880-1940:
A Community Oral History Project

California Jewish Community Series

Marshall H. Kuhn

CATALYST AND TEACHER; SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH
AND COMMUNITY LEADER, 1934-1978

With Introductions by
Alyson Kuhn
Richard M. Leonard
Harold L. Levy

An Interview Conducted by
Elaine Dorfman
in 1977 and 1978

Sponsored by the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, the American Jewish Congress,
and the Sierra Club History Committee

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PREFACE

The Northern California Jewish Community Series is a collection of oral history interviews with persons who have contributed significantly to Jewish life and to the wider secular community. Sponsored by the Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, the interviews have been produced by the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library. Moses Rischin, professor of history at California State University at San Francisco, is advisor to the series, assisted by the Center's Advisory Committee, Norman Coliver, chairman, Harold M. Edelstein, Seymour Fromer, Mrs. Theodore Geballe, James M. Gerstley, Douglas Goldman, Professor James D. Hart, Louis H. Heilbron, Mrs. Leon Mandelson, Robert E. Sinton, Frank H. Sloss, Daniel Stone, and Mrs. Matt Wahrhaftig. The series was inaugurated in 1967.

In the oral history process, the interviewer works closely with the memoirist in preliminary research and in setting up topics for discussion. The interviews are informal conversations which are tape recorded, transcribed, edited by the interviewer for continuity and clarity, checked and approved by the interviewee, and then final-typed. The resulting manuscripts, indexed and bound, are deposited in the Jesse E. Colman Memorial Library of the Western Jewish History Center, The Bancroft Library, and the University Library at the University of California at Los Angeles. By special arrangement copies may be deposited in other manuscript repositories holding relevant collections. Related information may be found in earlier interviews with Lawrence Arnstein, Amy Steinhart Braden, Adrien J. Falk, Alice Gerstle Levinson, Jennie Matyas, Walter Clay Lowdermilk, and Mrs. Simon J. Lubin. Untranscribed tapes of interviews with descendants of pioneer California Jews conducted by Professor Robert E. Levinson are on deposit at The Bancroft Library and the Western Jewish History Center.

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

Willa K. Baum
Department Head
Regional Oral History Office

31 May 1978
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CALIFORNIA JEWISH COMMUNITY INTERVIEW SERIES

- Rinder, Rose (Mrs. Reuben R.), Music, Prayer, and Religious Leadership: Temple Emanu-El, 1913-1969. 1971
- Koshland, Lucile Heming (Mrs. Daniel E., Sr.), Citizen Participation in Government. 1970.
- Koshland, Daniel E., Sr., The Principle of Sharing. 1971.
- Hilborn, Walter S., Reflections on Legal Practice and Jewish Community Leadership: New York and Los Angeles, 1907-1973. 1974.
- Magnin, Rabbi Edgar F., Leader and Personality. 1975.
- Fleishhacker, Mortimer, and Janet Choynski (Mrs. Mortimer), Family, Business, and the San Francisco Community. 1975.
- Haas, Walter A., Sr. Civic, Philanthropic, and Business Leadership. 1975.
- Haas, Elise Stern (Mrs. Walter, Sr.), The Appreciation of Quality. 1975. In process.
- Salz, Helen Arnstein (Mrs. Ansley), Sketches of An Improbable Ninety Years. 1975.
- Sinton, Edgar, Jewish and Community Service in San Francisco, A Family Tradition. 1978.
- Kuhn, Marshall H., Marshall H. Kuhn: Catalyst and Teacher; San Francisco Jewish and Community Leader, 1934-1978. 1978.

Related information may be found in other Regional Oral History Office interviews: Lawrence Arnstein, Amy Steinhart Braden, Adrien J. Falk, Alice Gerstle Levison (Mrs. J.B.), Jennie Matyas, Walter Clay Lowdermilk, Mrs. Simon J. Lubin, Harold L. Zellerbach; Bay Area Foundation History series; The Petaluma Jewish Community series (interviews conducted by Kenneth Kann); California Women Political Leaders series--Ann Eliaser, Elinor Raas Heller, Carmen Warschaw, Rosalind Wyman; Dr. Rubin Lewis, (chest surgeon); James D. Hart (fine printing); Maynard Jocelyn (wine technology); Ruth Hart (volunteer leader). Untranscribed tapes of interviews with descendants of pioneer California Jews conducted by Professor Robert E. Levinson are on deposit in The Bancroft Library and the Western Jewish History Center.

SAN FRANCISCO JEWS of EASTERN EUROPEAN ORIGIN, 1880-1940

A Community Oral History Project of

The AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS & JUDAH L. MAGNES MEMORIAL MUSEUM

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A B S T R A C T

942 Market Street, Suite 5
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The contributions of the Eastern European Jewish community to the development of San Francisco have until now been largely overlooked. This project will document these specific contributions through two historically significant methods of research: oral history and archival documentation. The purpose is to record through taped interviews and collected materials a broad cross-section of San Francisco's Eastern European Jewish community. Through these in-depth interviews we hope to cover the central aspects of the San Francisco Jewish experience: the social and political conditions which induced Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe and those conditions which motivated settlement in San Francisco; the social, cultural, and physical environments of San Francisco and the interviewees' response to them throughout their lifetimes.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Joel D. Brooks
Seymour Fromer
Marshall Kuhn
Stan Lipkin
Suzanne Nemiroff

This project will not only document Jewish lifestyles of that period but also the history of the institutions linked with the development of that time. Our project includes coverage of the South of Market district (ca. 1880 - ca. 1906) and the San Bruno and Fillmore-McAllister districts (ca. 1906 - ca. 1940), each at their time the focus of Eastern European Jewish life. Also covered is the emergence of the Richmond district as the symbol of upward mobility.

PROJECT DIRECTORS

Barbara Deutsch
Ruth Rafael

Through this project we will be able to provide information for historical research, statistical comparisons, population studies, and innumerable other fields of inquiry. Additionally, community education and media presentations may be compiled.

The interview with Marshall Kuhn was begun as one in the San Francisco Jews of East European Origin Project. Halfway through it was transferred to the Jewish Community Leaders Series.

INTRODUCTION, by Alyson Kuhn

I've been asked to write an introduction to my father's oral history, and his death caught me on the brink of finally sitting down to do it. As a matter of fact, the Monday before he was taken to the hospital, he and I spent a fabulous evening together, indulging in our favorite joint pastimes, doing things we'd always done together, things which will always remind me of him. We had a long talk which revolved around my professional future and gave Harry* an occasion to wax eloquent and intimate about Jewish San Francisco genealogy and its various empires, with typical objectivity, candor, precision--and the ever-present astounding orb of interrelated tangents. We played an excellent game of Scrabble, which Harry happened to win, and consumed quantities of French bread toast with butter and bowls of midnight ice cream. The following day I stayed home from work and toyed with pounding out my introduction in the afterglow of the previous evening. But I went for a bike ride and played with my art post cards instead. My original plan was to recount several anecdotes which for me really sum up the incredible essence of Harry, but now I feel a need to choose differently, to make this a worthy final tribute to my father, especially as some of what I'm about to describe I hope to press herewith, once and for all, in my "memory book."

I think that my telling you of certain circumstances relating to my father's "official passing" will assuage some of your pain about his death. He had left very specific last wishes, complete with list of his favorite organ music for the Temple Emanu-El organist, Ludwig Altman. I went through this file for my mother one night while she was at the hospital with my father. I had been there twice earlier that day, and felt that my father's spirit had left him. Thus I had secretly decided not to witness the "final rites" of modern medicine, but rather to keep my blessed memories intact. I could not stand to see those eyes without a twinkle. Harry had remained in control of his cosmos throughout his illness, and I could not bear to see him otherwise. So I pored through every scrap in his last wishes file and had my private mourning session, as it swept over me how consciously my father wished his life "imprinted" on his death.

On the most recent trips he led for Temple Emanu-El confirmation classes to the Jewish cemeteries in Sonora, many students, as well as Harry himself, were much taken with a line engraved on some of the tombstones: "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die." Harry had written the research

*Marshall told me that when his children were very young they wanted to call him by his first name, as many Temple Emanu-El members did. Marshall replied that they could call him Tom, Dick, or Harry, but not Marshall. Thus, Harry became a loving nickname used by the Kuhn children for their father. Ed.

librarian at the San Francisco Public Library to track down the source of the quotation, and subsequently wrote personal letters to three of the students who were particular friends of his, telling them what he had learned and enclosing a copy of the full text of the poem "On Hallowed Ground," which closed with those lines. I gave a copy of this to Rabbi Brian Lurie to share with my father's mourners.

At the funeral, Rabbi Magid spoke of how my father, even in his illness, had seemed larger-than-life, blessed with almost superhuman energies and resources, intellectual and spiritual. He said he had found my father intimidating in a sense, because in his presence you had to strive to meet his expectations of you and for you. Rabbi Asher likened my father to one of his beloved redwood trees, whose trunk had been felled, but whose branches and roots would still flourish, referring to my mother and me and Bruce and Nancy, and my father's multitude of pet projects. I took the roots to be the traditions he embodied and cherished (some of them of his own innovation). Brian spoke briefly, elaborating on how impossible it seemed to believe that my father had really died, and I loved what he chose to say. For me, Harry in death is more of a presence and a source of joy and energy than so many people in life.

I feel like an intellectual carbon copy of my father, and I told him so in that marvelous talk we had. He was, in typical Harry fashion, amazed to learn that people compared us in this way, and protested that he knew nothing of art or music, and that I had talents he couldn't hope to approach. He took the opportunity to apologize for never having thanked or praised me sufficiently for the art post card book I had made him for Father's Day 1977, which work I felt celebrated the most beautiful shared aspects of our lives and the qualities I most loved and respected in him. I had considered it my creative masterpiece, all the more difficult to execute as I knew how ill he was, and how much he wanted me to make something like this for him. Anyway, in the course of this dialogue, he said how sorry he was for not having acknowledged my gift with proper extravagance and enthusiasm, but that he had just lost the ability to write and type at the end of that spring and "besides, what can you say about perfection?" I also told him how flattering I found any comparisons people saw fit to draw between us--in spite of my feeling that some of the things I least liked in myself had been inherited along with his brain. I added that it was terribly unfortunate that he did not seem to have transmitted his acute sense of moral judgment.

On several occasions I have described Harry to people as being "excruciatingly moral." He seemed to instinctively know what the right course of action was, even in the most intricate and political situations. He, of course, protested that he was often besieged by grave doubts and just tried to do his best. This would have been a marvelous line for his tombstone (and I know he would forgive me the pun), but he has been cremated per his wishes.

Let me return to my theme that Harry's death really reflects his life. His twenty-some plastic tubs--his huge working files for his various commitments--have been distributed to a whole handful of organizations who will

carry on projects he had undertaken, and in several cases actually initiated. He loved to refer to himself as a catalyst, a force behind the scenes spiriting worthwhile hypothetical projects into reality. Harry's wealth of expertise and experience, coupled with his phenomenal memory and his love of teaching, made him a "mentor" and an inspiration to many people, including some who knew him only superficially or even second-hand. Harry's extraordinary humility, his awesome articulateness, his total lack of academic pretension and his ever-ready sense of humor contributed to his status of raconteur and public speaker par excellence. Harry was, and again I am confident he'll forgive the pun, an ultimate upper--he raised money and consciousness and spirits and blood pressures. He left his mark and his memory on a wondrous maze of "soft forest tracks."

Let me just tell you one story which Brian recounted at the memorial service, and which I'd never heard. He and my father had been roommates on a mission to Israel several years ago. One morning my father had thrown open the shutters of their hotel room, gazed out across the Dead Sea and exclaimed, "Brian, let's take Moab." This became a password between them in their work together. Whenever they had something to accomplish, they would enter the negotiations or discussion with "Let's take Moab." When Brian visited my father in the hospital, he said to him, "Marshall, I don't think we're going to take Moab today." And my father smiled his unforgettable smile. Secure, I hope, in the knowledge that we will try to take it for him.

June 1978
San Francisco, California

INTRODUCTION, by Richard M. Leonard

Marshall Kuhn will long be remembered as the conservationist who preserved the history of the Sierra Club. Not in a single book or two, but in year after year of historical material on national conservation issues. Almost all issues of major importance require heavy efforts over periods of many years. The protection of the National Park System through the defeat of the proposal to build Echo Park dam in Dinosaur National Monument required six long years in Congress. The Wilderness Act of 1964 took over a decade of educational effort throughout the nation. Marshall Kuhn as the first Chairman of the History Committee of the Sierra Club generously, and aggressively, arranged to transfer all such valuable historical material to the great Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley. Their professional archivists are able to provide permanent care and access for future generations.

Equally important, Marshall Kuhn has aggressively utilized the powerful historical technique of Oral History. By concentrating first on the older and more fragile leaders of the Sierra Club, Marshall wisely and fortunately recorded the views of such great leaders as Bernays, Bradley, Colby, and Farquhar just before their deaths at about age 90 for each.

The powerful technique of oral history can also be continued effectively on into succeeding generations. The Sierra Club is

fortunate indeed that Marshall Kuhn had the foresight, energy, and generous perseverance in creating such a valuable continuing contribution to the future.

1 March 1978
San Francisco, California

INTRODUCTION, by Harold L. Levy

Our friendship began in 1932 when Marshall H. Kuhn was sixteen years old. He had just completed eleven years of Religious School at Temple Emanu-El, and he was in the Confirmation Class of that year. He was elected to membership in the Pathfinders, which was then a select group of boys who were past confirmands of Temple Emanu-El. The Pathfinders met regularly in the Rabbi Martin A. Meyer Memorial Room in the Temple House. Marshall and I were both Presidents of the Pathfinders, and he was custodian and preserver of the minutes and records of the club, which, I believe, he delivered to the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum.

The bond of our friendship strengthened over the years as we grew from boyhood to manhood. We were both native San Franciscans. The history of our City and its historical landmarks fascinated us. We shared a continuing interest in Congregation Emanu-El and its Religious School, and in Jewish education generally. We were both graduates of Lowell High School and of the University of California at Berkeley, and we both served in the United States Navy from 1942 to 1946.

If I had to find a touchstone of Marshall's remarkable career in professional and volunteer services, I would look in the classrooms of the religious schools where he sat as a student, teacher and principal for almost 35 years. There his devotion to Judaism and his love for youth - the energy, imagination and boundless enthusiasm of youth - provided the catalyst for transmittal of Jewish ethical precepts into his monumental achievements in the fields of youth, community health and recreation services, Jewish education, and in the conservation of our natural resources and historical heritage.

While I knew Marshall best through his volunteer services, his record as a professional, with special expertise in providing health care services for the total community, is outstanding.

As a sales executive for Blue Shield of California (California Physicians' Service) from 1946 to 1970, providing group and individual pre-paid health plans, Marshall Kuhn innovated the chest X-ray program for employees and directed drives for blood donors and for United Way. From 1970 to 1972 he was manager of donor recruitment for Irwin Memorial Blood Bank of San Francisco, and through his efforts, Irwin became the first major blood bank in the United States to eliminate paid donors. In 1972 and 1973 he was Executive Director of the San Francisco Jewish Community Center. During the past four years, he utilized his energy, his knowledge of the structure and leadership of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Community,

and his skill in harmonizing and unifying human resources, as a member of the staff of the Jewish Welfare Federation of San Francisco, Marin County and the Peninsula. Although Marshall was not a trained social worker, his record with Federation is impressive, including: Director of the Advance, Pacesetter, Community, Marin County, and Religious School Divisions; Co-leader of Israel Missions in 1974 and 1975; Coordinator for the General Assembly of Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, and Director of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund.

I had occasion to observe Marshall's volunteer services in United Way (formerly the United Bay Area Crusade). For many years, he headed the Crusade's Speakers Committee. In the 1960 Campaign, he was Chairman of the Speaker and Film Bureau, and in 1966 and 1977, he was a UBAC trustee. I heard him address the volunteers of the Speakers Bureau, and I remember his speech for his reference to Maimonides' "ladders of charity", the supreme degree being to provide the means to restore self-worth, so that the poor can become self-supporting. The next best is giving in such a way that the giver and the recipient are unknown to each other.

Marshall knew Jewish history and literature. The Code of Holiness in the Book of Leviticus was a guide to his conduct. I think, however, that for him, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" was infinitely more important than the attempt to "love thy neighbor than thyself".

In all his volunteer activities, which are too numerous to chronicle in this introduction, his goal was to carry a project through to completion, to create from nothing something of worth and value for others, to get things done with patience, perseverance, with careful research and factual precision. He was, in truth, a catalyst, and he had the capacity to bring about change without being unduly affected himself. In pursuing his goals, he had a passion for fair, open and honorable dealings. In every project his hand found to do, he was always a teacher, and his role was to tell both sides.

It is impossible to record here a complete list of Marshall's identification with numerous Jewish and community organizations in the Bay Area. The scope of his work reached out to a multitude of health, education, youth services, social welfare, conservation, recreation and historical agencies. However, by way of examples of his activities, the following deserve mention:

EDUCATION (including his teaching on the faculties of Congregation Emanu-El, San Francisco, and Peninsula Temple Beth-El, San Mateo):

He was the founder of the Educators' Council of the Bureau of Jewish Education, San Francisco, and served as its chairman in 1962, and he was a member of the Board of Directors and an officer of the Bureau of Jewish Education.

YOUTH SERVICES:

San Francisco Council of Camp Fire Girls;

San Francisco Area Council Boy Scouts of America;

Diabetic Youth Foundation: He was a member of its Board of Directors and undertook to raise funds to establish Bearskin Meadow Camp for diabetic children.

Jewish Chautauqua Society and National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods;

Jewish Youth Athletic League, which he founded;

Jewish Welfare Federation Committee on College Youth and Faculty;

B'Nai B'rith Committee on Hillel;

National Hillel Commission.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES:

Blue Shield of California, volunteer work with medical societies and foundations, service clubs, professional schools, business, industry and labor organizations;

Auxiliary of the San Francisco General Hospital: He secured funding for the construction and furnishing of a recreation room for tubercular patients;

Jewish Home for the Aged, San Francisco: He coordinated the staffs of the Hearing Society for the Bay Area, the San Francisco Hearing & Speech Center, and the Jewish Home for the Aged, in a first-ever program of testing the hearing of all residents in a home for the aged;

American Society of Blood Banks, serving as an active member from 1960 to 1972. In 1974 he was the recipient of the Ten-Gallon Donor Award.

Irwin Memorial Blood Bank, receiving the Extraordinary Volunteer Service Award in 1966, and it should be noted that he was an 88-pint donor.

Jewish Welfare Federation: Chairman of the Social Planning Committee from 1966 to 1968, which was then planning and projecting the expansion of Mount Zion Hospital and Medical Center.

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION:

Strybing Arboretum Society of San Francisco, where he served on its Board of Directors continuously since 1971. In 1973 he motivated the planning and fund raising to complete the John Muir Nature Trail in Golden Gate Park;

Save San Francisco Bay Association and Save-the-Redwoods League;

Jewish National Fund for reforestation in Israel.

HISTORICAL RECORDS AND ARCHIVES:

California Historical Society: He proposed and carried to fruition the placing of a commemorative plaque on the site of Robert Louis Stevenson's home in San Francisco;

Commission for the Restoration of Pioneer Jewish Cemeteries and Landmarks: He personally conducted working groups of Temple Emanu-El confirmands to these cemeteries in the Mother Lode Country;

His contribution to the Sierra Club, in organizing its project to protect the Club's valuable archives, and the program of oral interviews with prominent conservationists, is covered in a separate introduction to Marshall's memoirs written by Richard M. Leonard;

Congregation Emanu-El, as consultant on Temple history; Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, on whose board he served in 1962;

The record should also show Marshall's volunteer services on behalf of the State of Israel and Soviet Jewry through his work with the United Jewish Appeal, the Joint Distribution Committee, and the Jewish Community Relations Council.

Marshall loved the city of his birth and knew it well - its streets, buildings, parks, playgrounds, bridges and waterfront. He loved being Jewish. His Jewishness was so completely natural, so totally a part of his personality.

The events of our times tend to discourage most of us, but Marshall never gave up; he just could not be disenchanted. His inexhaustable energy, his irrepressable enthusiasm and good humor, his courage and stamina, his devotion to the Jewish people and to the public welfare, stamps him as the symbol of the dedicated layman and teacher. His personal credo, perhaps, can be summarized in the words of Moses Maimonides, the great Jewish rabbi, philosopher, physician, scholar and teacher (1135-1204):

"May there never develop in me the notion that my education is complete, but give me the strength and leisure and zeal continuously to enlarge my knowledge."

#####

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Marshall Kuhn was interviewed in order to document his substantial contributions to the Jewish community in which, for more than forty years, he was a vital force as an organizer, educator and fundraiser. Initially, his oral history memoir was planned to be one in a series on "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880-1940" a primarily volunteer project jointly sponsored by the Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, and the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the American Jewish Congress. It was later made a part of Magnes Museum's history series on Jewish Community Leaders.

Early in May, 1977, when I telephoned Mr. Kuhn and invited him to record his memoir through a number of planned interview sessions, he expressed reservations about the importance of his experiences to the project. I assured him that he fitted the guidelines of the project: he was of Eastern European origin, had lived in San Francisco since his birth, and his recollections would be noteworthy both to the Jewish and the secular communities because of his significant activities as an educator and volunteer leader. With his reservations dispelled, Mr. Kuhn readily agreed to the interviews, assuring me that he would work hard on being scintillating. Although I assured him that scintillation was not a requirement of the project, it was apparent throughout the interviewing process that that was not a problem for Marshall Kuhn; scintillation was a basic component of his personality.

Our first meeting took place on May 15, 1977, after he had reviewed the outline of the discussion topics which I had previously mailed to him. All of the interviews were conducted at the Kuhn home, 30 Seventh Avenue in San Francisco, situated in a lovely tree-lined street that ends at the Presidio wall. A spacious, comfortably furnished home reflected the family, the intellectual, and the community life shared throughout the years by Marshall and Caroline Kuhn and their three children.

Marshall and I taped all of our interviews seated before the fireplace in the gracious living room. From there, I could look out the bay window to the trees on Seventh Avenue, or admire the Sierra Club photographs, or the Max Pollack etching, a recent gift from Temple Emanu-El. In the hall beyond were shelves of books, and a United Jewish Appeal "Man on the Go" award statue. Beyond that was the large dining room, which, according to friends of the Kuhns, has been the scene of many dinner parties alive with sparkling and witty discussions.

The cordial, but formal tone set in the first interview session changed gradually to one of warm informality long before we had completed the ninth session and the seventeen recorded hours, during which Marshall looked back on his life as an important catalyst in the San Francisco community. We usually worked between 7:30 and 9:00 at night, although occasionally we continued on until 11:00 o'clock; several times we met in the afternoon. Regardless of the time, we always talked for a while after we finished recording on topics ranging from Judaism and the Jewish community to our thoughts about families, values, death, and the problems that people face in relating to the serious illnesses of their friends. Marshall's pervasive Jewish consciousness came through in all of these discussions.

Caroline Kuhn, Director of Counselling and Guidance at Cathedral High School in San Francisco, was usually busy in another part of the house during interviews. It was she, by design and effort, who made possible the quiet environment in which we worked. She took time for greetings and farewells, and occasional small talk. Eventually, I met the Kuhn's grown children--daughters Alyson and Nancy, who work in San Francisco, and son Bruce, employed in Daly City.

Marshall, when I met him, was already suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease), but he was working full-time at his office. Shortly thereafter, limited by his health, he shifted to working at home part-time with the aid of a secretary and a telephone. Despite ill health and a busy work and community volunteer schedule, he was always superbly prepared for his interviews. To enhance and enrich the memories of his experiences and the sense of his intimate contacts with so many of the leaders in the San Francisco community, he made use of his copious files and his numbered, 12x14 rectangular plastic tubs full of correspondence and other memorabilia which I was free to study, and from which I could select relevant samples to include in this memoir. The bulk of this exceptional collection has been deposited in the archives of the Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum in Berkeley.* The remainder, that which relates to the Sierra Club, has been deposited in The Bancroft Library, the designated repository for all of the Sierra Club papers.

Gradually, during the year in which we worked, Marshall had to rely on a more continuing use of a portable respirator. Electrical interference from that equipment caused severe static in some parts of the tapes; the ensuing difficulties in the transcription were clarified later in revue sessions. As there developed an urgency to complete the interviews because of the progression of his illness, Caroline, Nancy, and Alyson took a greater part in the process by gathering photos and additional files from "The Pit," Marshall's other office in the basement.

*Tape recordings of all interview sessions will also be found on deposit at the Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley.

In December, 1977, the board of directors of the Western Jewish History Center decided that since Marshall Kuhn was a major Jewish community leader, his memoir should be included in their Jewish Community Leaders Oral History series, which is produced for the Magnes Museum by the Regional Oral History Office. The assignment of completing the memoir was transferred, and I was asked by Willa Baum, head of that office, to join the staff in order to handle all the editorial tasks which remained. Marshall was delighted by this recognition and he continued to work with energy and enthusiasm.

We recorded additional material even as we reviewed the transcripts of earlier interviews. Ann Lage, who with her husband, Ray, is co-chairperson of the Sierra Club History Committee which had been organized by Marshall, came in to record his experiences with the Sierra Club and its history committee. She reviewed with him the transcripts of other taping sessions. Marshall completed the major share of the review with the help of two close friends, Ruth and Morton Macks, to whom, during lengthy sessions, he dictated changes and additions. Gary Haas assisted by making many photographs available for the volume and for deposit in the archives.

Seemingly undaunted by his ailment, and by the required use of a still more powerful respirator, Marshall also continued to conduct organizational meetings at his home. Graduate students, administrators, and authors sought appointments. Phone calls occasionally interrupted our taping sessions; callers wanted his insights on organizational matters, policy analyses, procedural strategy, and the names of people to nominate for vacant positions on community boards. Marshall, a large man with a strong presence and a seemingly inexhaustible bounty of ideas, was a resource on people, organizations, and agencies, and he knew, instinctively, it seemed, how to weave all these separate threads together to accomplish a specific purpose. His responses could be dynamically supportive if he were in agreement with an idea or proposal, and they could be equally dynamic if he disagreed. One always knew where Marshall Kuhn stood on an issue. His memoir reflects his bursting-at-the-seams mental energies and opinions.

We held our last meeting on May 6, 1978, having decided that our work together had been completed. We had been preparing this oral history for nearly one year. Then, as was our custom, we talked about young adults and our hopes for the growth and change in our own children. At one point Marshall asked, "Are you changing?" When I answered, "Yes, aren't you?" he responded dynamically with a twinkle in his eyes, and a smile, "Hell, yes!" We then discussed some of his yet unfulfilled goals: the establishment of a fellowship in conservation history at the University of California, Berkeley; finding ways to implement the purchase of copies of the Sierra Club oral histories; and the completion of arrangements to bring

Charles Angoff, the author he so greatly admired, to give a series of lectures in the Jewish community of the Bay Area.

A week later Marshall entered the hospital. Caroline Kuhn telephoned me with the sad, yet expected news that Marshall had died on May 18, 1978.

Elaine Dorfman
Interviewer-Editor

February 1979
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

- 1916 Born, San Francisco, California
- 1927 Graduate, Sutro Grammar School
- 1927 Father died
- 1929 Bar Mitzvah, Temple Emanu-El
- 1932 Confirmed, Temple Emanu-El
- 1933 Graduate, Lowell High School
- 1934-1937 Undergraduate, University of California, Berkeley
- 1935 Solicitor, Jewish Welfare Federation, beginning a volunteer career that spanned more than forty years
- 1935-1936 President, Pathfinders, Temple Emanu-El youth group
- 1936-1942 } Athletic Director, Temple Emanu-El
- 1946-1953 }
- 1937 Office boy, Herbert Fleishhacker, Anglo California National Bank, San Francisco
- 1939 Mother died
- 1940-1941 Graduate, University of California, Berkeley, B.A.
- 1940-1942 Teacher, eighth grade class Sunday School, Temple Emanu-El
- 1942-1945 Lieutenant, United States Navy
- 1946-1970 Hired, sales representative, advanced to Director of Sales, Northern California, to Manager, Market Research and Development, California Blue Shield
- 1947 Founded, Jewish Youth Athletic League
- 1947-1948 Teacher, Confirmation class, Temple Emanu-El
- 1948-1949 Principal, Sunday School, Temple Emanu-El
- 1949 Climbed Mt. Whitney with the Sierra Club
- 1949 Agent for author Betty West, Diabetic Menus, Meals and Recipes
- 1950 Married Caroline Nahman, San Francisco; children Alyson, Bruce, Nancy
- 1950-1961 Member, Board of Directors, Diabetic Youth Foundation; fund raising chairman for Bearskin Meadows Camp
- 1953-1970 Principal, Religious School, Peninsula Temple Beth El, San Mateo
- 1955, 1960 } Loaned Executive; Chairman, Speakers and Film Bureau;
- 1965-1967 } San Francisco Chairman, Commerce and Industry Division; Trustee, United Way of the Bay Area, formerly United Bay Area Crusade
- 1955-1970 First volunteer co-ordinator, donor clubs; chairman, speakers bureau, Irwin Memorial Blood Bank of the San Francisco Medical Society
- 1957-1960 Prime mover, development and construction, swimming pool at Camp Caniya, San Francisco Council of Camp Fire Girls, Inc.
- 1958 Member, Board of Directors, Auxiliary to San Francisco General Hospital. Secured Auxiliary funding for construction and furnishing a recreation room for tubercular patients
- 1962 Member, Board of Directors, Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum
- 1962 Chairman, Business and Professional Division, Jewish Welfare Federation

1962-1963 Campaign Co-Chairman, Jewish Welfare Federation
 1962-1968) Member, Board of Directors, Jewish Welfare Federation
 1970-1972)
 1964 Member, Board of Directors, Jewish Home for the Aged
 1965 Vice-Chairman, Young Audiences of San Francisco; created
 "Young Audiences Week"
 1967 Vice Chairman, Western States Region, United Jewish Appeal
 1966-1968 Chairman, Social Planning Committee, Jewish Welfare
 Federation
 1968 Vice-Chairman, Youth Services, Council of Jewish Federations
 and Welfare Funds
 1970-1972 Manager, donor recruitment, Irwin Memorial Blood Bank of
 San Francisco; first major blood bank to eliminate paid donors
 1970 Founding Chairman, History Committee, Sierra Club
 1971 Vice-Chairman, San Francisco chapter, American Jewish Committee
 1971-1972 Chairman, Committee on Soviet Jewry, Jewish Community
 Relations Council
 1971-1972 Chairman, Committee on Hillel, District Grand Lodge, Number 4,
 B'nai B'rith
 1971-1973 Member, Board of Directors; Treasurer, San Francisco Arboretum
 Society, responsible for naming planned nature trail in honor
 of John Muir
 1972 Produced "A Portrait of Federation" for annual meeting,
 Jewish Welfare Federation
 1972-1973 Executive Director, San Francisco Jewish Community Center
 1974 Author, introduction to paperback reprint, Stickeen, by
 John Muir
 1974-1978 Director, Jewish Community Endowment Fund, Jewish Welfare
 Federation of San Francisco, Marin County, and the Peninsula
 1978 Died, May 18

AWARDS

- 1955 United Way of the Bay Area, formerly United Bay Area Crusade, Honor Award
- 1959 San Francisco Council of Campfire Girls, Inc., Luther Halsey Gulick Award, highest award a local council can present a volunteer, for involvement with swim pool at Camp Caniya
- 1960 San Francisco Council of Campfire Girls, Inc., Certificate of Appreciation
- 1962 United Jewish Appeal, "Man on the Go" award statue
- 1963, 1966 American Association of Blood Banks, Honored Guest at annual meeting
- 1965, 1969 KABL "Citizen of the Day"
- 1966, 1974 Irwin Memorial Blood Bank of the San Francisco Medical Society, Extraordinary Volunteer Service Award; Ten Gallon Donor Award, for 88 pints of blood donated between 1943 and 1974
- 1978 Diabetic Youth Foundation award, medal designed by Francis Maier, for work with Bearskin Meadow Camp
- 1978 Temple Emanu-El, Special Achievement Presentation and Award
- 1978 John Muir Memorial Association Conservation Award, to the person "who best exemplifies the civic virtues of John Muir and his or her concern for both the environment or the community."
- 1978 Sierra Club, "Special Achievement to Marshall Kuhn for founding the History Committee and serving as its indefatigable chairman for eight years, so that the Sierra Club's rich past will be preserved to guide, inspire, and enlighten the future."

I FAMILY BACKGROUND AND CHILDHOOD

[Pre-Interview Conference: May 15, 1977]
[begin tape A, side 1]

An Overview of Marshall H. Kuhn's Family and His Insights

Dorfman: When were you born?

Kuhn: On December 23, 1916.

Dorfman: Where were you born?

Kuhn: I was born at home, which was 2036 Hyde Street between Union and Filbert in San Francisco. This is just half a block from the original Swensen's Ice Cream Store. I've said, jokingly, that if Swensen's had been in business when I was born, we never would have moved away!

Dorfman: Where were you married?

Kuhn: In San Francisco on September 5, 1950.

Dorfman: What is your wife's name?

Kuhn: Her maiden name was Caroline Sarah Nahman.

Dorfman: Where was Mrs. Kuhn born?

Kuhn: She was also born in San Francisco, at Mt. Zion Hospital.

Dorfman: On what date?

Kuhn: January 26, 1924.

Dorfman: What was your father's name?

Kuhn: My father's name was Samuel Kuhn.

Dorfman: Where was he born?

Kuhn: He was born in Riga, Latvia in 1873.

Dorfman: Your mother's name?

Kuhn: My mother's name was Agnes Kurlandzik. She was born on May 3, 1880, and I'm not sure whether she was born in Kovno or Vilna, Lithuania, or Bialystock in Poland.

Dorfman: So far as your grandparents, your father's father's name?

Kuhn: Michael. I only found this out in very recent years. I have no idea what my paternal grandmother's name was and my mother's father was named Nathan Kurlandzik. He died in Europe and her mother was Minnie and she died in San Francisco in 1902. I never knew any grandparents nor any great-grandparents.

Dorfman: You're not sure where your father's father was born?

Kuhn: No.

Dorfman: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Kuhn: I have two brothers, both of whom are dead. Both were older. Mortimer was born in 1911. Harold was born in 1913 and he died in 1976. Mortimer died in 1953.

Dorfman: Do you have any sisters?

Kuhn: No, no sisters.

Dorfman: Do you have children?

Kuhn: We have three children. The oldest is Alyson, who is twenty-five. She lives and works in Paris. Next comes Bruce, twenty-two. He lives in Daly City. Then there's Nancy, who's twenty, and she works in San Francisco. All three of them were born at Children's Hospital. The whole family are natives. That's rare.

Dorfman: What kind of work have you done over the years?

Kuhn: I interrupted my college career for three years to work for the Anglo-California National Bank, which is now part of Crocker, and for the first of the three years I was office boy to Herbert Fleishhacker, who was second as a financier in the West only to A.P. Giannini of Bank of America.

MARSHALL KUHN AND HIS FAMILY



Marshall H. Kuhn with his father, Samuel Kuhn, 1916



His mother, Agnes Kuhn; brothers Mortimer, *left*; Harold, *right*, 1917



Yosemite, 1926. Parents and cousin of Marshall H. Kuhn. *Left to right*, Dolly Weiss, Samuel and Agnes Kuhn



March 2, 1974. Mr. and Mrs. Marshall H. Kuhn at a family wedding

Kuhn: Then when I got out of college I went directly into the Navy and I left the Navy after World War II. I began a career with Blue Shield of California in sales work and remained for twenty-four years, I was a year and seven months with the Irwin Memorial Blood Bank in charge of donor recruitment, and then I became executive director of the San Francisco Jewish Community Center and left there shortly after a year--on loan, as it were--to the Jewish Welfare Federation and changed the loan to a gift or a grant in 1974, where I have been ever since, currently serving as director of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund.

Dorfman: Which synagogues have you belonged to in San Francisco?

Kuhn: Only Emanu-El and I would say that's--well, my parents belonged to Emanu-El and when my mother passed away there was no one belonging until I joined on my own in 1945.

Dorfman: What involvements have you had with Temple Emanu-El?

Kuhn: With Emanu-El? Well, I started out as a religious school student. I remember the old Temple down on Sutter Street at 450 Sutter and the Sunday school at 1335 Sutter. I remember when we lived around the corner here at 610 Lake Street. When I was four, cycling up on my tricycle to Arguello and Lake to see the building then on that site, a kindergarten called "The Child Garden" burned to the ground with its ice plant cover. I remember that because it was the first time in my life I had ever seen my brothers coming from a different place than I came from. They were coming home from school and I was coming from where we lived.

Shortly after that Emanu-El bought the property and built the Temple. I remember the cornerstone being laid on Washington's birthday in 1925. Then I was bar mitzvah, confirmed, became the basketball coach in 1936 and a member of the faculty in 1940, principal in 1947 to '48, and taught the confirmation class from '46 to '53 except for that year as principal. Then I left there. For eighteen years I was principal at Peninsula Temple Beth El in San Mateo, but all the time living here in San Francisco. Then when I gave up the principalship in San Mateo in 1970, I returned to the Emanu-El faculty where I have been ever since.

I was vice-president of the men's club, the chief usher, and the president of the youth group, the Pathfinders. In its time it was just a young men's youth group and the girls met separately as the Reviewers. You wouldn't get away with that today. That's about all I've ever done for Emanu-El. Well, I've done a lot of other things. Periodically, every five years, they would have a confirmation class reunion. I was perennially the chairman of

Kuhn: that, but after the last one I put on in 1960 I figured I'd retire. We had representatives of sixty-one classes present at that one reunion.

So, various little things here and there for the Temple but mostly, mostly in later years, I've been involved with the children. I seem to get along better with the kids than I do with some of the adult leadership of the Temple.

Dorfman: At Emanu-El?

Kuhn: Yes. Any temple. I consider parents the last frontier.

Dorfman: Your involvement certainly has been more than superficial. Did you belong to any Jewish organizations, either charitable or religious or cultural, in San Francisco prior to 1940?

Kuhn: Yes. Irving Reichert was the rabbi at Emanu-El and in 1934, I believe it was, he was also the campaign chairman for what was then called the Jewish National Welfare Fund, which collected money for national and overseas agencies. Because I was president of the youth group in what was then my freshman year at college, he asked me to get some other young men to help. That was my first involvement in Jewish philanthropy. I remember collecting--that was during the depression and there was a series of small Jewish shops on Kearny Street where Bank of America is now and we were collecting a dollar, two dollars; five dollars was the biggest. I did that every year starting in '34 and continuing to the present.

Dorfman: You still--

Kuhn: Well, I'm not collecting those small amounts, but I put in forty years as a volunteer before I became a professional--which is quite unusual.

Dorfman: I would say. Did you belong to any non-Jewish organizations prior to 1940?

Kuhn: It's hard to remember. I would say this. I was a charter member of the Jewish Community Center when it opened about 1932 up at California and Presidio Avenue, where I returned forty years later to be director. I went to Camp Tawonga, which was run by the predecessor of the Jewish Center, the old YMHA on Haight Street. I was a charter camper there in 1925 and '26. But I can't recall offhand belonging to any non-Jewish organizations. Maybe the YMCA to play basketball or something like that.

Dorfman: Did you attend or participate in any cultural activities in San Francisco prior to 1940--music, art, or theater?

Kuhn: Well, I attended the theater with friends. We loved to hear Maurice Evans in Shakespeare. I wasn't much on art. Music occasionally. I graduated from high school in '33. I remember going in the fall of '31 with my mother to my first opera. It was the last season when the San Francisco Opera was held in the Civic Auditorium before moving into the Opera House and it was Il Trovatore, starring Elizabeth Rethberg and Giovanni Martinelli. I'll never forget when they clanged that anvil; that sound went up my spine. I can feel it yet.

Then, of course, in '34 I went to college and then I was a dropout for three years, as I mentioned, before going back to complete it. During that period I had a great opportunity through an aunt who was an opera teacher to usher at the opera one season at night at no cost. I stood through Aida, which was okay, and through La Boheme, which was okay, but when they asked me to stand for The Masked Ball, that ended my opera ushering career. After a hard day's work in the bank, no opera was that good.

Dorfman: What political parties, if any, did you belong to before 1940?

Kuhn: When I first registered it was as a "refused to state" vote because I didn't feel the major parties were that different. Then, when I realized I was losing out on all the primaries, I became a Republican because I felt they were a little more responsible fiscally. I stayed that until 1968 when my older daughter began to work for Eugene McCarthy and I decided I'd try being a Democrat for a while; my being a Republican hadn't helped the country very much. I don't think being a Democrat has helped it very much either, but I seem to have a greater rapport with Democratic candidates, so I'm a registered Democrat but not a very avid one.

Dorfman: Have you ever belonged to a labor organization?

Kuhn: No.

Dorfman: Have you lived in places other than in and about San Francisco?

Kuhn: Well, the only places would be either the time of service in the war, or I lived several months in New York City in connection with various businesses after the war, trying to make a connection with eastern firms. But that was just a matter of several months.

Dorfman: This was after World War II?

Kuhn: Right. My whole experience in New York was during and after the war because my naval training was in New York. I guess I lived in New York City for about six months in my life, but apart from that it's always been here.

Dorfman: Can you give me the date at which the first person in your family moved to San Francisco?

Kuhn: No, I have no idea. I suspect it was my father in about 1880. He came from Latvia when he was six, so that would be about 1880, with his cousins, and I don't know anybody who would have come before that. I have no idea why they picked San Francisco. There may have been someone here before him, but I don't know that.

Dorfman: That was my next question, why--

Kuhn: I don't know why on either side. He came because his mother had died. He didn't get along with his stepmother, and so when his cousins came to San Francisco he came with them, which seems to me so utterly ridiculous, but apparently the roots of that disagreement were very deep. I've discussed it with my cousin in Israel who has memories of that grandmother and she was something to contend with.

Now, why my mother came. I think parts of her family had come before her, and then her aunt went back to the home place and brought her along on the second trip. But apparently their memories of Europe were so bitter that they didn't ever talk to their children about them--which is a great pity. And they used Yiddish as a code against us.

The only Yiddish I knew as a kid was lasum saroo. When my father was walloping me for something, my mother would say, "lasum saroo, Sam," and that meant, "That's enough already." Somebody challenged me on this once and I checked it with Dr. Samuel Kohs, who's a great Yiddishist, and he said, "One, you're absolutely correct, you got the words right, and two, never distrust your childhood memories. They're always correct."

Dorfman: Did you ever live in the Fillmore-McAllister district?

Kuhn: No, I never did. I've always been in the Richmond district. You could subtitle this interview High Fog Near the Ocean, because that's been the weather prediction ninety percent of the time.

Dorfman: So you have always been in the Richmond district rather than in any of the other small Jewish neighborhoods in San Francisco?

Kuhn: Right.

Dorfman: What was your address here in the Richmond district?

Kuhn: Well, we moved from Hyde Street to 610 Lake, and then about when I was six we moved to a brand new flat at 4720 California. About three years after that we moved to 439 15th Avenue, which was the nicest place we ever lived. When I was eleven, in 1928, my father died there, and then we moved a year later to 280 17th Avenue, then to 3876 California Street, and then to 158 3rd Avenue and 152 3rd Avenue. Then to 130 Lake Street. When I was twenty-two, I was living with my mother there and she passed away.

Then I lived with my brother and his wife at 481 35th Avenue for a few months, and then with my eldest brother at 3234 Clay Street for a few months. Then I moved to Berkeley, where I lived at International House, and graduated and went into the service. It sounds like I lived on a moving truck. [Laughter]

Dorfman: It sounds as though you know San Francisco's geography. Can you list for me the major events in your life and the approximate dates?

Kuhn: I would say my enrollment in Sutro Grammar School, which would be in January, 1923. That's right, I would have been just six. That would be a major date. At that time elementary schools did not automatically have kindergartens, so I had gone to a kindergarten but it had been a private one. Sutro was an outstanding school. There were eight grades and I definitely feel that I got off to a very good academic start there. They had splendid teachers.

Then the next key, that would be my father's death. I think that's the one single most traumatic event in my life. Here was this healthy man of fifty-four who had no symptoms that I had seen (although I was told later that he had been warned that he was working too hard) and he died in his sleep at night.

My mother was a widow; this was in 1928. [She was] completely unqualified--I won't say completely--but unqualified to carry on his business, which was the wholesale baker's and confectionery supplies. We were going into the depression. I have no idea how much my father left my mother, but whatever he left her lasted through the depression until her death in 1939. But if prosperity had stayed and prices and rents had remained high, she wouldn't have made it, which is an unusual way of looking

Kuhn: at the depression. I don't know what Studs Terkel would do with that.

I would not say that my bar mitzvah and confirmation really were big, significant events because of the way they were done, which I may comment on about Temple Emanu-El later.

Certainly entering Lowell High School in January, 1930 was a key event. That was another splendid school. Then entering the University of California at Berkeley in January, 1934. I left there in April, '37, just walked out, and came back in August, '40 after working three years for the bank. I would say that in July, '40, when I went for a week's hike to the High Sierra camps in Yosemite, to which I've returned with my kids many times since, I spent a week up there thinking about what I should do and decided to quit my job and go back to the University if they would have me. That certainly is a significant date.

Then, of course, December 7, 1941, Sunday morning, when I was bringing a class home from a field trip. My eighth graders at Temple Emanu-El were taken that morning to the Jewish Home for the Aged and we turned on the car radio and heard the news of Pearl Harbor. The following April I left graduate school at Berkeley and went into the navy. Now, do you want other key events or just the pre-1940 events?

Dorfman: Let's take the pre-1940 period for the time being. What major traveling have you done?

Kuhn: The first trip I ever made outside of the state was in 1938 when two friends and I drove around the western states. We drove for over thirteen days, 4,500 miles, and the cost for each of us was a penny a mile--for everything--and it just opened a new world to me because I became a nut on national parks. We went to Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Montana--to Glacier National Park. Just an unbelievable trip.

The next year, '39, one of the fellows that was with me the previous year, Nerv Silberman, decided to get a new car in Detroit. So, we took the train from here to Detroit, got a new car, and drove across to see the New York World's Fair, down to Washington, and back across the country. That was a three-week trip. I don't know why I should stress these dollar figures except comparatively: for three weeks, exactly \$150 total.

Dorfman: Too bad we can't translate that now.

Kuhn: I'd like to do it for a day. That was the only traveling I knew before I was in the service.

Dorfman: Have you traveled abroad?

Kuhn: When I was in the service I made five trips to Australia, New Zealand, and New Guinea. In 1961 when I was going to be campaign co-chairman for the Federation the next year and subsequently in '63 as well, I traveled through Denmark, Austria, Morocco, and France, and in the succeeding year to Poland, France, and Israel, which also were unforgettable trips. They make you wonder which is the illusion and which is the reality.

But before that I was pretty isolated. You just didn't all of a sudden buy a plane ticket when college closed and go over to Europe for the summer. Nobody could do it. You didn't have the money; you didn't have the imagination. Even to let me go to New York to the World's Fair, I was twenty-two and my mother had certain reservations about it.

In fact, when my father died she sort of clamped back on me. I was the youngest one and I was the only one she really had control over. She took me out of the traffic patrol so I would be home sooner and leave later. Very bad. It had a great effect. I don't blame her because she only did what she thought was best, but it had a very great effect on me, not having a father.

That changed my whole career in sports because I had to work after school when I was starting high school, and somehow because of my brother Harold's experience at Lowell High School, which had a horrible gym, I spent the first two and a half years in ROTC, so I rarely got a chance to play during the day or after school. I was working for a wholesale jeweler and I didn't have the athletic career that I might otherwise have had. Sports have been a big part of my life.

Dorfman: What are your special interests now?

Kuhn: Now my special interests are anything in the Jewish world and then conservation. The things I do on the outside now--they're far more limited than they were before. I don't have the time that I used to have or the energy. The primary one is serving as chairman of the history committee of the Sierra Club, which was a new committee of the Sierra Club when we formed it in 1970. I also serve as treasurer of the Strybing Arboretum Society of Golden Gate Park, and then I'm on the advisory board of the Diabetic Youth Foundation, which is a children's camp for diabetic children which doesn't take any of my time at all. Those are my only outside interests right now.

Dorfman: Which would be your--

Kuhn: The Sierra Club is by far.

Dorfman: In which area of San Francisco Jewish life do you feel that you have the most insight and the most knowledge?

Kuhn: Which area of Jewish life? [Pause] I would say in the area of organizational--I don't want to use the word "politics"--organizational structure and life: the way organizations are formed, mutate, and die. That's with any organization. It makes no difference whether it is reform, orthodox, or conservative. They all have the same basic human interplay. I would say anything in the history of the Federation, certainly, or of its agencies, but basically anything to do with Jewish organizations.

Dorfman: Looking back, reflecting over your life and your experiences, what difference do you think it has made to you that you were a Jew?

Kuhn: On, a tremendous difference. To be born a Jew, a reform Jew, in San Francisco--first of all, I traveled around the world on behalf of our fellow Jews. Wherever you run into somebody they say, "San Francisco?" It's either their favorite city now, their having been here already, or it's the one place in the world they want to go next. So that's San Francisco--San Francisco in California in the United States.

And then as a Jew here, there is so much opportunity here and so little anti-Semitism; as a matter of fact, once you travel around you realize you live in a golden land. I've never at any time ever thought it would be better to be something else. It's just been the perfect place and the perfect time. I was born at the right time for a number of things.

Irving Reichert, in spite of other reservations I have about him, had a great effect upon me. I was confirmed in 1932, and for five years, except for taking college classes, I ushered every Saturday morning at services. I listened to his sermons and I learned a great deal from him. I would say that the basic focus of my character came from what he spoke about and from my family life, particularly my mother's influence because I knew her longer than my father.

Chaim Weizmann came to San Francisco about 1937. I was just old enough to be smart enough to realize that I had to go hear that man. Here was a man I'd been hearing about all my life.

Kuhn: I was in my early twenties and I went to the Hotel St. Francis to hear him and I can remember today what he said, which was basically, "This is what the Zionist movement intends to do. If you'd like to help us, we'd enjoy receiving that help, but if you're against us, please don't oppose us actively. Just step to one side." Well, San Francisco, being one of the heartlands of the American Council for Judaism a few years later, really didn't take that message to heart.

No, I can't think of any place that's better to have been. But that's just sheer luck.

[end tape A, side 1]

Childhood in the Richmond, a San Francisco Jewish Neighborhood

[Interview 1: June 9, 1977]
[begin tape 1, side A]

Dorfman: First I thought you could tell me what the neighborhood you lived in as a child was like.

Kuhn: The neighborhood was this very same one where we are sitting now, the Richmond district. We moved here to 7th Avenue and Lake Street when I was about three or four. That's right around the corner from this house. We stayed in the Richmond district even after I went to college. I didn't know any other districts, so there was nothing to compare it with, and to my mind's eye, looking back, it was a district with many fog-overladen days. I used to say (I don't know if I said it before) that I would call any autobiography High Fog Near the Ocean, because we have basically very restricted weather.

Of the boys I went to school with--I didn't have too many friends on weekends. My brothers were of such an age that they really didn't have the same interests I did. I won't say it was lonely. We were certainly unstructured. I didn't join the Boy Scouts. I didn't belong to the YMHA. I didn't belong to any youth group or organization--such as the Cubs. All the things I have tried to do later in my life or organize seem to be a complete reversal of what I went through myself. I went to camp two years, but only when my brothers quit, I quit. I didn't have much guidance. My father was too busy. When he passed away, my mother was busy. She also didn't have a man's strength and opposite viewpoint to balance it off. I could have used a lot of guidance in my reading and everything I did. I

Kuhn: didn't belong anywhere. I don't think I took advantage of some of the opportunities that are certainly much more available today.

Dorfman: What would you say the street on which you lived as a child was like?

Kuhn: The street I lived on as a child would be California Street between 9th and 10th Avenues. It was a brand new house at 4720 California, a set of flats actually. I lived there from the time I was about six years of age to the time we moved to 15th Avenue when I was about eleven.

It was a street of single-family dwellings, of flats. The houses and structures were of all ages. There were a few vacant lots and the C Streetcar of the municipal railway ran right down the street all the way up to 33rd Avenue. It was a street you didn't play on because you were afraid of automobiles and the streetcars. You merely came off the street to go in and get a change of shoes after school and an apple, grabbed some milk, and ran out to 10th Avenue and played there because that was a flat level street, a long street which was pretty protected.

I knew some of the people on 10th Avenue and on 9th Avenue, but again I can't conceive of these people being friends of the family except in one case; Betty Edelstein's grandparents lived on our block. It's a street I have passed every year of my life ever since. It's the first time I ever really thought about the question: What kind of street was it like?

Dorfman: What was your house like?

Kuhn: When we moved into it, it was brand new and that was great. It was a standard kind of a flat. You came in, there was a living room, a dining room, kitchen, and three bedrooms. The bedrooms were sort of--well, my father and mother would have one bedroom to one side. My brother and I would have one to the other side, and then on the back, sort of the tail end, my eldest brother would have his room. He was the oldest, so he always got his own room first.

I remember one time in 1926; I was nine and my middle brother and I had spent a month at Camp Tawonga. My parents had gone to Yosemite, the first and only time they ever had a chance to do anything like that. Then they visited us at Cisco and while all this was going on they were having the house painted. We came home and the place was brand new, spic and span, just as it had been when it was completed. My father put us both in the tub and scrubbed all this month's accumulation of debris

Kuhn: off. Then we had our first mother-cooked meal in a month and that really--and I slept like a babe in arms. It was just marvelous. Not that camp had been bad. It was just the familiar sights and sounds of your own house, coming back from such a long time, that had never happened to me before.

Dorfman: How did that make you feel?

Kuhn: Wonderful, wonderful. My mother was a superb cook. My father was a good cook too. As I mentioned, he was in the wholesale confectioner's and baker's supply business, so he knew how to make ice cream. At my oldest brother's bar mitzvah reception, it was unique in the sense that my father got these gorgeous French rolls and he made all these beautiful sandwiches out of French rolls. You didn't see this at any other place. But it was just--well, it's a beautiful memory. Not enough of them. Not enough in the sense that my father died too soon.

Dorfman: What was your room like?

Kuhn: My room? Well, it was my room and my middle brother's room. He was older than I was, so I guess it was mostly his room. We had twin sets of drawers, twin beds. I didn't have any collections or anything like that. I think he had a stamp collection. It was just the stuff that Donald O'Connor would refer to as--a guy's got to have his stuff, which means your catcher's mitt and your roller skates. I was a big muscle man because I never went through the kites or tops or marble stage or anything like that--all these small things--because my two brothers were older than I was. I was always out there socking with them and their friends, so I never had any of these more intellectual type of things.

Dorfman: What was your favorite room?

Kuhn: My favorite room? My favorite room would obviously have to be the kitchen. Every Friday night my father would--not just Friday night, but that was the main one--my father would bring home from McAllister Street this gorgeous Waxman rye bread because Mr. Waxman was a friend of his and the whole family had gone to Henry Waxman's, his son's, wedding on Sutter Street, the big hall where every guest had his own miniature challah. I guess it would have to be the kitchen. So many good things came out of there.

Dorfman: Could you tell me about shopping with your mother?

Kuhn: My mother's main source of supply was the market on Clement Street at 11th Avenue called the Checker Market. One time I convinced them that I would go to work for them one Saturday opening newspapers that they would use to wrap fruits and vegetables. For all that labor I could have as much watermelon as I wanted. Well, pretty soon they began to pay me off in watermelon and I had about two slices. I was through because your eyes are much bigger than your stomach. My mother would order by phone frequently and about two hours later she'd think of something and she would phone and they would answer and she'd say, "Sidney, did you send the order yet?" He said, "Mrs. Kuhn, it just left," and she'd say, "Put in another pound of butter," and he'd say, "Okay." It had never left.

Dorfman: What were the stores like?

Kuhn: The stores? Well, there was a Mr. Cohn, who was the cobbler. That was a shoe repair store then, and here over fifty years later it's still a shoemaker's store on Clement and 9th Avenue. There were stores then called Johnson & Nordquist, and Ladenheim's. Those were men's and boys' haberdashery. They still are. One of them sponsored, every Saturday afternoon--when you went to the Coliseum Theater, a part of the stage production was a pie eating contest. Because the orchestra leader was a cousin of mine named Joe Mendel, my mother thought it would be a disgrace if I were to get up there and stand with my hands behind my back, kneeling in my new pants, eating these pies off a board, and winning with a face full of pie, and my cousin being the band leader. So I was forbidden from participating in this.

This was the main thing. On Saturday afternoon you went to the Coliseum and you saw Douglas Fairbanks "continued next week" or Harold Lloyd. You had a stage show and then you invariably had a newsreel which consisted of three parts--always at least three parts. They were common. One was the opening of the bathing beauty season at Boca Raton, Florida, somebody diving off the board. The second was a horse race and the third was the Kaiser chopping wood at Doorn with these herky-jerky motions, going up and down with his axe on his shoulder. And in none of those was a boy of my age interested at all. I couldn't tell the number of even the horses. That was the big thing, the Coliseum Theater.

Then there was another theater up at 18th and Geary. I went to that one the day it opened, the Alexandria. It was "Aladdin and His Magic Lamp."

Kuhn: A few years ago I ran into the owner of the Coliseum, one of the ubiquitous Levin family, and I said, "You know, I went to the show there the other night and I hadn't been there in fifteen years." He pointed his finger at me and he said, "You're the guy that ruined the movie business."

Clement Street. It's a great street. Now it's almost like an Oriental bazaar, but it's always been a good shopping street. There wasn't anything you couldn't get there. Every year, of course, the merchants put on this Halloween party. But I really wasn't a shopping person. My mother did it on her own. I was more of an errand person--if you go fetch this, then you'll get this--just like a trained dolphin.

Dorfman: What did you like most about the neighborhood?

Kuhn: Well, I liked the neighborhood mostly because it was the same kind of freedom that has represented San Francisco. If you went about your business and you didn't bother anybody else, nobody would ever bother you. That was pretty much the rule. Anything bad that happened was due to your own stupidity. If you cross in front of a car, you're going to get hit because you challenged some fundamental rule of safety. It was just a nice free atmosphere--plus the fact that you were sandwiched in between Golden Gate Park on the south and the Presidio on the north. That was, I think, the greatest part of it. Wherever you turned, it was green and you never had to play in the street unless you wanted to and, of course, most kids would rather play in the street and break a window than walk one block to the nearest park. This is why some of our great ideas of having huge recreation projects fall down, because no one will go that far, even a block.

But it was the freedom. You can see right from where we're sitting, this backdrop of eucalyptus.

Dorfman: Yes, it's lovely.

Kuhn: Beautiful. Now, when we were here before, when we lived around the corner, I remember a winter here in which the ravine up here was solidly filled with water, and kids made rafts and sailed them up and down. It's right by the Presidio golf course. We had another legend. The legend was that Mountain Lake here had a secret connection with the Pacific Ocean. It was also bottomless. So someone asked, "If it's bottomless, how come you can get to the bottom?" Well, there was no explanation for that. "How come it's got a connection with the ocean? The ocean is salt, but this is fresh." "Don't bother me with facts."
[Chuckles]

Kuhn: Then we had another thing. There was a playground here, Mountain Lake Park, that runs between 8th Avenue and Park Presidio Boulevard. That's a block away from here and that was our big playground when I lived particularly on California Street. You'd be playing along and men would come from the Veterans Domiciliary Home at 15th Avenue and then we'd say, "Watch out! These guys were gassed in World War I," as if that was something contagious, and we'd all run away from them.

There was the Public Health Service Hospital there and this Veterans Domiciliary Home and an orphanage. There was also an orphanage down the corner here at 7th Avenue and Lake Street and both of them had Jewish children. All the Jewish children were not yet at Homewood Terrace. Some of these orphanage children went to the same grammar school that I did, which was Sutro, between California and Clement and Funston and 12th Avenue. Some of these fellows I still see today. They were known as "the kids from the home."

Dorfman: I guess every city has them.

Kuhn: Yes, well, there was a string of five excellent grammar schools all the way from Pacific Heights at Fillmore and Jackson, through Grant, Madison, Sutro, and Alamo, all five excellent schools. Sutro I wouldn't place second to any grammar school in this city--an eight-year grammar school. I went through in seven. Those were the days when you could get skipped, but after I was skipped twice, I was still in the off semester. The same happened in high school and college. I was always a "January boy," which is a curse.

Sutro was a great school. When we left Sutro after the eighth grade, I went to Lowell. The next semester, January, 1930, was when they opened the junior highs in the Richmond district, Roosevelt and Presidio. So I never went to a junior high school.

Dorfman: What event in your childhood would you say you remember most vividly?

A Response to Father's Death

Kuhn: Oh, by all means, my father's death. By all means. It was the first personal experience with death. I'd gone to a funeral. My father took me to the funeral of Major Peixotto, who was the head of the Columbia Park Boys' Club, because he wanted me to

Kunn: see a great man and particularly because Rabbi Newman of Temple Emanu-El, who was our rabbi, was conducting the service. But my father's death to me was so unexpected. It just came at a time when really my relationship with him was just beginning to flower. He had an arrangement whereby on Saturdays and on vacation days he would take one of the three boys with him. I wanted to go more than the other two, so sometimes I would get an extra day. I remember the night he died--it was a Wednesday--and that afternoon I'd gone to Temple Emanu-El for basketball. This was in 1928. The religious school building had opened in '27. The Temple itself had been finished in 1926. It was a rainy day and I know I got a ride home from one of our neighbors who happened to be driving by. My father was busy, as he was every night, keeping his own books. I remember saying, "Good night, Dad," and the next thing I heard were all these horrible shrieks. I don't know whether they were just my mother's shrieks or my father's. I'm pretty much convinced now that he passed away just in his sleep. Maybe there were some cries of pain. I just don't know. I later heard that he had some prior warning that if you don't take off weight and slow down, at the age of fifty-four you would have trouble. But I didn't know any of that at that time. I was just bereft.

Dorfman: How did the neighbors treat you and your family?

Kuhn: If you're talking about the fact of anti-Semitism or something like that, I wouldn't know. I can't really react. I know that there were neighbors and we had different relations with them--I think just about the same as here--based upon the age of their children. My mother would be friendly with a neighbor because she and my mother were active in the PTA together and made sandwiches together. I think it was mostly like that, but on California Street, particularly, I mentioned the houses were all ages and sizes and varieties, and the people were too. There were a lot of people there who didn't have any children. You wouldn't find anybody there like a young person, twenty-two or twenty-three, living by himself. That's a phenomenon of later times. There were families who lived there, or the families where the children had grown up and gone away. I still have friends who lived on that block.

One of the most interesting families was a Scotch one named Mink. There were two boys; one of them we called Scotchie Mink. He was an excellent soccer player. The other was his brother, Alan, who got an enlargement of the heart. No one really knew what that meant, except that he was confined to bed for about a year. I used to go over and play cards with him in the afternoon. He later died very prematurely in his teens. As I say, it wasn't

Kuhn: a block that I focussed on. I wanted to get somewhere where I could run and play. That was either 10th Avenue, because it was a long flat block, or the Presidio.

Dorfman: Did you have many friends near by?

Kuhn: Oh, yes, there were a lot of boys on 10th Avenue particularly. One of them was named Billy Raymond, whose grandmother and mother ran Wilkins Private School. Billy was an only child, so he and I were pals for quite a while. We went to high school together. Even though his mother by then was running the private school by herself, she couldn't control Billy and hired me to tutor him and objected to my prices. [Chuckles]

Dorfman: As you look back on those years now, what kind of childhood would you say you had and how did it seem to you then?

Kuhn: To me it seemed a little sad because of its unstructured nature. I didn't have a dad to go to the ballgame with, not that I would ever blame him. I knew how busy he was. He really worked himself to death for us. But I just didn't know how to manage going from one end of the city to the other and, of course, after my father passed away my mother was very overprotective. There were so many things that I could have done. Whether it was because of my own shyness or lack of direction--I just don't know. I think part of it was the fact that my brothers took advantage of me and so did the world. Let me give you an example.

When I went to camp at the age of eight, to Lakeport, Camp Tawonga, you were supposed to be a minimum of ten. But here were my two older brothers, so the camp accepted me. It was a temporary site, so the first two weeks you'd get the camp in shape for the kids coming the third or fourth week or who were staying over for two more weeks. When we finished this croquet court, I said, "Let's play on it." "You can't play. You're too young." I said, "I wasn't too young to build it." "Well, you're too young to play on it." That carried through for softball, and I think it's not fair. A little kid hasn't got a chance; that's what I really meant.

Dorfman: That's something that stayed with you?

Kuhn: Because nobody up to the top of the camp did anything about it. No one took the little kid's part.

Dorfman: Especially as relates to Jewish life, what would you say were the major events that you remember from those years?

Kuhn: I have to assume that my parents had very little Jewish life at home, or brought very little Jewish life with them from Europe. I don't remember one holiday or festival being observed at home other than the Japanese cleaning man came on Friday. The house was spotless, and the china, my mother's linen, and the silver--everything was just beautiful. Of course, as I said, my father brought the breads home and we had beautiful candles. I think my first recognition of it though was when my father joined Temple Emanu-El, both for himself but primarily so that the three of us could go to religious school. Rabbi Newman was the rabbi then and he used to pack them into the Temple Emanu-El. Eugene O'Neill and his plays, and Sinclair Lewis's books to some extent--that was the fare for his sermons. The whole community, Jewish and non-Jewish, used to pack the Temple.

My middle brother was a Boy Scout in Troop 17, the Temple-sponsored troop, and he would take me along as a visitor. Meanwhile, my parents were at the service. Then by the time the service was finished, my brother and I would go home with our parents. We'd walk around and get a soda. One time we walked all the way down to--it was either Blum's at California and Polk or some other place along the way. But my father had just had a brand new suit made and he was really in his element. This is the only way that the troop could survive--that they didn't compete with the services. I've given Magnes [Museum] a lot of material on that Boy Scout troop, but that was the only way they could do it, if they held the scout meeting so that any boys whose parents were in services could go home with them. Troop 17 always met on Friday night because the boys had no homework that night. This, however, created a conflict between the scout master and the rabbi, particularly if the rabbi felt that a scout meeting violated the Sabbath. However, after three months on the job, as it were, every rabbi became an ardent advocate of Troop 17. And we never heard complaints from that rabbi again.

Dorfman: And it worked?

Kuhn: It worked.

Recollections of the Fillmore District

Dorfman: From your knowledge of the Fillmore-McAllister area, and I know that you never lived in the Fillmore, but from your knowledge of the Fillmore-McAllister area up until 1940, would you define it as a Jewish ghetto?

Kuhn: Well, if you mean as a ghetto in the sense of it's being self-imposed, I would say yes, because the people not only lived there but they worked there. Any place where you can go to work just by walking half a block or two blocks, you can work an infinite number of hours. And so can members of your family. You don't need a phone. You just have to yell out the back window.

I didn't know any boys there except the ones I met at camp and I didn't know specifically where they lived. I just knew they lived "over there." For us it was a place for really great shopping for kosher Jewish foods. The only other times I was over there, as I look back, were: First, when you went to get your medical examination to go to Camp Tawonga, you went to the old YMHA on Haight Street. Second, my father took me to see the dedication of the Central Hebrew School, the Talmud Torah, run by the Jewish Education Society, which is now the Bureau of Jewish Education. He did that because again he wanted me to hear--I don't know if he wanted me to hear, but he wanted to hear--Rabbi Newman, who was giving the dedicatory address. Of course, above this building at Buchanan and Grove there was for many years the office of the Hebrew Free Loan Association.

Right in the same block, incidentally, was a place my father dealt with, which is one of the world's biggest butterball factories [chuckles], and I knew where that was. Years later this factory manufactured the Annabelle Bar, which was a marvelous confection of marshmallows, the owner having named the bar after his daughter, Annabelle Goldberg. The only girl I know after whom a candy bar was named.

But it was a shopping place. A couple of other occasions the family would go to a kosher place. There was a kosher restaurant on Webster Street, White's. There were two of them around the corner on Golden Gate Avenue. There we went for a kosher meal. But we didn't go to a synagogue anywhere near there. It was an area which I knew was Jewish, but it wasn't my kind of Jewish. It wasn't any better; it wasn't any worse. But until I got to high school and realized that these were the same kids that I had met at camp, that this was where they were really from--but I still didn't go down to visit them there. Our lives were just apart. Our lives were defined by where we lived, and I was a Richmond district boy. I guess if these guys would have come up to where I lived they would have been just as foreign as if I went down to their place, except their food was better. [Chuckles] There was no need for them to move.

Brothers: Mortimer and Harold Albert Kuhn

Dorfman: You told me that you had several brothers.

Kuhn: Two brothers.

Dorfman: Could you tell me a little bit about them?

Kuhn: Yes. The oldest brother was named Mortimer and he was born in 1911. He had the distinction of being a student in the first Montessori school that Madame Maria Montessori ever conducted outside of Italy--at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915. Years later, when my oldest child was taking a course in nursery education at UC Irvine, she wrote me that she had to get this book, The Montessori Method. I wrote her back saying, "You don't have to get it at all. You've got it. You've got an autographed copy. No one in the class, including the professor, will have that." But it's right in this house now.

He was very mechanically inclined, not so academically inclined. As he grew up in school he had a lot of problems because of his nonconformity in academic things. For example, when he was in high school he worked with one of the teachers who nowadays I would know was a child psychologist. Then it was just my brother working with Mr. Bronson. You had to guess what that meant, you see.

During World War II he was in the Merchant Marine. He was very much interested in radio. He was a radio ham. I lived with him for a while, after my mother passed away, on the top floor of a residence on Clay Street near Presidio Avenue. He had a transmitter with 1,000 volts, and I can tell you, when he hit the key you could read the message by the dimming of the lights in the house, the entire house. You could walk on the roof with a little light globe unconnected with anything and it would light up and go dim depending upon the nodes. Unbelievable.

Anyway, he had a life that was all black and white. There was no grey in my brother's life. He would get mad at you for two or three years and then he would be your pal for two or three years. He never married. I think he led an extremely lonely, sad life. In the last few years he was plagued by hypertension at a time when there really were no drugs that could give you proper relief. He had a sympathectomy. That didn't bring him any relief and he finally died at about forty-three years of age of a coronary. Really, really a sad life because he had this genius with his hands. He could make anything. He had learned to do engraving of silver saddle ornaments. If he had a friend he'd make him any kind of ornament or pin.

[end tape 1, side A]

[begin tape 1, side B]

Kuhn: But the understanding was that then the friend was obligated to give him something. This is a syndrome, I've found, of many people who lead a life of solitude. They have to mark things off, one against the other, because literally in many cases that's all they have. It's very sad.

Now, my middle brother, who just died a year ago at the age of sixty-two, was Harold Albert Kuhn. He adopted the initials H.A.K., or HAK. He had good grades in school, a good athlete, active in the scouts. When he graduated from Lowell, my mother was a widow, so my brother decided he would forego college and he studied accounting at night. That meant that almost six out of every seven nights he either was in accounting school or studying. And he passed the CPA exam the first time he took it. He really had remarkable powers of concentration.

Then he married. He had three sons. Later on he was divorced. For many years he and I were somewhat estranged. But then we healed our differences in the last five to ten years of his life. We were very, very close, much closer than we had ever been before. We had been very close before, because in our teens he and I had done all sorts of things together. We had rowed on Stow Lake together (he was an excellent oarsman), climbed every bit of Mount Tamalpais, and he was very much a conservationist, as am I. He loved particularly the bay. In 1968 he had his first coronary, and a series of coronaries thereafter, until finally the last one was in March, 1976.

But my oldest brother would be on good terms with either my brother HAK or me--one or the other--but never both. I often thought that our whole family could have used a staff psychiatrist almost full time.

Dorfman: There might have been something to the triangle theory.

Kuhn: There might have been. I know from our family doctor that my parents had anticipated very much having a girl for the third child and had really bought girl's clothes and were extremely disappointed when I came along. I felt that actually for the first ten years of my life I was just fighting to get up even. So, as I say, from ten to eleven, when my father died, I was really sort of coming into my own--that "this guy may amount to something."

It's hard for a child--well, it was hard for me in any way to be critical of my parents, not only when they were alive but for many years afterwards, as if criticism were the same as finding

FUNERAL SERVICE FOR HAROLD ALBERT "HAK" KUHN

SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL, SAN FRANCISCO

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 1976

SERVICES CONDUCTED BY RABBI JOSEPH ASHER
OF TEMPLE EMANU-EL

EULOGY DELIVERED BY MARSHALL H. KUHN, HAK'S BROTHER

Rabbi Asher, dear friends, on behalf of our family, I wish to thank all of you for your kindness to us during the past few days, and for joining with us today in this farewell service for HAK. Many of you have come from considerable distance to be here. For those who wish to visit the family, Michael and Dayle will be at home this afternoon, while Caroline and I will be at home this evening.

I probably knew HAK longer than anyone, yet there are a number here who knew him almost as long, some for over half a century. You are, indeed, "old friends", so there is little I can say about him that would be new to you. He had strengths, and weaknesses like any human being, though his might have been somewhat different than ours. He held positions strongly, hated hypocrisy, disliked incompetence, and was impatient with those in private or public life who betrayed their trust.

My memories go back to our boyhood in the Richmond District, where my family still lives. Our flat on California Street near Ninth Avenue was just three doors away from the house where Henrietta and her family lived. After high school, HAK went to work, studying accountancy at night, and passing the CPA exam the first time. He took great pride in his profession, specializing in taxation, and contributed articles to accounting journals for almost four decades.

He loved San Francisco, particularly Golden Gate Park and the Bay. He introduced me to the joys of Mount Tamalpais and was especially partial to the sunny warmth of Marin and to swimming at Las Gallinas. And he was ever available to drive visitors to the City around the 49-Mile Drive and to share with them his infectious enthusiasm for the city of his birth. To HAK, everything here was "the oldest, the biggest, and/or the best."

He liked good things--good food and wine, good reading and good conversation. And sports and humor, good or bad. We had a standing routine. When he answered my phone call, I would greet him, "Kuhnavitch, you're a bum!" To which he would respond, "Am I at least a good bum?" Then after an exchange of outrageous puns, he would ask if I knew who had won last night's Warriors game. When I confessed

that I hadn't even known they had played, his rejoinder was, "It's guys like you who are ruining pro sports!"

Since his first heart attack eight years ago, HAK mellowed, softening his views, and drawing ever closer to his family. He bore his physical limitations gracefully, though he was often lonely. There were so many things he wanted to do, articles to finish, contract bridge games to play, but saddest, he seemed to know that he would never be able to visit his son Jonathan's family in Israel and see his grandson Shahar.

Recently he seemed to have achieved an inner peace. Michael, Jonathan and Jeffrey were grown and happily married, and his granddaughters provided him with infinite enjoyment. Even his death at age 62 was as he wished, instantaneous, hopefully painless, and as it happened outside San Francisco, causing his family the least trauma.

We will remember HAK for his many good works, for his service to the American Arbitration Association, and for his involvement in the Save San Francisco Bay Association--he was its most active membership recruiter. He was interested intensely in conservation, from the Sierra Club to protecting the California Golden Poppy.

He was a rare bird of a rare species, the genus Kuhn. He had character and integrity, and we who loved and respected HAK shall all miss him. But we will have our recollections of happy times spent in his company, and the certain knowledge that he loved all of us. This knowledge will comfort us at this sad hour, as we say farewell to HAK, to you, my dear brother. Your memory shall be for a blessing.

Now and in the years to come, we will assuage our grief through the wisdom of acceptance in keeping with our tradition, "The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

Amen

Kuhn: fault, rather than rational analysis, because a parent can't be everything to everybody. He's got to be one way or the other, and they did make mistakes with me. I might have made worse mistakes on the same things. I think it's also the practice that the first child gets the biggest share of attention, the second child a little less, and the third child the least. If you gauge it upon, for example, the number of family pictures and snips of hair in the baby book, by the time they got to my baby book there was nothing in there.

Dorfman: Please tell me about some of the characteristics and the personalities of your parents.

Further Recollections of Father, Samuel I. Kuhn

Kuhn: My father was a man who worked intensely hard. He came here from Europe as a little boy. He ushered in the theater with Sol Bloom, the New York congressman, and Julius Kahn was also an usher. Then he started to go to work for some firms in the wholesale confectionery supply business--Eng-Skell Company. He was a man, as far as I can tell, who everyone loved because he was the kind of a guy who would do a favor for anybody. He loved humor, he was gregarious, he was a pleasure to be with. He wore a derby hat.

Every once in a while I'll run into someone who remembers him. I ran into a man last year, Mr. Herbert Sichel, who was maybe twenty years younger, but who worked in the same Eng-Skell firm. Then I ran into a man named Mr. Gallagher on Mission Street near 11th and when I recalled to him who I was, he said, "Your father was a food faddist." Now, in our house there were bookshelves on either side of a fireplace. My father had many books on the Shaftesbury Method (also the name Ralston, I guess of Ralston Purina) and every once in a while he'd get on these kicks of these dietary foods and my mother would have to cook hot codfish and other things that smelled horribly. None of this he laid on us.

He really was what you would call a curbstome broker. If you ran a candy store, you could buy almost anything from him and he'd carry the credit, which means that [went] for everything from glassware, straws, syrups, sugar and flour, etc. He didn't have a warehouse big enough, so he would go to the wholesaler and pick up and toss a hundred-pound pack of sugar on his shoulder like nothing. One time, while delivering flour to a

Kuhn: bakery, he slipped on a banana peel and sprained his back. That's the first time I remember I'd ever seen my father disabled in bed.

But [he had] big and powerful, tremendously strong arms, and a very unique type of handwriting. I think he'd gone to some penmanship school. He kept his own books very meticulously. He was the kind of man who'd give you the shake of a hand and that was it. Everywhere I ever went in my life, I never ever had to even think of having to apologize for my father. His character was flawless. That was a fantastic plus for me. Everywhere I ever went I would be known as "Sam Kuhn's boy."

Dorfman: Did you ever have relatives living with you?

Kuhn: Yes, we did, twice that I can remember. Well, three times. The first I don't remember, but I'll tell you about it anyway. My mother had a large family here and she had a lot of cousins and one used to come every Friday night and babysit for us on Hyde Street and my parents would go out. This was my mother's cousin Margaret. Margaret has since told me that the reasons she did that were twofold. One, we always had the newspaper and we had hot water. She could come over and take a bath, because at her place there wasn't hot water. That was around 1920.

Then she had an older sister, Dolly Weiss, who was a wholesale furrier. Dolly lived with us when we lived at 610 Lake Street and she adored both of my parents and went with them to Yosemite in 1926 while my middle brother and I were at Camp Tawonga.

Also during the 1920s, over from Palestine came my Uncle Nahum, who later took the name Nehemiah, who as an engineer had been thrown out of Russia, had gone to Palestine, and had then come to California with the idea of maybe going up to Petaluma and becoming a chicken farmer. I remember him, going to Golden Gate Park with him. He stayed about six months. Finally, he went back to Palestine, became chief engineer of the potash company, built the plant on the north end of the Dead Sea, and when it was captured by the Arabs in '48--he built the plant at the south end of the Dead Sea. His three children live in Israel and I have seen them when I've gone to visit there. The oldest of his children just left here two days ago after having taught the spring quarter in architecture at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo.

The family came from Russia. My father's oldest brother and his youngest stepbrother were both retail jewelers in Boston. There was the brother in Palestine and a sister who stayed in Russia. No one has the slightest idea what ever happened to her family.

Dorfman: Were there any other relatives that you had who lived near by?

Kuhn: No. On my mother's side, her sister Helen lived in Oakland and a variety of aunts we had were always feuding with somebody. They lived in San Francisco, but not where you would ever go over there and ring the bell. Some of them I never even saw until after my father passed away, and by then some of these wounds were healed. I decided at that age not to make anybody's feuds mine except the ones I was involved in personally. Otherwise, I'd run out of people. Did I ever mention my Aunt Rachel?

Dorfman: No.

Kuhn: Well, my mother had one brother and four sisters. The sister Helen in Oakland and one in the East, Dora, were both married. My Aunt Schone, who also lived with us for a brief period on Lake Street, and my Aunt Rachel were school teachers. I never saw Aunt Rachel that I can remember until one day in 1925 when she "borrowed" me. She was going over to the University of California at Berkeley on a wet Saturday morning and she thought she'd take me along. So we took the big red Ellsworth Street train and we went to Berkeley, to Wheeler Hall. She had some business there. I saw her put her umbrella in this little stand and pull out a bronze umbrella tag, which I thought was a marvelous invention. We had lunch on Telegraph Avenue. We went up the Campanile for ten cents, which is the same cost today, and I thought this campus was the most beautiful place in the world. I'm sure this had something to do with my going to Cal, except for the fact that when I went to Cal in the depression it was the only place that I could have afforded. Imagine having to go to the finest university in the world, being forced to do that! I thought of this when I read Irving Stone's story of how he fell in love with Berkeley when he was in high school and his mother took him over to Berkeley one Sunday. It was almost the same thing.

Other than my father's cousin who came over from Palestine, none of his relatives were out here. I never met any of his other relatives until I went to Boston in '39.

Recreation and Street Play

Dorfman: Did you have any musical instruments in your home?

Kuhn: We had a piano, which no one played, and I don't know if anybody ever took any lessons. I only took lessons when I was fourteen. I got the idea that I wanted to learn the accordion. So they said,

Kuhn: "You have to learn the piano first." I was so bad at piano that I completely forgot that what I really wanted was to learn the accordion. I chucked that for about six years and then I went back to it. I did pretty well with the "Missouri Waltz" and "Pagan Love Call," neither of which have any sharps or flats. But beyond that, that ended the whole family's musical involvement.

We did love music in this sense. My father had a wonderful collection of Caruso records. He would sit in the living room on Saturday afternoon and my middle brother would rub my father's head with olive oil and turn over the Caruso records. That was just superb to see my father enjoying these very, very simple things. Then when he died, each place after my father died was smaller and smaller until we got rid of the records. First of all, Caruso records had no fidelity as we know it today, but they were really something.

Dorfman: What magazines, books, and newspapers do you remember reading and discussing?

Kuhn: Well, we always subscribed to the San Francisco Chronicle because we were a Hearst-hating family, and we had the Emanuel and Jewish Journal, which was a forerunner of the Jewish Bulletin. I don't remember any other magazine--oh, yes, pardon me, we had the Literary Digest, which lasted until it made a huge error on Franklin D. Roosevelt's election in 1932 and then it went down. I thought it was a horrible magazine. All it was was a retreading of articles from other magazines all over the country. It wouldn't last five minutes today.

The books around--my mother read a lot of American biography, particularly Lincoln, and she got a great deal of satisfaction from the whole Carl Sandburg series. My father just didn't have the time for that. The only time I came out unscathed was when I was five years old my father bought a twenty-volume set of the Book of Knowledge and my two brothers fought over the first volume and tore out about fifteen pages. I didn't get walloped because I was too young to read and I must be innocent, in my father's eyes, but not in my brothers' eyes.

I guess if I had seen a lot of reading around it would have impressed me. The only time I really remember much of it was when my mother in later life was afflicted by illness and she did a lot of reading.

Dorfman: What games did you play?

Kuhn: We played touch football. That was the main one. We played baseball, except, to be more accurate, we played softball. A little tennis. Basketball, not so much. I played any kind of game. If they had a ball, I'd play it. If it was a game of handball, they'd throw it, and it would bounce, and the batter would have to hit it on the first bounce, and we loved that. There was a type of handball known as "cigarettes." One player would hit the ball against the wall and call out a cigarette brand. The player who chose that brand would have to hit the ball on the first bounce.

On 5th Avenue a boy named Vincent Pampanin lived. He and I were in the same school class and we volunteered to collect some fresh wildflowers one spring. When it became dark and we still hadn't come home, it seemed like the whole neighborhood came looking for us. They found us hiking along a road in the Presidio carrying a huge wooden box which we had filled with poppies, lupine, and other spring wildflowers. When they found us, we were having the time of our lives, anticipating how pleased our teacher would be the next day. You don't see flowers in this profusion in the Presidio anymore.

Incidentally, the weather was different then, in the sense that there'd be three or four days a year when the fog was so thick you couldn't see the streetcar coming. You'll never see a San Francisco fog like that anymore. There seems to have been a change in climate.

Dorfman: What songs did you sing?

Kuhn: The greatest tragedy of my childhood is that when they conducted a paper drive for Sutro school, someone put my songbook in with the old newspapers. I saved the words of every song from "Sweet Kentucky Babe" to four songs that were on the blackboard the day after Lindbergh flew to Paris. "Lucky Lindy." There were three others. Of course, we went down to see Lindbergh come up Market Street. Any song, patriotic--"Columbia the Gem of the Ocean," "My Own United States," "America the Beautiful"--for seven years all these songs were written down in this songbook. I didn't have much of a voice, but I loved to sing. I'd love to have that songbook back.

Dorfman: What was your favorite kind of music?

Kuhn: My favorite kind of music would be sort of camp songs, something that a group would sing together. One of my great thrills was when I was fourteen and my mother took me to hear Il Trovatore. The last season of the San Francisco Opera was held in the Civic

Kuhn: Auditorium before the Opera House was open. This was in the fall of 1931, with Giovanni Martinelli and Elizabeth Rethberg, and we sat there and heard that anvil chorus and, boy, that sent the sparks up and down my spine.

I've always loved music. I have a very poor musical education, but I love it and I don't apologize for it.

Childhood Influences

Dorfman: When you were growing up, what were you most afraid of?

Kuhn: I suspect I was the most afraid of the effect of poverty. I didn't consider ourselves poor, but I knew my mother had tried to carry on my father's business after he died. And I have no idea how much he'd left her. I had no idea how long that would last. The depression saved us in a way because things cost less. They were fixed. If there had been runaway prosperity after my father had died, I don't know how we would have survived. We were all in school. Sure, I had an after school job. So did my brothers. But that wouldn't have done it. I think that was it. I don't think I had any strong fears of death at that time.

Strength of Mother's Values

Dorfman: How would you say that your mother raised you in terms of values?

Kuhn: Well, she raised us with some very, very strong values, however almost in the sense of unspoken, which I think is a traditional Jewish way. There were certain things you just didn't talk about. I would no more have discussed a girl with my mother and asked her opinion of a girl--but you got the idea of what kind of girls she approved of just the same. I would say that most of my moral training came from my mother, although for years I tried to think that maybe my father was a bigger influence. But that was impossible; he wasn't there. It couldn't have been easy for her. I know women who have four or five boys. I cannot contemplate how that can be done.

Dorfman: Was there much laughter and gaiety at home?

Kuhn: When my oldest brother was in one of his moods or funks it wasn't fun at all. In fact, there were several times when he just moved out for a period of months or years. It just seemed to work

Kuhn: better if he was boarding out somewhere else and came over to see my mother a couple of times a week or have dinner with us. It certainly was much more pleasant for me because while he wasn't much of a drinking man, if he got to be really seriously intoxicated, he'd come home and break all of my toiletry bottles and immediately forget he had done it. He used to pick on me until I was fifteen. Then one time he came from behind and got a wrestling hold on me. I was just getting my strength and I bounced him on his head and he never laid a finger on me from then on. But this was very sad. So it wasn't a gay household. It was a busy one in the sense that my middle brother was going to night school so much and he had to have peace and quiet.

Of the years I went to Berkeley, most of the time I lived at home and commuted. My oldest brother--as I say, most of the time he didn't live at home. It couldn't have been a very pleasant place.

Dorfman: I was going to ask you what kinds of things and events made the family sad.

Kuhn: I'm trying to think of what we ever did together after my father passed away--not much. We never went on vacation together. My middle brother went to Japan in 1929. My mother went east to see her sister. I was parked up at Boyes Springs, at a Jewish resort owned by a friend of ours. My oldest brother worked in San Francisco. Everybody was doing his own thing. There was no such thing as a family event any more. That was gone. Now that I think of it, it was completely gone.

Dorfman: Do you still see any of your childhood friends? You mentioned earlier seeing several people.

Kuhn: On, yes, I'll tell you why, because some of them went on from here at Sutro School to Lowell and with me to Berkeley, went all the way to Emanu-El with me. The present president of Temple Emanu-El, Myer Kahn; his predecessor, Raymond Marks; and I started in kindergarten and at Sunday school together. Now, I say, I see them occasionally. Some of them I've known for over fifty years and I haven't the slightest idea what kind of guys they really are.

Dorfman: So they would be not close friends.

Kuhn: Not close friends. Al Cahen, whom I've known longer than anybody else, used to live under us at 610 Lake. When my parents went out, my two brothers and I used to raise hell. So Al's father would rap on the glass with a long pole. We'd quiet down for a

- Kuhn: few minutes and then we'd go back to playing "off the bed you go," which was all three kids on the bed, and the idea was to see if you could throw the other two off. And this was a racket! Al I've known for fifty-five years and he's a swell guy, but I really don't know him that closely. That's just the way life is.
- Dorfman: You said that your father was an important influence on you during your childhood. Who else would you say was an important influence?
- Kuhn: I would say my school teachers, particularly Helen Ward, who taught me in grammar school in the seventh and eighth grades. She was the homeroom teacher and actually did almost all the teaching. You didn't have the circulation that's the feature in junior high school life. She was a woman of incorruptable character, great teaching ability. I think she must have had a great effect on my life. Miss Ward stressed fundamentals in reading, writing, and arithmetic. She drilled us particularly on the parts of speech and good composition, and this has stood me very well my entire life, whether in school or college or out in the working world.
- There was no male figure. My oldest brother had joined the Boy Scouts and then my middle brother joined a different troop. He joined the Temple-sponsored troop and he started bringing me around when I was ten. At that time the age for admission to the Boy Scouts was twelve. By the time I got to eleven I was over that initial wave of enthusiasm that's a part of boy scouting. By the time I was twelve I was down from the plateau on the other side and I didn't become active in scouts until I was an adult leader. So there was no scouting authority that was anyone I looked up to particularly.
- Dorfman: What would you say gave you the most pleasure as a child?
- Kuhn: As a child? Play. Play. I didn't have enough of it because when I went to high school my middle brother convinced me that Lowell had a very poor gym. It did. So he had quit gym and taken ROTC, and I did the reverse. I started with ROTC and then switched to gym. In the meantime I was working after school, so except for being able to row and later on to run on weekends, I didn't have any daily play period. This is a huge lack of balance for someone who loved to play as much as I did. But you just throw me a ball; I'll figure out a way to use it.
- Dorfman: You love sports?
- Kuhn: Love it, love it. That's the one thing I do every week; every Thursday night I read Sports Illustrated.

Dorfman: During this period what would you say gave you the most pain?

Kuhn: Well, if it was before my father died, there was nothing that gave me pain then, except maybe some of the cruelties I thought my brothers inflicted upon me. And some of my own groups in school. When I was in the fifth grade, I was really excellent in school. But there was a period of a half a dozen weeks when I'd make a stupid mistake on every single arithmetic exam. The teacher was just giving it to me. She would say, "Marshall, shall I get out the handkerchief?" This absolutely killed me, although she was an excellent teacher--Olympia O'Hara.

But after my father died, that wasn't much of a choice to make. Life itself was sad. It was saddest for my mother because none of the three boys could be a husband to her. My older brother particularly didn't have that sense of dedication. My middle brother did and, in fact, he made it possible for me to go to college because he had foregone college and studied at night. I just felt that my mother had really died when my father died. They were that close.

Influence of the Jewish Community

[begin tape 2, side A]

Dorfman: You said that your family was not particularly observant of Jewish practices?

Kuhn: Well, if you learned something in religious school, it was not something you could take home. I don't remember a seder at home. I remember a seder in religious school. I remember Purim in religious school, and my mother would make hamantaschen, and she'd shlepp them over to the rabbi's because those were the ones he delighted in. But we weren't going around lighting lights for Chanukah. It must have been something that they were never taught to do and that they felt we should learn. Therefore they joined Temple Emanu-El. Everything we've created in our own lives, my wife and I, has just been by starting all over again, by utilizing the things that we had been lucky enough to learn.

I remember at Temple Emanu-El when Rabbi Newman was there. This was about 1928. They had the whole school there for a communal seder in the gymnasium. But, unfortunately, all the teachers couldn't come, so you had maybe one adult for each two tables. Before the thing even got underway the kids were throwing eggs. It was a shambles. Rabbi Newman and Cantor Rinder

Kuhn: were standing up there pleading with the kids and they couldn't get the kids to shut up. They sent them all packing home in disgrace without having had the seder, and it wasn't until five years later that they resumed on a departmental basis--having a seder for any part of the school. Oh, when we came home--"What are you doing home so early?" To try to explain that was something.

Dorfman: I'm sure, multiplied by many times.

Kuhn: Hundreds of times.

There's something I recall now that, looking back, is full of nostalgia. When we arrived at the religious school on Sunday morning there was a large sign hanging over the door reading, "I am early, what a pleasure." And promptly at nine-thirty when school started someone turned the sign around and it read, "I am late, what a pity." And years later when I was principal of the religious school for a year I found one of those signs and we used it. I wish I had one of them to hang around the nouse. [Laughter]

Dorfman: Could you tell me some of the details about your bar mitzvah?

Kuhn: Well, this was a very, very sad thing. I needed the job of delivering papers after school, which was what I was doing. Cantor Reuben Rinder (may he rest in peace), who later was a good friend of mine, just didn't understand this. He insisted that I had to give up my job in order to come twice a week on time for bar mitzvah rehearsals. The bar mitzvah rehearsals were ridiculous because all I did was mouth the broches over the Torah and Haftorah. I didn't read the Torah. Maybe I could have been taught to, but no one even made the effort. So I just came twice a week and memorized these blessings, and on the appointed day, which was a Saturday, several days after public school had ended, I was thirteen. It was Chanukah and my birthday and my bar mitzvah and the Christmas season, and I got a job, all within four days of each other.

After the bar mitzvah ceremony we went home and my mother had three or four lady friends of hers. I didn't have any boy friends of mine. When lunch was over I got on the streetcar and wnen down to 717 Market and started to work for a wholesale jeweler, Henry Elston, for the Christmas season and for two years thereafter. So it really wasn't much of a bar mitzvah.

Dorfman: How did you get that job?

Kuhn: I got the job through Jake Davis, an old friend of our family who sold carnival and county fair supplies.

Dorfman: What kind of work did you do as a thirteen-year-old?

Kuhn: I did deliveries, cleaned silver in a cyanide solution, wrapped parcels, kept the showcases in order, and even delivered bootlegged hooch to Mr. Elston's friends, fearing that if the package broke I'd probably end up in Leavenworth. Mr. Elston drank about a tenth of a gallon of Prohibition whiskey every day. I only saw him sober once and it was a horrible sight. [Chuckles]

Dorfman: That must have been what you were referring to--

Kuhn: Well, it was sad. There was so much loneliness. I could no more conceive of somebody saying to my mother--or they may have; I may be doing everybody a discredit--saying, "Agnes, your husband's dead. You should remarry." Now, maybe she considered it. I just don't know. But it would be difficult for me to think of it in those terms.

Dorfman: What was the Temple like?

Kuhn: The Temple was magnificent. To remember in my mind's eye, just briefly, the old Sutter Street synagogue--and then I remember being outside of Emanu-El, February 22, 1925, when they laid the cornerstone on a rainy Sunday morning and brought us all out from 1335 Sutter Street for the ceremonies. Of course, the Temple was partially constructed by then.

The Temple opened in '26 and the religious school in '27, but it was just a fantastically beautiful place. It has such memories for me because this has been my sanctuary all of my life. Yet I know by having taken people through the Temple and by having visited synagogues all over the world that everyone doesn't agree with me just how beautiful it is, because so much of our impression of synagogue life and of worship generally is physical--sight and sound relationships, smell, memory--all sorts of things we can't even define to ourselves. I like a place that's plain, and protested very much when they contemplated putting in the stained glass windows in Emanu-El several years ago. Now that they're in, I think it's the greatest thing they've ever done. But before they were in, I was really a part of the older generation protesting any kind of change.

Dorfman: How do you remember the synagogue during your bar mitzvah?

Kuhn: Big and empty, which is the story of Temple Emanu-El. I don't know. I haven't thought about it much, except there was sadness. My father died when I was a little over eleven. He wasn't there to be there for me or my mother. I guess my brothers were there. I don't remember that particularly clearly. But it seemed like so much work for so little. If I had been taught to read a portion of the Torah, that would have been something else, but no one even attempted it. Of course, instruction for bar mitzvah is far better now than it ever was before--in duration, in quality. It could have been better, that's all. In a sense, my mother would have been disappointed if I hadn't been bar mitzvah, particularly because my middle brother did read the Torah. Somehow there was an inference there that he was a better scholar than I was--"He did and you didn't."

Dorfman: Did you receive gifts?

Kuhn: [Chuckles] Very few. As I say, each gift celebrated so many different things--it's your bar mitzvah, it's Chanukah, it's your birthday, you graduated from grammar school, you go to high school--that whole thing. I got a knife from my aunt. I don't remember anything else. It was a very, very small thing.

Dorfman: What was your relationship with the rabbi?

Kuhn: My first memories of Louis Newman were when I had done something bad enough in class to be told to stay after Sunday school and meet the rabbi. Here came this big man down the aisle after the assembly was leaving the auditorium at 1335 Sutter Street and he looked down at this little boy. He asked, "What's the matter, my boy?" I said, "I did something wrong." He said, "You won't do it again, will you?" I said, "No, sir." He said, "Now, you run along home," and patted me on the head. And I thought, "This guy--this is the essence of the Judeo-Christian spirit of mercy." So I liked him. He was a very jovial fellow. As a matter of fact, he buried my father, he bar mitzvah me, and confirmed my brothers. I stayed in touch with him all my life.

I remember going to the New York World's Fair in 1939 and having dinner at his home in New York. In 1942 I was in naval training back there, staying in touch with him, visiting him when he came out here to speak at Emanu-El, visiting him in his apartment in New York, until finally he died. Staying in touch with his widow, and when she died--and for both of them, raising money for a project in their memory in Israel. So it was a long, lovely relationship. Whenever he would come out here, I'd be one of the few people he would look up because I'd been one of his boys.

Dorfman: It was a relationship?

Kuhn: Oh, yes. But it wouldn't be any relationship based upon the bar mitzvah.

Dorfman: How did you spend Saturdays?

Kuhn: Well, Saturdays. When I was a little kid, I spent them waiting for the theater to open on Clement Street so I could go up and watch the pie eating contest in which I was forbidden to compete. Later on it would be some kind of a game. I might go out to Recreation Park or Seals Stadium and watch the San Francisco Seals play. You could get in there for a dime, or in the summer for nothing. Playing down at Mountain Lake Park or in the Sutro school yard. Nothing very big because I had no means of transportation. My mother couldn't drive. While my father was alive he worked on Saturday and if it wasn't one of the Saturdays when it was my turn to go with him, I was cut off from that. [Chuckles] I'm sure I wasn't studying.

Later on when I was a junior in high school I used to do a lot of rowing on Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park on Saturdays and Sundays. I loved that. I loved anything to do with Golden Gate Park. That's one of our real great blessings here, we were so near the park.

Dorfman: In what way would you say your family preserved or continued what might be called old country habits?

Kuhn: Well, you see, there was this conspiracy of silence in which my father and mother never talked to us about the old country. The only Yiddish phrase I knew was lasum saroo. When I mentioned this to some friends a few years ago they said, "Ach, you've got the words wrong." So, I wrote to Samuel Kohs, who's a noted Yiddishist, and he wrote back saying, "You're a hundred per cent right and don't challenge your childhood memories." The meaning of the phrase was, "Lay off, Sam; you're hitting the boy too much."

Now, when you asked me about my family, there still was the family that my father came over from Europe with. Maybe I boxed them out of my mind. He came over with an uncle and aunt, William and Betty Mosher, whose name I really think was Mazur, but which was changed by an immigration clerk. They had four children, including one who lived in Florida. There was David, who was a self-taught chemical engineer and who reputedly developed the process by which clorox is made to work without damaging the cloth and was cheated out of his patent. Therefore he decided he would never work again. He had a younger brother

Kuhn: and sister. This sister was Hermina and she was just a household servant. Then there was Ben, the youngest, and he was a cooper-- a barrel maker, the only Jewish barrel maker in California. He was a barrel maker from the time he was twelve until he retired more than sixty years later.

Now, Ben and Hermina had been made deaf and dumb by scarlet fever in their European childhood. So therefore they were made to be almost like servants to Dave. When his mother died, he just ran them around. I guess Ben at that point had retired from being a barrel maker and he had a pension from Social Security and the California Packing Corporation. I used to sort of keep in touch with them. David eventually developed diabetes and was bedridden and he lost his leg and he finally died. I kept in touch with Hermina and with Ben until they died.

But their mother had this home at Sacramento and Laurel Streets, which is now psychiatrists' offices, and nothing could be more appropriate. You would go in there for a Friday night dinner when I was a little kid, our whole family and their family. Here was this weight of authority of the matriarch, Betty Mosher, running that thing--her children and her nephew. It was a very warm environment in the sense of everything being richly colored, books and everything, but you knew very well that this was not a place where you could get out of line at all. This lady is not a fun person. So we hated having to go there and, of course, the moment that she died that was all over.

My father, when he came over from Europe, had had this big disagreement with his stepmother, who married his father when his real mother died. And my father came to America with the Moshers, his cousins. He had a great sense of responsibility which really delayed his marriage to my mother by many years--until he could save enough money to support a household. My mother's cousin, George Weiss, used to tell me that they would go to a party and they would take my father and turn him upside down and maybe fifty cents would come out of his pocket. They would kid him about this. But, looking back, it wasn't a kidding matter because of the age beyond which it was increasingly tough to have a family.

My mother's family, incidentally, had a dry goods store at Fillmore and Geary, and to this day I'm told it was sort of like the I. Magnin quality because my mother and my aunts all learned all the skills of needlework and tapestry and petit point and everything else.

Dorfman: Coming back to any old country customs that might have been preserved, do you remember any superstitions?

Kuhn: No, I can't remember anything like that. No, I really can't. Superstitions or anything--I might think of some recipes, but no superstitions. They either didn't remember them or they left when they were too young. Or they made a conscious effort to block them, feeling that you are in America, you're an American kid, you've got to speak English, and Yiddish is our code. And it's too bad, because in my professional life and my other activities a knowledge of Yiddish could have been a great thing for me. But they did what they thought was right. Looking back, I think they were right. They didn't want us to feel strange. I've been associated with some boys whose only tie to the old world was the fact that even though they were born here, they picked up one of their parents' accents and they were teased horribly. To prevent a thing like that from happening again, "They'll never learn Yiddish."

Dorfman: So you feel that actually was deliberate.

Kuhn: Oh, I'm sure it was deliberate. I'm sure it was deliberate. This is another thing that marked me off from the kids down [in] the McAllister-Fillmore. There was no code for them.

Tensions Within the Jewish Community

Dorfman: What tensions can you recall that might have existed within the Jewish community--religious, social, or economic?

Kuhn: Everything I would have known would have been at Temple Emanu-El. It never occurred to me at that young age (and I'm speaking of my childhood) that there was any kind of division between Russian and German Jews or anything else like that. You knew somehow without being told who were the well-to-do kids and who were the others. You didn't know then that there were certain well-to-do kids whose family didn't send them to religious school. Oh, certainly maybe some of the boys and girls.

As far as tensions are concerned, you're a little too early for that. I remember during the '20s there were riots in Palestine. Rabbi Newman later told the story to me that they had a big rally in Civic Auditorium, and they asked James Rolph, Jr., the mayor, to bring greetings to the Jewish community. Instead of only bringing greetings, he gave a fiery speech for the Zionist cause. When Rabbi Newman thanked him he said, "Mayor, I didn't realize you felt so strongly about the Zionist position." The mayor said, "Rabbi, who's kidding whom? How many Arabs vote in San Francisco?" All you knew then was that

Kuhn: this was a Jewish cause, Palestine and the British oil, etc. But it wasn't a focus of my interests. I'm talking about up through the end of the '20s. Now, if you want to get into the '30s or '40s when Irving Reichert came to Emanu-El, that I can spend considerable time on.

Dorfman: We can pick that up again a little bit later.

Kuhn: All these things you've asked about, I've been unable to help, until we reach a certain point in my development. The development of Jewish life and these things either became more accentuated into my consciousness or actually were more accentuated themselves. And then they became clear.

Dorfman: With regard to Eastern European Jews, were you aware of any who belonged to different organizations and synagogues other than the German and Sephardic Jews?

Kuhn: I knew there were other synagogues, because if you went down [to] McAllister-Fillmore you knew it was Keneseth Israel, you knew there was Anshey Sfard on Golden Gate Avenue, and you knew there was, as I said, the Talmud Torah. You just knew that no one would ever say, "Go in there," or, "Can I show you around?" That just wasn't done. I never went into Sherith Israel until I was in high school and their youth group and our youth group at Emanu-El had a joint dance. These are some of the things you just knew in a vague way.

Now, an Eastern European Jew might be a guy with a long beard who came around with rags, bottles, sacks, a wagon, or with a horse and buggy, and whom I knew we were vaguely ashamed of, or maybe not so vaguely. We had no idea where he came from, where he lived. We had no real curiosity about it. Someone would give you a book about him; you might read about it. But just to see it on the street--no, not much.

I think one of my parents--if I could recall one of my parents, someone talking to me about it, how this man got to where he is. But there wasn't that. It wasn't worth the time or the effort, or maybe they were conscious of it not to do it. I just don't know.

Highly Esteemed Jews of the Community

Dorfman: Which Jews would you say were most esteemed and loved within the community?

Kuhn: The rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, Louis Newman. Cantor Rinder. I had a certain amount of respect for my teachers, particularly my kindergarten teacher at Emanu-El, Phoebe Litzberg Frank, whom I adored and kept in touch with until she died. The esteem would be with the president of the congregation, men like Louis Bloch, Samuel Dinkelspiel (who was Lloyd Dinkelspiel, Sr.'s father), Henry Mayer, Louis Haas. Anyone who could be a director or officer at Temple Emanu-El would be a man of high esteem. There weren't these peripheral groups like the Conference of Christians and Jews where a non-Jewish Jew would be honored. They would only be Jewish groups.

Dorfman: I see, which is quite different?

Kuhn: It's quite different. Now you have to know who has the numbers. When they say you can't tell the players without an official souvenir program, that's what they're talking about now. A non-Jew might think that So-and-So is a great Jew because he's been honored by a certain non-Jewish group, but the real Jew will know who is to be esteemed.

There were also the women who were greatly esteemed. Mrs. Henry Harris and Mrs. Rinder were both heads of Hadassah. Mrs. Max Sloss, who was one of the founders of the National Council of Jewish Women. Some of the ladies of the Temple who were head of the Sisterhood Guild. Those were the three basic organizations my mother belonged to. There was the Sisterhood, Hadassah, and the Council of Jewish Women, and she really respected the women who had formed them. It seems you look back now and say it's nice to be part of an organization that's that old. But when you realize that at one time they were not old and had to start in many cases against odds--therefore, they should be more esteemed.

Jewish Education and Athletics

Dorfman: You told me something about the Jewish education that you had received toward your bar mitzvah. What can you add to that--beyond your bar mitzvah?

Kuhn: I started in the kindergarten. Miss Frank was my kindergarten teacher. There were women teachers in the early grades, and then you got a series of men: George Goodday; Walter Gabriel; Dr. Harold Lindner; Bill Cherin, who taught me in the confirmation class; Rabbi Melbourne Harris, who was Rabbi Reichert's assistant. Rabbi Reichert himself had a big effect on me.

Kuhn: Mostly it was book learning. They got you a text and the teacher taught the text rather than teaching the class and the individuals. I think that explains it. That was the general pedagogic method. If you can do in the religious school equally as well as you do in the public school classroom, all is going to be fine. Very little originality. No such thing as a field trip and nothing really to warm the heart at all--no debates, no inter-school events.

I would be ashamed to be connected with a religious school like that today in any position of authority, and yet that's what you dealt with. There was a great deal of repetition. Every Sunday you marched into the auditorium near the end of the two-hour session. You started off by reciting the religious school creed, which would have a certain amount of prayer in it, a recitation of the Ten Commandments in their long form. Kids today won't even memorize them in their short form for confirmation. So there were certain things you did learn. You could learn more obviously. We had a library in which Miss Packscher (may she rest in peace), the librarian, had a standard enticement. Every Sunday morning she broke open a roll of Necco wafers. Any kid who took home a book got a Necco wafer. That's the way she promoted reading--bad teeth but good reading.

It wasn't all too bad. I went through the usual protests, particularly after my father died. I asked my mother one time, "Do I have to go to Sunday school?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Okay." I realized I had exhausted all avenues of protest. But she wanted me to be more active. At that time you got confirmed when you were a junior. When I was in tenth grade, she wanted me to be in this Succoth pageant. So I said, "I'll be in it if you give me a tennis racket." Quid pro quo--"It's a deal." One difficulty was that I was ahead of myself a year in Sunday school, as I had been in public school. And that was a crucial year, particularly socially--all the dances. My glands hadn't caught up with me yet, so all those boy-girl things didn't mean anything to me.

What I liked most about Sunday school at that time was the fact that where the Emanu-El Guild Hall is now was a gymnasium, and I played on the basketball team. You couldn't have stopped me from being confirmed because that would have taken the gym away from me. Later on I became the basketball coach. So, never underestimate to a boy the athletic advantage in a religious school.

If you say, "You've got to be in good standing in order to play--," because a lot of these are kids who are not going to be 7'2" tall. They're never going to make a high school or college varsity, but they could be a big star in Sunday school. So you

Kuhn: make a deal with them: "You join the Sunday school team, stay and keep your nose clean, do your assignments, and we'll both be happy." You'd be surprised how many kids were kept out of trouble--brain surgeons now and so on--just because we had a basketball team. That's one of the tricks of the trade.

Dorfman: You projected that then into your own team?

Kuhn: Oh, absolutely.

Dorfman: What kind of a Jewish education did your children have?

Kuhn: They had a pretty good one, except I shorted them in this way. I'd been teaching at Emanu-El and when Peninsula Temple Beth El started they wanted a principal. So for eighteen years I went down there and the only one of my children whose religious education I took part directly in as a teacher was the youngest one. I went back to teach her at Emanu-El when she was confirmed. But they all got reinforcement here at home and observed every holiday. I think they got a pretty good one.

Now, any parent's kidding himself if he feels that such a statement has some kind of a guarantee or heckscher on it, because you really don't know until the chips are down what kind of adult the child will be. There are no guarantees in this thing. But I think that they got all the basics, because when I was principal at Temple Beth El, many times I would take my children there on Sundays to observe the holidays. I'd assign them certain jobs in the Sunday school, and they were big shots because they were the principal's children and they didn't have to do this or that, and they had a good time.

Dorfman: So the observance then was a shared one?

Kuhn: Oh, yes. Not as much as it should have been, but, look, the youngest one wanted me to teach her in the confirmation class. The older two might not have wanted to be in my class. I'm not so sure I'd have wanted one of my parents to teach my class.

Dorfman: Not all children would.

Kuhn: That's right.

Dorfman: Do you have any grandchildren?

Kuhn: No, none of my children are married.

Dorfman: What did your parents want their children to be? Did they project hopes for you?

Kuhn: I have no idea. The only one--I think maybe for my middle brother, because he was really a superior student in the sense of application--natural ability plus application--this tremendous ability to study six nights a week. Now, what they actually thought that would produce, I have no idea; or what he wanted for himself, I have no idea. I think he became a CPA because he wanted to be a CPA.

My oldest brother had certain skills. I think he was generally in an unhappy situation due to the fact that he lived alone and that militated against any kind of real happiness.

With me, I was just getting over not being accepted for not being a girl. [Chuckles] I have no idea what they wanted for me. I had no idea what I wanted for myself. I mean, it wasn't this thing in the classic tradition that at a certain age I said, "I'm going to be a doctor." Frankly, it never occurred to me anywhere through school--anywhere, anytime--to study medicine, even though classmates around on all sides were going to medical school.

Dorfman: As you approached college age, did your mother at that point project on you hopes for achievement?

Kuhn: Well, she had gone to school herself here with Dr. Monroe Deutsch, who became provost of the University of California at Berkeley. That would be the same thing as being chancellor now on that campus. So I went to see him and he said, "Well, you've got excellent grades in all studies. Why don't you pick math and science and start out with engineering?" That seemed logical, and I did, but I didn't do well. But I didn't remember his words saying, "Let's just start out this way and see what goes along," and so I carried this huge guilt feeling that I hadn't done very well.

In those days you didn't discuss with your parents or anyone else possible changes of major, dropping out--those were all like social diseases. We were so dumb it's unbelievable. And the fact that I made so many mistakes myself, I think, has made me a better teacher, and I basically classify myself throughout my whole life as a teacher, learning from the things both good and bad, at least learning enough to look at them. Oh, the fact that you couldn't talk to your parents is just horrible. There was nothing that said you couldn't. You just didn't.

Dorfman: I would agree.

Kuhn: Yet my mother was a well read woman. But I just didn't know how to go about it.

Dorfman: It wasn't done.

Kuhn: Yes.

Dorfman: What were your dreams, your ambitions?

Kuhn: Well, I guess at one time, when I was very young, it would be to be a New York Yankee. When I got to Lowell I got the idea that I ought to go to Annapolis. I had a friend, a dentist, who had been in the Navy. He claimed that it was a hotbed of anti-Semitism, which I couldn't possibly intellectually accept. So I went to see Congresswoman Florence Prag Kahn, and she said, "Young man, I can't even think about giving you an examination until I get re-elected." This was about '31. Well, in '32 she was re-elected even though the Democrats took everything else. (She was a Republican.) Then two years later she and the other Republicans were out for almost forever it seemed at that time. By that time, I'd forgotten that I ever wanted to go to Annapolis. I did get a Navy commission later, but through a different avenue.

Then, as I say, I went to Cal and the idea was to get a college degree for fear that if I didn't go now, I'd never go. And here my brother stepped aside so that I could go, which was an extremely generous act on his part. Then my college career seemed to fall apart, so I quit for three years. Then I went back and was studying teaching until I went into the Navy. When you lose four years in the Navy, you try to figure out, "Where do I patch it up?"

[end tape 2, side A]

Clarification of Childhood Recollections

[Interview 2: July 14, 1977]
[begin tape 2, side B]

Kuhn: This is Thursday, July 14, and we're picking up again where we left off--in which I had made some statements about my overall recollections of my childhood as being somewhat a sad period. I'd like to put that in context. I lost my second brother last year, which means that over my life, my father, mother, and two brothers have passed away, and I'm the only one remaining--which is sad to contemplate. I think that may have given a flavor or a feeling that that childhood period was sadder than it actually was, just by the realization that things will never be quite the same.

Kuhn: Also, I've had some problems with my health over the last year, which I won't go into now, but I think that perhaps has given a skewed and biased opinion. In some ways I think I had a happy childhood, although there just wasn't as much doing because that was the nature of life in the Richmond district at that time.

In the past week, one of our newspapers has started a series on the districts of San Francisco which would be affected if we had district elections of supervisors. The first district they picked was the Richmond because it's the only true district in the city. The others have been gerrymandered to make the districts. It points out the Richmond district now is really quite a flavorful place to live just because of the huge diversity of nationalities and races--and that's certainly true. It was much more homogeneous when I was a kid.

Now, during the past week, my wife had occasion to go to the main library here in San Francisco and researched through the Pope-Crocker-Langlely city directories back to the time when my parents, and in one case my maternal grandmother, came to San Francisco, to see where they lived and what they did.

In the case of my father, he came with his aunt and uncle, William and Betty Mosher. They never lived directly in the Fillmore-McAllister. As a young man, my father lived for some years at 302 Valencia Street, which is less than half a block from the old (and present, I might say) Levi-Strauss factory. He also lived at 1830 Eddy Street, which is several blocks west of Fillmore. I think later on I'll put in a page giving all his occupations as listed in the directories. Of course, you never know how accurate they are because you have no idea who in the family actually responded to the door-to-door soliciting of information.

On my mother's side, her mother ran a millinery store at Fillmore and Geary and apparently lived upstairs. I know my mother talked sometimes about working in that store, as did her sisters. She had four sisters and one brother, and for the first time I found out that their brother Leon actually lived here for a time. Later on he went to work on the Panama Canal. I never knew him.

My mother never appears in the city directory and this lent some credence to a statement which my Aunt Dora made. She was a sister of my mother whom I saw in New York for the last time in 1967. She made a statement to me which I had never had the chance--I didn't know before and I never had a chance to verify--that my mother did not come to San Francisco with her mother and

Kuhn: older sisters. She stayed in Lithuania or Poland until a later relative brought her over to San Francisco. Whether that's true or not, I have no idea, but I would have no reason to suspect my aunt. On the other hand, why didn't it come down to me through my mother?

Her mother also lived for a time on the 1100 block of Folsom Street, which would be part of that Jewish community that lived on Folsom, Natoma, Howard, Clementina, and so on.

At what point my mother and father, during the course of their courtship, decided that when they had a family they would not live in the "ghetto," I don't know. I don't recall ever seeing in our household any Yiddish or Hebrew material other than the Hebrew textbooks of my brothers and myself from Temple Emanu-El religious school. My parents, as I mentioned before, used Yiddish defensively as a private code.

When they were married they lived at 2036 Hyde Street, where I was born at home. My two older brothers were born in hospitals. Our first move from there was out to 7th Avenue and Lake, and I have lived in the Richmond district almost continually ever since.

I have no idea whether they had any attitudes toward this whole idea of Eastern European versus German Jewry. When I tell people that my father came from Latvia, I frequently receive the response, "Yes, but Kuhn is a German name." I had occasion several years ago to execute an affidavit on behalf of one of my nephews who is married to an Israeli, testifying that to the best of my knowledge we were not Kohanim. I think that if we had been, it's likely my father would have had a better understanding of ritual law. We would have had some home observances which we didn't have. I'm not positive, but it seems likely, and so much of all this is speculation. I am not the only one, I'm finding out very rapidly, whose parents just didn't talk to their children about these things.

It's a common practice and I think it's one of the two aspects of this oral history, two really important ones, one being recording the data of people who are somewhat prominent, the other recording your own family history for the edification of your own children and grandchildren. So that one of the purposes, my own purpose, has been fulfilled by this interview, by making me do my own research, which, frankly, has been long deferred. I'd been planning to do that for a long, long time, but I recommend it to anybody. I've researched the city directories many times on behalf of projects of mine not related to my family. For example, John Muir lived in the 900 block of Valencia Street at one time, for six months, just six blocks from where my father did.

Education as a Continuing Practice and Influence

Favorite Jewish and Non-Jewish Writers

- Dorfman: Shall we pick up where we left off last week? I'd like to fill in on several things before we go on. Can you tell me who had been your favorite Jewish writers?
- Kuhn: My favorite Jewish writers?
- Dorfman: Yes, over the years.
- Kuhn: I would say certainly--well, the one I am the most enthusiastic about now is Charles Angoff, because I'm trying to get him sponsored to come out here for the first time and speak. I think his Polonsky Saga is just sensational and I think it's largely unheralded. I agree with him that he would have been a much better candidate for the Nobel Prize than Saul Bellow. Of course, Sholom Alechem. Morris Samuel, as far as content is concerned, but he had the very disconcerting habit of looking for the most complicated words--the only author I ever saw who consistently used words that I never even heard of, much less knew the definition of. I've never really thought of it in terms of--I have many favorite non-Jewish writers. But I've read so widely among Jewish writers; I haven't really thought of favorites.
- Dorfman: Charles Angoff?
- Kuhn: [Spells name.] He dates back to the days of H.L. Mencken. He was an assistant with him on the old American Mercury and teaches at Fairleigh Dickinson College in New Jersey. I think he is one of the most scholarly writers on the American Jewish scene today. So many of the people who write also speak, and few of them do both well, and he does both well. That's why I want to get him out here.
- Dorfman: That's very unusual. How about non-Jewish writers?
- Kuhn: Of course, of the non-Jewish writers, [John] Muir is my favorite. He wrote twelve books. Most people who belong to the Sierra Club have never heard of any of them. They're not readily available. Anything on the West.

I'd like to tell a story that illustrates exactly where I am. There was a lieutenant in the Navy named William R. Anderson. He was in the submarine corps in New London, Connecticut. He received a wire, "Come and be interviewed by Admiral Rickover for the atomic submarine program."

MARSHALL H. KUHN
30 SEVENTH AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94118

February 1, 1978

Mr. Charles Angoff
140 West 86th Street
#14B
New York, N. Y. 10024

Dear Mr. Angoff:

This is a belated response to your kind letter of September 3, 1977. However, during October, November and December I immersed myself in "The Polonsky Saga" and read all ten books, every one of the 5,308 pages, and in order. Each volume was a delightful reading experience and taken together, all ten volumes are a tour de force.

I made many notes to myself as I read the books and perhaps some time I will have the opportunity to transmit these thoughts to you.

When David entered Harvard I thought back to an incident that occurred on March 15, 1970. That morning I assembled a class of students at the religious school of Peninsula Temple Beth El in San Mateo, and their parents. They were about to visit the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum in Berkeley to view the exhibit, "The Lower East Side" which was on loan to Magnes from the Jewish Museum of New York.

I told the children that I had asked the parents to drive their cars that morning rather than to charter a bus, because the exhibit would be more meaningful to the parents than to the children. I quoted to them an item which had appeared the previous Friday in the San Francisco Jewish Bulletin and said that this brief quotation summarized to me the Jewish experience in America.

Jewish Telegraphic Agency, New Haven. "Abraham S. Goldstein, son of A Lower East Side pushcart peddler, today was named Dean of the Yale Law School. He is 44."

Prior to reading "The Saga" I had read your book on Menckin and also "Something about my Father and other People". The story, "Rabbi Sharfman" is exquisite.

My father's older brother, Ben and younger step-brother Abe both were in the jewelry business in Boston, Abe

being in the Jewelers' building at 373 Washington Street.

I shall look forward to the publication of "Toward the Horizon" and would like to get a copy autographed by you.

I must admit that I have been more successful in my reading of Charles Angoff than in my booking him to speak in our community. Actually I began my campaign in your behalf several years before we met. Of course, one is always concerned as to whether a person who writes superbly is also a good speaker. But "our spy" from Temple Adath Israel of Merion reported to us that you are even a greater speaker than an author! Which leads to the question as to why I have been unable to get my Rabbinical and educational colleagues to absorb my obvious enthusiasm for your work. However I shall keep trying.

Your letter of last September reached me just before Rosh Hashonah. With regular New Years behind us and Chinese New Years coming up so soon, I decided to get this letter off before Egyptian New Years!!!

With all best wishes,

Marshall

February 26, 1978

140 West 86th Street
Apt. 14 B
New York, N. Y. 10024

Mr. Marshall H. Kuhn
30 Seventh Avenue
San Francisco, California 94118

Dear Mr. Kuhn:

Thank you for your letter, and for what you say about my
Holocausty Saga. I believe I told you that the eleventh volume
in the Series, "Beyond the Horizon," is scheduled for late this
year or early 1979. My God, did I write 5,308 pp in that saga?
Oy! Yes, sometimes I'd like to read your notes, and perhaps
we can discuss them in some personal meeting....You are right:
Goldstein's assumption of the deanship of the Yale Law School tells
the story of the Jews in America very well. And so does the fact
~~to do the fact~~ that the Litvak Henry Rosovsky is dean of the
Harvard faculty of arts and sciences. Harvard is the yeshiva I
went to, as you probably know. ... I didn't know that you had
some mishpoche in Boston. I know Washington Street very well.
My father, who was a tailor, used to do business with the Filene
bargain basement....So you read my Mencken book. Maybe you'd also
be interested in my book, The Tone of the Twenties, which deals with
a glorious and meshuggene period in American history. ..Yes, I'd
love to see you-all, and ploider before your congregations,
interspersing deep seriousness with a few chochmes. Perhaps a
long week-end? Perhaps two or three congregations could get
together? Nu, anyway, many thanks for trying and for being such
a fine chossid of mine.

All best,

Charles Ansoff



I enclose something that will
interest you.

Kuhn: So he got to Washington and his interview was about as rigid as the one which Jimmy Carter went through when he was interviewed years later for the same program by Rickover--completely unorthodox type of questions, ending with the last question, "Give me the names of the last ten books you read." Anderson's mind went blank.

When he was going back on the train to New London, he was cursing himself. He said, "I do read! That's the curse of it. My mind just went blank. I will not let that man think I'm an ignoramus." So he wrote him a letter just saying, "Here are the names of the last twenty books I read. I'm sorry, my mind just went blank."

The next day he got a wire, "Come to Washington," and he was the first skipper of an atomic sub and took it under the North Pole, which he describes in Nautilus 90 North. Then he went into Congress.

I read a lot, but hitting me with a question like that, my mind just goes blank.

Dorfman: Are there other favorite writers you'd like to speak about? We'll come back to this subject later. And when you think about it, mention it if you would.

Kuhn: For vacation reading I'm partial to Stevenson and Twain. I might also mention this, that for twenty years or more, each time I read a book, I type a review of it and put it in a file, because I always have occasion to refer to it and it makes me read the book more carefully. When I finish it, I review in my own mind the chapter headings, what the main conclusions were, who the personalities were, other writings by that author that I may want to look up, and so on. It's been a very great help to me.

Dorfman: I would imagine.

Kuhn: Part of it was due to this--I used to just list the titles. Then, when I read Nautilus 90 North, I thought I better write out the whole review because you put a tremendous amount of yourself into reading a book. Why not take another half hour or fifteen minutes and make some notes for yourself when you read it? What it was about. Even a few good jokes. [Chuckles]

Dorfman: My next question you partially answered. What kinds of books have you enjoyed over the years?

Kuhn: Oh, a great variety, a great variety. Books about the Sierra particularly, humor books, all the poems of Ogden Nash, all the crazy books by Fred Allen--a great, great variety. My only sadness is that I haven't read more, because I read very slowly, but I don't forget anything.

Lowell High School

[Interview 10: February 28, 1978. This interview was recorded during an editing session with Marshall H. Kuhn at his home at 30 7th Avenue, San Francisco.]

[begin tape 17, side A]

Dorfman: You were going to tell me about Lowell High School.

Kuhn: Lowell High was a marvelous school. I entered there as a freshman in January, 1930, the semester after my brother Harold had graduated from Lowell. I went for four years and graduated in December, 1933, just before I was seventeen years of age. I took a straight academic course with one exception. I took typing, which was then considered a radical innovation for Lowell because it was the first break with a completely college preparatory curriculum. Most of the students in my grammar school class at Sutro went to Lowell, as did practically all of the Jewish students in the Richmond. Junior high school in the Richmond district started in January, 1930, so I missed that.

When I was a high freshman, the school was so crowded with about 3,000 students that after the first period, the entire high freshman class went up the hill from Hayes and Masonic to Hayes and Pierce Streets, and we spent the rest of the day at Denman School, just the high freshmen. And later on I found out that that was the grammar school where my mother had graduated when she was a girl. After Lowell finished with it, it became Louise Lombard, a school for deaf children. Now it's being master-planned into something else.

Now, the high freshman year was the high point because I had all women teachers except for one man, Mr. Henrich, who taught science. He just pre-empted the top floor of Denman into a museum of botany and zoology. He would take us on field trips around the neighborhood. We'd have a relay race to go bring back the leaf of a certain plant or a ladybug, and he would show the boys how to develop a tiger build. He was really a very colorful character.

I took four years of history, science, English, foreign language, and five years of math. Along the way, when I was a high sophomore, I got the idea that I wanted to go to Annapolis, so I took extra credits and I really got the only bad grades in my whole career when I bit off more than I could chew. I took two years of Latin before I sunk under the subjunctive; then I switched to French. I did very well. In science I took elementary science, biology, chem, and physics. I had excellent teachers, particularly in physics, Mr. Smith and Mr. Robertson.

Kuhn: In math, I took five years, including calculus and plane analytic geometry. The teacher was a remarkable man who later went on to teach at City College, San Francisco. His name was A.F. McCarty. He really taught us math as a college course, advanced algebra. He was just tremendous. It was really a challenge.

Then I took three years of English.

Dorfman: You were going to tell me about Miss Duffy.

Kuhn: Anna Duffy was a white-haired, bright-eyed woman of Scotch-Irish descent. She was a master English teacher, she was the head of the department, and I took English from her when I was a low sophomore. The first week she gave a spelling test, and if you got 100 percent you never had to take another spelling test. I was very good at spelling, so I had a lot of time to read.

Then three times during the year she read stories to us aloud. She read us A Tale of Two Cities, by Dickens, which was marvelous. She read us Prestor John, and she read us another story about a rescue from a submarine. This was so unusual, so different from any other teacher. I never took another course from her. I wish I'd taken a course in composition or creative writing.

She later retired and subsequently died and left in her estate bequests to Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish charities. In the last case it was the Jewish Welfare Federation. I asked her attorney how she happened to pick the Jewish Welfare Federation. I'm going to paraphrase her will, in which she stipulated that, "I leave this money in gratitude for having had the privilege of teaching Jewish children"--which is a beautiful thing. I've often wondered how many Jews have left money for the privilege of having children taught. A lot of her best students were Jewish students.

Then I took four years of history, including civics under a teacher who said she wouldn't vote for Florence Prag Kahn because she didn't like the hats she wore. I thought that for a teacher to tell her students that was really a dumb thing, because we were trying to learn about civilization and civics and the Constitution--as a real subject. Anybody can be prejudiced.

In the junior year we studied American history, and a lot of that was the Civil War, just interminable battles. Then I had a course in the history department under George C. Lorbeer, whose field was Pacific relations. My brother had gone to Japan with Mr. Lorbeer and others in the Pacific Relations Club in 1929. Lorbeer was convinced that the Japanese were the most peaceful

Kuhn: people in the world, and when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor it really crushed him. It really did, because he had been teaching what he'd believed to be true for so long. He, incidentally, was one of nine brothers and sisters, children of medical missionaries, all of whom graduated from the Claremont Colleges, supposedly the largest single family unit to go to the same college in America.

Lorbeer was also the debating coach. And while I didn't debate, my wife and many friends of mine did, and they really got their basic skill in forensics at Lowell, including Pat Brown, who was named "Pat" after Patrick Henry, and a lot of other attorneys and judges who got excellent training in this from George Lorbeer.

Then I took ROTC for five semesters, which was a huge waste of time. I just followed my brother's advice. His experience was that Lowell had a terrible gym, and it did. I didn't have a chance to play after school for two years because I worked. I didn't get much play. Then, finally, after three semesters, Lowell dropped ROTC, and I took gym and had an absolutely marvelous time playing basketball.

Lowell at that time had a tremendous basketball reputation. I tried to go out for one of the teams when I was a junior, but the coach said he was sorry, that I had great potential, but I hadn't grown up with the Lowell system, so I couldn't play. The Lowell system was probably as effective as any high school team in America. They alternated their varsity play with Stanford and Cal freshmen and beat them. On the first national collegiate basketball championship in 1942, three of the Stanford team, of the starting five players, were Lowell captains. That gives you an idea of the tradition of that school.

The coach was named Ben Neff, an absolute genius in basketball. I grew to love basketball and I played it, coached it, officiated it, but I didn't ever play for any school team, just club teams.

My final semester, they brought over someone from Cal Tech and someone from Berkeley. At that time you had to have certain grades to get into Cal, plus your principal's recommendation. I remember I graduated with a tremendous academic record; the last year was all A's. The principal signed my application for Cal, handed it back, and didn't say one word to me such as, "Nice record. Good luck"--nothing. I thought there was really something wrong.

Our class jokester took a class photograph for the yearbook. We lined up in the court, 350 seniors in a U-shaped formation. This character was way over at one end, and as soon as the moving camera began to rotate, he ran behind the group and was also in the picture at the other end.

Kuhn: One of the members of the class, incidentally, was Jerry Flamm, who has a new book out, Good Life in Hard Times, about his years as a boy growing up in San Francisco. He's a good man. I run into a lot of Lowell people. My middle brother went to Lowell, my wife and her brother went to Lowell, and all of her cousins went to Lowell. We were a Lowell-oriented society because at that time there was no Washington High School, so we really didn't know any competition. The other schools were pretty much ethnic, except Commerce, which was a business-oriented school.

Dorfman: What was it like to be a student at Lowell?

Kuhn: Well, you got there in the morning about 8:20 and you went to class. I remember many's the time in the math classes on Saturday when I'd work and then walk over on Saturday morning and slip my assignment in the department door on Masonic Avenue. I knew this was expected of me and also I was susceptible to a bribe. My brother said, "I'll give you two and a half if you get all A's for the semester." I wouldn't let that go by. But that doesn't mean I loved every course or every teacher--by no means.

By in large, they had an excellent corps of teachers who were there for a long time and they had a distinguished roster of graduates. For example, for many years Lowell was the number one school in the state as far as grade point average of freshmen was concerned, Lowell and Eagle Rock in Pasadena. And then, peculiarly enough, when Washington started, it took over from Lowell that distinction. Washington had a great principal for about twenty years, Mr. Schmaelzle.

First of all, as you went you got to know fellows and you'd play basketball with them. You'd have your own teams, you'd play touch football at the beach, and you'd go to Lowell even if there were no classes, just to see your friends. Toward the very end I got a little sloppy. If I was playing basketball and the bell rang after lunch, I'd keep on playing and I'd cut the next class. I'd built up such an impregnable reputation that I was never challenged; they'd think I must be out doing some good work somewhere.

I liked Lowell. I really did. I have some friends who are pathological, narcissistic Lowellites; they live for the reunions. But I never was that way.

Dorfman: Even with such a large student body, was it a very cohesive student population?

Kuhn: Well, there were a lot of orientals, some blacks, a certain amount of Latin Americans. You just didn't pay attention to these groups. I don't think there was really overt prejudice that I ever saw. The biggest distinction would be the guys who were old enough to have a relationship with girls. They would go on the girls' court and eat there during lunch hour. I wouldn't have been caught dead in there; I wouldn't have known what to say to a girl.

Dorfman: You must have been very young when you started at Lowell.

Kuhn: I was just thirteen and five feet even, a little round butterball. I didn't grow until my junior year and then I grew seven inches during my junior year. Had there been some way to keep me back a year, it would have been much better for me. Academically I could handle it; I could handle even more. A large part of it was due to the fact that you had good teachers.

Dorfman: Who were the outstanding teachers?

Kuhn: Miss Duffy, of course, in the English department. Another English teacher was Miss Machett. I fooled around in her class with a friend of mine, Charlie Reardon. So in punishment she made us start a student literary publication called Ad Astra (To the Stars). It was the first literary publication Lowell had had in twenty-five years. I remember I was the circulation manager and I took a copy over to Dean Monroe Deutsch at Berkeley when I asked his advice about what major I should follow.

McCarty in math was outstanding, Smith and Robertson in physics, Mr. Barnes in chemistry, Miss Rudoir in French, and Miss Angus in French.

Dorfman: Why do you say those teachers were outstanding?

Kuhn: Well, the last two because they knew the language, and Miss Angus had adopted a French boy.

McCarty was so clearly above the cut of the average high school math teacher. He also supervised the cleanliness of the yard. He had what was called the MYCA, McCarty's Yard Cleaning Association. He would get some tough football player who was cutting up and he would say, "You pick up papers for half an hour." And no one would challenge him because he was highly respected, although he was sixty at the time.

He had a very unusual method of teaching. He had worked up his own text in advanced algebra and he would dictate this to the class. He'd say, "Proposition three," and he'd read it to you;

Kuhn: "Proposition four," and he'd read it to you. Then he'd say, "Proposition five, omit," and I was so green I would write down, "Proposition five, omit." I found out something very unusual for that time; he would teach advanced algebra by subjects--equations, permutations of combinations. You'd study and go through it by rote and go on to some other subject. Then about three weeks later, when you were on the other subject, the first one all of a sudden clarified itself in your mind. It was a tightrope reaching a plateau.

There really must be an area of study in educational psychology to tell us how this delayed reaction occurs. As a matter of fact, when I took calculus from him I did it mechanically, just by following the formulas. It wasn't until I repeated it at Berkeley that I really understood what I was doing. So when Winston Churchill said that he repeated the third form five times, I can see the value of it.

Dorfman: Do you suppose that instructor understood that process?

Kuhn: I have no idea.

Incidentally, one of my classmates in the advanced math class was a fellow named Harold Chatham, who went from Lowell to Cal Tech and invented the synthetic emerald, and he's made a fortune. He has a plant here in San Francisco. He's the only one in the world; no one else can figure out how he does it. I only wish I'd done it.

Dorfman: How many other students at Lowell were Jewish?

Kuhn: I suspect about a third of the student body, which was about 3,000 students.

Dorfman: Were you comfortable among the students at Lowell?

Kuhn: Oh, yes. I got more comfortable as I got along because when I grew in size as a junior, about seven inches in one year, then I didn't have to worry about height. For example, I was a freshman with a fellow named Bill Peters, who was about six feet tall as a freshman, but he never grew during high school. Finally, when I graduated, I was as big as he was. But all the time along I figured, "My God, where was I?"

As you grew to have more friends, particularly with that athletic bond or studies, you felt more at home. Nobody could have kept you from school, because you went there to see your friends. You walked together, took the same 21 Streetcar, had

Kuhn: lunch with them, had gym classes with them. It was a great place. It's a place where you have--a genuine affection for Lowell, more than you would have for Cal. Cal you could have on a philosophical basis, but at Lowell you had it on a personal basis.

Dorfman: Did that have something to do with Lowell's size?

Kuhn: It was 3,000 people within one square block; the facilities were horrible. But that was your school. They had great athletic teams, good coaches, and everybody in San Francisco whom you knew was "rah rah" for the old red and white.

I was glad to graduate from Lowell and, of course, like every school they say, "Come back and see us." But like every school, they don't mean that. It was many, many years before I ever set foot in the place again. I think I went back to see one of the coaches about something. But--good school!

Dorfman: You recognized this?

Kuhn: Oh, yes. That was very easy.

Incidentally, I mentioned that Jerry Flamm was a member of my class. And I recall that when he and I were high seniors, he and I and another fellow, Jack Kent, who was a swimming star, ran for class historian. Jerry won because he was very popular. He was a football player and a track star, and I wasn't known at all. But we had to write an essay, and I remember picking the essay--this was in the fall of 1933--on the threat to the world of Adolpn hitler.

Dorfman: What do you recall about the essay?

Kunn: Well, he was a great threat to democracy, but I certainly didn't predict the holocaust. No one else did either. We were having refugees come from Europe, we were having boycotts of German-made goods in downtown stores, and we were looking to Franklin Roosevelt for leadership--and it never came. I cite the story to show that it was on our minds at that time.

University of California, Berkeley

Dorfman: You attended UC Berkeley, you left, and then you returned. Could you tell me, please, what was most valuable about your experience at Berkeley?

Kuhn: I would say being in an atmosphere of free intellectual inquiry. I don't want anybody making any inference from this that I utilized this atmosphere wisely at the time. But as far as a permanent effect on me is concerned, just being in the atmosphere of a great university like that, having the freedom to do it, was a great thing for me, just a boy from very, very modest circumstances tossed into this university.

I read this book called There Was Light, edited by Irving Stone, a response to Let There Be Light, the centennial volume of the university, which was photographed by Ansel Adams, text by Nancy Newhall. Then, several years later, Irving Stone got the idea of putting together this book of thirty-nine chapters, starting with Galbraith and ending with himself, of people whose lives have been affected by Berkeley, almost all of whom were affected by someone being kind to them, taking an interest in their career; kindness, of course, being what Stevenson would consider the greatest virtue of all. I might say that he would be among my very top, favorite authors--his own life particularly, more than his writings.

Stone's whole book is these thirty-nine chapters; it's a love letter to Berkeley and Galbraith more than anybody. He adores Berkeley, which is why he centered in Berkeley one of his scenes in this new BBC series on economics, "The Age of Uncertainty." He considers Cal, as far as intellectual inquiry and the interplay of faculty and students, the real one live university in the world.

Qualities of a Good Education

Dorfman: What makes for a good education?

Kuhn: What makes for a good education? Great teachers, a great library, students who really want to have their minds stretched. I have often thought of doing a book--and I know people have done this--on what is it that makes a great teacher. You're lucky if in your lifetime at some level--elementary, high school, or college--you run into a great teacher who can change your whole life around, as is pointed out by this book, There Was Light. So you have to have a great teacher.

I really think that someone ought to research what type of secondary education Nobel Prize winners got, because it's too late by the time they went to college. If they were molded, it must be at least by high school. Whom did Willard Libby find in

uhh: Analy High School in Sebastopol that formed him to win the Nobel Prize? So you have to have the great teachers. You have to have the facilities.

Now, Irving Stone was at Lowell High School, my school, ten years before I was. When he went to Berkeley, he lived in the library stacks. He didn't go to class. He didn't have time to go to class. He was reading anything and everything about the human condition he could get his hands on. So for him it was the library facilities.

It never occurred to me at Berkeley to go around and ask people who were the great professors in any discipline--history. Who's a great history [teacher]? Who's a great political scientist? Whom should I audit for one lecture or take a whole series, not for credit, because it's not in my curriculum, but just because I want to stretch my mind? I didn't do it. Why? Because I was lazy and dumb, and that's what happens with us.

But the opportunity was there, so here's the other thing: It's not just the teacher. Well, it does come with the great teachers. If I had had a great teacher, someone to take me under his wing and say, "This guy has got some potential"--maybe I didn't have any potential that was readily apparent. I know very well the university wasn't structured to find it.

It never occurred to me in that student body of 14,000 that I would get any kind of personal treatment. I would think, "That's out." How can they possibly deal with--have one dinner with your so-called faculty adviser and twenty other freshmen, and you never see the guy again. We took it. If you were there in the 1960s and didn't like it, you could have raised hell about it. But you have to fight for it.

II ORGANIZATIONS, GROUPS, AND THE SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH COMMUNITY

Mother's Affiliations

Dorfman: You mentioned some of the organizations to which your mother belonged, such as the Sisterhood of Temple Emanu-El, Hadassah, and the Council of Jewish Women.

Kuhn: She also joined, when I entered Berkeley, an organization of Jewish women whose children attended Cal and whose purpose, as I understand it, was to provide support for other Jewish children who needed it. I think it was called the California Alliance of Jewish Women.

Dorfman: What kinds of organizations were these? What was the make-up of the membership?

Kuhn: I have no idea. I mean, obviously the Sisterhood of Temple Emanu-El were members of the congregation. This California Alliance of Jewish Women--my aunt lived in Oakland, but I think probably through her my mother met these people. My mother would do what was really expected of her. During World War I she joined the National League for Women's Service, out of which came the Women's City Club, and she did whatever was needed. I knew she belonged to Hadassah, but I have no idea what the program was. Now I assume it's the same program they always had. How deeply-- she would never run for office or anything like that. If you wanted something from my mother--ask her to bake a cake.

As far as the Council of Jewish Women--that was about the same idea. It was an effort on the part of Jewish women in America to make Jewish life and all life in America better, a very noble aspiration when you think of it. I have no recollection of having discussed the program with my mother. I would just see the literature, announcements, and programs around the house.

Dorfman: Who were the leaders?

Kuhn: I have no idea, no idea.

Dorfman: You mentioned Mrs. Sloss.

Kuhn: Right. Mrs. Sloss was one of the founders nationally of the National Council of Jewish Women. Bernice Scharlach is interested in writing a book about Mrs. Sloss. The leaders of Hadassah included Mrs. Reuben Rinder, Mrs. Henry Harris, and Mrs. Morris Heppner. My mother knew all these women, how well I just don't know. It might have been a nodding acquaintance.

Dorfman: You didn't know them?

Kuhn: I was too young.

Dorfman: Do you recall other organizations, Jewish organizations, at that time?

Kuhn: Jewish, no. Those were the only ones my mother belonged to as far as I know.

Dorfman: And that you remember?

Kuhn: That I remember, right.

Dorfman: Do you feel that these were effective organizations?

Kuhn: Oh, yes, absolutely, absolutely.

Dorfman: Do you know who donated money to these organizations?

Kuhn: I'm assuming that most of this was through annual membership dues or fund-raising affairs. The Sisterhood Guild, for example, at Emanu-El, then as now, devotes a great deal of its efforts and money to support a religious school, and I think that's certainly very worthwhile. A woman's actual involvement in that aspect is almost always going to parallel the years in which her children are studying there. And my mother had three sons who went to Sunday school.

Dorfman: Which organizations were supported by Eastern European Jews exclusively?

Kuhn: Oh, I have no idea. I have no idea. My father belonged to San Francisco Lodge Number 21, B'nai B'rith. Originally this was Ophir Lodge in the Mother Lode, founded in 1855. I remember going to one meeting when they owned a building down on Eddy Street. I would have no idea where these people were from.

Kuhn: I was just a little kid, you know. It never occurred to me, the whole idea of this German-Eastern European thing. Intellectually I knew about it from the history of the Jews in the United States, but I never really related--and I know about it specifically with Temple Emanu-El. But my own family's role in it never even occurred to me before we conceived this interview, because I really think that this is not very important. You're a Jew, and for Jews to have fought on the basis of their origins, over which they have no control, at a time in Jewish life when solidarity was always needed, was a waste of effort.

Effectiveness of Pre-1940 Jewish Organizations

Dorfman: Prior to 1940, from your experience, how effective do you think these organizations were in serving the needs of the Jewish community in general?

Kuhn: These organizations only attempted to do a certain bit. The Sisterhood Guild was designed to help Temple Emanu-El. The Council of Jewish Women was an attempt to improve conditions in America. Hadassah was primarily conceived for health and child care in Palestine. Then you had the Federation of Jewish Charities, which was part of the Community Chest and met certain local needs. You had the Jewish National Welfare Fund, which represented national and overseas needs. So none of these organizations by itself could attempt to accomplish the whole job. Each one, just as now, defined a role for itself and it got in trouble if it started lapping over into somebody else.

Now, when you say there really were two organizations, because we had to have one for the Germans and one for the Poles, this was the way it was, and eventually, of course, it worked out. One of them fell by the wayside, or they merged, because those distinctions no longer remain. Instead of having Germans and Poles, you have Ashkenazim and Sephardim. There's always somebody on the outside, you see.

Dorfman: But do you feel that Jewish organizations generally are effective?

Kuhn: I think Jewish organizations have been extremely effective. I really do. You're not going to be able to document this in the lives, in the sayings of people who were helped directly, because people don't like to admit they were helped. But if someone wants to make me believe that my parents and the people they came to

Kuhn: America with did it all by themselves, that there was nobody sitting in some port in Europe or in New York or in San Francisco, that there was nobody there with a welcome basket, I won't believe that. I don't know how my grandmother could get here with two of her six children, as a widow at age twenty-eight, by herself. I don't believe that.

Dorfman: That's an interesting situation to examine. Let's stop here and turn this tape.

[end tape 2, side B; begin tape 3, side A]

Dorfman: Do you recall friction between any Jewish organizations?

Kuhn: At that time?

Dorfman: Yes, prior to 1940, from your childhood to 1940.

Kuhn: Well, I certainly became aware in the latter part of that decade, '35 to '40, of the fact that Temple Emanu-El had a rabbi that was anti-Zionist and he was the only one around who was. He effectively prevented the other point of view from ever being presented at Temple Emanu-El, with two notable exceptions. I don't know if you want to cover the youth group at Temple Emanu-El. Would you like me to speak about that?

Dorfman: Yes, I would like you to, a little later.

Kuhn: Well, then I'll speak about that later on, but I'll talk about this one aspect.

Dorfman: This was Rabbi--

Kuhn: Irving Reichert, about whom I intend to speak considerably. Toward the end of the '30s Emanu-El had an evening program. The sanctuary was packed and the speakers were Joseph D. Schwartz of the Joint Distribution Committee and Abba Hillel Silver, the great Reform rabbi from Cleveland who shared with Rabbi Stephen Wise of New York the moral leadership of the Zionist movement in America. Whoever sponsored the meeting got the use of the sanctuary. Rabbi Reichert welcomed everyone and then said, "This is a house of worship. We will have no applause." Of course, this is completely contrary to Jewish tradition, but at that point there wasn't anything you could do about it. Had he had his way, the meeting never would have occurred there.

About a year before, the Men's Club invited Rabbi Saul White to present the Zionist viewpoint and after the meeting everybody was asking questions of Rabbi White, not around Rabbi Reichert.

Kuhn: For the first time, we had heard somebody tell us that there was another side. This was when I first realized that there is this difference, although I won't say I foresaw any great conflict coming which did come later on during the '40s.

Other than that, the Jewish community worked together very, very well--from my standpoint. But I knew also that they were very active in the Community Chest. Frank Sloss said several years ago at the fiftieth anniversary of the old Community Chest (it would have been 1972) that he remembered his parents working hard at this, and that it was an important thing in his mind and a very worthwhile thing and a lot of fun. He still thinks it's worthwhile and important, but whether it's still fun he's not so sure, because life has gotten so complicated.

Dorfman: But you do not recall friction between Jewish organizations?

Kuhn: No, I don't recall it. But I'll say this. Even for a kid, though, because as a part of this youth thing there was a little competition between Emanu-El and Sherith Israel--between their basketball teams, between their youth groups, but this was a natural thing. If you didn't have the competition, you wouldn't have the basketball game.

Dorfman: Would you call that a friendly competition?

Kuhn: Oh, yes.

Dorfman: How effective do you think Temple Emanu-El is in serving the religious and Jewish cultural needs of its membership?

Kuhn: Well, do you want that in a paragraph or a book? Because I carry on a love-hate relationship with Temple Emanu-El and I have most of my life. It's my place. I was born to it. Every time I criticize it, it comes back to the fact that my criticism would be very simply evaporated if I would put more effort into my congregational membership myself, if I would take on a greater leadership role.

But I've had a number of serious or quasi-serious occurrences in my experiences with Emanu-El. So that a number of years ago I decided that I was going to serve where I felt I could do the best job and get the most satisfaction, namely working with the children, that somehow my background and that of the average adult member were nonmiscible. It just didn't mix together. I really don't think that Temple Emanu-El does a very good job, but I'm going to explain that by saying I don't believe any congregation does a very good job.

Dorfman: Do you mean the religious and the cultural needs?

Kuhn: That's right. Now, the religious needs--of course, the both of them are subject to definition. There's a communal religious need which is like worship services. I think there's just a defect in the reform service, whether it was the old prayer book or this one, by not having enough participation. I like to sing. There are not many opportunities for that. I go to a Friday night service. If it's crowded in the chapel you have to sit out almost in the corridor. If you say, "Why don't we sit in the Temple on Friday night?"--"Well, because there aren't enough to fill the Temple." So I say, "Let's get some tough ushers and make us all sit in front together." I'm too much of a voice in the wilderness to make a big hassle out of it anymore.

On the other hand, as far as individual religious needs--you have a problem in your family, a death or a sickness--the rabbis are very responsive as far as their pastoral calls are concerned. I have absolutely nothing but admiration on that score.

On cultural needs, well, if you like art displays or musical concerts, that's fine. They have this Emanu-El Institute of Adult Studies, which Rabbi Fine started, which I think is excellent, excellent. So from a cultural standpoint I think they do better than religiously, but also that it's easier to do better than religiously. I've often said that if I could find a better temple I'd quit Emanu-El and join it, but it hasn't happened yet.

Dorfman: Which organizations do you feel best serve the Jewish community today?

Kuhn: In San Francisco?

Dorfman: In San Francisco.

Kuhn: Well, I want to disqualify myself from stating the Jewish Welfare Federation because I'm employed by them. But I was a volunteer for them for forty years, so I think that I wouldn't remain in that capacity of increasing responsibility if I hadn't felt that all along. But that's not a service organization because the Federation does largely funding and social planning. The Home for the Aged, certainly, the Jewish Family Service, the Hebrew Free Loan, which exemplify the highest tradition of Jewish charity. You've got me in a very difficult position because I may consider a need as very important, but if I eliminate the organization it's going to imply that I don't think the need is being met as well as possible, and that's certainly true. That's why I'm going to stop here.

Dorfman: What can you tell me about the American Jewish Committee? I understand that you were vice-chairman in 1971.

Kuhn: Well, the American Jewish Committee originally was an elitist organization. It started out as one of the first organizations to try to combat anti-Semitism in Russia. It had tremendous muscle in the halls of Congress and much of its work was done at the national level out of New York. Then later on they tried to broaden the base.

I'd been approached for membership several times. I finally joined because I had respect for the person who asked me. And then I was asked to go on their board of directors by an invitation, which in one way was an insult. They said, "All that we want is your name. You won't ever have to do any work." And I really shouldn't have accepted on that basis because if I can't work, I don't want to be connected in a leadership role. Then I found out that to me, anyway, the local organization didn't mean much. It was mostly a way of generating financial and other support for the national and international activities.

But then I was asked to be one of the three vice-chairmen and I didn't ever want to become chairman because I was running out of organizational steam at that time. So I got the other two vice-chairmen together just to let them know that if they were ever asked to be chairman, there was one guy who would never stand in their way. I'd be cheering them on. Both of them, incidentally, Edith Coliver and Paul Vapnek, did become the chapter chairmen.

Then shortly thereafter I dropped off the board. I'm still an AJC member and you might say that some of my best friends belong to it, but I think their real strength is in their national programs.

Dorfman: And the United Jewish Appeal?

Kuhn: The United Jewish Appeal is the major beneficiary of the Federation drives throughout the country. I really only became involved with them directly when I became campaign co-chairman of the Federation in 1962 and '63, because it was then that I went overseas on missions that they had organized. When I came back they asked me if, time permitting, in addition to my speaking engagements in our own community, I could go elsewhere throughout the Pacific states where people had not had the chance to go overseas and bring the message back.

Kuhn: So I became very much involved with them and eventually ended up as vice-chairman of the western states region of UJA. I went to their regional conferences and became a real "UJAnik," which I am to this day, balanced by the fact that when you become a "UJAnik" you become all overseas-oriented. You see the tremendous sweep of history when you see Jews wiped out of Poland, the whole Jewish population disadvantaged whatever country it is. You tend to get the attitude, well, their problems are so much greater than any we have that we ought to be able to handle our own problems by ourselves and still solve theirs. Later on you realize that it's not that simple, that you have to have strength locally and internationally. Otherwise the whole thing is going to fall apart.

But the average donor doesn't get involved directly with UJA. He gives to UJA through his federation, but he's really not involved in it. He would have to be in a special capacity to be involved in it.

Dorfman: So that the weakness in the UJA is--

Kuhn: That's not the weakness. The weakness in UJA is, I think, a little softness as far as the administration is concerned. But that wouldn't be a disabling weakness, because if there's a crisis in the world you could send out a telegram tonight and there'd be 5,000 people in New York tomorrow morning if UJA called upon them. That's the organization that saves lives in a very difficult way because they have to meet the standards of America and yet deal with Israel, which is a different country over which they have no say. I think there's going to be a little tightening up of the internal administration of UJA. I don't see any other particular problems they have.

Dorfman: And your involvement with B'nai B'rith?

Kuhn: Well, over the years friends of mine who belong to B'nai B'rith said, "Kuhn, we're going to get you into B'nai B'rith. You're the kind of guy we want. You're a worker." I said, "To hell with you!" But finally I got put in a position where the president of the District Grand Lodge #4, Dr. Abraham Bernstein, was involved in a business transaction in which I needed his good will. He called me one day and said, "I happen to notice that you're not a member." I said, "Until five minutes ago I wasn't." So I joined, but I didn't go to my first meeting for about a year. When I finally arrived, Judge Leland Lazarus, who was the president of my lodge, announced, "I just lost my bet. A year ago when I saw that Marshall Kuhn joined our lodge, I bet he would never come to a meeting, and here tonight he's shown up and embarrassed me."

Kuhn: It's not an attending thing. I chose to join the same lodge my father and brother HAK had belonged to, San Francisco Lodge 21, which is now San Francisco-California Lodge 21. That means that it was the twenty-first B'nai B'rith lodge in the whole United States. B'nai B'rith was founded in 1843 and our lodge dates back to 1855.

That I belong to the same lodge as my father means a great deal to me. But the only thing in B'nai B'rith in which I really got involved was as chairman of its District Grand Lodge Committee on Hillel. That means for about nine states I really worked very hard on that--selection of personnel on various campuses for Hillel, working with federations to get funding, changing the Hillel leadership at SF State from a councilorship to a foundation.

That's really my only involvement and then when I went to work for the Jewish Center and became a professional, I had to give that up. But apart from Hillel, I've never done really anything for B'nai B'rith.

Dorfman: What do you think the strengths and weaknesses of B'nai B'rith are?

Kuhn: The strengths are that for a number of men this is a primary Jewish involvement. It's quasi-religious. B'nai B'rith has a seder. That's a religious thing. It's the fellows getting together and you can knock it all you want. If you say they only go because they have bowling--but it's thirty or forty Jewish men bowling, knowing each other. So that can be a strength or a weakness.

The weakness stems not just from B'nai B'rith. It stems from the fact--and I've noted this as I went around for years as a volunteer for the Irwin Memorial Blood Bank. It's from the change in American life. In the early days my father-in-law was honored to be asked to be a Mason, or rather he asked them if he could join the Masons; you ask them. All fraternal orders are having a tough time. B'nai B'rith in a sense is a fraternal order. They're also having a tough time. Veterans groups have a tough time. You go down to the Veterans Memorial Building and you walk around these halls and they're the kind of halls--the physical set-up is the same as if it were a Masonic lodge, very highly ritualized type of meeting, very high level age in membership. A young guy can't crack that.

In some places it's the same as if it's a service club like Lions or Kiwanis. Half a century ago when all these groups had their greatest strengths, there were far fewer distractions than

Kuhn: today. Cars and radios were few and there was no TV, so the lodge or service club meeting provided your excitement. I vowed during the war that I would never join any organization that had a secret ritual. I was in the Navy and that had certain secrets. I said, "I'm just not going to do this," in spite of the fact that my father-in-law wanted me to join him in the Masons. He wanted his son and his three nephews. None of the five of us would do it. Yet, given twenty years back into time, we all would have done it. From his standpoint it was acceptance for the foreign born; he was going to be a Mason. It was a good business connection. He would get potential customers for his clothing store. I didn't feel that I needed either of those.

Now, maybe if I had my back to the wall and it was the depression--I don't want to make myself out as any big liberal about the thing because I look to see the Masons maintain a home for their down-and-out brethren. Since my childhood they've sponsored a football game, the Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children--they do a tremendous amount of good and B'nai B'rith does a tremendous amount of good. They have service projects all over the place.

The weakness is in trying to get enough men to take part in these. You can't knock the leadership entirely, because they're doing more than I am. I'm knocking myself as the followership by just saying, "I'm not going where my money is." I'm just--there's a limit and I've reached the limit, so that in some cases B'nai B'rith, for example, has formed a young people's lodge where the age automatically is lower so a young guy can get ahead. B'nai B'rith in some cases now permits a man's lodge and a woman's chapter to function as one unit.

I've seen service organizations where a past president was a member of the board of directors ex officio for life. You get enough past presidents on the board, and they're close enough to each other socially and agewise, and they go out together with each other on Saturday night, and you've got the dead hand of the past. This is what really kills them.

But in B'nai B'rith they have more or less come to the conclusion that the success of any lodge is not going to be based primarily upon attendance at regular meetings. We're going to have to split up some of these service functions, and we can get somebody to help us raise the money for Hillel, and for visiting veterans in the hospital, and for raising blood. And then we've met some of our needs, but without imposing upon a guy to, say, come on Tuesday night to a meeting. It's just another night out, and the average guy frankly doesn't want another night out. He wants another night in.

Kuhn: That's my analysis and I think I'm pretty right on the beam on that because there are so many organizations which are in the same boat.

So some of them have changed. They have their meetings during the day or they have a breakfast meeting of a Rotary Club type and try some kind of a gimmick because many men just will say, "I'll give you my money, but you're not going to get my time." They don't have it.

Dorfman: Do you feel that there were any strong or burning political issues within these three organizations, the ones we've just talked about, the American Jewish Committee, the United Jewish Appeal, and B'nai B'rith?

Kuhn: Well, the American Jewish Committee was one of the mainline community relations organizations, along with the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Labor Committee. They always have things to do because they have to keep their eye on not just Congress and the legislatures of fifty states, but all the major cities or wherever else any kind of legislation is proposed that's going to have any type of effect upon anybody's rights, plus the whole overseas structure. So they're always battling these things out. I wouldn't want to pick out one thing, but certainly anything dealing with Israel is uppermost, and that's the American Jewish Committee.

The United Jewish Appeal is the same way except they have the second complication, which is whatever they do in the way of fund raising has to meet the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service.

The third one, which is B'nai B'rith, concerns about the same things as the American Jewish Committee except that the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, which is their human relations arm, is almost a separate organization from the rest of B'nai B'rith. It receives a great deal of funding separately from federations. It gets money from B'nai B'rith and this comes back, of course, to the fact that there have been many efforts over the years to merge some of these community relations agencies to save money and personnel and to avoid duplication of services. It hasn't happened because the one thing that hasn't merged is different viewpoints.

For example, the American Jewish Congress is much more militant, whereas the American Jewish Committee might try conciliation in a matter. Say they have a boycott, the American Jewish Congress would just as soon go to court. So seemingly there are places for each of them, but I wouldn't want to recommend new organizations

Kuhn: or new publications. That's way overdone. But basically if an organization has hung on and can develop the support, it's going to do pretty well. It's going to have to, however, continue to justify its existence as a separate organization by proving that it has a different approach from somebody else already in the field.

Dorfman: But there are no major internal problems?

Kuhn: [Pauses] Well, there are always major internal problems. There is professional staff in every organization that's jockeying for position. There are volunteers jockeying for leadership and you have to be very skillful about the care and feeding of volunteers. Some organizations have several volunteer structures. They have the national advisory council, the national executive council, the national administrative council, and each one is responsible for a different level of things.

In B'nai B'rith, for example, the supreme lodge is broken up into these district grand lodges. As a matter of fact, the district grand lodge of the B'nai B'rith is meeting this week in Palo Alto for the western states, District Grand Lodge #4. They'll have forty or fifty resolutions they're going to deal with that they're going to pass on to the national.

Now, whether these are real issues or whether they're just hyped up by somebody is again subject to interpretation. You can be a very good B'nai B'rith member and let that completely wash over you. There are a lot of organizations in Jewish life that exist primarily for schmooze. Some guys really love it. I'm not mocking it, because at certain times that's what you're going to really need. You get into a situation, for example, where the American Nazi party becomes active in a certain city. The first thing in countering this threat is to call a meeting where all elements of the Jewish community, representing the whole spectrum of viewpoints, can come together to exchange facts and agree on a unified course of action. This interplay would be impossible if there were only one organization.

On the other hand, there are certain programs which develop future leadership. One of these is Thirteen Thursdays in which the Women's Division of Federation annually trains about twenty-five young housewives. Once they're trained, the question arises: Where are we going to put them all? We have to farm them out to the satellite organizations, auxiliaries, etc.--tell the gals that, "You've been trained for leadership, but raise your kids first and when they're out of school then come on back."

Changes in the San Francisco Jewish Community

Dorfman: From your vantage point, how has the San Francisco Jewish community changed over the years?

Kuhn: It's changed in many ways. Firstly, it's gotten older in the sense that the ones who have left in the last fifteen years have been primarily the younger families. During this time the Jewish population of San Francisco County has dropped from 55,000 to 35,000. Now, within the Federation area, where we've got between 75,000 and 80,000 Jews in Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Northern Santa Clara Counties, those in Marin and on the Peninsula would be considerably younger in age, many of their numbers having come directly from the East, from the suburbs in the East, bypassing San Francisco, the core city, completely. So we've gotten older. In San Francisco we've gotten smaller. But again with the caveat that the Federation area itself hasn't changed totally.

We've gotten more Jewish in the sense that the incoming people from the East who went to college out here or went to college back there but wanted to get away from their family, whatever, and then they married--they came out and they started life here. And many of them had deeper Jewish roots than those who were born here.

You take a look at the Young Adults Division of the Federation, almost all of whom came from somewhere else. So we've had a great influx of young blood. Of course, you have an influx of retired people as well. So there's been a tremendous change in who these people are.

When I say they're more Jewish, even Temple Emanu-El, which is considered a bastion of--I tease them when I call Temple Emanu-El "The Big E," just like the Emporium. I say, "The Emporium of Organized Judaism." But even here at Temple Emanu-El, which is supposed to respond the slowest of anybody, when they finally decided to participate in these summer trips for confirmands to Israel, we've sent a higher percentage of our kids than any other congregation in the United States. And this area sends a higher percentage than any other area in the United States. We have 120 kids in Israel right now, forty-seven of whom were members of the Emanu-El confirmation class of '72. Twenty years ago no one would have predicted the success this program has enjoyed.

Dorfman: I'd like to review not only tensions between Eastern European Jews and German Jews when you were growing up, but also between those groups and Sephardic Jews.

Kuhn: When I was a kid it was a completely foreign subject, even though at one time when I was in high school and college I lived at 3rd Avenue and California Street, and at 4th Avenue between Clement and Geary was this Mogen David Sephardim. I never paid any attention to it.

[end tape 3, side A; begin tape 3, side B]

The Unaffiliated

Kuhn: I was as ignorant of Sephardim as the world was of the Jews of North Africa until after World War II.

Dorfman: How about tension between these groups, between and among the groups, after 1945?

Kuhn: After '45 there virtually were no Sephardic groups. These people hadn't really come over in any large numbers yet. When they did they were processed by the Jewish Family Service. Most of the Sephardim went to this Mogen David Sephardim Synagogue. Not all of them. By that time the Eastern European-German thing was all over. The last time you identified any Jews as German would be the ones who came over during the Hitler era. We had this Jewish Council of 1933 and that was just more or less for easy identification. The great marking point is between the affiliated and the unaffiliated, not between where you came from. Two-thirds of us are unaffiliated. Yes, when I say that we're doing a pretty good job, at other times it seems pretty bad, pretty bad.

Dorfman: Were there tensions between the affiliated and the nonaffiliated?

Kuhn: No, because the nonaffiliated don't really care, which is too bad. There are some tensions between the affiliated and the affiliated as to "our congregation is better than yours," and, "we're afraid that someone might resign from our congregation and join yours because you have a younger or an older rabbi, you have bus service for Sunday school, or whatever," and this leads to the reduction of standards. For example, you never want to get a parent that mad at you; they might decide to quit and join somewhere else. Therefore you give way to the most impossible demands. It's bad. It's bad.

Religious Education

Dorfman: What might those demands be?

Kuhn: "Well, my kid could only come two Sundays out of four to religious school because he's out on the bay yachting. We, his parents, are divorced and my husband takes him two Sundays a month." So you say, "Okay." I had a child in my Sunday school class at Emanu-El one time whom I never saw because he was always out in the bay. I finally told the rabbi, "You put this boy in another section of the class, but get him out of mine. I will not have a child on my roster whom I consider not to be enrolled in this school. I don't care what the reason is." So they did that and finally they threw him out of the class completely. [Tape interruption]

I also don't want to point the black finger only at Temple Emanu-El, because this happens in other schools as well. It's a generally bad situation where you have such a low rate of affiliation. I'm sure that this is a problem in most major Jewish cities in this country.

Dorfman: When you were growing up, how did the wealthy Jews treat the poor Jews?

Kuhn: Well, when you ask how they treated the poor Jews, if it was a welfare case they treated them through the welfare agencies. You mean--

Dorfman: Attitudes--

Kuhn: By attitudes do you mean walking around Temple Emanu-El? Well, in the first place, there were a lot of wealthy members of Temple Emanu-El who did not send all or even any of their children to the religious school for whatever reason--desire to assimilate, etc. The parents belonged to Temple Emanu-El, so they weren't trying to escape anything. Maybe they felt that "it can happen here." In some cases there were friends of mine with whom I went to Sunday school and they had brothers and sisters whom I didn't even know existed until twenty or thirty years later because they never went to Sunday school. "I couldn't figure out how come your sister never went to Sunday school." "Well, my parents just felt that they didn't want her to go."

I had one child in Sunday school to whom I gave an examination as I did every other member of the class. We had some questions about Hitler and anti-Semitism, and the parents directed this child not to answer these questions. They didn't want her to know that anything like this had ever happened. The religious school committee, to its credit, actually censored these parents.

Kuhn: When you say about wealth, the general level at Temple Emanu-El, because of the standards of the time, was all children dressed rather well. You wore a tie to Sunday school. You might wear your bar mitzvah suit beyond bar mitzvah or at least a nice sweater. So you would never guess financial status from that. It wasn't like today where they all dress like tramps wearing denims. So you couldn't really tell on that basis. The Temple has always been so large that nobody really knows everybody else anyway. I might know who the president of the Temple was when I saw him up on the bimah. He wouldn't know who I was necessarily unless I were active in the congregation or the men's club or something else like that.

I think that it was based mostly on social and family relationships. You were close to someone because of those. Those are the people you'd go to Temple with and you'd want to sit with. Remember this, that the Temple was financed by selling seats. Your subscription bought you lifetime privileges. You had to pay dues beyond that, but those dues were less than if you joined the Temple without owning seats. Then as things progressed and deaths occurred, it was considered the proper thing to do, to deed the seats back to the congregation. So it's a fairly small minority of people who still own their seats. Of course, if you owned your seats the best ones were up in front and cost the most.

So that would be one way of differentiating, but now the situation has changed. You have two High Holy Days services now. I have no idea what the method of assigning seats is. I look around and most of the wealthier people I know don't sit up in the front. Maybe they don't want to be conspicuous. I think that has been for the better.

Dorfman: Did you see any evidence as you were growing up of social exclusion on the basis of wealth?

Kuhn: Well, yes. It really wasn't all that bad because, for example, a girl in the confirmation class would have a party at her house. It was always insisted by the religious school committee that everybody in the class was invited, no matter who they were.

Dorfman: I see. So this was anticipated then?

Kuhn: This was anticipated and frowned upon and it wasn't as bad as I would have thought it would be. I think mostly it would be a matter of what schools you went to, what high schools you went to, or whether you went to public versus private school. You just knew, you know. But, on the other hand, I went to Lowell. The only kids I really knew in my confirmation class were kids with whom I'd gone to grammar school or Lowell together. If you went to Galileo or some other school--I really wouldn't know these kids unless they happened to be on the Temple's Sunday school basketball team.

Kuhn: It was a commonality of interests tied with other things. The poor kid who came from some offbeat high school where he might be the only Jewish kid was going to Sunday school to be confirmed and didn't know anybody. He was really out in left field. There was less exclusion. But there was noninclusion. I don't know if that's a distinction that's useful.

Dorfman: How about today?

Kuhn: Today, pretty much the same. At Emanu-El, the level of affluence is still pretty high, with exceptions. Emanu-El has its members of the Sephardic community who have not done as well and haven't been here that long. But its members are very well accepted, very cheery kids, attractive kids. I think that that stuff is gone, or rather the circumstances are the same in the sense that if you come from the school where you're the only Jewish kid, you're not going to be too well accepted at Emanu-El. You're not going to be too happy there. But that would be true if it were in Sunday school or anything else.

I don't think there are any conscious efforts to exclude anybody. I think, on the contrary, that their need for participation is such that they would want everybody to participate. It's whether your mother has a station wagon and is willing to drive the class around. [Chuckles] That's one of the factors.

It requires a tremendous skill in group dynamics to make these things work, the desire to have them work and the patience that says, "We're really not sure what the value of all this is. We think it's good, but we're not going to know for ten years from now. Yes, we're going to do it anyway." A lot of it is crossing fingers. I think that by and large you can make it work, if you don't have standards that are so close to what's applied in public schools. Otherwise you're trying to measure people by the fact that they're religious or more or less Jewish because they got 85 on a test against 75, and that's got absolutely nothing to do with it, nothing.

Dorfman: I think you made that point last time, except that you didn't go into it at length.

Kuhn: Our whole religious education system needs a tremendous shot. If I had my way, I would abolish all conferences, national and international, and take all the plane fares and put them into teacher training.

Dorfman: That's where you think it is?

- Kuhn: That's where it is--teacher recruitment, training, motivation, praise, a kind word from the rabbi: "You're doing a fine job in the sixth grade. Mrs. So-and-So called me last week and said her daughter loves it." A teacher laps that stuff up. How often do you think they get it? Not often, in any school. Why? Because you have to be attuned to thinking it, and the head of the school, whoever it may be--rabbi, principal--has to have that as a priority. Generally his personality is not such as to think of these things and he better write himself reminders in his date book, "Praise So-and-So this week. Whom have you praised lately?" I really mean it. I really mean it. What other reason does a person have to teach than a kind word? Because on the general level, the teacher is not getting that much support from parents.
- Dorfman: To come back to your economic situation as a child, you expressed a recognition earlier that there were economic changes in your family after your father's death. How did you consider yourself as you grew and developed?
- Kuhn: Well, even before my father's death I knew that at certain points I'd be wearing my brother's clothes or shoes or something. I got over thinking that was a bad thing.
- Dorfman: Did you consider yourself middle-class?
- Kuhn: Oh, yes, yes.
- Dorfman: As opposed to rich or poor?
- Kuhn: Well, I knew I wasn't rich. I didn't think I was poor, because there was nothing I was consciously deprived of. If I wanted to go to camp, I went to camp. It was my decision. I didn't want to go because my brothers ceased to go. This was after two years. No, I considered myself middle-class without all the upper-upper and lower-middle and all that sociology jazz, because I lived in a middle-class neighborhood. It's as simple as that. That's what the Richmond district was and is.
- Dorfman: As you were growing up, how would you say that new immigrants or "greenhorns" were treated by Jews who were already established?
- Kuhn: The only ones I would be familiar with belonged to the Council of '33 and because they were Germans there was a great attempt made by Temple Emanu-El to make them feel welcome. Irving Reichert was a leader in this in calling attention, really on a broad scale, to the fact of what was going on in Germany and making attempts, often successful, to bring persecuted rabbis over from Germany. He did a great job on that.

Kuhn: So at Temple Emanu-El there would be these special events for them. Then during the year, after confirmation, I sort of appointed myself as assistant to the janitorial corps. I would go around there after school helping them set up tables and chairs and all that business, so I would see all these events. I was very much impressed with what they were trying to do--make these people feel wanted. It wasn't economic. They all seemed to be middle-class or better. This was earlier in the Hitler years, so they could bring things over with them. It was a matter of making them feel a part of the community, that this was a secure community and it wasn't going to happen here. This *Council of '33 still exists and there are other groups parallel to it--for example, the Far Eastern Society of Jews coming out of Shanghai.

There was always this great desire among Jews to maintain their roots, long before Alex Haley. Now, what other attempts were made by other congregations, I just don't know, but the Jewish Family Service certainly was alerted so that when these people came through they were helped with their immigration things. They all had to be sponsored as far as that was concerned and we took our quota as now. I think it was done in a very, very fine way.

Dorfman: Were they socially accepted by already established Jews?

Kuhn: Well, yes, because there were always groups; the moment the first ones came over and got settled, there would be the base for the next ones. Sometimes you would go to a party and it would be almost all German-speaking. Even up to a few years ago, maybe still, we'd get together with people, a large percentage of whom were from German backgrounds, just happened to be there; we just happened to be there and were friends with them. It wasn't because of their German background. I don't speak a word of it. But they seemed to be more comfortable in that environment and because this is a free country, thank God, this is where they have their social life.

Dorfman: To come back to anti-Semitism, did you have any experience with it as a child?

Kuhn: Only an occasional taunt. I couldn't even give you a numerical thing, or who might have taunted somebody else. I don't even remember anybody else being called "kike." There was, I would just say, a little of it, and by the so-called "tough kid." You would pay no more attention to that than if someone called another kid a "wop." There's very little of it.

Dorfman: And as an adult?

* Jewish Council of 1933

Kuhn: Very little. I encountered some in the Navy, much less than I would have thought. But, on the other hand, I've always been one that looked at it both ways. There was a friend of mine in the Navy from Temple Emanu-El and he was thrown out of the midshipmen corps and everybody who knew him figured, "That's no surprise; he wasn't worth a damn." But his explanation was anti-Semitism, and we said, "That's baloney." So you're always going to pick the explanation that suits you.

I had a class at Emanu-El one time and I asked this question, just as you asked me about anti-Semitism. None of the kids had ever had it until I came to one girl whose whole family had been wiped out in Holland and, of course, this was a shock. Her experience couldn't even be understood by the other children. She said, "I lost my parents, brother, and sister."

So you say anti-Semitism. There was nothing virulent about it and I don't even know if it was any more harmful than anti-Jewish jokes. I'm sure there was more there, you know, but I was never in any position where I was scared or thought that this was any kind of a threat.

Dorfman: What about experience with Jewish anti-Semitism?

Kuhn: Well, I knew that some kids would have preferred not being Jewish. I've had students like that. I think that's about the extent of it. You have some people who don't belong to congregations because for whatever reason they want to disaffiliate or change their names, whatever it might be. It made you always wonder, because whenever you had a war in Israel, the Welfare Federation would pick up two or three or four thousand gifts from donors who hadn't given for ten or fifteen years because something--that old mystic tie got to them. If you could explain it, you could maybe patent it, bottle it, but it's there.

I always felt that if you didn't want to be Jewish, go ahead and quit. You're not doing us any good and maybe you're not doing the world any good. Quit if you can, but quit at your own peril, because no one's pushing you to quit. The Gentile community isn't. I think that there's been a great acceptance of Jewish values. I've seen that in my interfaith work. A tremendous number of Christians, Catholics, and Protestants really believe the way Jews believe, increasingly so. So they're not pulling anybody.

But there are a lot of people with all sorts of neuroses for which they think that any action is better than none, and because they have ignorance about what Judaism stands for, or they'd maybe rather try Zen or some other Eastern religion--but I don't see the

Kuhn: incentive. Boy, if you can't be Jewish in San Francisco, you can't be Jewish anywhere as far as freedom from anti-Semitism is concerned.

Unfortunately, there is a special kind of Jewish anti-Semitism where the reform doesn't like the conservative or orthodox, and vice versa. This sense of superiority, this arrogance based on ignorance and fear, is very divisive. The sects within Judaism must learn to accept each other and to realize that their most urgent common problem is the high percentage of unaffiliation.

Dorfman: As you look back upon your life in San Francisco, do you feel that Jews have tried to assimilate too much or perhaps too little?

Kuhn: [Pauses] Well, that's a hard thing for--a value judgment for one to make about somebody else. I think that any assimilation is too much, so they have tried too much. Anything is too much. That would be my considered answer. Any kind of assimilation is too much.

Dorfman: Would you like to react to Suzanne Gordon's article on San Francisco Jews?

Kuhn: I spent a couple of hours with Suzanne here in this same room giving her some of my reflections on Jewish life. I just felt that the article that resulted, which she had originally intended for New West, but which came out in Moment, was nowhere near as good as I think her ability would call for. I think some of her positions are too simplistic. I think taking certain families, such as the Fleishhackers, who represent only one really extreme position, and making them sort of central figures was poor choosing. It's not an article on American Judaism that I would recommend anybody take seriously.

Quality of Jewish Life

Dorfman: If someone asked you about the nature and the quality of Jewish life in San Francisco today, what would you tell them?

Kuhn: I'm going to tell you a story. I was in Philadelphia for the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds last November. Rabbi Robert B. Gordus, who is one of the leading lights of the conservative movement, was the key speaker at our banquet. I had never heard him before, though I have read his material. He talked about the glories of Jewish life in this

Kuhn: multi-culture nation, this bicentennial July 4th that was not only our 200th anniversary, but Entebbe, and the way the Jewish people have flourished economically in this free capitalist society, and how we have hundreds of Jewish scholars at universities.

And then he stopped and said, "So how come if everything is so good, why is everything so bad? Why is it bad? Because we've got assimilation coming out of our ears, because our kids are intermarrying, because no one takes these studies seriously"--the whole litany, and it's a mishmosh, and you're always fighting. It's like saying, "I'm fighting to not die of pneumonia, but why are these cooties in my hair?" No matter what it is, there's always something and that's the nature--there's that old song, "That's Life, That's Life."

You'll get someone from the East who will say, "Why can't I get a good water bagel out here?" Well, to them that's Judaism; that's gustatory Judaism at its apogee or nadir or whatever you want to call it. I don't want to say that everybody is his own best judge. I don't know. A girl who comes out here in search of a Jewish husband--it's a great place if she finds one. It's a lousy place if she doesn't, see? You pays your money, you takes your choice.

I've never lived anyplace else for any sustained period except New York and I certainly wouldn't want to live in New York. I don't think that's a fair thing to ask of a place: "What's the matter with you?" I think that so many of the things that we find wrong about anything in our society are so correctable within ourselves. If I don't like anything in politics, I can always join the local Democratic club. I can't do everything, but I can do more than I've been doing unless I want to say, "I'm going to toss it all over the side and I'm going to sit on the sidelines forever."

We tend to blame this indefinable "they" or "them" for so many things when there's either no one to blame or that's just the nature of things. Most Jews who come from somewhere else think there is something the matter with us here. So then what I want to know is how come they're coming from someplace else? [Chuckles] Why don't they go back to where it was better? But they don't have much of an excuse for that. What they want is for San Francisco to be better in every respect than from where they come.

That's not possible, because I'm betting that they didn't come out here just for a better Jewish life except in very few cases. I've known cases like that--a family in San Mateo, specifically. In the middle of building up his practice in the Midwest, this young physician made a conscious choice. They came out and I

Kuhn: remember showing them Peninsula Temple Beth El on a Saturday afternoon and he said, "Well, we want our kids to grow up in a Jewish environment. San Mateo's got it and this little town where we lived in Ohio doesn't. I'm going to just give up my practice and start all over again. But if I don't do it now, I'll never do it." And he did it.

He was Dr. Myron Frylech and he passed away last year and I thought there was a real courageous guy. But that's a family taking a real strong position, but not out of keeping with what they felt. They felt that the reason that they got married was to give a good life for the children they would have. Luckily he was in a profession, with sufficient professional skill that he could do this. If he were tied into a family business which would have gone completely down the tubes, that's something else. But I think that's rare.

There are so many reasons people come out. A lot of them are economic. So many people work for big firms. We had at Beth El about sixty new members every year and about sixty resignations. Most of these were people that worked for General Electric, Lockheed, or Philco, and every year you'd look around, and where'd they go? They got transferred.

Dorfman: Isn't that a common problem?

Kuhn: It's a tremendous problem. When you figure that 23 percent of Americans move every year, I would have a kid in the school who had been in six grammar schools by the time he hit the eighth grade. I had one child whose father was in the armed forces and it was worse there.

This tremendous transient status of Jewish--of American--life, not just American Jewish life--it makes it tougher for the Jews or for any religious group. With this complete dislocation where the woman has no idea what she's doing, all she's ever doing is packing and unpacking. The kids have no idea where they are, anything's relationship to anything else, or whether it's even worthwhile to find out where they are until they move again. The only thing that's going to save them is when they grow up and go to college, because then they'll be in one place for four years even though their family may be moving.

Dorfman: Perhaps.

Kuhn: Perhaps. It's just a tremendous thing, this transience. Even if they're not moving from one community to another, they're upgrading their status by moving from one tract to another--east of the Bayshore, west of the Bayshore; Burlingame to Hillsborough.

Dorfman: Would you comment generally, in view of all this, on the strength of the Jewish community here in San Francisco?

Kuhn: The strength of the Jewish community in San Francisco is the same basically as the strength anywhere--that I think we've finally learned: one, we'd better get along with each other because we're going to need each other, and when we need each other, there ain't nobody going to help except another Jew. Jimmy Carter's going to help the same way as Ford and Nixon and Eisenhower and Kennedy, up to the limits of American interest, which are very much--.

[end tape 3, side B]

Uniting the Jewish Community

[Interview 3: July 28, 1977]

[begin tape 4, side A]

Dorfman: If you could bring the Jewish community closer together, how would you do it?

Kuhn: That's such a utopian goal. I've never really looked at it that way. I think if you could make each congregation closer together, then there'd be less space between them and you could work on the unaffiliated. I can't see in this day of whatever media we have of anybody, no matter how good, being able to be accepted as pure with no self-aggrandizing motives. This is true in general as well as in Jewish society.

There are just so many problems and it isn't the lack of ability; it's the lack of, as I said, guts and character and these are characteristics which can be appreciated only over a long period of time. I don't see any great leaders on the scene. I'm not blaming anyone because he's not a leader, but you don't become a leader just by having a leadership conference. You don't develop educators by just having an educators' conference.

Well, let me explain this. The Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion had a three-year curriculum in developing cantors. At the end of that time you were supposed to be qualified both as a cantor and as an educator. But they sent out to Peninsula Temple Beth El in 1955 a man who was a fine cantor, but he was not an educator. The congregation had accepted him but later pointed out the discrepancy. They said, "All right, henceforth, to be an educator you have to stay an extra year: a cantor, three years; and a cantor-educator, four years."

Kuhn: But where it doesn't work is that one year does not an educator make. The requirements of a cantor are primarily artistic, of an educator they are primarily administrative, and they rarely exist in the same person, regardless of any time requirements. It's like saying that it would be very nice if a rabbi were qualified to sweep out the shul because then maybe a temple could afford only one rabbi and one janitor, but it isn't done that way.

The crisis of leadership--if you had the leaders you wouldn't have to worry about how it was done or what the goals were and you'd have the confidence that it was going to be done. But I don't see it on any level, certainly not locally here by any rabbi or any lay leader; none is accepted fully without question. Now, maybe that's too hard to say, without qualification. There are certain lay leaders who are felt to have no ulterior motives. A rabbi always likes people to agree with his point of view and particularly that of the division within Judaism which he represents.

I don't know. I'll have to give some thought to this, how you achieve this state of nirvana or the Hebrew equivalent. It's going to start with education, certainly, continual lifelong education, whether anybody comes or not.

Dorfman: We can come back to this a little later. What do you think is most unique about San Francisco's Jewry?

Kuhn: Well, that's going to be, obviously, compared to what? Do you mean compared to the rest of the Bay Area? Or I assume you probably mean the rest of the United States, or at least the eastern part.

Dorfman: Yes, compared to the eastern part of the United States.

Kuhn: First of all, orthodoxy has a very shallow base of support here. Reform got here early, as Sherith Israel and Emanu-El, which in thirty years of their arriving here changed from German orthodox to American reform congregations. We've got about an equal spread between reform and conservative, a great majority of unaffiliated, a fairly good degree of Jewish organization, a great acceptance of Jews in every form of civic life and politics, artistic, musical. And it isn't just any one of these; it's a combination of them. The acceptance by the non-Jewish public is not only right but good. Jews are leaders in philanthropy, general and Jewish.

I think that just like the whole rest of San Francisco, the Jewish community in many ways hangs loose. They didn't put up any big fight about Willie Brown's bill for consenting adults to have sex acts legalized. We're not having any big Jewish battle about gays.

Kuhn: Our concern, of course, is the same as most of American Jewry, which is Israel and all that this implies. If that were solved (not that it's going to be solved) what we'd do to take its place, I don't know, but there will be something. I think maybe it's the fact that you can be Jewish here less consciously than elsewhere. There are not many people who see that there is anything wrong with this, although I personally consider it undesirable.

Dorfman: Undesirable?

Kuhn: To have so many people unaffiliated, not to support the synagogue, to be uninvolved and not to involve their children. But there are conflicting things in this. As I said, we have a higher percentage of our confirmands go to Israel each summer following confirmation than any other place in the United States. Things start here later. It happens ten or twenty years later, yet we finally have three day schools that we're supporting. Twenty years ago they would have laughed at you if you had said we would even ever support one because our commitment to public education was so deep. So it comes later here and deeper here when it finally comes. We go to conferences the same as anybody else. Maybe the mail is slower.

Dorfman: I asked you last time about conflict and competition, and you spoke about the competition between and among Bay Area synagogues today. How would you say this has changed over the years?

Kuhn: There was an effort maybe fifteen or twenty years ago to have the San Francisco synagogues form an organization of synagogues, as contrasted to the organization of rabbis. Now there is such a synagogal organization in the East Bay and the proposed one here had one or two meetings and agreed not to go further. They couldn't find any purpose and this, of course, I think is a result of rather shallow leadership.

There are purposes, even if it's just joint efforts to reduce the number of unaffiliated. There are certain changes on the congregational map. You'll find Beth Israel, which at one time was the largest conservative congregation, selling its property at 1839 Geary because the neighborhood had become all black. They merged with the reform congregation at Temple Judea to form a combination reform-conservative synagogue, which is almost unheard of in the United States. That changed the map quite a bit.

You have Sherith Israel at one time becoming very, very low in membership, giving Emanu-El perhaps a three or four to one lead in membership. Now it's adjusted itself somewhat, but there's always the argument as to whether or not there's room for one more reform congregation. The big question is, who and what kind?

Kuhn: Perhaps the largest growing synagogue would be Mogen David Sephardim on 4th Avenue, which consists of North African, Sephardic, Egyptian, and Moroccan Jews. But the congregational figures are hard to come by because when they want to brag about it, they give you a big figure. When it comes time for them to pay their dues to the national organization, they try to show how few they have.
[Chuckles]

Dorfman: So the figures are flexible?

Kuhn: A little skewed.

III EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES, 1938-1972

Financier Herbert Fleishhacker's Office Boy

Dorfman: A little earlier you said that you interrupted your college career to work as an office boy for Herbert Fleishhacker.

Kuhn: Right. At the old Anglo-California National Bank.

Dorfman: What kind of man was Herbert Fleishhacker?

Kuhn: Well, he was a gambler. I was his office boy for a year and I would say that he gave priority to things in life on the following scale. He was tremendously interested in public service. There was priority if you were to come into the bank to see him because you wanted to give some deer or other animals to the San Francisco Zoo; he was chairman of the Park Commission. He was also chairman of the Finance and Fine Arts Commissions of the Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939-40. Those were his two primary interests in public life. The third visitor he'd see would be someone who had some kind of a private deal for him. He was said to have been a director of eighty-four corporations simultaneously, certainly a financier second only to A.P. Giannini. People came to see Herbert Fleishhacker, but Herbert Fleishhacker went to see Giannini. [Chuckles] Fleishhacker was quite a bit behind Giannini.

The fourth priority was someone who just came in on plain old bank business. He was looking for a big loan, and if it was good enough to get a loan, Herbert wanted a part of it. A very interesting man. He lived for many years at the Hotel St. Francis. During the summer he had a place on the Peninsula. He would arrive in his chauffeur-driven car every morning. He would take from the chaffeur his thermos of hot coffee. One time I found that the glass liner had cracked. So maybe in a sense I saved his life by not pouring that day.

Kuhn: A very dynamic man, full of energy, not Jewish in any kind of a formal sense. I assume he belonged to Temple Emanu-El. I never saw him there and in this sense he was quite different from his brother Mortimer, who was chairman of the board of the bank, whereas Herbert was president.

During this period he was named as a defendant in a lawsuit brought by some members of the Lazard family regarding a transaction which dated back to about 1913. He was trustee of some land in Kern County for the Lazard family and they charged that he had not fulfilled his fiduciary responsibilities and they sued him. He engaged as his attorney John Francis Neylan, who was also Hearst's attorney. Neylan held the theory that he could easily defeat this suit on its merits rather than claim the statute of limitations. After the first go around, Fleishhacker lost in superior court and Neylan issued a statement, "As Zola was to Dreyfus, I will be to Herbert Fleishhacker," and then he sent him his bill for \$175,000. That ended their Dreyfus-Zola relationship. [Chuckles]

I had the task of moving the entire transcript of the trial from Neylan's office, which was in the old Crocker Building at 620 Market Street, now the Aetna Building, across the street to the Palace Hotel, where Mr. Morton of L.A. came up. He was the attorney who was going to undertake the appeal, which they also lost. The amazing thing about Mr. Neylan's law firm was that in spite of its very conservative make-up, it included Bartley Crum, who later wrote Behind the Silken Curtain, which actually was ghostwritten for him. He became the editor of the New York Star or PM. I forget which it was. It was a liberal afternoon paper. Perhaps it was PM.

When Fleishhacker lost that judgment, other people from his past came forward and began suing him on other grounds. It was bad for the image of the bank, so he left the presidency. His brother left the board chairmanship. His son, Herbert, Jr.; nephew, Mortimer, Jr.; and his nephew by marriage, Leon Sloss, all left their vice-presidencies.

The bank had to go out and get new leadership, leadership of a very visible nature, because the unions were also hammering at the door. So they asked Robert Gordon Sproul, president of the University of California, if he would become the bank president. The students marched around the president's house in Berkeley: "Bobby, don't leave us. We need you now. Don't go for banking. We know they don't pay you here as much as you'll get over there, but we love you." And he didn't go.

Dorfman: What year was that?

Kuhn: That was about '38. They brought in a man, William H. Thomson, from Southern California who was a banker and he did an incredible job. He brought in others with him and the bank pulled out. It cleaned up its portfolio of questionable loans and eventually sold out after the war to Crocker Bank. Anglo-California no longer exists.

Incidentally, that job was gotten for me by Rabbi Reichert. When I told him I was dropping out of school for a while, he spent a considerable amount of time trying to get me employed. He referred me to Hugo Newhouse, a Golden Gate Bridge director and president of the Emanu-El men's club, and to Harold Zellerbach, and, thirdly, to the Fleishhackers. But this was still in the depression. It was tough, particularly as to the union aspects; to try to get these waived for a college boy was pretty tough.

Dorfman: How did you relate with Herbert Fleishhacker?

Kuhn: I don't think he even knew I existed. There was always going to be someone out there to do his bidding, but he gave me a perspective of the way that big men of this type operate. They don't operate monolithically at all. For example, he had a male secretary and he would just tell the secretary what he wanted written. The secretary would then dictate this to his female secretary. So the number one secretary had to have a parallel brain. He used to come over to our office about every day in the greatest state of frustration of any man I had ever seen. His name was Harry Thompson. He just died here a few years ago.

Dorfman: This was the executive, then, delegating power?

Kuhn: Herbert Fleishhacker, after he left the bank--he didn't just fold his wings. They had to dispose of their wealth in certain ways in accordance with the court decree, but he went back into business, Yosemite Chemical Company, until he died. He still lived in the penthouse of the Hotel St. Francis and loved contract bridge. He was indomitable. Time did a profile on him and they called him "the bulbous nosed Herbert Fleishhacker." He didn't like that very much.

California Blue Shield

Dorfman: [Chuckles] I suppose not. At a later date, you chose to work for Blue Shield. How did you make that decision?

Kuhn: Well, I had come out of the Navy and had a few temporary affiliations. One was selling Esquire boot polish and that didn't work out. I had taken a course under the G.I. Bill of Rights on public speaking, possibly the smartest thing I ever did other than marrying my wife. I realized for the first time I could speak. Before that, although I had been active in organizational work like the young men's group at Temple Emanu-El, that wasn't the same as speaking to people whom you didn't know, and I liked it and was good at it.

As a matter of fact, the company that put on the course, Beckmann Hollister, wanted me to work for them. Frank Beckmann gave me an introduction to a fellow named Frank Weisman who was a sales manager for Blue Shield, then known as California Physicians' Service. I had heard of them briefly. They had only been organized since 1939. I remember even then thinking in '39 that when they did organize--thinking how nice it would have been if the bank had had a plan like that, a health plan. I just went in to see them because I needed a job and he hired me, right on the spot. They were short of men. If it had been some other organization, I probably would have gone to work for it.

This is what happened with a lot of fellows. They just at some point began discounting what kind of places were acceptable employment and they found out that the next meal on the table was probably as good a criterion as any.

But I stayed there. I don't think when I went there I had any idea I would ever stay that long. But I found it satisfying until a certain point. Then when the nature of the leadership changed in the mid-'60s because of the introduction of Medicare and Medicaid, I felt that it was time to leave.

Dorfman: Yes. Why did you leave Blue Shield?

Kuhn: I became ashamed of them. The basic part of any health plan is the ability to pay claims on a timely basis in accordance with your contract. If you can't do that, you have no reason being in business, and we had lost all our reserves through inept management. We no longer even met all the requirements of being called a Blue Shield Plan. It was a political thing that kept us going.

They had a political thing that if the plan had gone under--because of technical requirements it no longer maintained the reserves it should have, reserves defined as being perhaps six months' dues be paid in advance, a standard created by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, not legally binding but accepted by Blue Shield. If California had gone down (California is the largest plan in the nation), the conclusion would have been

Kuhn: that the doctors don't know how to run a health plan. That would have jeopardized the whole Blue Shield movement, so therefore they couldn't go down. But when I had friends call me and berate me every day as to why my organization couldn't pay claims--there's no answer to that because the company was very growth-minded. How can you grow if the business you already have can't be served?

The point was we brought this new management in to replace other management. There was a company fight, and this happened (the dismissal of previous management) at the same time as the inauguration of Medicare and Medicaid in the middle of 1966. So here we were going up from an employee total of something like 750 employees to 3,000--like overnight. Now, you couldn't get supervisory people to train new employees, much less find them. So every department was strained. They had to show performance on the government programs, which soon became much bigger than nongovernmental programs. Prior to that time, although we'd had some governmental programs, they hadn't amounted to much.

I was in the nongovernmental side, group and nongroup plans, and our staff was literally raided. Just like an expansion team in baseball, they'd come up and say, "You've got to give us three skilled people." I'd say, "We need them." "Tough." Then they would say, "And also we expect a greater production of new groups out of you." You can't do it because they say you have to have the horses, and I thought this was never going to change.

They even had a policy, believe it or not, in their desire to hire people who were skilled keypunch operators--they would pay one of our employees a bonus if he could convince a friend of his doing that job somewhere else to quit his employer and to come to work for us. This is just on the fringe of business ethics. But that was the only way they could get them.

So I figured, "Well, you've thought about a lot of things in your lifetime and certain things you've skipped. Maybe now is the time to do it because you won't have the chance again." One of my close friends in the company came around and congratulated me--one, on doing it; and two, having the guts to do it; and three, with the tinge of regret that I wasn't taking him along with me.

Dorfman: But it took courage.

Kuhn: It took courage, yes. My wife was with me all the way. She wasn't happy at the nature of my change, but she was happy that I was. She thought I would be happier.

Dorfman: That's understandable. Then from there you went on to--

The Irwin Memorial Blood Bank

Kuhn: On to the Irwin Memorial Blood Bank. I'd been a blood donor since 1941 and I'd been active with Irwin ever since I came back from the service and went to work for Blue Shield. I was chairman of our employees' blood donor club and then I began to branch out to organize donor clubs in other organizations and speaking as sort of, really, a one-man's speakers' bureau. I became very active in the state and also nationally in the American Association of Blood Banks. I think I can say I'm one of the experts in blood donor recruitment, which is a very complicated thing. And about this time I thought, "What would it be like to work for this, doing it full time?" Bernice Hemphill was the executive director of the blood bank here. We had talked it over and she decided to hire me in mid-July, 1970, which was--I'm not going to say a date that will live in infamy, but like everything else, most instructive.

The blood bank movement, by and large, is the cutting edge of women's liberation because blood technology, the ability to do blood transfusions, depends upon certain scientific discoveries, the latest of which wasn't made until 1940 with the discovery of the Rh factor. Now, this was pretty close to the time that America was mobilizing for war. When the war came, the men who were in pathology and hematology went into the services. They left the labs and the blood banks, the newly organized blood banks, pretty much in control of the women who have never given up that control.

I don't say they should, but this particular blood bank made an art out of emasculating its male employees. I felt that they would never try it with me because I had really meant quite a bit to them as a volunteer and as a volunteer I was their pampered darling. But the moment I was on the payroll, it was a different story. A different story.

A Significant Accomplishment

Kuhn: So I wasn't there too long before I decided that this was not going to really last. I did accomplish one thing. I say accomplished it because there was no other factor to account for it, and that was that we went down to absolutely zero as far as paying donors is concerned. Up to that time they had said, "Oh, this is a volunteer blood bank. All blood is given by volunteers, except for a few who were paid for being rare types, blah, blah, blah." And those they had come in the back door or by the side entrance. But while I was there we went down to zero--the first time any major community blood bank in the United States could make that statement.



IRWIN MEMORIAL BLOOD BANK OF THE SAN FRANCISCO MEDICAL SOCIETY

INSIDE STORY

Volume IX

AUGUST 1970

No. 3

MARSHALL KUHN JOINS DONOR RECRUITMENT STAFF

Marshall Kuhn, former volunteer coordinator of donor clubs, recently affiliated with the blood bank as manager of donor recruitment. Mr. Kuhn, who is familiar to many donor club chairmen through his years of volunteer service to the blood bank and his associations in business, civic and charitable organizations, comes to the blood bank from California Blue Shield, where his most recent position was manager, Market Research and Development.

At the blood bank, Mr. Kuhn joins Mrs. Robert (Jean Strell) Coach, Mrs. Edward (Wilma) Cummings and Mrs. Carol Burt in planning mobiles and other donor recruitment activities in the community. They work in conjunction with other staff members who phone and recruit donors to fill the various blood needs of hospitals in Irwin's eight county service area.



With 63 donations to Irwin, Mr. Kuhn was especially proud when his daughter Alyson gave her first donation at age 18. A student, Alyson has been working in the blood bank laboratory this summer.

Kuhn: Now, other blood banks could say, "We don't pay for blood," but they couldn't also say, "We meet all needs." What they did was if a hospital couldn't get the blood out of a blood bank, it had to buy it from a commercial source.

So the main way this was done was to organize as many opportunities as I could to speak to large groups of employees of various firms, employees who had never had a blood donor group before, had never heard anybody talk about it. They had heard about blood banking and about being a blood donor, but they hadn't done it. I was able, in some cases, to get a fantastically high percentage of employees to do this, and this was the difference. A lot of this material would be of interest now, I think, in view of the suit recently filed by the State of California against the Irwin Memorial Blood Bank and other defendants because it's all pertinent to this whole question.

So I decided to leave and I told them I was leaving, but I didn't leave for about seven or eight months after that, not until it got to the point where I figured, well, I had no specific place to go and hadn't really spent much time looking around. I don't know whether I was waiting for the good fairy to touch me with a wand or not, but I left there without having any real place to go. I left there on March 31, 1972.

Dorfman: I think we'll stop here.
[end tape 4, side A]

A SAMPLING OF MARSHALL KUHN'S LIFETIME INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES



Anglo California National Bank of San Francisco Basketball Team - Season of 1939 - San Francisco Recreation Department - Industrial Division Men's Basketball Tournament - Class AA

Back row, left to right: William Prindiville, Carl Trappmann, Marshall Kuhn, Fred Newman, Coach Milton Stansky

Front row, left to right: James Collins, Jack Donovan, Eugene Shupack, Charles Kennedy, Richard Garaventa

Missing from picture: Fred Estebes, Walter Herringer, Manager Bill Burns



Israel Prime Minister Ben Gurion greeting Marshall H. Kuhn, co-chairman of 1963 Jewish Welfare Federation Campaign, during a United Jewish Appeal overseas study mission.



Reserve fund luncheon, Irwin Memorial Blood Bank, San Francisco Medical Society, 1962. *Left to right:* Doctor Leonard, chairman, Blood Bank Commission, San Francisco Medical Society; Mrs. Bernice M. Hemphill, managing director, Irwin Memorial Blood Bank; Marshall H. Kuhn



Kuhn Track Club. Eugene, Oregon 1976 US Olympic Men's and Women's Track and Field Trials. *Left to right:* Flora and Gay Maclise; Walt Miller; Andy Winokur; Marshall Kuhn ("The founder"); Mort Macks; Hugh Winokur; Charles Auerbach; Jim Abrahamson; Peter Berg.



Marshall H. Kuhn, *left*, Ryozo Azuma, *right*; after receiving an honorary life membership in the Sierra Club. John Muir National Historic site, Martinez, California, 1975

IV FURTHER REFLECTIONS

[Interview 10: March 8, 1978. This interview was recorded during an editing session with Marshall H. Kuhn at his home at 30 7th Avenue, San Francisco.]

[tape 17, side A]

Dorfman: Please explain the basis for the suit against the Irwin Memorial Blood Bank and other defendants by the State of California.

Kuhn: In blood banking through the American Association of Blood Banks, the local blood bank makes two charges which are rendered on the patient's hospital bill. For each unit of blood transfused there is a replacement fee and a processing fee. The processing fee is roughly equivalent to the blood bank's actual cost of doing business.

Now, I'm not relating any of this to the charge the hospital itself might make for cross-matching or administering the blood. I'm just stating that the hospital is the fiscal agent for collecting the fee which will come back to the blood bank. First you have the processing fee, and up to very recently at Irwin that was \$12.50 per unit, a unit being one pint of blood. Then there's the blood replacement fee, the theory being that if the blood is not replaced by a co-worker or a friend or a relative of the donee, the blood bank will take that fee and go out and hire a paid donor to replace it. And at that time the replacement fee was about \$25.

All the time this system was going on, the blood bank was saying, "We really don't want paid donors. We want volunteers because, one, that is more the American way, the Judeo-Christian ethic; and two, a volunteer donor is much less likely to have had hepatitis and not reveal it."

Now, eventually Irwin reached the state where they didn't need any paid donors. All blood was given by volunteers. And yet, if you were a patient and the blood that you used was not specifically

Kuhn: replaced on your behalf or replaced by means of a credit, established in advance, you still paid a replacement fee for each unit. This was, in a sense, pure profit to the blood bank. They were charging you for something that cost them nothing.

Now, what did they do with the money? Well, in the case of Irwin, at least with some of the money, they used it to build a new blood bank when they moved from Laguna and Washington Streets to 70 Masonic Avenue. At that time they decided not to have a public drive, even though one would have been justified, because it is a public institution. It could easily have succeeded since it saved so many people's lives. They got new laboratory equipment from the William G. Irwin Foundation. But the public wasn't told this, except for one very, very small article. Actually, it was one paragraph that appeared in the newspaper when the building was complete, as if it were almost a legal notice.

So, the question is: If they had collected more money in replacement fees, even beyond paying for the new building, and this money accumulated and is presumably invested, what were they going to do with this money and for what purpose? Does any individual or group benefit thereby? I don't think there are any charges that anybody is. It's probably invested and it is probably fully revealed in the annual report that the blood banks, along with every other nonprofit institution, must render to the Register of Charitable Trusts in California. But at what point is it going to end? I think the saddest aspect is the fact that they never took the public into their confidence. They just kept on charging and charging.

One of the most unusual aspects is that the insurance companies have gone along for years paying these donor replacement fees as part of hospital expenses. Now, it's true that some of the insurance companies will not reimburse the blood bank until it has been shown that the donor had not been successful in recruiting a replacement donor. But, nonetheless, the State of California argues that you have a two-price system for the same thing. Here your blood bank is giving away blood that someone has replaced on paper in one instance and charging a replacement fee for the same thing in another instance.

There are all sorts of ramifications to this, including the fact that the American Red Cross blood system, which is about the same size as the American Association of Blood Banks, operates on the principle that anyone's entitled to blood just by virtue of needing it, that there is no artificial need for blood, and that the public ought to be good enough citizens to donate it, without a complicated system of credits.

Kuhn:

The truth of the matter is that most blood donors are altruistic in nature and they give the blood willingly. But they want to hold back a little, in the sense that if they should ever need it, they'd like a little break as compared to the person who needs it and has never made the effort to give it. And that's the great majority of the public. So you've got a very sticky situation, financially, ethically, and the worst thing is that it has been hidden so long, is if there were something to be ashamed of. It's a natural situation which has to be dealt with.

First of all, the blood banks themselves were in a bind. Someone would come in Congress and would say, "We want to inspire people to give blood. We'll give them a tax deduction for each pint they donate." But who was going to assign the value to that blood? If it is saving my life, it may be worth a million dollars a pint. The blood bank didn't like congressmen saying that blood was worth such and such, but the blood bank itself had to put a value on it when they had this replacement fee program. It's a very sticky thing.

As a matter of fact, at the annual meeting of the American Association of Blood Banks held in San Francisco last year, the joint agreement, started in 1960 between the American Association of Blood Banks and the American National Red Cross for reciprocity on a nationwide basis, was considered. It would allow me to give at any blood bank I wanted, whether Red Cross or AABB. That unit of blood could be transferred to any hospital in the country in 1976, without any fanfare whatsoever. After the AABB had adjourned here, however, it was announced that this agreement had been abrogated. Now, that's just one example.

There's another example of what I would call very sloppy administration, and as a citizen I always felt bad about it. When I went to work for the blood bank, the new building was still being completed, and one day someone called up and said, "If you don't evacuate the building, you're going to have a bomb!" This was at a time when there were bomb scares all over San Francisco every day. You wonder who would threaten to bomb a blood bank, but there are kooks, as you know. So we evacuated the building.

Then we went back and I wondered, where was the orderly procedure for the evacuation? I had never seen any written instructions. So I inquired of a number of the blood bank's original staff who had been there many, many years and none of them had ever seen a written plan. In other words, we just got out of the building, we came back, and that was it. So I raised this question with the director of the blood bank and asked whether she would want me to make up a

Kuhn: plan. The answer eventually came down, "No." At that time, as of when I left in March, 1972, there was no plan. I would venture to guess that there has never been a plan.

I worry about it from several aspects. First is the plan for how the blood bank operates if it has a disaster within itself. A boiler blows up; the power fails. We have any number of things including contamination or sabotage. How do you handle it within yourself? Secondly, supposing the catastrophe occurs in the community? San Francisco has an earthquake or a fire. What does the blood bank do in response to that? How do they get personnel there? How does it deliver the blood? No instructions.

Now, if you say there are instructions, they're in the safe of the director, that's the same as no instructions. Instruction is only as good as people know it to be. That is, it's properly posted, the employees and the public are used to it, and they practice it. The third aspect is that the Irwin Blood Bank, along with every other blood bank in the AABB system, undergoes periodic accreditation.

I cannot conceive that one of the questions in that accreditation process would not relate to whether or not you have adequate plans for meeting emergencies properly posted, gone over with civil defense officials, the fire department, and the police department. If they don't have that question, it's a black mark against the AABB. If they do have that question, and accredit Irwin on a continuing basis in the light of a negative response or of not asking the question, then it shows a little collusion between the organization and the association.

The public has the right to expect of a blood bank like this, that brags of its being the best in the United States, that it certainly would know how to take care of itself in an emergency. For, after all, blood itself is always used in the event of an emergency.

I'm thinking of a situation such as at Mt. Zion Hospital, where the average person, if asked, "What happens if the power fails in the hospital?"--and the answer comes back, "The auxiliary generator goes on." Then when you ask, "But what percentage of the hospital needs are taken care of by the generator?" the answer is such that it will discourage you very much, because it is rarely adequate at all.

On Authors

[begin tape 4, side B]

Dorfman: There are two stories you say which will--

Kuhn: Yes. Last week you asked me who was my favorite Jewish author, and I answered Charles Angoff. During the week I had occasion to go over my record of reading, and over the past twenty-five years I've read about a hundred Jewish books, plus a lot of non-Jewish books. The only author of whom I've read as many as five books is Harry Kemelman, who did Friday, the Rabbi Slept Late, and Saturday, Sunday, etc. Other than that, three stories by Sholem Aleichem; a number of authors of two books; Angoff, just two. But he's still my favorite because I know what he has written that's waiting for me.

Dorfman: That's anticipation.

Kuhn: It's not like among non-Jewish books, in which I would say maybe I've read twenty or fifty books by or about John Muir. I've read much more widely in the Jewish field based upon numbers of authors. But for whatever reason--maybe it's because I'm involved in Sunday school work so much that a book comes over my desk and the librarian has ordered a book that is so good that I borrow it for two or three weeks or months. [Chuckles] Meanwhile she's shrieking, "Where's that book?" That's one thing.

An Awareness of Economic and Social Differences

Kuhn: The second thing is that you asked me did I or children similarly situated socially and economically--were we aware of this difference between us and the more affluent? And, I think, yes, in various ways. There was a boy my own age. He went to Lowell with me. He lived about two blocks away and we would walk every morning. This was when Lowell was a four-year high school. Pretty soon his parents began inviting me to be their guest for dinner on Sunday night with their family, which consisted of themselves and this only child and the grandmother. And this went on every Sunday night for months. I would be with them Sunday afternoon and only once did they invite my mother.

It took me a while to figure out that they were literally buying someone as a companion for their son, someone who was acceptable, who played games well, whether it was cribbage or something like

Kuhn: that, and shortly thereafter I broke it off. I figured, although my mother never complained--maybe she saw it as a great opportunity for me. This man was prominent in business. I felt that this was not fair. I had two older brothers, but they weren't any companionship for my mother. At least I could be with her on Sunday night. That's just the way--one way, I guess, of reflecting on the situation.

Dorfman: That was an astute recognition on your part.

Kuhn: Yes. It takes a while for some of these things to come clear in your mind, how you're being used. Of course, you don't like to think you're being used, and even if other people are being used in similar circumstances, not you.

Dorfman: No, there's often a rationalization, but you didn't do that.

Kuhn: Not me. [Laughter]

V WORKING FOR THE JEWISH WELFARE FEDERATION

Dorfman: You expressed a feeling of strength and knowledge in the way organizations are formed, mutate, and die. Can you, therefore, tell me first why you went to work for the Jewish Welfare Federation?

Kuhn: Why I went to work for the Federation? Well, that's very simple. After I left the blood bank, I was unemployed until September, '72, when I was engaged as director of the San Francisco Jewish Community Center. I was there for thirteen months when the 1973 war came to Israel. The Federation asked if they could borrow me to assist with their fund-raising efforts because I was the only paid executive within the federation agency family who had any experience fund raising as a volunteer or professional. I had been a campaign co-chairman twice. I had been active in the campaign, you might say, back to 1934. I had been a board member of the Federation for ten years, active in every type of federation activity, chairman of social planning, and so on. So I was delighted to go because I thought I was needed. It was work, I think, more in keeping with my experience than being director of the Center.

I had long felt that I would like to work for the Federation if the opportunity presented itself, so I did. It was a temporary thing, a loan, until the federation leadership changed and Rabbi Lurie came in as executive director and invited me to stay. That was no problem.

The Federation Concept

Dorfman: What can you tell me about the Federation?

Kuhn: How many years? [Chuckles] Well, the Federation is, in concept, the same as it is in every major city and even intermediate-sized city in the United States. It collects money from its members for local, national, and overseas needs; does the social planning to help determine how the community envisions its priorities; conducts capital funds campaigns when new physical facilities are involved; and I've done all that. Now I'm director of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund, which appeals to people on the basis that they've supported the Federation for anywhere from ten to fifty years and that participating in the endowment means that their influence can be felt after they're gone. They can say--a perfectly natural method of expression--that they or the members of their family would like to see their name carried on.

Now, every federation differs as to which agencies it supports or the percentage of its dollar that goes for education or health. Denver, which is a relatively small intermediate-sized community, supports two Jewish hospitals; they don't have enough tsouris with one!

I naturally am very proud of our Federation because we send a higher percentage of our dollar overseas than almost any other federation in the country. Our collections are very good, by which I mean our shrinkage of nonpayment of pledges is very, very small. I think the Federation has been a unifying force in the community.

One of its most important things is the continuing involvement of younger people. When I went on the Federation board, I was quite junior in age. Then we changed the bylaws so at least three people have to be board members who are not [yet] thirty-five. We have a young adults' division created out of a recognition that a lot of people living and working here were not born here, but they may have just gone to college here. We've involved them in other ways--not only about 1,200 of them presently--but they've had several hundred marriages over the last ten years, which by any record is a highly successful venture. They're involved in every aspect--fund raising, social service, athletics, and roommate finding.

We have a leadership development committee of young couples whose primary purpose is educating themselves by exposing themselves to excellent speakers and reading material on a year-around basis. We have a fine women's division throughout the entire federation area, which includes Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties throughout, and the northern half of Santa Clara County.

Kuhn: We don't respond immediately to every new change. Sometimes we're slow. But we get there. One of our biggest things right now is developing housing for the well elderly. I think that within a couple of years we're going to have a considerable investment in this. But I wouldn't want to say that we're that much different from federations anywhere else in the sense that each community decides for itself what it feels it should be doing.

Feelings About the Federation

Dorfman: How do you feel about the Federation?

Kuhn: I feel good about it. I feel good about it. I feel good about working for it, about the people I work with. I don't think we have a tremendous number of people who are complaining about things. We have a very high number of people who don't support us. This is true anywhere. There's no place in the country where this is not true. It's even worse in major cities like New York or Los Angeles who have such huge populations. You can hardly keep track of where the people are. Los Angeles County has almost 500,000 Jews, compared to our federation area which has 75,000.

Dorfman: There's a vast difference.

The Jewish Population Shift

Kuhn: A vast difference, just keeping track of them. Then we've had a population shift, so that in the last fifteen years 20,000 Jews have moved out of San Francisco, leaving us with 35,000. The balance are spread between Marin and the Peninsula. San Francisco has a very high percentage of elderly Jews; I would say about one in six would be above sixty-five.

Dorfman: In San Francisco?

Kuhn: In San Francisco, much less in the other areas. But that's good. Let them live a long time--L'chayim! In my view of any kind of social work that I could have involved myself in and have involved myself in, either professionally or as a volunteer, the Federation is the most encompassing. It involves every type of Jewish participation--with little children, with the elderly--every type of thing involving their lives and their leisure pursuits.

Kuhn: The funny thing is that Irving Reichert again is responsible for this in the first place, because in 1934 he was chairman of the campaign of the Jewish National Welfare Fund, an organization which was later merged into the Federation. This was organized in 1925 to raise money for national and overseas needs. The local needs then were met by the Federation of Jewish Charities, which was part of the Community Chest, now the United Way. These didn't get together really until between 1948 and 1955 when they were formally merged.

So I was then an officer of our youth group at Temple Emanu-El, the Pathfinders, and Rabbi Reichert brought us in to work on the campaign. I became well acquainted with Annette Saber, who was the executive of the organization, and when I was about to go out of the Navy in 1945, she asked me to be her assistant, which I did not do. So when I did come to the Federation in 1973, it was sort of like a twenty-eight-year delay, that's all. [Laughter] An interesting coincidence.

Thoughts on Leaving the San Francisco Jewish Community Center

Jewish Community Center Problems

Dorfman: As you look back, have you ever had second thoughts about having left the San Francisco Jewish Community Center as executive director?

Kuhn: No, no. I'll tell you why. At the time I was there, they had fantastic physical problems with the building. The building had been built in the early '30s. The night it opened I remember sitting there having a soda with Louis Blumenthal, its executive director, and he said, "My God, my God, if we had known how many people were coming, we would have built it bigger in the first place." That might sound strange, but it's the only building project I ever knew that raised more money than it needed to build. It had a surplus. But, at that time, the program was designed so that the building didn't open until 3:30 in the afternoon when the kids came from school. There was no senior adult program for elderly people. It was a much different thing. Now the place opens at 8:00 in the morning with swimming lessons for kids six months old. It's going all day long. You have to throw one group out--you have to throw the little kids out of the auditorium so that the people seventy years old can have their lunch there.

Kuhn: But everything was falling apart like a one-horse shay--the roof, the wiring, the plumbing. If you have a home, you know what I'm talking about, except this was on a grander scale. I remember the Federation board members having voted for an emergency appropriation of \$70,000 to \$80,000 to fix up the electrical system, and my asking at that time, "What goes next? The roof? The stucco? The plumbing? What goes next?" And they said, "We don't know."

But then when I got to be director, I found that \$70,000 did not fix up all the electrical system, just part of it. So it was a battle every day for someone who was technically unprepared to do that. I would have been prepared if I had finished my engineering studies in college. So it was a difficult thing because it would take about half the time just for putting your finger in the dike. Here was a chance to really get to do something I knew, work with people I had worked with before. The Center offered many opportunities for satisfaction. When you realize there were 6,000 people coming who wanted to be there. It's not like school. So that was a great satisfaction.

But I hadn't been trained for the job. I had been trained for the community relations aspects of the job, which are very important, particularly in a center that was growing increasingly less Jewish in its membership. That part I think I was able to do, to sort of unify things. Something happened about three months after I left the Center, a small child was drowned in the Center's pool, the first time since 1932.

Dorfman: That must have been very difficult.

Kuhn: He was taking a lesson and they all went into the shower room. Somehow he got away from the instructors and got back in the pool. He didn't drown immediately. He was like a vegetable for months. It sounds heartless for me to say that I'm glad. I wasn't at the Center anymore. If I had been there at that time, just knowing my own disposition, it would have been very, very difficult for me regardless of responsibility or not.

Dorfman: I'm sure it was difficult for you to hear about it.

Kuhn: Oh, God, yes.

Major Changes for Federation Volunteers

Dorfman: Let me ask you, in view of your long history as a volunteer, to come back to the Federation. What would you describe as the major changes in these many years?

Kuhn: Among the volunteers?

Dorfman: Yes.

Kuhn: I think I was the first volunteer to reach a high position in the Federation without coming from a family background of wealth and importance. I think that's significant, not because it was me, but that it happened to somebody, and because it has happened to lots of other people since that time, and nothing's thought of it.

Dorfman: Because you were probably the first, would you say?

Kuhn: I think so. It was done because of my involvement in work for a long time in many, many areas, primarily fund raising. But not only that--the social planning and so on. I did whatever they asked me. It never even occurred to me that eventually I would have a top position because it all happened very rapidly. For example, I was in the insurance section of the business and professional division and every year they'd ask me to be vice-chairman, but that didn't mean anything because a vice-chairman had no additional duties. I still took cards to solicit.

Then one day in the late '50s, a friend of mine, Bennett Raffin, who was going to be the next chairman of the business and professional division, came up to see me and asked me if I would be chairman of the insurance section. I said, "Sure." Well, he practically collapsed that it was that easy to convince somebody to do this. I would no more turn him down than I would want anybody to turn me down. We had a very good campaign. The next thing I find out they want me to be vice-chairman of the whole business and professional division, and then they want me to be chairman of the division. Then they wanted me to be chairman again.

Well, the structure of the Federation at that time of the campaign--and remember, the campaign has a structure completely separate from the normal organization of the Federation as a corporation. The Federation has the president, Peter Haas; as campaign chairman, Ron Kaufman. There are two parallel things going on.

Kuhn: Well, being chairman at that time of the business and professional division was about the biggest job physically because it involved some thirty or forty sections, from optometrists to doctors, pharmacists, teachers, and you had to get a chairman and vice-chairman for each of them--a tremendous amount of contact work. So I refused. I refused to take it a second year because, first of all, I was involved with a tremendous number of organizations at the same time.

None of them meant more to me than the Federation. But I felt we had really done a poor job if along the way, while we were raising funds, we hadn't developed leadership; where you have to ask the same guy to do the same job over again, something's the matter. One, the leadership may be there and you're not looking for it, you haven't identified it, which is a failure on your part, or, if it isn't there, why haven't you developed it? Why don't you get co-chairmen and have training courses? So I wouldn't do it. But instead they made me vice-chairman of the overall campaign.

A vice-chairmanship can be almost like being vice-president. It can mean something or nothing.

Dorfman: Depending on what you choose to do?

Kuhn: Depending on what the chairman wants to do. But the chairman, in this case, was a man with whom I'd been vice-chairman at other states along the way, Richard Goldman. He'd been chairman of the Business and Professional Division when I was vice-chairman, and we'd worked on other general endeavors together.

So then the following year I was asked to be co-chairman of the whole campaign with John Steinhart, an attorney whom I didn't even know at the time. But he represented the more affluent segment of the community. His father was Jesse Steinhart, a very well known attorney and Jewish leader. When I called Dick Goldman up to tell him about this, he said, "Congratulations. You've helped me and I'll do anything for you--but work." I said, "Gee, thanks a lot." [Laughter]

Then we did a creditable job, John and I. This was the campaign of '62. We had gone over to Europe to see things there. Then Ben Swig, who was the president of the Federation, came up with a beautiful line. He said, "Marshall and John did a great job for us in '62, but for '63 we felt we needed leadership that was older and more mature, and who's aged more than these two guys?" [Laughter] He was asking us to do it again, so we did it again. It was the same as doing it on

Kuhn: your own again, because it was splitting up between someone else and yourself, although there are problems of co-chairmanship just like there are problems with vice-chairmanship.

During the first campaign, John and I were made members of the Federation board, albeit without right of vote, which I really laughed at because I said, "That's like being a little bit pregnant or something." And they caught the message. So it became almost understood from then on that anybody who becomes campaign chairman goes on the Federation board very rapidly. The Federation board is involved in so many decisions about the campaign that the campaign chairman has to take part in those decisions. His influence has to be felt.

Dorfman: That's the way to do it?

Kuhn: Right. Then after that, I worked my way back down again [chuckles] because along the way one of the other chairmen wanted me to be vice-chairman again, just simply because he wanted to have access to the other past chairmen as a sort of an elite society of anyone who's been a past chairman of the Federation. There's really no experience quite like it, the things you're subject to--not just in the size of the gifts, but the development of the whole campaign as it goes along, and meeting officials of the State of Israel and the top officials of the United Jewish Appeal, the Joint Distribution Committee, and so on.

Then I worked my way down to chairman of the congregations division, which we'd never had before. The United Jewish Appeal had organized a volunteer effort to try to get congregations to do more philanthropically. So we had eighteen congregations here, all of whom knew me well. I had spoken from the pulpits of most of them and each of them told me the same story: "Marshall, we love you, what you ask is 100 percent right, but you know we've got a building fund plan coming up, and we have so much trouble raising money for ourselves. We're just not going to have the energy to do anything more for Israel."

I admit that I was biased toward Israel, but I could hardly excuse them when I realized that Temple Emanu-El of Honolulu, where I had spoken, had spent all of its energy during the 1950s raising money for a new sanctuary and hadn't sent a cent overseas. I don't believe that you, at home, come first and that your overseas brethren come second.

So, anyway, we scrapped the congregations division and I next chaired the religious school division. I'd chair anything except the women's division. [Chuckles]

Dorfman: Why not?

Kuhn: Well, the women do very well without my help. I've had a standard answer over the years when people say, "Marshall, we've read your bio and you belong to every organization but this." I say, "Oh, no. No, it looks that way, but I've done very little directly for the Mothers' Milk Bank--indirectly, maybe, but not directly."

The Federation's Future

Dorfman: What changes do you see in the future for the Federation?

Kuhn: Well, we're going to be involved in--over how many years?

Dorfman: Let's say the next twenty-five years.

Kuhn: That's too much. Somebody asked me to do a big study of how the Blue Shield looks, about the changes of government involvement in health plans for the next twenty-five years. I said, "Here's a hundred questions. You answer those and I'll start to build up my response."

Certainly they are going to be more involved in care of the well aged. They have to be. This is probably with a great deal of input by the federal government. The groups that are organized for it will do better than the groups that are not organized for it, but a lot of our own resources will have to go in there. Any means of keeping these people out of an institution for maximum care, delaying it--in other words, if you could keep them at home or in any kind of facility where they're getting minimal nursing care, they're so far better off than putting them all in a home for the aged. That's one area.

I would like to feel we could make some meaningful improvement in religious education. I can't see that happening unless each congregation decides to yield some of its autonomy to a central organization. That may sound like a cop out, but it's so much more efficient. You get better teachers, better training, better facilities such as we have here at the Ben Yehuda School, which has absorbed all the elementary Hebrew education for every school in San Francisco, except Emanu-El. That's much more than any school could do for itself.

[end tape 4, side B]

[begin tape 5, side A]

Kuhn: Now, to continue with the aged. When we have more of the well elderly living in their homes, or in any arrangement other than a maximum care institution, the Center has to be prepared either within its own walls or [with] some other arrangement to provide services of a social, recreational, and cultural nature for them.

I'm not sure what we're going to find in the next twenty-five years. It's probably been found already in some of the other communities. We've just delayed, and I think this is because the nature of any organization, whether it's a federation or-- the greatest example to me is the school system. You can only make one major change a year. It just cannot handle the disruption of more of that because you've got to keep on doing the other things you have been doing.

As valid evidence for this theory of mine, I think of the experience of the San Francisco Unified School District. In the last ten years, and maybe ever since Brown versus Board of Education, the district has been completely off balance. No matter what they do, they're hit by something else. There's a new regulation at the city, state, or federal level, and they just cannot adjust to it. They have to adjust to minor variations in racial make-up, changing standards of earthquake resistance-- you just can't do these. Also, changes in educational philosophy, and as W.H. Ferry stated, and I'm willing to quote him, "No major statement about education can be proven."

Dorfman: That's an interesting statement.

Kuhn: It's an interesting statement from an article about Charles Eliot, the president of Harvard, by his great-grandson, who said that everybody didn't agree that his grandfather was the greatest educator there was. Ferry was one of his critics and then Ferry admitted that he couldn't prove it either.

VI THE RABBIS AND CANTORS OF TEMPLE EMANU-EL

Dorfman: In general, how do you feel about the rabbis in San Francisco?

Kuhn: Well, in what decade is this going to be read? [Chuckles] Let me say this. There was an expression in baseball about a player-- the fellow who hits the home runs gets paid more than anybody else. So they asked about this fellow and they said, "Lots of field, no hit," and that's what I feel about most of the rabbis. I like them all personally, and I think they have a tremendous variation in their effectiveness and in their willingness to be effective. Their roles are cut out for them.

But whatever they say is not necessarily the position in Judaism that I set out for myself or for the community because we have a very knowledgeable laity, although not knowledgeable in Judaism. Many rabbis aren't teaching Judaism much anymore. They're involving themselves in a lot of other things in which they're no more expert than anybody else.

Now, giving them their due in that they're in a very difficult profession and in a very difficult time, nonetheless, there are classic examples of great rabbis. I just don't happen to see any of them necessarily on this scene. I may be doing them a great injustice because I may be seeing them from a very privileged position in which nobody could look good. Maybe a rabbi doesn't impress his wife even. This is no particular criticism of them, but I just don't see any giants among them.

Least Effective Rabbinical Contributions

Dorfman: Would you like to talk about their least effective contributions? We're talking now, I assume, about the current rabbis.

Kuhn: Well, let me give you an example. We have been trying for some time to meet the needs of individuals who don't belong to congregations but who find themselves sick at home, lonely, maybe in a nursing home, maybe in a hospital other than Mt. Zion. At first we thought we could meet this need by engaging a community rabbi, a community chaplain, and we did this. We engaged Rabbi Arthur Oles. As a matter of fact, I was chairman of the committee that engaged him. It soon became apparent that he would have enough of a caseload just by serving Mt. Zion Hospital and a few other institutions. Mt. Zion wanted it that way. To serve any other institutions or individuals at home we would have to find some other means.

Now, at best, this is a very difficult type of assignment for any rabbi or anybody. Nobody likes to be continually in the position of calling on sick people, unbalanced people, chronically ill people, lonely people. So we decided that we weren't going to necessarily go out and engage someone new. We were going to try and get the rabbis of the community, the pulpit rabbis, to make an occasional call or adopt an institution in their neighborhood--a nursing home, for example, or a general hospital. The response to this request has been so mixed as to be discouraging.

Very few rabbis have interpreted this request as any type of obligation for rabbis. The fact that these unaffiliated people have needs similar to their own congregants' doesn't impel these rabbis to adopt these people as part of their flock. That's their right and maybe their congregation wants them to take that position. But I would have hoped that they could have just said, "All right, to the best of our ability we'll go one step farther and if there's any possible way of working this in, we'll do it. And if we can't, we'll see that our cantor does it, or the senior teacher, or the president of the men's club could organize a committee." Maybe in time that will happen.

But it hasn't happened as yet, and I'm sure that if you ask this question of the rabbis they would say that it's a matter of interpretation, that "Kuhn's not sitting where we're sitting, he doesn't know the needs I have to meet, the small budget, etc., etc." We always like to ask the impossible of somebody else, but that definitely has not been a stunning success.

You would think that when somebody in the community who wants a rabbi's hands on him, for whatever needs, that would be something that we could provide. It doesn't even cost anything. But we haven't been able to do it. We've been able to organize some lay people to take these elderly and lonely people shopping, to the doctor's office, but as far as religious needs, which is what some

Kuhn: people--that's what they want; they want to see a rabbi. Maybe they want to see a rabbi about something which he considers inconsequential, or the rabbi figures, "Well, the person's so far gone they don't even know I'm there." I don't know all of those answers, but it's not a record we're proud of.

Dorfman: The reason for the mixed response is not a simple one?

Kuhn: No, no. Some rabbis have a smaller congregation and they can do this. But there are some--I don't want to imply that no rabbis are doing this. There are some who are. I just wish it were a higher percentage.

Rabbi Louis Newman, 1924-1930

Dorfman: What can you tell me about Rabbi Newman?

Kuhn: Well, at the end of his career he sent me everything that he still had dealing with his years in California. I gave it all to Magnes [Museum] after having it photographed at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati.

I remember him first as a little boy. He was this great big handsome man, and I had been told to stay after school because I had been bad in the first grade. So here, as the assembly breaks up, they all march past me out the doors of this big building on Sutter Street. He looks down and he says, "Little boy, why are you here?" I said, "I was naughty and I was told to stay and see you." He said, "You won't do it again, will you?" I said, "Never." "Okay, go home." I thought, "Boy, there is the essence of charity." [Chuckles] He didn't even ask me what I had done. So he was in my book as a great man to begin with.

Then my mother used to make him hamantaschen, and then he prepared me for and conducted my bar mitzvah and my two brothers', and also their confirmations, and he buried my father, and then he went away. When I went to New York in 1939 to see the fair, I looked him up. He had me over for dinner and he had three sons a little younger than I was and we talked about the Yankees. I'd seen the Yankees play three days before and he even knew the score of the game--three days before. I thought, "This guy is a genius."

All of a sudden, three years later I'm in New York for my naval training and he was still just so personably hospitable and so was his wife. She was a wonderful person, Lucile Newman. They'd take me to plays in New York, movies, and, of course, we'd talk about

Kuhn: people in San Francisco. He still remembered many people with great affection, particularly the Rinders. So whenever they would come out here and the Rinders would have a luncheon or dinner for them, my wife and I would be invited.

Then there was a big hiatus in our correspondence. He would write me [chuckles], but I wouldn't write back, which was a ridiculous thing because I had somehow the idea that my letter had to be some kind of example of perfection or something. But he never even asked me why I didn't. He just accepted it as this human fault.

When I began going to New York again, I'd see him, and when I was there for the American Association of Blood Banks in '67, he had me out for lunch. He was just so nice to me. Then, of course, he became ill. He had a stroke, and when he passed away I helped to raise some funds for an institution in Israel to which he was close. Then when his wife passed away, I did the same for her.

In my younger years he was the example for me of what a rabbi should be like. Later on, as I grew older and he changed, I realized that that would not then have been my criteria. First of all, he overquoted other rabbis of authority, even though with great skill. He even asked at Temple Emanu-El if he could quote Groucho Marx from that pulpit. [Laughter] But he was a man who was a marvelous orator, a great scholar, a great man.

As his example for me--at one time I considered going into the rabbinate, and I think one of my greatest contributions to American Judaism is when I abandoned that plan. [Laughter]

Dorfman: There are people who might argue that.

Kuhn: Well, it's a long, long road. You have to have a certain hard skin about you, which I lack, and I hadn't had any Hebrew training, any adequate Hebrew training as a child, and that you have to have, even though I knew rabbis who made it in spite of that. But it's not the easiest way to do it.

Rabbi Irving F. Reichert, 1930-1947

Dorfman: You said at one point that the basic focus of your character came from Rabbi Reichert.

Kuhn: Well, I would say that the basic focus of my character came from my mother, from my parents, but as far as ethics in any formal sense--when I was in the religious school, you went to

Kuhn: pre-confirmation class in the tenth grade. You came after school during the week and then you came again on Sunday morning. I was excused from that after school because my mother was a widow and I had to have a job after school. This was during the depression.

Then the next year, which was junior year, you had to go during the week to meet with the rabbi, and on Sunday morning to meet with the teacher. The rabbi said that in addition you were to come to services on Friday night and Saturday morning "x" number of times a year (I don't remember what it was), and then he told the boys to expect to usher. By that time, I'd lost my job at the wholesale jeweler's. I was a junior at Lowell. So I took the ushering seriously. Pretty soon I was ushering every Saturday morning and I did it for five years. That's right--from '32 to '37, because '37 is when I went to work for the bank.

During that time I heard him preach on a great many subjects completely unconnected with Zionism--the meaning of good and evil, and aspects of Judaism. I couldn't tell you what they are now. You have to realize that things were very much formalized then.

For example, the confirmation ceremony was written by him, all the English parts. You memorized your speech as you memorized the Hebrew part. I had one in English and one in Hebrew, but this was the basic--it was Irving Reichert Judaism. [That] is what I remember, and there are many like me. Therefore, I say--how do people rate the rabbis at Temple Emanu-El? You have to ask a child or a grown-up, "Who would you want to marry you?" And they'll say, "Rabbi So-and-So." And you ask, "Why?" And the guy might say, "I don't know. I just feel close to him." It's about as scientific as Louis Newman patting me on the head and telling me to go home. I don't know.

One time Rabbi Irving Hausman told the story of his grandfather sitting in the succah outside his home in some little shtetl in Eastern Europe. His grandfather lived in the succah for a whole week. This was such a poignant story; it brought you closer to the rabbi, that that had been a very big part of his life. If a child has even one rabbi he can relate to, that he would like to be married by, I think that's marvelous. It doesn't always have to be the same one. Those are value judgments that are impossible to explain.

Dorfman: You indicated that Rabbi Reichert was, at least at one time or perhaps several times, a controversial rabbi and that you found much to differ on with him.

Kuhn: Yes. Well, the first thing he was controversial about was his anti-Zionist position, because he put his views right up front. In 1943, on the eve of Yom Kippur (I was overseas at the time, but the echo soon reached me), he made the statement that "it's time for everybody to choose" and "you're either with me or you're against me." That's a little like a call to arms. People don't like being challenged like that. Besides, where were they going to go? They weren't going to join Sherith Israel. A few dropped out. Reggie Goldstine quit. She'd been a faculty member and came back again after he left.

He had packed the board with members of the American Council for Judaism. This was one of their strongholds here. Over half of the national membership was from the San Francisco Bay Area. When people said they didn't believe that anybody could have that much of an effect educationally, I said, "Look at Irving Reichert. If he talks to you about this thing month after month, year after year, and you want his approval, you're going to change." So much so that--. He finally abandoned his position after he visited Israel in 1956, and he had long left the congregation nine years before. He renounced the American Council for Judaism, but no one paid the slightest bit of attention because he'd lost his power base.

That's exactly as predicted when they discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls--what will this mean to Christianity? Nothing. And it hasn't meant a thing. The fact that Jesus was a member of this small Essene group down by the Dead Sea--that hasn't changed anybody. So this switch by Irving Reichert didn't change. The damage had been done. When I say damage, I'm talking about the damage to community solidarity, the loss of support for Israel. When you consider that certain people were giving us huge sums of money prior to Israel becoming a state and all of a sudden they stop giving at all, that's one way in which he was controversial.

The second way was his own character, his own personality. During this battle he himself must have been tremendously discouraged, in spite of what he felt was the correct position, that all his colleagues in the United States, the men he'd been ordained with, were on the other side--or most of them. They took it out on him in certain ways. His son told me that he couldn't get even a volunteer assignment during World War II. He was invited to visit a series of Army training camps and all of a sudden he'd find that after he'd accepted, the offer was then revoked. His ex-colleagues had gotten to the Army and the Jewish Welfare Board and said, "We're going to isolate him." So he paid for his position.

Kuhn: There were certain changes in his personality. He told me, for example--when he asked me to be religious school principal, he told me that he hated kids, and, of course, you're not going to make many adherents among kids. Did I tell the story about the kids' response to his suggestion that they stand up in his presence?

Dorfman: No, you didn't.

Kuhn: Well, he asked me to talk to the student council. It was customary when a rabbi came into a room, all the children stood. I knew this only through my own experience. If you were taking military science at Berkeley and a major came into the room, you stood. I presented this to the student council, suggesting that all the class in the religious school do this, and they wouldn't do it. They said, "This rabbi is not a holy man. We won't do it." They would not do it. There was no way I could make them do it. So I told him that, and I have no idea whether at the time he thought I was ineffective or that I had sabotaged it.

He would stop coming out after services on Friday night into the foyer and greeting people. When Harold Zellerbach asked him why, he would say, "Well, it's bad for my throat." This is one of the things that Harold Zellerbach documented as evidence that he really had lost the desire to serve, because when he was finally discharged it was by unanimous vote of a board of directors whom he had hand-picked. They were all members of the American Council for Judaism. So his being forced to leave had nothing to do with Zionism at all or anti-Zionism. It had to do with the fact that as a rabbi he'd had it.

A lot of people didn't know in what way he'd changed. If you hadn't been there since he came, and then your child began going to religious school in the mid-'40s or something, you wouldn't have known him before. You wouldn't know if he'd changed or if he'd always been that way.

The point was that he was so changeable anyway. If he wanted to charm you--oh, my God, there was nobody who would be more charming. There would be no one who would be more effective in an extemporaneous argument than he was. His greatest success was during the war when he did some labor mediation. If he had been an attorney, as is his son, maybe that would have been the greatest kind of career he might have had. The whole tradition had been that his was the fifth generation in an unbroken line of rabbis.

So it was his changeability in many ways. I felt that because he would ask me as religious school principal for my views about something--about education or about something dealing with the youth

Kuhn: group--to work up something. I'd come back three weeks later and he would talk to me as if I was nuts. Where did I get the idea that he was interested in this thing? I'd seen Gaslight, and so I figured that no one was going to do this with me. (As a matter of fact, I saw Gaslight with Rabbi and Mrs. Newman.) So no one was going to get me thinking I was crazy.

But a great waste of real, real human talent. He wasn't unsympathetic to every cause. He was very sympathetic because of German Jewry, particularly [in] assisting rabbis, refugee rabbis, coming and settling here. There are still some around that we helped to bring over. But, basically, an unfathomable man, completely. When I say unfathomable--if anybody would say, "How do you get Irving Reichert to do this?" I said, "There's no way you can be sure. You don't know whether to ask him before breakfast, or after breakfast, or before dinner, or when his glands are going to do this or that--just no way."

Yet there are people who remember him with great affection. One of my real battles with Temple Emanu-El was over this. I used to wander around creating in my own mind arguments that I would have with him to really show him the light, that he could be loved if he would only act like a human being, let people reach him. Well, I never used any of the arguments.

In 1950, 1955, and 1960 we had reunions of the various confirmation classes, all part of a five-year scheme to raise money for the congregation for a new elevator or whatever it might be. So in 1960 I got the idea that Irving Reichert should sit on the pulpit during this confirmation reunion service. Inasmuch as we were going to get a message from New York from Rabbi Newman, let Rabbi Reichert enjoy the fact of the presence of members of his eighteen classes. So I wrote to him and he responded asking, "Shall I bring my robe?" which means, "Am I going to be on the pulpit?" At that point, Temple Emanu-El decided that was a bad idea, that I should disinvite him, at which point I should have said to the Temple, "Go to hell." But I was chicken--

Dorfman: It was a very difficult position.

Kuhn: I should have just walked away from the situation. I'm no better or worse than anyone else who is afraid to do the right thing. Maybe worse. So I wrote him saying, "No, you won't need your robe because you won't be sitting on the pulpit." So he called me and he said, "I'm sure you'll understand that under those circumstances I can't come." I said, "I not only understand it, I'm humiliated. I'm crestfallen."

Kuhn: Well, within a half an hour I got a call from his son, who came over to see me. We were good friends. The way this was arranged was that each class would have a representative at the ceremony, and I had sixty-one classes represented. So this was over two-thirds of all the classes that had ever been confirmed, and Irving, Jr. was representing his class.

So he said, "I'm not going to be in this thing. The Temple insulted my father." I said, "Well, I can sympathize with you, but on the other hand your name is in the program, you were at the rehearsals. Don't be an ass because we're all asses." He said, "Okay, I'll do it for you. But we won't stay for the reception." I said, "Okay." And he did, a lovely affair.

Two years later when Irving Reichert's grandson Joshua was a bar mitzvah, it was okay for Rabbi Reichert to be on the pulpit at that time. Irving Reichert gave the sermon, he blessed his grandson, but it wasn't okay in 1960. That ended any substantial formal efforts on my behalf for the congregation, except dealing with children.

I had several other things of a similar nature, which I'll be happy to go into if you want, but this one was the--I kept thinking, "How can you do this to a man who only wants to see his former students and they want to see him? He's married some of them and buried their parents. What are you running?" That ended this for me. I'll deal with the kids, teach them Sunday school, take them up to the Mother Lode, but I'm not going to work with your adults any more.

Dorfman: That must have been just a terrible experience.

Kuhn: It put me in a terrible place because it was then so close to the-- in fact, if I had pulled out, the whole thing would have fallen apart. I should have done it anyway, maybe. I don't know. So I don't know.

Dorfman: Was this the incident to which you referred when you began to speak of the youth group and Irving Reichert?

Kuhn: No. Irving Reichert was involved in terminating a group called the Pathfinders, which had been started in 1921 by Rabbi Martin Meyer and continued on ever since. When Rabbi Newman came, his wife started a parallel organization for young women called the Reviewers. In the depression, in the '30s, there were many families who would drop temple membership the moment that a child was confirmed. They either couldn't afford it, or they ranked it low on their scale of priorities after their child was confirmed. They didn't see the service as meeting their needs.

Kuhn: So Irving Reichert, either on his own, or at the inspiration or instigation of others, tried to form a young people's group composed of the children of congregants, but where these children had not attended religious school. There were some very influential families that didn't send any or all of their children to Sunday school. So he formed this group and scheduled it to meet the same night as the Pathfinders.

[end tape 5, side A; begin tape 5, side B]

Kuhn: It was about 1939. I was then a little too old for the youth group. I was sort of senior adviser to them, and I remember our last meeting was held the same night that his group met. It was obvious that the two couldn't exist side by side, and they both died. The minutes of the Pathfinders, of the whole thing from 1921 to 1939, have been photocopied. They're sitting there in Magnes. The originals are in the archives room at Temple Emanu-El, so you can read this last chapter.

Dorfman: Yes, I'd like to.

Kuhn: And you can also look over the years and see what kind of programs they had. They were very high-class programs, intellectually. A lot of the students, of course, were college students who would attend the meetings on Sunday nights and then go back to Berkeley, particularly before the age of confirmation was dropped from junior to sophomore. Sometimes they'd bring over a professor from Berkeley. It was a great organization and I got to be president of it while I was a sophomore in college. I was living at home rather than Berkeley and I almost flunked out, just spending so much time, as you can. But I learned a lot about organizational life, particularly about trying to do too much yourself.

Dorfman: What else can you add relating to Rabbi Reichert's discharge?

Kuhn: When he left, at the end of 1947, it was clear we would not have a successor probably until the following fall. The Temple board and selection committee started what is sometimes referred to as a rabbinical derby. Various contestants would come out on the weekend and preach at Temple on Friday night and Saturday morning, and then on Saturday afternoon they would be subjected to inquisition by members of the selection committee.

But, apart from that somewhat undignified procedure, there were positive aspects. Everything we had to do during that period of time we had to do on our own, without rabbinical help, other than these people who came in to speak. And so there was a very viable volunteer structure that was operating, showing really in depth how much people care about the Temple. Now, once we got the rabbi, things eventually reverted to normal.

Kuhn: And I found the same thing happened at Beth El, that in the years between their being a branch at Temple Emanu-El Religious School and their having their own congregation, with volunteers who really love the work, there was a great spirit. But, once you have a professional staff doing it for you, it's not the same spirit. It's the same thing as in Israel. The present generation are not the pioneers; their fathers and grandfathers were.

A Love-Hate Relationship with Temple Emanu-El

In Loco Parentis

Dorfman: Can you tell me about what you called your love-hate relationship with Temple Emanu-El?

Kuhn: Right. How can one have a love-hate relationship with an institution? Well, there's no explanation. It's either there or not. My mother died in 1939. I had two older brothers, one married. But I felt closer to people in the Temple. So when I went into the armed forces and I got an identification bracelet, it said on it, "In the event of accidents, notify Congregation Emanu-El, San Francisco." That was my in loco parentis. So if Temple Emanu-El did something bad, that was like a parent doing something bad. I still have that bracelet and have talked to my classes about it to try to show them how at least one young person had felt during his youth. It's hard to really know if they catch the relationship, because I'm sure I was one of the few. But my life was so involved with the Temple.

Let me, while it's still fresh in my mind, tell this story about the men's club. When I was president of the youth group I thought that I should, therefore, also be a member of the men's club, so as to act as a liaison, so that the members of these organizations so far apart in age might be drawn together, maybe in some kind of programs for young men seeking career information, and I became vice-president of the men's club.

In that same year (this would be about 1950 or '51), I was also program chairman. So I wanted to arrange a program on the UC loyalty oath. I called Regent John Francis Neylan and asked if he would debate one of the professors who hadn't signed, and he said no, he was too old for that, but he would speak at a meeting before or after the professor's appearance. We asked him to speak the first night. He did a very creditable job and was very well received.

Kuhn:

The next meeting, two weeks later, the speaker was Professor Charles Muscatine in the English department. He was sort of a leader of the nineteen professors. And he did a fine job. He represented my position, so I leaned over and spoke to Rabbi Fine and said, "If you feel like I do, why don't you get up and announce that you're going to give some money from your discretionary fund toward the professors' legal defense?" which he did.

The next day some of these men went to see Rabbi Fine to protest that the official Temple fund, even though it's discretionary, would be used for this purpose, because it was a purpose that they didn't agree with. They were for the regents and the state.

Now, a couple of months after that the nominating committee of the men's club came to meet and I was the obvious choice to be selected as president. But I wasn't selected president. The argument was that "if we nominate Kuhn, it's the same as making the rabbi president of the men's club, they're so close together." Now, Alvin Fine could not have cared less about the men's club, as is evidenced by the fact that he attended the men's club several years later and got himself so exercised telling them that they stood for nothing that he subsequently, that same night, had a heart attack, which led to his eventual resignation from the Temple. So they did not nominate me.

But they nominated a man, Eugene B. Block, who had been a member of the men's club for many years but had never been active. He had no idea why he was being nominated. When subsequently he found out that he was being nominated in my stead, he asked me to meet with him. I explained it and he said, "Well, next year, instead of accepting a second one-year term, I'll campaign for you. You'll be president next year." I said, "Well, we'll see." I didn't quit the men's club as I should have done. Again, either no guts or no brains or maybe a super dedication, because I thought, "If they feel this way about Alvin Fine, who is a close personal friend of mine--I met my wife in his home; we had taught a number of confirmation classes together--maybe I'll stick around just to help him out."

The next year the nominating committee met again and they decided to stay with Eugene Block for the second time, and Eugene Block decided to stay with Eugene Block, at which point I lost all my respect for him, although I'm sure he doesn't realize it. On the surface we're good friends. But I felt I deserved to be president.

I still stayed as a member of the men's club for several years and then I quit. Then several years later they sent someone to see me to say that if I thought I had reformed and was willing to

Kuhn: start all over again as treasurer and work myself way up through the secretaryship, I could have another crack at the presidency. But I thought, "That's a little too much chutzpah for me."

At one point I was nominated or considered for nomination as a board member of the Temple, and the argument there against me was: "Marshall Kuhn, although he lives in San Francisco and belongs to our Temple, is an employee of Temple Beth El in San Mateo. He's a religious school principal and if he's on our board, he'll give them all our secrets." You may not believe that, but that's true. That's what they had on me. So I've been trying ever since to figure out what these secrets are. The fact that they have a deficit--is that a secret? I don't know. I don't know.

So, anyway, I think you can begin to see some of the reasons why I figured, "To hell with the adults at Temple Emanu-El. I'll stick with the kids." Thus ends our lesson for the night. [Laughter]

Cantor Reuben Rinder, 1913-1959

[Interview 4: August 11, 1977]

Kuhn: Do I have on tape the story with Cantor Rinder about the General Marshall thing?

Dorfman: No, you don't. This would be a good place for you to speak about Cantor Reuben Rinder.

Kuhn: I knew him all my life because he was there the whole time. He was always there. Of course, much of what is known about him is recorded by his wife in her oral interview, for which I feel a little responsibility, because I convinced her that The Bancroft Library was not going to eat her up. [Chuckles]

She was very apprehensive about revealing confidences because she's a private person, but she knew everybody and everything, not only about Temple but the Jewish scene and the musical scene. They were completely devoted to each other and he was completely devoted to Temple Emanu-El. They always lived at 3877 Jackson. My wife and I have had so many superb meals in that home, from which she moved only after she became a widow.

Reuben Rinder would be, if there is such a person, the essence of a pious man in the reform sense. I don't mean that at cockcrow he would get up in the morning and say his prayers. I don't know that. But everywhere he was supposed to be, with respect to the religious functioning of that synagogue, he was there. When they had rabbis, when they didn't, when the rabbis were in the armed forces--whatever it might be.

Kuhn: Of course, he'd trained me for my bar mitzvah. It wasn't any great training, because the bar mitzvah service at that time at Emanu-El was a very pro forma thing, but that wasn't his fault. That's just the way things were. He trained us to sing in our confirmation ceremony. His theory of getting you to sing was to have you sing more. If you didn't perform well enough, it never was, "Well, we'll knock it off today and start again next week." It was, "Let's sing it again one more time," and then one more time after that.

So much so that the way you could tell the devotion people felt toward him was in the number of children who wanted him to marry them when they grew older, because they felt he represented all that was best in Temple and Jewish life.

He was particularly responsible, of course, for the discovery of Yehudi Menuhin and Isaac Stern and other musical luminaries, because he had this great following of congregants and other friends who trusted his musical judgment, evaluating potentials of young people.

Also, he brought to the Temple musical performances, the symphony, the municipal chorus, great stars. He developed the choir, which had a number of people who became opera singers--Dorothy Warenauskjold for one; Stanley Noonan, who has, according to Reuben Rinder, an operatic quality voice, but who had no ambitions to live anywhere else but Palo Alto.

This, as I mentioned before, was partially perhaps compensation for the fact that at a prime age of life, Reuben Rinder had lost his own voice for effective singing. He started singing again, perhaps five or ten years before his fiftieth anniversary with the Temple. But there were years and years, perhaps the majority of the years he was there, where children did not hear a chazan singing chants. They had a magnificently trained choir, a great organist, and great arrangements of the liturgy. But they didn't hear the chazan sing, something which I think was a great lack in the Temple.

Now, at various times there would be a group saying, "Well, let's do something about it. Let's get a cantor who can sing. Let's kick Reuben Rinder upstairs and make him musical director." But Reuben Rinder had in his very quiet way built up his fences, so to speak, and any such ploy never got--well, I'm using baseball terminology, so I'll say it never got beyond first base. It at least makes me consistent, although completely irrelevant.

Kuhn: But he was a real friend and one of his charms was his acknowledged [pauses]--I'm trying to get the right phrase--forgetfulness. It seems that for a year or two after we moved Sunday school from Sutter Street out to the new Temple, he would continue to make appointments at the old building, not realizing it.

Then there was the time I was principal of the religious school in the year '47-'48, a very eventful year in the Temple's life and in the life of Israel, when General George C. Marshall resigned as ambassador plenipotentiary to China. I was up there one late afternoon. I walked into the Temple office, and there is Reuben Rinder scanning the headlines of the afternoon paper, which read simply, "Marshall Resigns," whereupon he turned to me and said in complete seriousness, "What's the matter? Aren't they treating you right here? What do you want? More money? What is this?" So I said, "Robbie, it has nothing to do with this, nothing to do with it at all. This isn't me." "Oh, that other one!" Well, it was hilarious. I've told that story so many times.

In stature he was a very small man, as chazanim frequently are, and very gentle. He had set patterns. He would finish the service on Saturday and either his wife would give him a ride up the hill to Jackson Street, or he'd start to walk and somebody invariably would give him a ride, and he'd be taken inside for the kiddush. Mrs. Rinder was a superb cook and baked her own challah. Someone, of course, would always give him a bottle of shabbes or holiday wine.

Cantor Reuben Rinder and Rabbi Louis Newman

Kuhn: Regardless of the age difference between us (I was in college at the same time as their son Bobby), that didn't make any difference. We both were bound by Emanu-El and by a joint affection for Louis Newman, who had been rabbi here perhaps at the apex of Temple Emanu-El's influence in this city during this century. And who, when he left for New York in 1930, left behind Reuben Rinder as his local agent, as it were, because wherever each one visited--Louis Newman coming here, or Reuben Rinder going to New York, because Mrs. Rinder had a brother there--they always spent more time in each other's company than otherwise would have been the case. They kept each other informed by writing. There was a unique relationship between Rabbi Newman and Cantor Rinder.

Kuhn: Louis Newman eventually gave me all of his papers dealing with his years in California. I then had copies of all these papers sent to the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum in Berkeley and the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati.

The cantor literally had thousands of friends because he never made an enemy. He had a very delightful sense of humor. He told the story about one confirmation class he was teaching and he wrote on the blackboard the word minyan and he asked, "What does this mean?" One smart aleck kid raised his hand and said, "It's a French opera and you spelled it wrong." [Laughter]

Well, these went into his bag of jokes over the years. Of course, everything wasn't always so smooth, because when he retired and Cantor Portnoy was brought in to replace him, you had two singers. The great luck was that Reuben Rinder had been a tenor and Joe Portnoy is a baritone. It wasn't luck for Portnoy, because all of the arrangements were for tenors. But there was little friction between them because Cantor Portnoy wanted to be his own man and not have to fight the shadow of his predecessor, who had retired, but who, you might say, had no place else to go. This was not an unusual situation. So there were some difficulties there, but not being a musical person I never had to worry about those.

I think I might have mentioned that one of Cantor Rinder's Hebrew faculty was Yehudi Menuhin's father, Moshe, who was my brother's teacher and who took all the coins out of his pocket one day and held them in front of my brother Mort and said, "I'll give you all this money, all this money, if you'll tell me, if you'll recite for me, the first verse of "Adon Olom," and my brother Mort asked, "What's the first word?" [Laughter]

It was a gay time down there on Sutter Street. On Succoth they'd give everybody apples. My brother Mort threw one through the window one time, but the window wasn't open, unfortunately. [Chuckles] Some of the events would be held on the festivals down in the Scottish Rite Auditorium and, of course, Reuben Rinder would be rehearsing the music with all the religious school grades to sing at all these festivals and assemblies. He loved to hear the children sing. A great memory, to have a man like that as your friend for so long.

Dorfman: What was unique about Cantor Rinder?

Kuhn: I think his gentleness. His gentleness. He was never harsh with anybody, or if he had to be harsh at least it was as little as possible. He was just a sweet, gentle man. He had his little

Kuhn: study up above the Temple, all his musical arrangements. He was always working on something. Saturday nights he and his wife would be going with friends to the symphony, the opera.

It's just a pattern--as I sit here, I'm seeing him in my mind's eye, walking up Arguello Boulevard, about to go up the hill. You would think all he had to do was spread out his arms and the wind would blow him up.

He was really a frail man and completely impractical in many ways. He never wanted to drive a car, got along perfectly well without it because he could get anyone to take him anywhere he wanted to go. He was known by everybody. Literally every Jew in the community knew who Cantor Reuben R. Rinder was after fifty years with the leading synagogue, and he played such a commanding role in musical circles and, as we know, music is such an essential part of Judaism. He was just known by everybody. A great, great man.

Dorfman: Would you say that he had been an outstanding cantor?

Kuhn: I'm not qualified musically to tell that. I'm sure he must have been. He must have had great promise to have been called by Emanu-El in the first place, because they had a good musical tradition even before he came. But it became even better, because when he had to devote himself to being musical director, he was responsible for both developing the concept and securing the funding for having special shabbat services composed by Frederick Jacobi, and Bloch, by Darius Milhaud--I think five in all. The names of all five composers can be easily found in the Reuben Rinder Collection at Magnes. No other musical personality has ever come close to this level of religious musical output. This was his high watermark.

But I couldn't really qualify myself to tell you what kind of a cantor he was. I just don't know. As I say, I rarely heard him sing except in the last few years because he had lost his voice previously, from some illness.

Cantor Joseph L. Portnoy, 1959

Dorfman: Do you think he had more of an impact on the lives of his congregants than succeeding cantors?

Kuhn: The only succeeding cantor would be Dr. Portnoy, who has only been there, I think, about fifteen years. By the way, he's the senior man at Temple Emanu-El. I think it's too soon to tell, and they have different styles of voices anyway.

Rabbi Joseph Asher, 1968

Dorfman: What could you tell me about Rabbi Joseph Asher?

Kuhn: Rabbi Asher came to Emanu-El to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Rabbi Irving Hausman due to illness. At that time, which was perhaps eight or nine years ago, I was still principal at Beth El. I didn't come back to the Emanu-El faculty until the fall of '71. I had more or less separated myself from any other activity of an adult nature, and it wasn't until I really got involved on the faculty again that Rabbi Asher and I got to be close. There just wasn't space enough, time enough.

When I say close, it never was as close a relationship as I had with Rabbi Fine, for example, where our families were involved, where our children were about the same age, where we visited each other's homes. I never had that type of relationship with Rabbi Asher. We did have a good personal relationship, and we managed maybe every three months to have a breakfast or lunch or late afternoon meeting just to shmoos and exchange ideas. In addition to which, he's active to some extent in the Jewish Welfare Federation and other Jewish community organizations in which I was involved.

So I've seen him both as a congregant and as a colleague, a colleague in the sense that on the Sunday morning religious school program he and I have been co-teachers of the confirmation class for six years. Basically, he would teach the whole class or half the class the first hour, with his assistant rabbi teaching the other half of the class the first hour. Then, the second hour, the whole class would be divided into maybe four or five parts, and the children would have their choice of teachers, myself and others. But with that choice rotating during the year, they all got a choice of maybe three or four of us.

I disagreed with that format because I was very jealous of my time. I was used to, for example, being in a situation when I first started teaching confirmation classes at Emanu-El in 1946 of having two hours for myself with one class the whole year. The rabbis taught the children during the week after school.

But, of course, the children and their parents liked the idea of eliminating the midweek programs, which meant that the children got less of a lay teacher or no lay teacher at all. So if I wanted to teach, which I did, I had to go along with this system,

Kuhn: although I did not and do not agree with it. I feel I have as much to teach in my way as the rabbi, and I think the major lack of this system is that we don't require more, that we've given up that midweek system.

One way to do it, of course, is to have a longer session for confirmands on Sunday. Well, we've spoiled the children and their parents by reducing our standards.

But, be that as it may, I came to form certain conclusions about him--that he's a very articulate man, a learned man, but sometimes a harassed man, harassed to the point where it would affect, I think, his effectiveness as a teacher of children. Sometimes I would even hold him by the shoulders and tell him that, that if he was really bothered by something beyond the Sunday school class then he shouldn't be teaching that day.

There are many harassments for which his feeling that way would be perfectly justified. Being rabbi of Temple Emanu-El is not an easy thing. It isn't just what appears in the bulletin. People calling all the time want a part of him, want him to change his vote on something, or his views, or to preach a sermon. Whatever it may be, it's amazing. We might say, "Well, we would never do a thing like that," but there are congregants who feel the rabbi should jump to their tune.

This has always been true, and Temple Emanu-El, as I have indicated before, is no better or no worse just because it happens to be architecturally superb. It's no better or no worse ethically or morally than any other institution of human beings.

Rabbi Alvin I. Fine, 1948-1964

Kuhn: So he has his problems. I recall when Rabbi Fine was there, his speaking to the men's club one night on the subject, generally, of "a day in a rabbi's life," pointing out all the varieties of tsuris you can have during just one day. You have funerals, and you have to think of a position about war, nuclear energy--whatever it might be, everything is stacking up on you. One of the members, Joe Tonkin, got up and said, "You know, Rabbi, for your headaches I don't take aspirin." [Chuckles] So each rabbi has to take his own aspirin. But that's true even if you're not a rabbi.

Apart from that, in this school, I think, the confirmation class has been run quite well, particularly because Rabbi Asher's years here have coincided with the summer experience in Israel. We

Kuhn: often say Emanu-El or the western Jewish communities are twenty years behind the East. In this case, we were co-equal with the East as far as starting the program, and the percentage of children who participate in the seven-week summer experience is higher here than anywhere else in America. Of the approximately seventy children in this year's confirmation class, forty-seven went to Israel and just returned Tuesday night.

A large part of this is due to Rabbi Asher's enthusiasm, to the original impetus given by Rabbi Lurie's drive to initiate the program, and by all assistant rabbis since Rabbi Lurie left, and by the Federation's support. It's been a great success. It's been a great way for keeping children involved in the religious school, knowing that when they were confirmed they had this to look forward to, at no cost to themselves or their family if they couldn't afford it. So it is a very democratically conceived idea. Now, that's as far as the religious school is concerned.

Then I see Rabbi Asher, of course, as the rabbi in the congregation, as my pastor, as the rabbi I listen to on the high holidays or whenever else I happen to choose to go to services, or to funerals, or to weddings, and here I don't compare him to other men because the circumstances are different. I'm older. His performances I don't measure against Louis Newman's, because I'm different now as a mature adult than I was as a child. I don't even compare him to other rabbis in the community now. In fact, I try not to compare him at all. What I do is try to absorb whatever message he has and to like him and see what is really his message at this time.

It's a difficult thing for a rabbi, who week after week (and this is true of all congregations, not just Emanu-El and not just the reform) spends so much time and effort coming up with a theme for that Saturday's sermon, knowing that percentage-wise a mere handful of his congregants are there to hear him. I'm sure this must bother Rabbi Asher as it does every other rabbi.

Yes, we have a good relationship. I love his sense of humor, and as a pastor he's very eager to call on families who need his help, very easy to get to, not ever the possibility of getting the feeling that he's too busy to answer your call. He's there at the crack of dawn in the morning. If you want to have breakfast with him, all you have to do is be up--.

[end tape 5, side B; begin tape 6, side A]

Kuhn: Now, I could talk more about Rabbi Asher. On any particular issue, for example, I might agree or disagree with him. Jewishly, he obviously would be better informed than I. But I have not found

Kuhn: too many instances where he and I would disagree all that much. There are people, of course, who don't agree with his views as expressed in his high holiday sermons, the so-called two-days-a-year Jews who think he should come out with a new line every year as if it were a model of cars instead of Judaism, the ancient faith. But people are paying substantial dues to belong to the congregation and I guess they feel that that entitles them to any kind of criticism they want to make.

He's a good rabbi, an honorable man, and I hope he's with us a long, long time. We certainly have had enough change. I think it's a great source of gratification to him that in the year in which he received his honorary doctorate from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, his own son was ordained by the same institution, as the seventh in an unbroken line of rabbis. A great thing.

Dorfman: It certainly is. Do you think there is one particular area from which the harassments stem?

Kuhn: Harassments? I think, first of all, his calendar is very, very crowded. He might have on Sunday, normally, a confirmation class. He might have a Christian group having a tour of the Temple. He might be meeting a couple about to be married, and he might have a wedding or two, a funeral, then some social engagements. He's a very social man. He and his wife Faye are very desirable dinner partners at many functions. They like to be there, they like to be invited, but it's a very, very busy life. I think it just sort of stacks up on him, plus the fact he is a nonstop smoker.

I don't know. I just have the feeling that when he became super critical of certain behavior of fifteen-year-old confirmands, who are really basically still children, that was not really his intent. His intent was to be critical, but if he wasn't doing it in a constructive light, I felt I had an obligation to call to his attention the impropriety of the way he was speaking to them.

I would want someone to call it to my attention if I were doing the same. I looked upon it as equal colleagues, different trainings, different backgrounds, different experiences, but nonetheless a team. I think you have to have that, particularly, for a confirmation class.

VII MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Temple Affiliation of Paramount Importance in Jewish Life

Dorfman: Have there been difficulties in meeting the needs of the unaffiliated?

Kuhn: The unaffiliated consist of a variety of types of people. There are those who have never been affiliated. There are people who have been members and resigned, people who intend to be affiliated when their children become old enough, people who don't think they can afford it any more, people who have quit over some disappointment--perhaps they were looking for a disappointment. While there may be some stereotypes included in there, none of these people are going to join unless they've been asked personally by somebody, perhaps even in a semi-social way.

In this current issue of American Heritage, it makes the statement that America is still a religious nation, perhaps largely due to the fact that we have the choice to be religious or nonreligious. I think this is true. We look upon the ones who don't belong sometimes as not having got the message yet, or backsliders, or people trying to get a free ride, maybe get free high holiday seats, whatever.

I don't really know who among my friends belong to Emanu-El or not. I may see them at a high holiday service, but I don't know whether they are guests of somebody. If I did, I'd forget who it was by next year, unless they happen to be parents of one of my children's chums, and I really know they do belong to the Temple. There are some families; I am positive I know who they are. But there are some I'm not sure and I don't really care. I couldn't recite for you the membership roster of Temple Emanu-El.

Kuhn:

It's too bad that we have this feeling that the synagogue exists to be supported as we see fit. We should have somehow had instilled in us some sense of obligation from our religious school days to this institution, which is of paramount importance in Jewish life. It has to be supported. That's our obligation. We don't have to go if we don't want to, or if we want to go we don't have to listen, or if we listen we don't have to agree, but it must be supported, because everybody expects the rabbi to be there in case of joy or sorrow. How can he be there only then and not the rest of the time? Nonetheless, the congregations have disagreed more than agreed when it comes to what to do.

I think it's almost like saying, "If we can get someone away from being a nudist, I don't care whether he buys his clothes at Roos-Atkins or the Emporium. He buys them at one store; maybe the next time he'll buy them from the other store." And this is the case of someone joining the synagogue. I don't really care which one he joins, how he interprets his Judaism.

Part of it is due to the extreme mobility of American life. Twenty-three percent of the people moving every year, and the lack of roots, and the fact that they say, "Why join a temple? Your father's going to be transferred again next year. You make a bunch of friends and then you're going to lose them all." I can understand that, not as well as if it had ever happened to me. It's too bad because only about thirty percent of our Jews in this area are affiliated. There's never been really a major drive successfully to change it.

Emanu-El used to put on the seats at high holidays releases from the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. One of them was an extremely effective piece called "Tumbleweed" that [said that] without roots our lives are like a tumbleweed. They just roll across the prairie with no evidence of permanence or stability at all, a very apt parallel.

Now, if you were to come out here from the East, a family, say, whose children have grown, and you're to settle in San Francisco, a fair percentage of these people would join Temple Emanu-El if they were from a reform background, because it is, I think you know, the leading reform synagogue. I don't say in any sense that it is necessarily superior to Sherith Israel, or Beth Israel-Judea, or to the conservative, or to the orthodox, not at all.

I'm saying that if you're looking around for a place that has a reputation, you would select Emanu-El on that basis. These newcomers don't know anybody. They move into a nice apartment. They have the means, but someone has to integrate them. There

Kuhn: have been numerous cases where people have joined, paid their dues for several years, and then left because no one during that period of time made any effort personally to have them invited for dinner, or an evening, or to be picked up by someone for services--nothing.

It's a tough thing to involve people, but that's what hospitality is all about. You just can't expect the dues statements to take the place of that. I worked on the Temple membership committee one time on retention, dealing with people's communications who had written to say they had resigned, and by that time it was too late. "Now that you've resigned, we want to know what you didn't like or what we should have done that you would have liked." "Yes, but why didn't you ask us while we were there?" It's a question almost like, "Have you stopped beating your wife?"

Dorfman: What was Rabbi Asher's role when this happened?

Kuhn: Well, these people certainly--I'm again using a stereotype. These people certainly would have heard him on one of the holidays and they might have liked what he said or not. They might have liked what he said, but not the way he said it. They may or may not have come back again. They may never have had an opportunity to meet him face to face, because there was no occasion of joy or sorrow in their family.

It's not a congregation in which the rabbi, just by a simple check list, can say, "I'm going to meet five of my members this week," because the five he's going to meet this week are going to have a personal and immediate need for his services. For the rabbi just to call someone and say, "We've never met. There's really no need to meet, but I'd like to talk with you and see if you're a Giants or a 49ers fan," that just doesn't exist. They're all too busy. They really are. The rabbi is preparing a book review for the Sisterhood, or his speech for the men's club, the campus group, or someone else.

So, therefore, this thing breaks down, and the family says to him, "Look, we were in Chicago. We belonged to our synagogue for thirty years. The rabbi bar mitzvahed me, and he confirmed my wife, and buried my father, and how come it's not like that here?"

That's because life isn't the same. It's nobody's fault particularly. It's everybody's fault generally. But because it's no particular person's fault, there's no one to pin the error on. Unless you have a congregation that's tremendously committed to these nuances, to a situation that the board of directors analyzes, and every time they come across a name on the roster that none of them recognize, that sends up a flare. Someone always has to know him.

Kuhn: Now, Rabbi Asher, to his credit, does have evenings in his home for new members frequently. What comes out of them, I don't know. I don't even know if my figures are correct in figuring out the resignation rate is at a dangerous level. I don't know that because I don't know at what point in their membership longevity people are dropping out. It may not be the new ones at all. I just don't know. All I know is that the Temple periodically conceives of itself as having a severe financial problem due to the fact that the membership level has dropped.

Part of it is because the general Jewish population of San Francisco has dropped. Part of it is because a substantial proportion of what's left is superannuated, including people who can no longer afford to pay dues. This is a problem the congregation has to evaluate, as to whether or not to make some kind of a concession which is less than charity to these older members. And the rabbi does his share, and I'm sure that when people go to his home it's a very impressive evening. But this is something which has to be watered continuously.

It's not just in the congregational life; it's in every kind of Jewish and organizational life. How do you get someone who is not a self-starter himself, who is in the middle or the latter part of his life--how do you get him to feel at home and wanted and warm? How do you take the initiative all the time without knowing whether it will ever be reciprocated?

Those are tough questions and it's not like saying, "All we want is your dues, because we have to have large numbers to appear in Sacramento or Washington." This is not the same thing. We need your dues because we're trying to support the concept of organization based on the commonalities of our faith." People look at that as an imperative with far different values today than they did before.

You have all sorts of studies as to how the growth rate of American Jewish institutions rose after World War II, particularly in the suburbs. It's slowed down. It's slowed down. Certainly the inner city synagogue has had certain problems which the suburban ones don't have. They all have financial problems.

But, again, you have financial problems only if you consider your temple dues as some kind of a burden. The mere fact that the dues are tax deductible from income tax doesn't make the temple a charity. My synagogue is not a charity. It's where 1,200 other families and I decided together that we're going to support something which none of us could do by ourselves. It's

Kuhn: not a charity in any sense, except to the extent maybe that we make those services available to families who can't afford the same thing. It's something I do for myself. It's not done only for the poor or anything like that.

We've gotten away easily because we don't have this 4 percent sales tax that most European countries assess their citizens to support their religious institutions. Here you're free to do it or not to do it. I'm saying we're better off if we do it. Again, it's still a free country. I don't say that belonging to a synagogue automatically makes you a good Jew. I don't know that. But I'm saying that there are other ways people conceive of their Judaism. Some belong to the Center. Some work in philanthropy. To say that one person is better than another, or a better Jew than another, goes back to this pervasive "we're number one" psychology of sports teams. I don't believe that anybody can say, "We're number one Jewishly."

Dorfman: So that you feel competition should not exist in this context?

Kuhn: I would say competition should not exist as we know competition generally to be--"we're the biggest and we're the best." I don't know how to measure that. I would like every child to contribute, to bring charity money to religious school. The child who brings ten cents is not twice as religious as the one who brings a nickel. You have to know a lot more about the children than that. All I know is that we could do better than we're doing. That was what John F. Kennedy said in his campaign, "I think we can do more." And we know we can do more. It's acknowledged that the question is: Who's going to bake the bread?

Dorfman: To go on with your association with Temple Emanu-El over the years, what do you consider the triumphs of Temple Emanu-El?

The Triumphs and Disappointments of Temple Emanu-El

Kuhn: The triumphs of Temple Emanu-El? Well, creating a magnificent synagogue in 1864, followed by an even more magnificent one in 1925; maintaining for 127 years religious worship services in the congregational structures; serving the religious needs of its members and of the Jewish community generally; and educating children, although surprisingly that wasn't done before maybe the first twenty-five years of synagogue life because its first rabbi, Julius Eckman, started his own private school, the Hepzibah School. It's a fascinating story.

Kuhn: I think that all the foregoing defines the Temple's private role as a congregation. Its public role emerges when its rabbis take public stands or exert leadership within the American Jewish community or within the general community of San Francisco; when its members are also leaders of their community; when, for example, you find out that Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Camp Fire Girls one year chose their presidents from the membership of Temple Emanu-El; when some of our leading citizens in San Francisco in medicine, law, politics, etc. are fellow Temple members. These indicate a strength and permanence that is heartening to see.

Again, I don't think anybody was trying every year to come up with, "Let's win. We're the number one batter for this year." It's just what is acknowledged and felt. Now, I think there's this to be said for it. If Temple Emanu-El did not have the beautiful structure it has, it wouldn't be the so-called leader by that much. But people know that there is this synagogue in San Francisco which is an architectural marvel, particularly the Ark of the Covenant being considered the most significant Jewish artifact of the twentieth century, and that's the place where many choose to go.

For example, I once belonged to the Lions Club in San Francisco. This originally was called the host club, and when they got a lot more members they formed a second Lions Club, so maybe there are a dozen different clubs by now. But if you come from out of town and you want to get your membership attendance credited, you generally--you don't have to, but you generally look for the host club because that's going to be located downtown in the heart of the city, and that's where you're going to go.

This is sort of the same way. That doesn't mean anything's wrong with the other ones. And if a rabbi should be the spiritual leader of another reform, conservative, or orthodox synagogue, and he is a superman, and people flock to him to listen to his message, regardless of the type of Judaism he's preaching--if he's that good, he'll have an audience.

It's just that there are so many competing things nowadays and temple attendance itself is not a success story, so it's tough to do that. Therefore, a lot of rabbis prefer not to get involved with the pulpit. They opt for the chaplaincy, or Hillel, or federation work--anything, it seems, but the pulpit, because the pulpit is nothing but a bunch of headaches. For the ones that feel that way, I can see why they might.

Dorfman: What would you say were the disappointments in Temple Emanu-El?

Kuhn: The disappointments to me are those in which I share responsibilities, such as not being a temple attender as much as I should. There's no excuse for that. I know enough to realize that once I get there, I'll be glad I went. The soul needs refreshment, that quiet inner peace. But beyond that, in some of my disagreements about religious education, I think the saddest thing to me is the fact that the Temple really has not taken a liberal front-row approach on some of the social issues of our times--the Temple saying, "We stand for this."

Sometimes a rabbi will make a statement and have to qualify it by saying, "I don't speak for my congregants; I speak only for myself." Well, I don't think it's so bad if a rabbi says, "I speak for my congregants." He knows that by that statement nobody's implying that someone took a poll of his congregants. But he's the leader by his title, by "rabbi," by "teacher." This is the position of Judaism as he defines it now, distilled down the centuries.

Breira and Rabbi Joseph Asher

Kuhn: I think we haven't had enough of that, of religion speaking out for itself. Now, admittedly, if you do that, then you're out in front there with the position. People can shoot away at you. If you have no position, they can't shoot away at you, but, on the other hand, what do you stand for? I might say, "And if not now, when?" We haven't had enough, whether it's on war, on nuclear energy, or on Judaism.

But we may see a little change in that at Temple Emanu-El, because Rabbi Asher has become very active in leadership in the national movement called Breira, which means "alternatives." It's a group of Jews, primarily, I would say, with a large number of rabbis among their membership who feel that some of the problems affecting Israel and its relationship to America and the other portions of the diaspora have to be re-examined very critically. Some people have taken this to mean that their stance would be anti-Israel, not quite in the same way, however, as the old American Council for Judaism.

Now it appears that some of the leading figures in Breira come to this movement with records of questionable performance in the peace and free speech movements of the '60s.

Should Rabbi Asher speak on Breira on high holiday services, it could be somewhat inflammatory, not that I'm saying I hope he doesn't preach on it. A little inflammation could be good for us.

Kuhn: You read about this movement in some of the Jewish periodicals, and there's no question that Rabbi Asher is taking a leadership role nationally. Whether he anticipated that some of his congregants would not agree with him or not, I don't know, but there has been a certain amount of talk that he might have used poor judgment.

Dorfman: In affiliating with this group?

Kuhn: That's right, that's right. So there's always something. The argument against it, of course, is, "Who needs this organization? While Israel is still fighting for its life with the Arabs and contending with a new American administration, these should cause all of us to devote our attention to Israel, who needs all our support at this time and no divisiveness."

Their argument on Breira's side would be, "Well, you've been giving us that line for twenty-nine years now. Finally Mr. Begin gets in. But if we give you all this money through the United Jewish Appeal, we should have certain say in priorities of Israel, and social work, and what percentage of the national product goes into the armed forces, and so on."

I doubt that I, as an American citizen, have any right to interfere with the internal affairs of Israel. Breira's argument is, "Here we talk about a unified Jewry throughout the world and we're really not sticking our noses into each other's businesses. We're sticking our noses into our own business."

But it will have to work out as to where the arena of differences is going to be played. I think Breira is in a difficult position to begin with, because some of the non-rabbinic people have been literally beyond the pale in some of the other things on which they've built their previous reputations.

Dorfman: Such as the activities you mentioned in the '60s?

Kuhn: That's right, that's right. The way they used truth and falsehood interchangeably. The way they--a rabbi might say something and the next day he'll find his name on the letterhead of an organization to which he had no intention of ever giving public support. These are the sort of things that will--it will have to clean up its own house if it's going to be taken seriously.

For example, I read an article in one of the magazines last month in which they said that one of the things about Breira was its recommendation that each of us take more charge of our philanthropic distributions. That because the amount of money that American Jews had raised for charity in the last few years

Kuhn: has dropped, generally because of business conditions, maybe this is an indication that people are doing this. They're deciding where the money is going to go.

Well, this is a completely false reading of what's happened, because they're comparing the year '73-'74, which was a war year, the Yom Kippur war in Israel, with '75 and '76, which were drop-off years as any postwar campaign year is, and this is the explanation for it. So I'm saying that you have to watch very carefully as to what's being said and if it's a proper interpretation.

Dorfman: Yes, as you said, this should be very interesting if this comes from the pulpit.

Kuhn: Right.

Dorfman: Do you think there's a likelihood that it might?

Kuhn: Well, if he's announced the fact that he's one of their national leaders. And at some point he'll have to state his views, and the most logical time would be on the high holidays when there is a full congregation.

The Significant Contributions of Congregational Leaders

Dorfman: Of the leaders of the congregation whom you have known, are there one or more of those leaders who have made most significant contributions?

Kuhn: Do you mean to the congregation?

Dorfman: To the congregation, yes.

Kuhn: Well, Harold Zellerbach had the toughest task. For five of his six years as president of the congregation in the late '40s, he had to deal with the Irving Reichert problem. He seemed to treat it almost like a business problem, in that the membership of the Temple was dropping. He brought in his own public relations consultant, Gene K. Walker, and they made a public relations study that pointed to the fact that regardless of anything else that may have been wrong with the congregation, Irving Reichert primarily had to be the focus. Now, I can't think of any problem since then of any kind of magnitude that faced any of the recent presidents.

Kuhn: Every five years there would be a fund-raising drive generally tied into the 100th or 105th or 110th, whatever it might be, anniversary. More and more, the president of the congregation is a person of my own age. The present president, Myer Kahn, and his predecessor, Raymond Marks--

[end tape 6, side A; begin tape 6, side B]

Kuhn: Those two men were classmates of mine in religious school. We were confirmed together. I look at them and others like them, and they're all pretty much cut from the same cloth, with this exception. Very few of them, if any, now represent families of wealth. Men have not passed along the presidency of Temple Emanu-El as a gift to their children. In fact, the opposite might even be true, that the president's son is maybe less likely to be a future leader in the congregation.

You have people who have made contributions along specific technical lines of building to improve the Temple, or who have done legal work, or women who have been responsible for Sisterhood's activities or for floral decorations. But I can't see any of them who come to the top of my mind as having given anything really outstanding, other than Harold Zellerbach.

Now, before Rabbi Fine left he started this program, the Emanu-El Institute for Adult Studies, which was a twice-a-year program of adult courses. I'm sure there's been a tremendous amount of work put into it, but I can't conceive of that as being anything of a heart-wrenching nature like terminating Irving Reichert's contract must have been, and the fact that this adult studies program is still succeeding, I think, is to the credit of Rabbi Asher. It's a great program.

Dorfman: The program for adult studies?

Kuhn: Right.

Dorfman: What unique qualities did you think Harold Zellerbach possessed?

Kuhn: Toughness. Tough. For a man to organize literally a campaign to determine what was really wrong with this organization and to deal with the answers he found, organizing the way it could be resolved by having the two sides confront each other with a court reporter present in this famed Sunday meeting in November or December, 1947-- this takes a man with lots of guts, guts being the number one ingredient we ain't got enough of in this world. That's what gave him success in business. I wouldn't want to be on the opposite side of the table from him.

Kuhn: He told me at a meeting in his office Thanksgiving morning of that year when we were going over Irving Reichert's shortcomings as an educator--Harold Zellerbach said, "I don't give in to any man, particularly Irving Reichert, when it comes to relative brain capacity."

Dorfman: Last week you told of your experience with the men's club, and at that time you indicated that there had been other incidents. Would you please tell me about them? [Tape interruption] We can come back to that question at a later time.

Kuhn: All right.

Temple Emanu-El and the Future

Dorfman: Looking ahead, say for the next ten years, what do you see for Temple Emanu-El?

Kuhn: I see it about the same. If Rabbi Asher's health continues, he should continue to serve. Each two or three years we'll have a new assistant whom he will pick from the graduating class of the Hebrew Union College, and all the men he's picked so far have been topnotch in future promise. The school will go on under Dr. Portnoy's direction through the ninth grade. The rabbi and his assistant rabbi run the class in the confirmation and high school class years.

I think this Temple will go right along. It will have its periodic financial crises. It will have Breira or something else to create controversy. People will be born, become bar mitzvah, will be confirmed, go to Israel, will marry and have children and send them to our school, and die. Nothing much different is going to happen, except as Emanu-El's reflection of what happens in American and American Jewish life and world Jewish life. I just can't conceive of anything because the Temple is like a rock. It's built up there of mighty stone and, you think, this is permanence. Nothing is quite that permanent, but it's certainly more permanent than anything else we have. That's the feeling we want our kids to have of the Temple, that it's a permanent institution.

Dorfman: Are there any additional changes you might look for?

Kuhn: Oh, well, things are going to come along that will surprise you, that you're going to say, "My gosh." Well, let me give you an example. There's talk now of the reform movement being the latest

Kuhn: of the Jewish sects to come along with sponsorship of Hebrew day schools. Even Louis Newman's temple in New York announced that finally they were ready to go with their new \$2 million, five-day-a-week school.

Louis Newman told me before he died that this was happening, but he also qualified it by saying that it's an inner city type of thing. These parents don't want their kids going to school with blacks or Puerto Ricans. They want them going to a school where they'll learn some kind of a modern language, but there won't be all that emphasis on Hebrew as in a traditional day school. It will be something different.

Well, you will have to have a lot of reform day schools before a pattern emerges. If you were to have told me twenty years ago that the Federation would be supporting three day schools in the year 1977, I'd have said, "You're crazy." If you were to tell me today in 1978 that Temple Emanu-El would some day have its own day school, I'd have to say, "Well, maybe."

Perhaps the community might even help to support it if children who attend do not necessarily come from a family affiliated with Emanu-El, but have a reform background. After all, you shouldn't discriminate against the children. So you help Emanu-El educate these children. That's a possibility because there have been committees between the Federation and synagogues to redefine their relationships as to whether or not the community should be helping synagogues financially.

Then you come to the question: What is the attitude of the unaffiliated donor toward the Federation, to which he contributes, helping to pay some of the expenses of the synagogue, to which he does not contribute?

Religious Education, Its Growth and Change

Kuhn: I'm sure there will be other changes. I just don't want to stick my neck out beyond that. There are changes that I would like to make. I would like to see more than two hours a week devoted to religious education. That seems to be a figure which congregations have come up with as being the maximum that families will let us have their kids--nine to eleven on Sunday morning, apart from the weekends, when they may go to Camp Swig or something like that. Now maybe the fact that in confirmation year we get the children for seven weeks full-time to go to Israel makes the norm more than two hours per week.

Kuhn: There are some little things about Emanu-El that really irk me in a sense because I feel they are symbolic. For example, we haven't had, for a year now, a librarian, which means we have no library. We have a room called a library and people can return books to it. They can borrow books without signing out for them because there's nobody there to check them out, but you in no sense can have a library program without a librarian. Well, here the Temple is trying to save money on this.

Now, a university couldn't get away with that. The moment you said, "We don't have a library," you'd say, "Well, you're through." It should be required for a school to be accredited by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations--you have to have a library that meets certain standards. I may or may not be a voice in the wilderness. I'm certainly a dim voice. No one's paid any attention to it yet.

These are some of the things that if there's a continual crunch financially--these are the kind of decisions you make: What can we give up? What the fewest people scream about? Well, most people in the congregation have never been to the library, so they're not going to scream about that.

I'm reminded of the TV series, "Success Story," which Richfield Oil Company sponsored some twenty years ago. One week the video camera would tour an oil refinery. The next week, for example, the focus might be on the Camp Fire Girls. The following week you'd see another industrial process, and the week after you'd visit with the Boy Scouts. The program would thus alternate between profit and nonprofit organizations.

One time they showed the new campus at San Francisco State University, and I wrote them a letter and said, "It was a beautiful program, but you didn't show any shots of the library." They wrote back and said, "We're sorry, but the library isn't photogenic," which I thought was a ridiculous kind of statement for an educational institution to be concerned with.

If the library, which is the repository of books, isn't in the home of Judaism, where is it? These are the types of things that worry me, the fact that nobody is standing up at the annual meeting and screaming about them. Maybe I'll go to the next annual meeting and scream about them, and maybe I won't.

Dorfman: Can we return to the growth of temple-supported day schools? What changes do you think the growth of those day schools will bring?

Kuhn: The children who are going to Hebrew day schools come from a variety of backgrounds. I'll only discuss the two in San Francisco. There's a third one in the South Peninsula. One of those in San Francisco is the oldest, the Brandeis Day School. Many of its parents come from reform families who want a private education for their children, small classes, individual attention, and a modern foreign language, and they want it in a safe environment. But Brandeis has not been a roaring success, in spite of these seemingly faultless criteria.

On the other hand, you have the Hebrew Academy, which still has many children from a reform background but has more proportionally, I think, from a traditional background. It also has a large number, perhaps a great majority, of the children of the new Russian emigrés who they specialize in going after. They give them the Jewish background that the kids could not get in the Soviet Union. In spite of the controversy surrounding its director, Rabbi Pinchas Lipner, it's succeeding educationally in every other way, tremendously.

Now, what effects these will have on the congregation to which these parents do or do not belong, or to which they would otherwise belong, I don't know. I'm sure many parents wouldn't otherwise belong to congregations, because they themselves feel no need for Judaism. They want it educationally for their children, which has good and bad--plenty of bad--if you want only something for your child. But it's certainly something we never anticipated on this scale in this community.

You might even find several reform congregations joining together to sponsor a day school, just like they sponsor, together with the Bureau of Jewish Education, the Ben Yehuda School for the afternoon Hebrew program. Well, it might make sense to have a unified approach toward Hebrew day schools for the children of reform families. I don't know. I think there's enough money within the community that anything the community wants that badly, it can get. The point is, does it know what it wants, and how does it assess how badly it wants it?

Incidentally, when these children graduate from the day school at the elementary level and are reaching the age of junior and senior high school, then you come into an entirely different kind of finance thing. You just cannot use whatever space happens to be surplus during the week for some congregation. You're running into labs then and a lot of other expensive programs.

This is one of the reasons I'm sure that Rabbi Lipner has brought Dr. Edward Teller into the program as scientific consultant to the Hebrew Academy, because of his prestige and his obvious leadership as one of the world's great Jewish scientists, even if you don't agree with his politics.

VIII IN RETROSPECT

Chaim Weizmann at the Hotel St. Francis, 1937

Dorfman: I wanted to go back to an experience you mentioned; that is, hearing Chaim Weizmann speak in 1937. What can you remember about that?

Kuhn: Well, as I remember it, that was about the time I was working for the Anglo-California National Bank, and Weizmann's appearance here was announced, and, for whatever reason, I went to hear him. It was at the Hotel St. Francis, a crowded room. He was tremendously impressive in person, in appearance, speaking, and he made this statement. (It's rare that you remember what someone said who spoke to you forty years ago.) He said, "This is what we hope to do. This is what the Zionists hope to do: develop Palestine. And if you believe that you want to help us, we welcome your assistance, but if you can't go along with us, please do not oppose us. Step to one side and let us do what we have to do."

Of course, in San Francisco, particularly, we didn't take that message to heart because many did try to oppose him. I have tried, unsuccessfully so far, to locate the item in the forerunner of the Jewish Bulletin which would have described that meeting to see how my memory compares with what he actually said. But that's what I remember that he said. I'm very glad I went because I later read his book, Trial and Error, and when he described his periodic visits across the United States to raise money for the Zionist movement, he said, "The further west you went, the less Judaism there was, and when you got to San Francisco it was almost all gone."

Dorfman: And the organization that was most effective in opposing Chaim Weizmann?

Kuhn: That was the American Council for Judaism. It wasn't at that time. It was, I'd say, in the beginning of the early '40s, certainly by Yom Kippur, 1943, which was the date of Irving Reichert's famous sermon to Emanu-El that you had to choose between his position and the Zionist position.

Dorfman: Not at that time, not at that particular meeting?

Kuhn: No, no.

Dorfman: Was there another organization that actively opposed Weizmann at that time?

Kuhn: I'm sure there was more than one, but they were mostly small things, ineffective things. There wasn't anything to oppose or not oppose. We didn't have much effect on Great Britain. They were the ones who controlled immigration to Palestine, who issued the White Paper. We could protest, but to whom? We had Franklin Roosevelt, whose support of the Jewish cause, as we find now, was completely equivocal, all talk and no performance. In spite of the fact that he surrounded himself with many Jewish advisers, high-ranking in his administrations, he was no great friend of the Jews.

If you read Earl Morse's While Six Million Died, you'll see how impotent our American efforts were to save our people during the early stages of the Hitler period. You couldn't count on the national administration. So, therefore, whom else could you count on? There was no one else.

Issues Within the Jewish Community, 1937-1978

Dorfman: Can you tell me what the issues were within the Jewish community up until 1937?

Kuhn: Well, certainly Palestine was an issue. How effectively the community could deal with it, however, was dependent upon whether you felt that the Jews' support of Franklin Roosevelt was about all we could do.

Now, you have to realize that I was very young in 1937, and my efforts mainly were trying to raise money for my fellow Jews overseas, because there was still poverty in Poland, in Russia, in all these countries which we think of now as backward places behind the Iron Curtain. Well, there was no Iron Curtain, but there was still the poverty there, and various Jewish groups would go over there and do the best they could.

We didn't have any great overall program because we never envisioned extermination as being the ultimate end of most of these people. And we didn't have any means of bringing them into America by any instant program without that kind of a threat, even with that kind of a threat. So, there were efforts made periodically to bring them in, mostly from Germany. Not from other countries.

Kuhn: Soviet Russia, of course, was a big question mark then, not just for its foreign policy but for its domestic policies. There were friends of my mother who visited Russia and came back, and we had an evening for them at which they discussed the Five Year Plan. Well, they wouldn't let me in the room to hear these guests, as if this was something that a child should be protected from. This was one of the problems you had, not letting kids (I say "kids"; I'm talking about young people) share these problems. I still cannot to this day understand what they were trying to protect us from.

I remember going over to this friend of my mother's over here on Cornwall Street and borrowing her samovar. They had an authentic Russian tea at this meeting to discuss Soviet Russia on behalf of these two physicians who had just come back from a tour. It was okay for me to carry the samovar back and forth, but not for me to hear the discussion.

I would say that there may have been other issues, but looking back upon survival, which is what we're really talking about--that was it. Survival was always on the Jewish agenda. You always have the internal survival issues--intermarriage, assimilation, freedom of thought, freedom to join or not to join. These we will have with us forever. But on the gut things, which is overseas, Great Britain was in the driver's seat. America could have been, but chose to abdicate its responsibility and left us out in left field thinking we were doing something, when, in fact, we weren't doing anything.

Dorfman: How would you describe the issues from that time?

Kuhn: Since that time you've had the battle with the American Council for Judaism. You've had the efforts on behalf of all forms of American Jewish life, except the Council, in dealing with its own government to support Israel financially, diplomatically, and every other single way--in the United Nations, etc.--and therefore, the primary interests have been diplomatic and political and philanthropic.

There also has been a tremendous growth in religious affiliation, beginning at the end of World War II; and the growth of suburbia; and the decline of religious institutions within the inner city, meaning that either a synagogue moved somewhere else, or ceased functioning, or merged, or something like that.

If you were to read, for example, the index pages, the table of contents, of every edition of every major Jewish publication since '40 until now, I'm sure there would be issues that occurred again and again and again. But what really was in people's minds was how Jewish are we, what does it mean to us, what are we doing for ourselves and our kids, and how guilty should we be about this? And, primarily, what are we doing for our brethren overseas?

Kuhn:

The greatest motivation for people would be to take a trip overseas, whether it was behind the Iron Curtain or to Israel, to see for themselves, because when they see for themselves, particularly if they are visiting a country where they have some mishpochah, then you've got them. They no longer can hide behind ignorance. You take them to a place where they can visit a concentration camp or see the survivors of a concentration camp, or go see an old people's home in Israel when they had just visited one six months before in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Then the parallelisms begin, and the confusion between what is illusion and what is reality.

So there have been, I think, tremendous changes, tremendous changes in Jewish life. The whole day school movement has come along in that period of time--not so much change in other forms of education, but in day schools. Then you've got Brandeis University, a Jewish-sponsored university. You've got hundreds of universities in America that have Jewish scholars in residence. I want that to be categorized separately. When I said there hasn't been too much change in Jewish education, I mean within the elementary ranks except for the day schools.

But when you have increasing activity at college level, and you have kids in high school who can take Hebrew and get credit not only for the language requirement in high school but for college admission, and who can study further in Israel--they can take courses in theology, in Jewish history at the college level, for credit, and have a major or minor in religious studies. These are all tremendous steps forward in the acceptance of Jewish life.

The role of the Jewish academic--whenever you go to a campus where 8 percent of the students are Jewish and 35 percent of the faculty is Jewish, it makes you want to know how Jewish are those faculty, other than just nominally Jewish. You find out generally with a great disappointment that those faculty members couldn't care less about it, except that that changes too, because the world situation makes them change.

So it's generally much more dynamic and dramatic than trying to answer a question that hits you right in the face. If you sat down and said, "I'm not going to answer this question. I want to read these article titles first. These are dramatic things." Particularly the generational changes where your grandparents were one thing, and your parents rebuilt from that, and then the grandchildren rebuilt from the parents' position. Modern Jewish history is what your parents wouldn't tell you, but what the grandchildren want to know.

That's why whenever we have young people come into the Welfare Federation who really want to know (and they come from Canada and from New York and from the South), what they really want to know is

Kuhn: what went on in Europe, and when they go and come back it makes a difference in their lives. It really does. It made it in my life. I'm, by far, not the only one.

An Expansion of Values

Dorfman: How did it change your life?

Kuhn: It changed my life by really giving me, I think, a new scale of values as to what is important. I'm going to make a little parallel here. When I was in the Seventh Fleet in the Navy, I was in charge of some recreation facilities, and my commanding officer was a guy who liked a good time. He was a full captain in the Navy and he told me once, he said, "Kuhn, in this Navy the only thing that makes any difference is what happens on the sea, below the sea, and in the air. Everything we do on shore here, when we have a good time or fool around, it doesn't mean a damn. It's not really connected to anything."

Well, what do we do in our average life? We drive on the Bayshore Highway and we shuffle a few papers across the top of our desk, you know, pretty perfunctory. But when we go over to Europe and North Africa or Israel and we see Jews--the same flesh and blood--and what they had to go through for survival, it makes the average American Jew's everyday life seem quite humdrum.

[end tape 6, side B; begin tape 7, side A]

Kuhn: There are so many ways that I could document that: by stories from people I've met; things I have read; things that have been told to me by friends of mine; how people were reunited with members of their own family; miraculous rescues; and by my friendship with my friend, Herman Graebe,* a great non-Jew who saved hundreds of Jews during World War II, one of the great ones among the "Righteous Gentiles." So that you begin to wonder, as I said earlier: What's the truth and what's the illusion? Whose existence is more meaningful? Where and when does it all happen? How come I'm so lucky? Why did my parents choose to come to San Francisco, or their parents choose it for them? How did I get here? Who helped? How come I don't know? Where are we? And you don't get any answers to these things. Maybe there's a pattern, and maybe there isn't a pattern. Maybe I'll get an answer; maybe I won't. Maybe my children will find out. Maybe somebody left a secret diary someplace. I don't know.

You look back in your Sunday school songs. Reuben Rinder at least taught us songs in English because the kids could understand them. "There is a mystic tie that binds the children of the martyr race." Big words, "the martyr race." Well, big words but true words.

* San Francisco Examiner, May 4, 1978, p. 6.

Kuhn: I think of whom I've met. I've heard Weizmann. I've heard Golda Myerson as herself and later as Golda Meir; Joe Schwartz, of the JDC; Abba Hillel Silver; all of the prime ministers of Israel.

You figure, "This pageant, this parallel of Jewish history, where six million people had to justify their right to want to live, and they're my people. How could it happen?" And this is the central--the confrontation of the holocaust is the central problem of the moral life of our times, Jewish or non-Jewish. It's not going to go away just because people don't study it.

So there's now a committee in San Francisco, headed by the Jewish Community Relations Council, for the annual observance of the holocaust. I interpret that to mean that every year there will be courses and lectures and observance of Yom Ha Shoah. Not necessarily a statue somewhere, but a continuous remembrance.

If you can remember Pesach and that you were a slave in Egypt, you have to remember that you were a slave or a captive in Germany. You have to, because there were six million of them, and this is the only reason that Israel became a state, and people can't even remember that. They can't remember the United Nations set up Israel as a refuge and that Israel--why should they have to justify themselves every two minutes?

What do they want out of us? If it were a small number of people--but when it was six million out of eighteen million, you're talking about pretty significant numbers. When you go through one of these memorials, whether it's in Copenhagen or Paris or Krakow or Jerusalem, you realize that we're in this together.

So it's a pageant of unbelievable proportions. It belongs to all of us. We have a responsibility to know it, to feel it, and to try to be better Jews and better human beings, because it could happen again. We don't understand how it could happen again because we don't understand how it could have happened in the first place. But, having these stupendous agents of destruction, of genocide, who could say it couldn't happen again?

Is it preferable that it happen to me as a Jew than as an American? I don't know. So we're back to the classical confrontation in Jewish life of the question, the unanswered and unanswerable question. But at least it must be asked, not that we can ever find the ultimate answer.

So, therefore, when you come back from an overseas trip and you've kept your eyes and ears open, you've seen Jews living in caves in the mellah or Fez, or Jews passing through a transient camp in Vienna, or getting off a plane in Israel and kissing the ground,

Kuhn: you've seen something that is part of Jewish life. Where are you going to get that in the twentieth century? On television? So that's the kind of experience it's been, a very hit or miss summary, but I would say that it has been utterly fascinating to me.

If I were to flesh it out with some of the true stories I could give you, how people could just have these utterly amazing things happen to them without any rhyme or reason--how Ernie Michell met his sister after the war. Each thought the other was dead, and yet they found each other, purely by accident, purely by accident.

Dorfman: Overseas?

Kuhn: Ernie came over here from Germany. His sister had been taken away from their home in Mannheim and kept in the south of France in a convent. Ernie started speaking here on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal. Someone in Israel was unwrapping a Care package or the equivalent of a Care package, and, like anybody, he always reads the old newspapers because they're more fascinating than the new ones.

So he was reading this newspaper from Chicago and it said, "Ernest W. Michell spoke last night on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal." The newspaper reader said, "Don't we have a girl living in this kibbutz who had a dead brother named Ernest Michell? So, maybe he didn't die." So she found her brother, just by a random little newspaper article. He thought she was dead, killed by the Nazis, and she thought he was dead.

There are hundreds of stories, hundreds of stories like this. You talk around the Bay Area here--there are scores of people who are survivors of the concentration camps, and you get their stories. Everyone's different; everyone's the same.

A man wrote me a letter last week from Pueblo, Colorado. He's a non-Jew, a dentist, who saved hundreds of Jews in World War II and has been acknowledged as a "Righteous Gentile" by Yad Vashem. Now he's down on his luck; he's ill. What is our obligation to this man? How do you measure it? Let us say he saved a hundred Jews. Well, let's get a pencil and paper and figure out what that's worth in today's market. I don't know. You tell me, you tell me.

Dorfman: As another human being.

Kuhn: Yes, that's right.

Dorfman: How do you evaluate human beings?

Kuhn: That's right. How do you evaluate? So first you have to evaluate yourself maybe. I don't know.

Dorfman: Let's stop here.

Examining the Illusion and the Reality of Jewish Destiny

[Interview 5: November 3, 1977]

Dorfman: Can we begin again where we left off last time? You were telling me the story of an experience with a captain under whom you served in the Navy and drawing a parallel.

Kuhn: Yes. The parallel is that when you go overseas to see Jewish life in Europe or North Africa or Israel or in Iran or certain countries in South America, and you realize what these people had to go through to get there--some of them have fought in five wars since Israel's founding--and you come back, and you begin to wonder which is the truth and which is illusion. What's reality?

You realize that the two weeks you spent overseas is much more real, as far as Jewish destiny is concerned, than the fifty weeks a year that you spend in San Francisco doing things which before you thought were very important, but, really, compared to what you have just seen and experienced, they don't count for very much.

It's a matter of your scale of values. I think I discussed in an earlier tape my admiration for an American Jewish author named Charles Angoff. His most famous work is called the Polonsky Saga and is highly autobiographical. It starts off with his being a small boy in Russia, coming to America, and this was all going to be in one book. But he couldn't get it into one book and he took ten books. The eleventh will come out next spring. I'm on book four now, and although he is perhaps fifteen years older than I am, some of his insights and events parallel so many in my own life that it's absolutely amazing.

He got into Harvard on a scholarship. He was living in Boston, and it was a big experience in his life that he was looking forward to, and it was four years of nothing. All of his expectations were dashed. He was frustrated. None of the professors, though learned, had any excitement manifested toward their subjects. So he spent his time in the library and going to concerts.

He had prepared himself for nothing when he graduated, and it was on his conscience the whole time that here his parents were sacrificing to put him through. His father was frequently out of work in one of the depressions in the garment industry. David's [the protagonist of the novels] whole four years at Harvard were nothing but a guilty trip because he wasn't studying anything specific or of a practical nature. He didn't know what to study. He didn't know anyone to talk to. He couldn't listen to his parents. He didn't feel free to discuss it with his girl friend for fear that he would be downgraded in her eyes as an impractical man and an unsuitable suitor.

Kuhn: This was true in my case when I went to college. I wanted to change majors. Well, that was almost an admission of failure, to change majors. You just didn't talk about it. I didn't talk to my mother about things like that. I didn't discuss it with my brothers or with my friends. I just kept it within myself and this was--I don't know if it's purely a Jewish trait. I'm sure it's a human trait.

So I came out of the University of California with a huge ambivalence, a love-hate relationship, which is now at more of a love stage. My hatred of the University was really a hatred of my own attitude toward it for my not working hard enough. I wasn't motivated when I started, so I dropped out. Then, when I went back after three years, when I was mature, I couldn't get the full value of it because I had to work my way through then. That took so much out of me just to earn enough money to live on that I really didn't enjoy it.

As one lesson I would tell anybody, when you go to college and you can't afford it, don't go to college. Work for a couple of years, work during summer vacations, but not while you're going to school. You've got to have time to go to class. You've got to have enough time to study. You've got to have enough time to have some fun. If you work, something's got to go; either you won't go to class, or you won't study, or you won't have any fun.

IX THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Undergraduate Student Years, 1934-1937

Dorfman: This would seem to be a good place to return to the years that you spent at Berkeley. Will you tell me, please, what Berkeley was like?

Kuhn: Well, Berkeley was the biggest place I'd ever seen. I think I'd only been on the campus twice before, once when I was a small boy of eight taken there by my Aunt Rachael, and I just fell in love with the place--that was in 1925--with its beauty. Then I went to a track meet there in 1932, the Cal-Stanford meet. I had also seen one football game, the Army-Navy game, but basically I didn't know the campus at all. It was a huge place, 14,000 students then, half of what it has today, and it was so beautiful, so beautiful.

But I didn't know what I wanted to study, so I went to see the provost, Monroe Deutsch, who had been a childhood friend of my mother, and he said, "Well, you have good grades in everything, particularly in mathematics and science. You had five years of mathematics in high school. Why don't you start out in engineering?"

Well, I did, but I forgot his saying that if it didn't work out, you can always transfer. So I was in engineering from January, '34 through December, '35. I started out great, but I really didn't have the talent for engineering. You have to have a conceptualization of space, of three dimensions, which I don't have.

Say a hundred of us started as freshmen. There's the attenuation by the time you are seniors. By the time the graduates went out to try to find a job (remembering that at that time America was in the midst of the depression), there was a surplus of engineers. I was in the civil engineering curriculum. Then you find out five or ten years later how many are still actually practicing engineering. Maybe 2 percent of the original hundred. A fantastic waste of time, if you figure that it's all lost.

Kuhn: Now, there are certain things you learn which are great lessons in life. Surveying classes are great experiences even if you never become a surveyor or an engineer. There are techniques and ways of doing things and disciplines to follow that you learn. If you don't do it right, you have to repeat it, and it is a very good training in that sense. But there was no way then of aptitude testing. That was unheard of then.

Now, of course, it's different. It's different in the sense that they have aptitude testing at Cal, and the students pay for it in their student body fee, but less than 5 percent take advantage of it, so it's not so simple.

Forsaking School, 1937

Kuhn: Then I transferred to physical education and hygiene. This was something that I was really interested in and I thought I'd be good at it. I was in that from January, '36 to April, '37, when I just stopped going. I lost my motivation and I just walked out. I didn't tell anybody, didn't petition for a leave of absence. I used to watch the construction on the Golden Gate Bridge, and then, when the semester was over in May, I hung around the mailbox every day to intercept the letter from the University saying, "Your son Marshall is no longer in good standing." My mother never really got that letter addressed to her.

So I was out of a job. It took three months to get one. Rabbi Reichert at Temple Emanu-El was very helpful to me. I finally became an office boy for Herbert Fleishhacker, the president of the Anglo-California National Bank, which I think I've described elsewhere.

In 1940--my mother has passed away in the fall of 1939--I took a trip to Yosemite, a hiking trip for a week with fifteen others led by a National Park Service ranger, Ernie Payne. I got a chance to do a tremendous amount of thinking and decided that I had to go back and finish college and that I was just kidding myself by filling my nights with industrial sports, playing basketball and softball and all the other things you can do when you're young and there are organized athletics for you.

Returning to Classes, 1940

Kuhn: So I came back, and I told the bank I was going to leave if the University would let me back in, which they said they'd be glad to do, on probation. I was much more mature. And I would have to maintain a certain grade point average, which I exceeded with ease. I graduated in December of '41.

Then, by that time, in October of '41, I had signed up in the Naval Reserve V-7 program. We weren't at war yet, so there was no certainty that I would ever go or when I'd go. Then the war came along in December, '41 and the Navy said, "Just relax, we'll call you." They called me in April, '42, so I didn't finish my first semester of graduate work in the school of education and I never went back to finish it after the war.

All told, if you counted summer sessions, intersessions, I spent about six years at Cal and a lot of it was a huge waste. Part of it is unavoidable. You take a course in which you really aren't interested or, even more, you don't have a use for it. So you forget or you don't do the reading, or you don't review what you've done, or the professor is not stimulating.

In fact, the best lecture I ever heard at Berkeley was by a visiting professor from Stanford, Thomas Bailey, who talked in a course on American civilization, on the life and times of Theodore Roosevelt. He was sensational. I never heard anybody at Cal who could even touch him.

But I did have an interest in education. I thought teaching was my forte. I was in the 97th percentile in teaching aptitude in the school of education, which is a highly selected group. So I have done a lot of educational work since, primarily in religious schools, although everything I've done in my life, whether I was selling prepaid healthcare for Blue Shield or recruiting blood donors for the Blood Bank or working at the Center or for the Federation, in a sense was education, was teaching, was persuasion, imparting facts, inspiration, opportunities. So I think basically I would classify myself as a teacher.

Could I tell one funny story about Berkeley?

Dorfman: Please do.

Kuhn: Much of the time I commuted from San Francisco, and in the early years before November, '36--in fact, after that--there was no train service on the bridge. The bridge was completed, but there was no commuting on the bridge until the rails were laid for the inter-urban trains. So you commuted from San Francisco. I lived at

Kuhn: 3rd Avenue and California Street here in the Richmond. You'd take a streetcar to the ferries, take a ferry boat to the Oakland pier, take a train from there, and if you were going on the Key System you'd then transfer to a streetcar. So it was a full hour and a half or longer if the ferry was on a fog schedule.

Now, you say, "Why don't you study on the trains going both ways?" Well, that's not the easiest thing in the world. You're lugging all your stuff--lunch and your books--and you're talking with friends and enjoying yourself. In fact, on the Southern Pacific ferry boat you're watching people try to beat the iron claw machine. So I commuted and that was a huge waste of time. Another thing I would recommend to anybody is to live on campus and enjoy the campus life, get the full hours out of the library, don't be home-oriented.

One of the reasons I was home-oriented, of course, was economic, and, two, I was very much interested in my first two years in college in leadership positions in the Pathfinders, the Temple Emanu-El youth group. In fact, I put in so much time on that, I could have even flunked out. It's amazing how you can get diverted by good works because you just can't do everything.

But just about the time I left the University in April, '37, I was walking down the campus toward the Southern Pacific train and I noticed on the steps of the Life Sciences Building a little bird. It looked like it had been hurt and I scooped it up in my Daily Californian and ran into this building, this huge emporium of science. It was during the noon hour and every door seemed to be closed, locked, except one. I went in there and I said, "Look, I've got an injured bird," and they said, "Just leave it here. We'll splint it and he'll be flying in short order." So I forgot all about it.

In 1939 I received a publication, which I have here in my hands, from the University of California. [Reading from publication]: "Gifts of specimens to the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, June 1, 1936 to June 30, 1939." So, I'm leafing through this and I see Fred Dale gave 306 mammals from Valhalla, Alameda, and Marin Counties; William Jellison gave 159 mammals, three birds, ten reptiles and amphibians, from Alaska, Washington, etc. All of a sudden I come across this entry: "Kuhn, Marshall. One dwarf hermit thrush, Hylocichla guttata nanus, from Berkeley, Alameda County."

Well, when I went back to the University in 1940, I went up to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and I said, "Can I see my bird, which you promised you would splint and he would fly away, and then you killed him?" So they showed me this little bird in this huge lead sheathed case and explained that he was very rare. It was the latest in the year that any dwarf hermit thrush had ever been found in Alameda County. They fly north and this whole flock flew north, but my little bird had bad radar and he hit the building.

GIFTS OF SPECIMENS TO THE CALIFORNIA MUSEUM OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY

JUNE 1, 1936, TO JUNE 30, 1939

GIFTS by friends of the University who are interested in increasing its store of research materials account for two-fifths of the total number of specimens added to the collections in the past 37 months. Many specimens were obtained by persons who, in advance of journals, sought knowledge of the Museum's needs from the regions which they visited. Other specimens were provided to allow completion of studies under way and still others to fill special gaps in the Museum's collections. It is seen, therefore, that the specimens have great value. These pertain to 727 separate accessions. Each accession is composed of from one up to many hundreds of specimens. These are, by departments, as follows: mammals, 5445; birds, 3237; reptiles and amphibians, 3620; birds' nests and eggs, 1106.

This list does not include specimens obtained by collectors normally employed from the endowment fund or from other funds provided by Miss Annie M. Alexander for the maintenance of the Museum nor specimens received by purchase out of the same funds. In the period June 1, 1936, to June 30, 1939, there was a total, from all sources, of 906 accessions. Specimens that were catalogued in the same period number 32,842. These comprise 15,518 mammals, 8522 birds, 8112 reptiles and amphibians, and 690 birds' nests and sets of eggs.

Complete total for all specimens in the Museum catalogued to June 30, 1939, is 194,119; department totals are: mammals, 86,559; birds, 76,133; reptiles and amphibians, 28,352; birds' nests and sets of eggs, 3075.

The term "mammal" as here used ordinarily means a dry study-skin plus the cleaned skull belonging to the same individual; sometimes only one of these parts is meant but not infrequently a complete skeleton is meant, and sometimes the entire animal preserved in alcohol. A "bird" is usually a dry study-skin; sometimes it is a partial or complete skeleton with or without the skin. A "set of eggs" is the total number of eggs found in a bird's nest, often accompanied by the nest itself. A "reptile" or "amphibian" is, as a rule, the entire animal preserved in formalin or alcohol.

Localities are in California unless otherwise specified.

E. RAYMOND HALL, Acting Director,
Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
JUNE 30, 1939.

Kofoid, Charles A., 1 deer (*Muntiacus malabaricus*), from Mysore, India [through A. H. Miller].

Koford, Carl B., 1 least shrew (*Microsorex h. washingtoni*), from Sanders County, Montana; 60 mammals, from Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, and Imperial counties. [See Ball, R. J.; Rodgers, T. L.]

Kruse, George, 1 least bittern (*Ixobrychus c. hesperis*), from Oakland, Alameda County; 1 Pacific rattlesnake (*Crotalus c. oregonus*), from Josephine County, Oregon.

Kuhn, Marshall, 1 dwarf hermit thrush (*Hyllocichla g. nasus*), from Berkeley, Alameda County.

Lange, W. Harry, Jr., 1 western grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*), from Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County.

Leopold, A. S., 1 screech owl (*Otus a. bendirei*), from near Merced, Merced County.

Lewis, D. E., 1 cedar waxwing (*Bombicilla cedrorum*), from San Fernando, Los Angeles County.

Light, S. F., 1 turtle, from Oaxaca, Mexico.

Linford, J. H., 1 northern phalarope (*Lobipes lobatus*), from Alameda County.

Linforth, Miss Barbara, 1 western gull (*Larus o. occidentalis*), from Marin County.

Linsdale, Jean M., 16 northwestern toads (*Bufo b. boreas*), from Weott, Humboldt County.

London, T. [See California Division of Fish and Game.]

Lowery, G. H., Jr., 17 mammals (*Didelphis*, *Scolopus*, *Cryptotis*, *Blarina*, *Dasypterus*, *Tadarida*, *Glaucomys*, *Geomys*, *Reithrodontomys*, *Peromyscus*, *Oryzomys*, *Sigmodon*, *Neotoma*, *Onychomys*), from Louisiana.

Lundgren, M. B., 1 San Francisco brown towhee (*Pipilo f. petulone*), from Berkeley, Alameda County.

Mages, William A., 1 pocket gopher (*Thomomys b. pascoii*), from Tipton, Tulare County.

Marshall, Joe T., Jr., 234 birds, 9 mammals, 23 reptiles and amphibians, from various localities in California.

Maclin, Thomas P., Jr., 144 mammals, 1 bird, 540 reptiles and amphibians, from British Columbia, Oregon, and California. [See Hooper, E. T.; Rodgers, T. L.]

Maclin, Thomas P., and Rodgers, Thomas L., 76 reptiles, 114 amphibians, from Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Santa Clara, and Monterey counties.

Mason, Herbert L., 1 hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*), 1 long-tailed weasel (*Mus-tela f. nigricans*), from Oakland and Berkeley, Alameda County.

Kuhn: So years went by and in 1971, after they had the big oil spill here, I went back to take a look again. Then, about a year or two ago, it happened to be Shavuoth and my office was closed, so I was on campus doing some Sierra Club work with some people from the Sierra Club at The Bancroft Library. As we walked down to my car, we passed the Life Sciences Building. I told them this story and I looked at them and realized they didn't believe me. I said, "Well, wait a minute. Come in here. I'll show you this bird."

So we went into the museum, and we go to this case and the bird isn't there, which means I really am a liar. Well, I was covered with all sorts of embarrassment, but later that week I received a letter from the museum saying, "The specimen was found in its proper place fifteen minutes after you left. Ward C. Russell prepared it, but your name is also on the label as the collector." I have here a copy of the accession card showing that accession number 5221, April 9, '37, department number 71162--all these numbers. And the tag on the little bird says, "injured on campus," explaining how he got there. And I thought, "A lot of us are injured on campus."

So that's my dwarf hermit thrush story!

Dorfman: So the finding of the specimen helped you to regain your credibility.

Kuhn: I am now once more in good standing as an honest man. I used that story once when I was presiding at a meeting of the California Blood Bank System and I said, "Here before me are all you people steeped in science, and I only wish that I had some credentials in science, but then I think I do." And I told that story, to much hilarity.

Jewish Activities and Friends

Dorfman: While you were at Berkeley, did you participate in any Jewish activities?

Kuhn: I went to Hillel once or twice. Hillel at that time had a bad reputation. The girls that went there weren't very good looking. I guess the sororities got the better ones. But the Rabbi, Max Merritt, was an anti-Zionist and, as a matter of fact, he gave a talk one time at Temple Emanu-El after he had come home from Palestine, and the talk was entitled, "Palestine, Home of the Arabs." So Hillel wasn't really a congenial atmosphere for me, and I was commuting at the time, so I really didn't make any connection there.

There were no Jewish courses on the campus at all. Professor Popper taught Hebrew to maybe two or three students who were pre-rabbinical students. I chose not to join a Jewish fraternith, both

Kuhn: for economic and social reasons. I felt that I would lose the friendship of the fellows I'd graduated from Lowell with who were commuting, and I really was so immature I didn't know what was happening.

I was even rushed by a non-Jewish fraternity. I had no idea what was going on. I was only just seventeen when I started Cal and I didn't participate in any extracurricular activities. My Jewish connection was here in San Francisco at Temple Emanu-El.

Dorfman: Were you active in the Pathfinders at that particular time?

Kuhn: Yes, and I was its president during 1935-1936. I was continuing to usher at Emanu-El on Saturday mornings unless I had class in Berkeley. [Tape interruption for telephone call.]

Dorfman: So that at that particular time--

Kuhn: On campus I was nonorganization. I didn't belong to a fraternity. I didn't live in a dormitory. When I did live there at first it was in a boarding house, and then my last year on campus, half as a high senior and half in graduate school, I lived in the International House. There were a lot of Jewish students there, but there were no organized Jewish activities.

Dorfman: Who were your friends?

Kuhn: My friends on campus?

Dorfman: Yes.

Kuhn: Well, primarily fellows I'd graduated from high school with who continued at Berkeley, and particularly if they were in engineering or related things. We would commute together on the ferry boats and trains, arrange to eat lunch together.

One summer session, the summer session of '41, my closest friend was Arthur Cerf, who is now my physician, and he was behind me in high school about a year, but we knew each other then from the Pathfinders. We were going to summer session then and he decided to rebuild my swimming skills. So every day for six weeks we went swimming in the pool. He taught me, the first few weeks, how to really swim. I could swim very powerfully, but without any form. So he rebuilt my swimming skills and in the second three weeks he taught me life saving. We had just a marvelous time.

Then he and I lived on the same floor at International House that last year. He would have been my closest friend. He was going around with Shirley Steinan, who is now his wife, and she was an Alpha

Kuhn: Epsilon Phi. He would want to go see her at the sorority house, but he wanted also to get back to I House to study. So he would take me along with him so that I'd be like a third wheel, and Shirley seemed to resent me very much, because my part was that after a certain time--"Art, you have to get home and study for that exam." [Chuckles]

Dorfman: Let's stop here.

[end tape 7, side A; begin tape 7, side B]

Kuhn: He's one of my closest friends to this day. Most of the friends were Jewish and they were nonorganization people. Those who had gone to high school with me and joined fraternities just had their own priorities and agendas, and I never saw many of them again. You couldn't serve two masters. I understood that. That was no great disappointment.

I am just trying to think who were my friends. Arthur was the best one, but there were others in Lowell High, and we played sports together. We had our own intramural basketball team, the Wolves. The team included Melvin Cohn, now a superior court judge in San Mateo County and who for many years coached the basketball team of Temple Beth Jacob in Redwood City; Frank Brown, now a local attorney and uncle of Governor Jerry Brown; and John Spaulding, now a CPA on the Peninsula.

I am indebted to John for teaching me that the person who benefits from a charitable act is more likely to remember it than the person who performed the act. When I was in the eighth grade in grammar school, I fractured my left wrist. During the month that I wore a cast, John volunteered to fold my papers for my San Francisco Call newspaper route, and he did this before folding his own papers, and, of course, for free. During the half time at one of the Wolves' games in Berkeley, I recalled how much his generosity had meant to me, not only at the time but as a memory over the years. He couldn't remember the incident at all!

We were all San Franciscans, mostly from Lowell High. I organized a softball team called the San Francisco Busy Bees. It was mostly made up of people I had known in high school who went to the University and who didn't belong to fraternities or dormitories and who primarily still commuted, which was a very popular way of going to college. You stayed at home; your living costs were low. The worst thing was the time wasted in commuting, particularly before the bridge was built.

Dorfman: Did you have any other friends who were affiliated with the organizations in which you remained active over the years?

Kuhn: At Berkeley?

Dorfman: Yes, at Berkeley.

Kuhn: Oh, I would run into people all the time who'd say, "We were at Cal together." Lowell Adelson, for instance. He was at Berkeley then. There were a lot of fellows. There must be fifty or a hundred of them in various classes, because starting Cal in '34 and finishing in '42, I covered a large span of time even though I wasn't there three years.

Memorable Instructors

Dorfman: We can go back to that a little later. Would you tell me, please, who your most memorable instructors and professors were?

Kuhn: [Pauses] Well, let's see. In mathematics I was fortunate enough to have Professor Griffith C. Evans, who was a true gentleman and a great scholar. As a matter of fact, the mathematics department building at the University is named in his memory, and it was under his guidance as chairman of the department that Cal became probably the premier mathematics department in the world.

I had some great physics professors. Harvey White in Physics IA, Mechanics; he was the first one to teach physics on television for credit. All the physics professors--Professor Lenzen, Professor Loeb, Professor Jenkins--all were very high type men.

Professor Joel Hildebrand in chemistry, who is in his nineties now, a great Sierra Club leader. He was just fantastic. He taught Chemistry IAB and there was nobody like him. I asked him one time after he'd finished his oral interview for the Sierra Club--I met him at the faculty club. I said, "How do you account for your fantastic health in your nineties?" He said, "One, by great heredity. All my parents and grandparents were old. Two, I have a loving wife who ministers to my every care. And, three, I never take an elevator." I remember when I was at Cal he used to swim a half a mile a day in the pool.

In engineering there wouldn't be anybody memorable.

In physical education, I would say Heber Newsom, who just passed away in his eighties. He was in charge of all of the intramural sports. He was a man who cared so much for the individual student when he taught basketball classes that he memorized the name of every student. Now, some men will do that, but he had a tremendous number of Oriental students and he knew every one of them by first

Kuhn: and last name--Fujiharo Nakomoto, you know. It was just unbelievable. It showed this man really had character. I would say that he would be my most notable one in the field of physical education. But there weren't many. There really weren't many.

I remember some of the things, of course, that I'd hear from various lectures if I went to a University meeting or a night lecture. One time we had a lecture by a professor of political science, Mr. Davidson, at International House and I remember what he said. Somebody asked him, "Is the essence of good citizenship always obeying the law?" He said, "No, no one could always obey the law. It's not within human nature. First of all, no one knows what all the laws are. The essence of good citizenship is being willing to accept the consequences if you break the law." That made a big impression upon me.

There were some professors who were kindly. I had a professor in kinesiology, Dr. Bartlett, who gave me a C in that final semester of my undergraduate work. I didn't deserve a C at all, but she knew that I needed a C to graduate and she also knew that I was under tremendous strain, having signed up in the Navy, not knowing where I was going to go, and working just to have enough money to pay my room and board.

I had Professor Richard Aiken in Zoology 10. He's the one now who portrays the great scientists by dressing up like them. He was just a young teaching instructor in 1934.

The Cal faculty had a lot of great men, but I didn't become close to any of them because I felt that with the size of the University and their interest in research and teaching and scholarship and writing, how could a guy like me, just another number, really take up their time?

In the physical education department I was somewhat close to a man named Franklin Henry, who had a Ph.D. and who did a lot of work in measuring energy consumption and so on--scientific work in physical education as opposed to coaching varsity sports. I wasn't interested in varsity sports at all. I was interested in mass participation in intramural sports.

But having left the University, when I look back on it, it's not with respect to any particular professor or group of them. I know that if I had taken the time or had the opportunity that some of them could have been very helpful to me in giving me advice. But if you had a class of a thousand, and you broke it down into fifty sections of twenty students a week under a teaching instructor, a teaching fellow, it wasn't going to be that personal. I was a very great critic. I took, for example, geology. Well, if you had spent one week in Yosemite it would have been more meaningful than a year's study out of a textbook.

Kuhn: Similarly, I took a course in abnormal psychology. We took a field trip to the Sonoma State Home in Glen Ellen. That field trip and what I saw there meant more to me than the whole rest of the course because I was going there with a fellow who I later found out had a sister who was a mental defective, and I thought about that for a long time. I thought what that trip must have meant to him.

So I believe in what you might call confluent education--some method to bring it all to life. I think the opportunities exist today--I don't know if the students take advantage of them--for public service. A student can do tutoring at San Quentin and get some kind of recognition for credit. But in those days, with transportation difficult, there weren't those kind of opportunities. I wasn't interested in student government.

It was just too tough an economic thing to handle because I had no money and I had to earn it. I had a morning [San Francisco] Examiner paper route in San Francisco which I had someone deliver for me, but I owned the route and I would help on Sunday morning. I was working from eight to nine every morning in the men's gymnasium doing clerical work. I refereed a few basketball games. In fact, on Saturday nights for twelve weeks I refereed three games a night by myself at the Berkeley YMCA for one dollar per game. I taught Sunday school on Sunday morning and ran the gym program at Temple Emanu-El. Then, after that, I would come home and collapse. I did some ushering at theaters, all sorts of things.

It was really such a physical strain that I cannot say too strongly that no one should try it. You cannot get the value out of a university education under such circumstances--I don't care who you are. I'm not talking about working your way through college with a job that allows some freedom, but if you start combining jobs, it just won't work.

Dorfman: You said that your beginning as an engineering major was not the direction that you should have taken and that when you returned, you returned as an education major.

Kuhn: Right.

Dorfman: What helped you to make that decision?

Kuhn: During the time I was in engineering, realizing my grades--even when I made an effort, I just didn't show any aptitude. It's not merely an intellectual thing. It requires a perceptual and conceptual ability.

Kuhn: Let me give you an example. There was a course called Mechanics 2. Now, this is a means of doing mechanical drawing on a three-dimensional basis. Let us say, you have a tunnel in a mine that's going in one direction. Half a mile away is another tunnel going in a completely different direction. Now, you have to figure out the shortest connection between these two tunnels. There's a way you can do that on paper with drawing instruments. But I couldn't imagine it; I just couldn't conceptualize these things.

In electrical engineering I couldn't conceptualize either. Now, this is either an indication of my lack of aptitude or application, or a proof that it's really tough stuff. So I began thinking, "What can I do?" There really wasn't much help there. There was no aptitude testing. If you went to see someone and told them your problem, they were guessing worse than you were because they didn't know you that closely. Generally, you wouldn't go to see them because you didn't want to admit to this. You wouldn't want to admit you were thinking of changing a major. That was a confession of failure. You certainly wouldn't want to admit that you dropped out.

In 1955 I read an article in the New Yorker saying that at Harvard, which has fantastic screening for admission, over half of the students were dropping out, and Harvard had no idea how many of them ever came back there or elsewhere to graduate. They thought that most of them got back some day, but that was a pure conjecture.

So it was actually a lack of communication. So I talked to myself and I said, "What do I really want?" Well, I liked physical education, partly because I was deprived of it for two years in high school when I took ROTC and worked after school and had no chance to really have some fun. I thought, "It's an honest thing, it's a valuable thing, it's something I liked, it has many different aspects to it, and it's not just a snap course."

A lot of people think physical education is a snap course because a lot of athletes go into it. But it has, at Berkeley, a tremendous amount of biological science, household science, nutrition, bacteriology, physiology, anatomy, kinesiology--which is another tough thing. There's a conceptualization of how all the muscles work in support or opposition to each other when you swing a tennis racket or a golf club, and I want to tell you that is tough stuff.

So that's what I chose, and later on--in 1942, I guess it was, or maybe in '40; I can't remember--we had a Jewish vocational guidance bureau here. The director was Morton Gaba, who is now the executive director emeritus of the Jewish Welfare Federation in New Orleans. He gave me aptitude tests and it proved that my hunches were right. I liked to work with people in this capacity--educational, recreational, social--all the things that, for example,

Kuhn: stood me in good stead when I was director of the Jewish Center, which, of course, was much later. But working with people isn't just enough; you have to pinpoint it because there are thousands of ways of working with people. But working with people in a teaching capacity, that was the thing.

In other words, I took the route that if I enjoyed it, it would have to have some value to me even if I didn't use it. But engineering couldn't have any real value because I neither enjoyed it nor was good at it. Engineering is not like letters and science where you can go and read in the library and read classics. You can't do that in engineering. In fact, engineering at that time had no humanities courses. So when I came back after my three-year hiatus, I found myself taking a third year of French after having taken it in high school seven years before and having forgotten all of it in the interim.

Dorfman: It must have been difficult.

Kuhn: It was very difficult. It didn't make sense to me.

Athletic Activity

Dorfman: You indicated a love for athletics and you talked a little bit about the sports that you were involved in. What sports particularly?

Kuhn: First of all, I never would have qualified to be a great varsity player in anything but possibly basketball. That was closed to me because when I came back after the three years and I went out for varsity basketball, you had to sign a statement saying that you had never earned any money in connection with basketball, either as a player or a coach or a referee. I had earned money refereeing and I couldn't sign the statement.

So I went in good conscience to see Dr. Stanley Freeborn, who was a professor of agriculture and the University representative to the Pacific Coast Conference, and he would not grant me any exemption. The amount of money I had earned was something like \$250. This was at the time when Angelo Luisetti, the All-American from Stanford, had been declared an amateur again after having made a movie in which he earned \$20,000, because it was said that he used that money to repay his parents for his education, which was so blatantly false because he had a full scholarship at Stanford.

I just thought that this was unfair, because refereeing has nothing to do with playing ability, nothing whatsoever. You find referees in all forms of sports now who never played in those sports.

Kunn: But I loved a lot of things. I loved softball, touch football, tennis, squash, badminton, ping-pong, handball, running. Long distance running I did to develop my stamina. I took a lot of intramural soccer, five years of it. I loved to swim, but not competitively, and I hated diving. I went out for the Cal crew and that's a great sport.

There are so many wonderful sports. I guess if I counted them up there would probably be twenty sports that I tried. I didn't enjoy them all, but you had to learn them. Boxing and wrestling. Gymnastics I hated because my body just wasn't that flexible. But any kind of sports, virtually, I just enjoyed. I just loved it. It was just freedom. It was just--

Dorfman: You participated before you left?

Kuhn: Oh, yes.

Dorfman: As well as after you returned?

Kuhn: Yes, and during the years that I was out of the University you could find me every weekend at the Julius Kahn Playground here in the Presidio, playing something--touch football, tennis, softball, basketball. A lot of hiking.

Dorfman: During your early days at Berkeley did you also participate in sports at Temple Emanu-El?

Kuhn: Oh, yes, yes. I was a coach at Emanu-El for many years, the basketball coach. We had teams involving boys from the fourth grade up. As a matter of fact, when the Temple House was built, they even put in a ballet rail for the girls, which was never used because we never got that esoteric. [Chuckles] For years no one knew what it was, except me. But my point is that you don't have to be a champion to enjoy athletics and that the stress on college campuses is too much overemphasis on the varsity sports, whereas actually athletics can be participated in by every single person there.

Let me give you an example. The men's gymnasium at Berkeley had one long basketball court, or, if you set the baskets down, you would have three courts across. Well, every day during basketball season at four o'clock everyone was kicked off so the varsity could practice from four to six and the freshmen from six to eight. That means that literally hundreds and hundreds of men couldn't play because a very small number of varsity and freshmen athletes had to practice. Now, either the University has too few facilities and they should build more gyms, or they should take those varsity and freshmen and have them practice somewhere else.

Dorfman: To allow more participation?

Kuhn: Absolutely. Absolutely. That's my view. I don't believe in giving any special advantages to athletes as far as admission policies are concerned or to athletes once they're in there. They add absolutely nothing to the University by being athletes. Right now all it is is a system of breeding more professional athletes so they can go on the baseball, football, or basketball draft. I really don't see that it's of any great value to the University. I take a hard line on that.

Dorfman: How many Jewish students would you estimate were at Berkeley?

Kuhn: Well, my guess is a couple of thousand. A few years ago I came across a figure of 4,500 Jews when the total number of students was 28,000, so my guess is it was probably 2,000 in my day, many of whom were from the Bay Area. Most of them, I guess.

I might say also that one of my all-time heroes was Brutus Hamilton, the Cal track coach, and he considered it immoral to recruit athletes. If they wanted to come to Berkeley to study, that was fine. If they wanted to go out for track, he'd help them. But he never made an offer to anybody of money or anything else to attract them to Berkeley. They had to want to come. I believe that's the way it should be.

Dorfman: Did you ever have a nickname?

Kuhn: Oh, yes, yes. My brother Harold called me "Moose."

Dorfman: [Chuckles] Why was that?

Kuhn: Well, I was a big guy. I was bigger than he was. A friend, Henry Bettman, called me "Butch" for a long time. They kidded me when I was a kid. They called me "Marshmallow." That's about the extent of it. Generally, they just shortened it from Marshall to "Marsh."

Dorfman: But no other nicknames while you were at Berkeley?

Kuhn: Oh, at Berkeley? No, I can't think of any. If anybody said, "Hey, genius," I knew they'd be talking to somebody else.

Enhancing the Potential of a Dynamic University

Dorfman: You talked earlier about what you would have liked to have received from your education that you didn't.

Kuhn: I want to be fair. I couldn't have received anything unless I was really putting more into it. First, I would like to have seen more guidance to show me what was there. I never even took a library

Kuhn: tour, which is the most fundamental thing you can do, because right now I think that the library is the greatest institution in the world. But you have to really want to learn something. I often feel that college is wasted on the young anyway.

I would have liked to have been tested for aptitude to sort of narrow the field down, and to have had someone to follow me along every semester to say, "You're doing the right thing," or, "You really should consider changing," or, "Have you thought of this course?"

Then I would have liked to have asked around more, "Who are the great professors?" Not just, "Can I take their course for credit?" but, "Can I audit their course?" A man like Herbert Bolten in history. A fantastic scholar. I could have sat in on his courses on the history of Western America. It never occurred to me because I was dumb.

I went to a number of night lectures. But you could spend every night of the week at Berkeley going to various events and lectures, if you lived on campus. If you lived in San Francisco and you stayed over for a concert or a lecture, you would get home at eleven or twelve at night, and you would just turn around and come back in the morning. So I would have liked to have lived in Berkeley more than the two years I was in residence.

Then I would have liked to have had someone guide my reading, and that's about all. If I could have had somebody to inspire me, have had one or two great teachers--that's all you can really ask for, particularly in the field of your interest.

I don't know if I ever mentioned to you this book called There Was Light. Well, in 1968 it was the University's centennial and Ansel Adams put out a book of photographs with text by Nancy Newhall called Let There Be Light, which is the translation of Fiat Lux, which is the motto of the University of California.

Several years later, Irving Stone edited a book called There Was Light, which contained thirty-nine stories of people who were influenced by Berkeley either as undergraduates or graduates, starting with J.K. Galbraith and ending with Stone himself. I wondered where he got the idea for it until recently when I read the centennial issue of the California Monthly. Over half of these thirty-nine had little stories in there. Well, he apparently got them to expand their stories and almost every one of these people encountered someone at Berkeley who treated them kindly and got them interested.

Kuhn: In Stone's own case, he was living in San Francisco and had visited the University when he was twelve with his mother, who was then divorced. They later moved to Los Angeles, and when he came back to Cal he practically lived in the library rather than went to classes. I mentioned this last week to some friends here who were related to Irving Stone and who took this statement with a grain of salt. They said, "Irving Stone's greatest fiction writing is his description of his own career." But, anyway, it sounded great to me.

But this is what happened to these people. One of these thirty-nine was a woman who was the first Negro principal in the Oakland public schools. She went to Berkeley in the first decade of this century and for four years no one spoke to her because she was a black woman.

Galbraith loves Berkeley. He thinks that's where it's at. In fact, in his series The Age of Uncertainty on television now, a section deals with Berkeley because he feels it is the most dynamic university in the world. But he outfoxed himself as a young instructor and ended up at Harvard.

You have here Willard Libby, who discovered the Carbon 22 process. One of the chapters is by him. Judge Stanley Barnes-- a whole variety of people. The University meant so much to them, and it means so much to me, right now, because I see the potential there. If I had a tremendous amount of money, I would give a lot of it to scholarship funds for Berkeley, try to do something every year for them, because the potential is there. But to realize the potential there has to be the human touch, the exchange of communication between someone older and someone younger.

The University, in spite of the trouble in the '60s, the free speech movement--I don't think it's changed that much.

Dorfman: From the time that you were there?

Kuhn: I don't think so. For example, I talked to a friend of mine who teaches at Santa Cruz. He says, "The average professor teaches two courses and writes a book, and that writing a book is really a must for academic advancement." Another friend of mine is at Rutgers. She has to produce a book by the end of this year or she's out. Well, that takes time, because everyone is not qualified to write a book, and they all don't write it at the same speed, and they all don't find a publisher. So it's not that easy.

But I believe there must be a potential in smaller colleges or something like this. The universities in England have the college idea, like Harvard College. At Berkeley you have the College of Letters and Science, but there's no connection between the word "college" used at Berkeley and the word "college" used at Oxford.

Kuhn: They are not the same thing. It's hard for me to conceive of what a college is in a small sense, but what it really should be is a fraternity of young men and women with the don living right on the campus.

This is what John Hersey did at Yale one year--in fact, for more than one year. And he wrote that famous book called Letters to the Alumni. He lived on the campus right with the students, and anyone could walk into his quarters and talk his problem over with him.

Well, this is something that you couldn't do at Berkeley. You wouldn't know where to find someone with whom you could become personally involved, or maybe you could if you sought them out, but I didn't have the sense to seek them out.

I think to myself, "Why didn't I go up and see Bernard Maybeck?" I always admired his Palace of Fine Arts. He was living up in the hills there in Berkeley. Why didn't I go up and see him, just walk in? Well, I didn't. There were scores of others, business people in Berkeley, on and off campus, but you just didn't do that. Why? You didn't have the time or the brains.

Dorfman: Or the experience?

Kuhn: Or the experience. It looks easy now, but a young person has all of these hangups--the fear of rejection, what would he talk about, what would he have to offer to the conversation? But there's got to be a system, because if he can't talk to his parents, and if he can't talk to the faculty, and his friends aren't that skilled, who in the hell is he going to talk to? There's got to be someone.

This book I'm reading now, this third chapter of the one I just finished called The Sun at Noon, by Angoff, his four years at Harvard--it shows the utter frustration, the ups and downs. One day he's happy; the next day he's sad. He'd be happy and sad six times a day, but he's always thinking, "What am I doing? Where am I going? Am I disappointing my folks? What would they think if I told them this?" He had no friends to whom he was really close, and this is true of so many students at Berkeley.

When you look at the morbidity rate on the college campus in mental illness and suicide, it's staggering, mostly because people build up these complexes and fears about things that are never going to happen. But they don't know that, and they think that they are unique, believe it or not. Thousands and millions have gone through it all before.

Dorfman: Let's stop here.

[end tape 7, side B]

X A RELIGIOUS SCHOOL EDUCATOR'S EXPERIENCES, 1940-1977

[begin tape 8, side A]

Teaching at Temple Emanu-El, 1940-1953, 1971-1977

Dorfman: You were a teacher at Temple Emanu-El for a number of years. Could you tell me about your work in that role?

Kuhn: The first two years [1940-1942] I taught the eighth grade. This was primarily the history of the Jews in the United States, which is generally considered a lethal subject. Then, after that, I always taught the confirmation class (students in their sophomore year in high school), and generally in conjunction with the rabbi of the congregation. That, of course, was a great challenge. These were kids in their last year in Sunday school, and you tried to get them inspired so that they would continue in the youth group and the high school class following confirmation.

I had some really marvelous kids over the years, students who went on to have great academic records in college. In one class I had students, one of whom became an Oxford scholar, one was the captain of the Harvard track team, another was the University medalist with a 4.0 average at Berkeley, and all in one class at Emanu-El.

One of my greatest teaching experiences was one Saturday--we met on Saturday at 9:30 until 10:25, and the students were then expected to go to services at 10:30 till 12:00. We were discussing some point (and all of the students went down at 10:25, except about four girls and myself) and we began arguing this point and continued and finally I said, "We better get down there before the sermon starts," and I looked at my watch and it was 1:30. We'd been going at it for three hours.

Dorfman: Why was the history of the Jews in the United States so lethal?

Kuhn: Merely because I was still in college. I didn't know enough beyond the text, which was lethal. It really isn't an inspirational subject. It's a factual subject of the waves of migration, the institutions they formed, things about modern Jewish problems of assimilation and intermarriage. Too much of the subject matter is defensive, showing that Jews in this country did their part, whether serving in the armed forces or creating institutions. But it's not in the main-stream of the Jewish people, unless you know how to teach it much more subtly than I could then. I could do it now. But there's not really enough tragedy in it to be truly Jewish.

In other words, you could do a much better job if you could teach the history of the Jews of the western states than you could of the history of the Jews in the entire United States, because then you're talking about the Jews of the Lower East Side and millions of Jews in New York City. That's impossible for a kid to really project. When you talk about San Francisco and show maps of the city, where Temple Emanu-El was, this they can see. It's their own family.

Dorfman: Did you ever teach that course again at a later date?

Kuhn: History of the Jews in the United States?

Dorfman: Yes.

Kuhn: No, no. Now, at Temple Beth El in San Mateo, where I was principal for eighteen years, I didn't teach any classes except an occasional confirmation class. But I considered that having religious school assemblies, either the whole school or by departments, was my teaching opportunity to teach the whole school, whether I was showing a film, or having someone demonstrate Guide Dogs for the Blind, or having someone to speak about Biafra, after which we raised food and medicine and shipped them to Biafra. A lot of this program was in connection with the Tzedakah program. That was my teaching of the kids, via the assembly program.

I still maintain a healthy relationship with a tremendous number of kids I taught or whom I had in basketball, and my children often say, "Everybody in San Francisco either played basketball for you or was a student at Temple Emanu-El or Beth El." As a matter of fact, one of the heartwarming things is the number of kids whom I taught in recent years whose parents I taught in the '30s and '40s.

Dorfman: Did you really?

Kuhn: Oh, yes, many of them, many of them. In fact, I have a photograph that's in this year's Scroll of the Howard Miller family of four. I taught Howard, the father, in '42; Ellie, the mother, in '47; one daughter, Jean, in '75; and the other daughter, Susan, in '77-- the first complete family I've taught. But there are several other families where I have taught all three children of this generation. It's a great satisfaction.

The Scroll, 1977-5737

MARSHALL KUHN AND THE MILLER FAMILY



During several decades on our Religious School faculty, Marshall H. Kuhn (second from right) has served as Principal, Confirmation Class and Eighth Grade teacher, and basketball coach. Many of his students over the past few years have been the children of men and women whom he taught a generation ago.

All four members of the Howard Miller family were in Mr. Kuhn's classes. Susan (far left) was confirmed in 1975, while Jean (far right) is a 1977 Confirmand. Their mother, Eleanor (nee Willard) (center), was confirmed in 1947, the class that hiked Tamalpais in the rain! Her husband, Howard (second from left) was in the 1941-42 Eighth Grade class which made a field trip to the Jewish Home for the Aged on December 7, 1941. Returning to Temple, they heard over their car radios the broadcast of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, marking the start of World War II. For Mr. Kuhn and other teachers who entered the Armed Forces, the world was never quite the same again.

Photograph by Gary Haas



Dorfman: I'm sure it is.

Kuhn: The way I do it is to tell the parents, if I'm on good terms with them as adults, "Don't tell your child you had me. That's the kiss of death. He won't want to come to my class. Let him find out for himself if I'm any good or not." In fact, I'm a better teacher now than I was when I started out.

But, again, one of the techniques I used because it was pleasurable to me was to get the kids out of the classroom, either on a field trip, such as a trip to the Jewish Home for the Aged, or taking the whole class bicycling in Golden Gate Park, or hiking on Tamalpais. I have taken classes in both the rain and the snow on Tamalpais, as well as in sunshine. I'd take them on picnics--get them out of the classroom.

Let them see their teacher is a human being and they'll respond so much better. Then any time you put in is all to the good, even if you look at it only as an investment of time. I looked it as just a chance to have a lot of fun with a lot of nice kids who happened to be my students. Believe me, I recommend it to every teacher. Most of them don't do it. They're lazy and crazy.

I want to add one thing here, if I may, an unfinished thought. What I expected from the University--I never expected Cal to prepare me as an undergraduate for a career. I think that's the job of a professional school. I really think the undergraduate college is a place to teach you, whatever you study, how to solve a particular problem involved in your course of study. It's a place to teach you how to do the library research, the techniques of whom to see, the way you do it, the way you write it up, so that writing skills are important to me and spelling does count.

I think it's a problem-solving technique more than anything else, so that you can carry it on into future life when you're not at the university. I think the main thing is to teach you a love of learning and a love of books, because those will always be around.

Founding the Jewish Youth Athletic League, 1946

Dorfman: What can you tell me now about the founding of the Jewish Youth Athletic League at Temple Emanu-El?

Kuhn: First of all, I was the athletic director from 1936 to 1942 and also from 1946 to 1953. In 1946 I was teaching a confirmation class and I was also basketball coach and I felt we ought to have

Kuhn: some organized competition with other schools. So we got all the Jewish religious schools in San Francisco together (there weren't as many then as there are now) and we added to it the Jewish Community Center, the Concordia Argonaut Club, and Homewood Terrace. So we had about eight teams all told.

We organized a league, and the first winner was Congregation Chevra Thrilion on 25th Avenue. Then gradually we dropped the Concordia Argonaut Club, Homewood Terrace, and the Jewish Community Center, because many of their boys played on religious school teams already. We added teams from Temple Beth Abraham and Temple Sinai from the East Bay. Then, when new schools were formed on the Peninsula and in Marin, we substituted them for the East Bay teams. Now, this has gone on continuously ever since that first year in '46-'47, although there are some people who feel that it is much more recent than that.

But if you check the San Francisco Jewish Bulletin, I was the first, you might say, commissioner of that league because besides coaching Emanu-El I handled all the assignment of referees and courts and everything else for the whole league. It's always been a big success. I wanted it to go beyond basketball. I wanted it to go beyond just the ninth or tenth grades, and I wanted to involve girls, but that involves a lot of expenditure of time and money. No one's really done it. So it's primarily just boys' basketball, although some schools have girls on their teams. Luckily, I haven't seen that. I'm not sure I could stand it. [Chuckles]

Dorfman: Were there any athletics prior to 1946?

Kuhn: Temple Emanu-El always had a gym. We always had basketball. We didn't have an organized league. We'd schedule games with other religious schools if they had a team, or with outside organizations like the Booker T. Washington Center. Anybody who had a team--Town School, for example--anybody who had a team where you could get a good game.

But, as I say, there was no league. There was nothing organized about it, and I thought we should have a league and put the boys in competition, realizing that most of these boys, as far as basketball is concerned, would never grow to be tall enough to really be varsity players anywhere. Basketball is a game, unfortunately, which is tied directly to height, and most Jewish kids don't grow to be that tall.

But they can enjoy success in their own religious school, and it's been proven that there were any number of instances where boys stayed in religious schools just to play basketball. I took a tough line; if you didn't show up for school that day, you didn't play that afternoon. So it's been a successful thing over the years.

Dorfman: And it did help to encourage attendance at school.

Kuhn: Absolutely. Not only attendance, but enrollment. Muscular Judaism we called it. [Laughter]

Dorfman: When would you say athletics were introduced at Temple Emanu-El?

Kuhn: When the Temple House was built in '27 they put in a gymnasium and Rabbi Newman had this concept of all these clubs--basketball clubs, chess clubs, stamp clubs--and that's when I first started playing. I was just a kid. Then, of course, when the Jewish Community Center opened at California Street and Presidio Avenue in 1932, at which time Rabbi Newman had left Congregation Emanu-El, the athletic programs and clubs at Emanu-El weren't anywhere near as strong as they had started out to be. We still had a basketball team. In fact, the great star at the University of California in football, Henry Schaldach, was our coach in my confirmation class. (Hank Schaldach scored all twenty-one points for the West team in the Shriner game in his senior year.) Emanu-El has had basketball ever since.

Now, what happened was that during the '50s, when the birth rate went up and the size of the student body increased, they had to get more classrooms at Emanu-El. So they divided off Guild Hall on the top floor into more classrooms and then they put Guild Hall, the social hall, down in the basement where the gym was, and so they no longer have a gym.

The basketball teams now use public facilities, high schools and junior high schools, for practice and games. So it's always been carried on, ever since I can remember, ever since the mid-'20s, in some form or another. But now it's more highly developed as far as the ninth and tenth grade boys are concerned. There are other aspects of the athletic program that could be developed a lot more.

Principalship at Peninsula Temple Beth El, 1953-1970

Dorfman: You became the principal of the Peninsula Temple Beth El in San Mateo. Why?

Kuhn: Why?

Dorfman: Yes. What prompted you to move from Temple Emanu-El?

Kuhn: Well, I had been principal at Emanu-El for one year, from '47 to '48. Rabbi Fine came then and he wanted to run the school himself. So I went back to teaching confirmation class with him and also supervising

Kuhn: the upper grades. Then the school continued to grow and they brought in a full-time educator from the East, Herbert Zuckerman, who was at Emanu-El one year. Then Rabbi Fine brought in Rabbi Meyer Heller as his assistant, later his associate, and he ran the school.

The Peninsula Temple Beth El had been organized in 1951. They had a principal, Eric Gattman, who came down with polio, and he had to slow up his activities. They were looking for a principal and Rabbi Sanford Rosen asked Rabbi Fine, "Do you know anybody?" He said, "Well, Marshall used to be our principal and he's not any more, but maybe he's available." So I met with Rabbi Rosen and he said, "Okay. I'm going to ask Rabbi Fine if I can borrow you for a year." And this started a series of letters every year, for eighteen years: "We'd like to renew the loan of Marshall," as if I were some kind of a chattel. [Chuckles]

But I went because they offered me, of course, more compensation than I could possibly earn at Emanu-El, and it was a chance to do a really top administrative job, although it was very, very time-consuming—very, very physically demanding. It was twenty-five miles each way from my home to the Temple. There were periods there where out of eleven consecutive days I might drive to San Mateo nine times, for the Jewish holidays, religious school meetings, and so on.

But I just kept going, and there never was a chance for me to come back to Emanu-El on any comparable basis. I was offered the principalship in the late '50s when Rabbi Fine was on sabbatical, but that would have been only for one year. I didn't want to leave Beth El just for one year at Emanu-El. So I stayed at Beth El for eighteen years and I left there in December, 1970 for good. In fact, I had left in '55 when they brought in a cantor-educator at Beth-El, but he wasn't really qualified to handle the educational part of it, so they asked me to come back after six months. It was continuous from then until the time I left.

I just felt at that point I had had it, and I hadn't had any chance to participate directly in the formal education of my own children. When I left Beth El, I asked my youngest daughter Nancy if she would like to be in my confirmation class at Emanu-El. She said yes, she would. So I taught her class, which was a lot of fun. I had a great time.

In her class I started something I did for six years. This was to start the school year by taking the whole class, or as many as wanted to go, up to the Mother Lode for a weekend to visit the pioneer Jewish cemeteries. Of course, we'd leave San Francisco on a Saturday, and you can't visit a cemetery on a Saturday, so we would do something else.

1963



Religious School



Deep Are The Roots

Our Religious School Principal, Mr. Marshall H. Kuhn, Co-Chairman of the 1963 Jewish Welfare Federation campaign, is shown planting a tree in the Peninsula Temple Beth El sector of the American Freedom Forest of the Jewish National Fund during his recent visit to Israel. Mr. Kuhn visited Israel as a member of the United Jewish Appeal overseas study mission.

This sector of the Forest is a project of the Temple Beth El Religious School Children and was planted during Tu B'shevat (Jewish Arbor Day) in 1958. Rabbi and Mrs. Sanford Rosen dedicated this forest last year on their trip to Israel.

The Beth El children will continue to fulfill their project during this years' Tu B'shevat observance on February 10.

The Congregation records with sorrow
the passing of

FREDA FELDMAN
Mother of Mr. B. B. Feldman
and
ISADORE GORDON
Father of Mr. Sam Gordon

Ice Skating Party

9th and 10th grade Youth group is going to have an Ice Skating Party on Saturday, January 26, 1963.



Combined Youth Group Event

Ski Trip on Saturday, February 16, 1963 leaving for Dodge Ridge at 5:00 a.m. Equipment will be rented at Dodge Ridge.

There will be a stop for breakfast and dinner, bring your own lunch. The return to the Temple will be at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Transportation charge and insurance—\$6.50.

Space limited—Sign up with the Temple office before January 16.



Another Program On Judaism

Commencing in January, a regular weekly program, "JUDAISM TODAY", is to be produced by the Board of Rabbis of Northern California, on Station KTVU, Channel 2, every Wednesday morning 10:20 to 10:30. It will be a religious education and information program featuring important community, national and world-wide events and programs.

January 16—New Judah Magnes Jewish Museum in Oakland.

January 23—Union of American Hebrew Congregations.



A Proper Site

During the construction of the new Jerusalem School of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, devoted to Biblical and Archaeological studies, which will be opened next year, Dr. Nelson Glueck, President of the College, noticed a semi-circular, vertical white limestone ridge. To his eyes, the trained eyes of an archaeologist, this appeared to be the kind of artificially carved escarpment under which tombs or burial caves are found.

Sure enough, preliminary soundings have already revealed a series of burial caves and in all probability others will be found—on the very grounds of the school.

Also found on the grounds was an ancient Byzantine lamp some 15 centuries old. It will be used in the School Chapel at the first Kiddush service when the school opens.



Bulletin Schedule . . .

Material in by Jan. 25 for publication Feb. 11

Material in by Feb. 8 for publication Feb. 25

Material in by Feb. 22 for publication March 11



Magazine Subscriptions

Be sure to call your chairman, Thelma Bass, at FI 1-0377 when purchasing any magazine subscriptions. Remember, Sisterhood gets credit for your purchase.

Kuhn: For example, in 1972 we went to Oroville. We visited the dam, the fish hatchery, the Chinese museum, all the things in the town. Then we went out and had dinner at Country Smorgy and then went to our camp site up above the dam.

I told the class the story of Ishi, America's last wild Indian, who was discovered at Oroville in 1911. I had written a special Havdalah service, following which we would start a campfire. Kids would then start playing their musical instruments and singing, and they would talk practically all night. Meanwhile, I'd try to get at least a little sleep.

The next morning we got up, I served them hot chocolate, and we left to visit Jewish cemeteries. In this case, we visited Oroville and Marysville. This is a great educational experience because for many of the children it was their first visit to a cemetery, but in a completely impersonal way. They didn't know anyone who was buried there. These are cemeteries where the last burial may have been fifty or a hundred years ago. Often we went to Sonora, which is probably the most beautiful of the cemeteries. One year we went to Grass Valley and Nevada City and helped to rededicate the Nevada City Cemetery, which the Commission on the Preservation of Pioneer Jewish Cemeteries and Landmarks (an activity of the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum) had just taken title to. In 1977 we went to Mokulume Hill and Jackson, staying overnight at Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

So it's the whole experience of being away from the school with your class for thirty-six hours, sleeping out of doors, just relaxing. I asked the kids in all honesty to please tell me what they thought of this adventure: "Don't kid me by giving me the answers you think I want. Just tell me three things, in the order of importance, that you got out of this weekend, and don't sign your name, and don't ask your neighbor."

I had given them a very loose rein over the weekend, but I had talked to them seriously three times over the two days, once during the Havdalah service and again in each of the two cemeteries we visited.

Their responses indicated that they liked my remarks the most, which was pleasing to me because it indicated that the youngsters realized that the trip was a learning opportunity. I really spoke from the heart each time--my concepts of death and what I felt that this signified as far as Jewish history in California and the West was concerned. Many of them had come from the East. California was really part of their own family heritage now.

Kuhn: In telling the story of Ishi, I read Dr. Saxton Pope's statement about Ishi's death, which is one of the most magnificent statements in the English language. Well, that was the most important thing on the weekend to some of them.

Surprisingly, a lot of them said, "Being able to see the stars." Many of them had not been outdoors at night where there was complete darkness around, where they could see stars. Of course, there above the Oroville Dam there's almost no other light, and there are stars by the billion out in magnificent display.

One student said, "The Havdalah, but don't serve burgundy next year." [Laughter]

So it's a greatly satisfying experience, because some of the kids--very few, but some of them--would write me a note. One girl who had been at Sunday school for ten years said, "I had a few friends before I left. Now I have over thirty friends." And she had been in Sunday school her whole life. There's a chance for them really to mingle. A lot of them will be the only Jewish kid in their own class in school. They don't all go to the same schools. And it's a great educational experience if you know how to do it.

I finally killed myself with success, because last year I took not only thirty-nine kids from Emanu-El but six from Sherith Israel. The whole group, including aides, was over fifty, and that's just too many to move around. But I've told Rabbi Magid and Rabbi Asher to cut the size of the group down, to continue the Mother Lode trips, to take at least two groups each year. Unfortunately, however, I understand the trips will not take place during the school year 1977-1978.

Dorfman: What did you tell the youngsters at the cemetery?

Kuhn: Well, I would tell them that in this particular cemetery, particularly if it was Sonora--if it wasn't Sonora, I would tell them about Sonora. There was an excerpt from a poem that appears on a gravestone in Sonora and it reads, "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die." This sentence is very attractive to the children. This is what they really believe.

One child, Amy Waldman, wrote in her autobiography--I have every confirmand write an autobiography before the year starts, a Jewish autobiography. I tell them briefly what facts I want, so I can really figure out just where they are. Some of them become philosophical. Amy was a remarkable girl and she began to write about death. She said, "I don't believe in your spirit floating around in heaven, and I think the worst thing in life would be to die and no one cares. I believe that you only live on in what people remember about you, the good things." So I've saved that and I use it every year to read to the other children.

Kuhn: One of the students in another class took the poem on the Sonora gravestone and made his confirmation speech tying the poem in with the Yom Kippur War. "To live in hearts we leave behind," a beautiful tribute by Danny Terris.

I tell kids that this poem is the way I also feel. I really can't conceive of all of these feelings of immortality. But basically, physiologically and psychologically, I really believe that we do live on in what people remember about us, the good deeds one does. I said, "That's the way I remember my parents and my brothers, and you're going to have to struggle with this yourself. I don't have all the answers. I have even more questions. Even your parents and grandparents don't have all the answers. They're struggling themselves in an age much beyond yours. They're much closer to being in a cemetery some day. And I just want you to think about it sometimes, as to what may be on your parents' and grandparents' minds. I don't want this to be morbid. It's a fact of life. Every animal or plant or species dies. We have no proof that life or death is better than the other. It's part of the whole process of life."

The kids think about this. They really do. I just make it brief and just tell them that this is part of Judaism. You have to realize that you just can't put it off in the corner somewhere and say, "It's not going to happen to us." It does happen. In Judaism we say, "The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord." They seem to understand this.

Then we go around the cemeteries and we look at tombstones, and they begin to realize the changes in society in the last century. In Oroville there are four headstones above children's graves; one child was two years of age, one was four, and one was eight, all in the same family. They look at certain graves in the Jackson cemetery. Here's a grave of a woman who had three children who died; one was stillborn and the other two died at one and three days of age. Now, beyond that, all these early deaths at Jackson--if you got beyond the fifth year, you could live to seventy. Well, they will look at all these things and they begin to think, "Oh, my gosh!"

Dorfman: It's a new awareness for them.

Kuhn: "These deaths were not due to war," I said, "but to disease. This was lack of medical knowledge. This was an absence of obstetrical care, whatever it might be. This is why Jews had large families. Can you imagine this woman who had three children die at childbirth, really, and her attitude that she hadn't produced an heir for her husband? Can you imagine psychologically what she had to live with?" Well, they began to think of this.

Kuhn: We had a marvelous thing up in Oroville. There was a husband and wife who died on the same day, 1877. So I asked, "Can you explain this?" "A car accident." I said, "No, it's a nice try." [Chuckles] But I actually had Bob Levinson [Robert E. Levinson, Ph.D., San Jose State University] look it up in the city records up there. The husband and wife were both quite ill, and one died in the morning and one in the afternoon, quite independently of each other. But it's fascinating. You'll come across a tombstone in Marysville of someone born in 1789. Another tombstone says, "So-and-So killed by a highwayman on the way to Laporte." I said, "You know, he's probably stealing gold." The tombstones are fascinating.

We were up in Placerville, a little Jewish cemetery, and the previous night I had taken them to see Billy Jack. I don't know if you saw the movie Billy Jack--quite a remarkable movie, very unusual. The two bad guys are Mr. Posner and his son Bernie, and their attitude toward the Indians is in the worst American tradition.

So the next day we were having lunch at Colma, the Gold Discovery State Park near Sutter's Mill. So I asked these kids, "Is there anything about the movie that strikes you as anti-Semitic? Well, let me tell you something. You just saw a grave this morning that says, 'So-and-So, native of Posen,' so he could be a Posner, just like the native of Hamburg is a Hamburger, and a native of Berlin is a Berliner. Posner is the same name as was in that movie last night. You never heard of anyone named Posner in a movie before, did you, or on TV or radio?" "No." I said, "Well, that's a Jewish name. You ought to think about that. I'm not saying that the movie is anti-Semitic at all, but it's something to think about. Why not Smith or Jones or Brown or Johnson? Why Posner?" Well, I'll tell you, it shook them up. And that's the whole idea, to make them think.

Several times I took classes to see a man named Kenneth Fox. He's a dentist in Auburn, and there's no Jewish cemetery there, but it's on the way either to Placerville or to Grass Valley. He's a man who in his mid-thirties decided that he wanted to become a sculptor as a hobby. So he took it up and he has a huge studio behind his dental office. He's got sculptures that are small and some that are big. Some are fifty tons, huge things, huge things.

He was commissioned by several veterans' posts to create a peace statue, which he did, but unlike most peace statues which are really war statues, his was a Bill Mauldin-type GI carrying a dead buddy in his arms. On the pedestal it says, "Why?" And they put this statue in front of the county administration building and connected an eternal flame, and Dr. Fox paid the gas bill.

Kuhn:

A few years later someone on the five-member county board of supervisors complained, "We can't have that statue here anymore because the draft board is in this building and a potential draftee doesn't want to go by looking at that." So they were going to vote on getting rid of this statue.

So Dr. Fox went to a packed meeting of the board of supervisors and he said, "Look, I can't speak well and I can't write well, but I can create a sculpture and this is my method of expression. I had a niece, eighteen, who died, and I wondered why, and I said, "I wonder why people die in Vietnam." I don't know the answer, and you're infringing on my right of free expression under the First Amendment."

So they voted three to two to move the statue, which wasn't enough because one supervisor said, "My dear colleagues, in this county it has to be four to one to do anything that involves the expenditure of money, and it would cost some money to move that statue, so we can't move it."

I asked him, "Did you lose any patients because of this?" "I lost some and I gained some," he said, "but the worst thing that happened was that the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars and all the other veteran organizations who were sponsors when they wanted to put the statue up--by the time it was supposed to be removed, none of them came to my defense."

So our class went to his studio and would pick Dr. Fox up on our bus. We'd drive half a mile to where the statue was, and I would tell the kids, "I'm going to tell you in front of Dr. Fox that he's a guy with guts, which is the rarest commodity in the world. Brains aren't rare. Physical ability isn't rare, but guts are rare. Here's a guy who laid it on the line."

He would talk to them, and one kid said, "Isn't there a little flower between the fingers of that dead GI?" He said, "You're the first one who's ever noticed that." So when we left him I told the kids, "Now, there's a guy who's a little nuts, but in such a beautiful way."

We visited Dr. Fox three times. That's some kind of an educational experience that you're not going to get anywhere else. You're out in the boonies, out in Auburn, to find a guy who was willing to lay it on the line for truth. These were the kinds of things I would try to bring up on these weekends. They were all very, very gratifying--the kids' responses. It also unified the class after confirmation year just started. Their response to everything else that came later in the year was more positive because they realized, "The guy teaching us, he's an okay guy."

Dorfman: There was more of an acceptance?

Kuhn: Absolutely, absolutely, absolutely.

Major Contributions as a Teacher and Principal

Dorfman: What would you say your major contribution to that Temple was?

Kuhn: To Temple Emanu-El?

Dorfman: To Temple Beth El.

Kuhn: My major contribution to Beth El? Well, we ran a very effective, efficient school. For a long time every member of the faculty was a member of the congregation and had his own child in the school, so he definitely had a personal interest. It was a school well run administratively. There wasn't any lost time, any lost motion, any noise. I would say that's the way a school should be.

I would say the two things I did there--one was the Tzedakah program, getting the kids aware of some of the organizations they were contributing to by involving them--for example, marching for UNICEF. I'd take the sixth grade to the graduation of Guide Dogs for the Blind in San Rafael so the children would know what that agency was. The seventh grade I took to the Jewish Home for the Aged. As I say, we had several speakers over the years from the SS Hope, which is a tremendous program. Our kids saw a doctor who gave three months out of his life at no pay in order to help people of another nation. I said, "That's the greatest thing America has done." So the Tzedakah program was the first thing.

The second is that when we built the new school and when we expanded it, I insisted they include a library the size of two classrooms, and that was my baby. That's the thing I'm proudest of because I believe that if you can get a kid to read, or an adult, and have a Jewish book at his bedside, you've doubled or tripled your teaching time. So we use the library to try to stimulate the reading habit.

There was our yell: "Two, four, six, eight, who do we appreciate? Beth El!" Except I made it, "Alef, bet, gimel, dolid, we're the team that's really solid!"

[The following insert was recorded during an editing session with Marshall H. Kuhn at his home at 30 7th Avenue, San Francisco, on March 27, 1978.]

Kuhn: Again, in a light vein, let me tell you a story. At the time I retired as principal of Temple Beth El, the educators council of the Bureau of Jewish Education, which is a group consisting of all the principals of religious schools, of which I was one of the founders and one of the past chairmen, gave me a dinner and a gift. And in my response, with tongue in cheek, I said, "I assume all of you have read Michener's The Source." And they all had. "Well, the book after that, Iberia, had also great Jewish overtones." And, fortunately for me, none of them had read it. I said that you could trace migrations of Jews by where esrogim would grow, the esrog, because you had to have esrog for Succoth.

There's a similar tradition as far as horseradish is concerned. In Iberia, Michener points out that the best horseradish is not grown up by the Basques in the mountains, but along the flatlands. As a matter of fact, this has entered Jewish liturgy, and you may have heard sometime in the recent past that there is a song that is quite popular, and it goes something like this, "The chrain in Spain grows mainly on the plain. By jove, I think he's got it!"

Well, I sure had them, I'll tell you.

[end of insert]

Dorfman: What can you tell me about your work as principal at Emanu-El?

Kuhn: Well, it was just a year thing. At the start of the year, Irving Reichert was still rabbi, and he had known me as confirmand and basketball coach, and then I was a college student, and then I was in the Navy. He liked the way I taught the confirmation class. This was just after the war, when I came back. During the war there were practically no men on the Emanu-El faculty and the kids ran wild. Their goal was to see how many teachers they could knock off in a year. I came back and I replaced Barbara Bine Emerich. She was a probation officer during the week in the juvenile court. She said, "Marshall, I deal with delinquents all day long. You can have them on Sunday."

So it took me three months with this confirmation class of '46-'47 to make them realize that I was the teacher and they were the students and there was a difference, and then we had no trouble. We had a marvelous time after that.

Well, Irving Reichert liked the way I handled this class, so he said, "I would like you to be principal."

[end tape 8, side A; begin tape 8, side B]

Kuhn: Irving Reichert asked me to be the principal from '47 to '48. He liked the way I handled kids. He thought I was a disciplinarian, and he was sort of a law and order man as far as school was concerned. So I accepted. It was a very difficult thing because his own position was in jeopardy. In fact, he left Emanu-El in the middle of the school year. After that, my job for the last six months was just to keep the ship afloat, realizing there would soon be a new rabbi and there would obviously be changes.

This was difficult for me because the chairman of the religious school committee, Dan Hone, had definite ideas about religious education. The Temple was interviewing potential rabbis, and every Saturday afternoon he would get hold of a new prospective rabbi and ask for his ideas of religious education and then hit me the next week with, "That's the way we ought to run our school," that week. The next week he'd have different ideas, and I was going crazy. But it worked out all right. That was just the one year.

Actually, in many schools when the secretary runs the school, she may be the only full-time employee on the school staff. This is one of the biggest problems in Jewish education in America, that the number of schools that have part-time principals who are businessmen or public school teachers or whatever else they may do, and run the religious school on their peripheral time, form the majority. Especially in the West and in San Francisco particularly, in this area, part-time principalship seems to be more common than elsewhere.

The number of cases where you have a cantor-educator running the school, or a full-time educator, out here is very, very minimal. There's really no incentive for any man to come out and do it, because he's sort of in a vacuum if he's the only one who's doing it that way. If the man is a cantor-educator, his time is split between the two duties, and most of them, frankly, are more cantors than they are educators. These are not particularly compatible professions. Yet all the literature you read in pedagogical magazines seems always directed to the full-time man.

I thought someday I might do an article on what it's like to really run a Sunday school on just the reserves of your energy. The school says, "You have a part-time principal. Why not give him a part-time secretary?" There may be actually no one who's full-time with respect to the school, which is the leading activity of the whole congregation. Far more kids come to Sunday school than parents go to a service, and for a longer period of time, and yet, because it's kids, the adults don't really pay the school the full service they should, and they're going to get what they pay for.

Kuhn: This part-time work after a full business day is known as moonlighting. But, take it from me, there's nothing romantic about it. I used to come back from Beth El, sometimes at four or five o'clock in the morning, and I'd have to stop in Golden Gate Park and sleep for five minutes just to get enough strength to drive down to 7th Avenue. It just was physically debilitating many times.

A lot of it you do by phone, by dictaphone, and then, as I say, you depend upon the skill of whatever secretary or whatever secretarial help you do have, and frequently that changes. Or maybe they'll say, "Well, we'll have you divide the secretary between the rabbi and yourself." The rabbi is right there in the office, and if his sermon has to be typed, then you're going to take what secretarial time is left, if any.

Frequently on a Sunday morning I would drive to my office downtown and mimeograph the teachers' notice and then drive to San Mateo. So every time you went out on Saturday night you had to wonder, "What do I have to do Sunday morning before I go down there?" It's a huge problem; it really is. No one really understands it, unless he's done it.

Dorfman: What did you mean when you said you felt that parents were the last frontier?

Kuhn: Let me give you examples. You'll schedule a back-to-school night, either for the whole school or for certain grades. The percentage of parents who come is so small, even if you hip it up with free food or a drawing or something like that. Now, you can come to several conclusions. The most heartening is to say, "Well, you're doing such a great job that they don't have to come. Their absence is their seal of approval." I don't believe that.

I believe they don't really care. What they're really saying to you is, "Do whatever you want to our kids as effectively as possible, stuff as much information in them in two hours, just so long as we can make our car pool. We're not going to give you any more time on Sunday. We'll give you more time during the week if the kid's preparing for bar mitzvah." Basically that's it. There are few exceptions, but not many.

So you might say that a one-day-a-week school is bound to fail, and the day school movement really shows this in a way, although some of these enrollments of day schools are really not all that valid. You get some parents who put their kids in a Hebrew day school because it's a private school. There are no blacks, there are smaller classes, there's a lot of teacher-pupil contact, and they're learning a foreign language which now is accepted for admission at high schools, colleges, and so on. So some of this is not really the desire of the parents for the kid to have a more intense religious education.

Kuhn: The point is, what does a kid do with it, with any education, when he brings it home, if he has parents who say, "Look, it's all right for you to learn about Passover in Sunday school, but your mother doesn't want to make a seder." This is one of the biggest frustrations in the world. There is virtually nothing that a kid can't do if taught by a parent or a teacher. The adult doesn't have to do it, but the kid can do it if he's taught properly--conducting the services, preparing Friday night's dinner, and so on.

Temple Beth El had its twenty-fifth anniversary this year, and they asked me to write a piece for an ad book that will come out next month and will talk about highlights during my career there. I pointed out that one of the frightening things was that every Passover we had a model seder in each classroom. We would have one of the Sisterhood ladies as a mother to serve the model foods and a father of one of the children to lead the service, with all the kids as his children.

And how many fathers there were who wouldn't do this! Some would even come the week before for training and then call up during the week and cancel out. They just could not perform that role. Frightening. Now, the article I submitted for the ad book contained this observation about using fathers to conduct class seders. When the ad book was actually released, however, they had shortened my article and eliminated this reference. "Shortage of space," they explained. My explanation is that unpleasant truths may not be compatible with nostalgia.

Dorfman: Why do you think they were--

Kuhn: Because of an inadequacy within themselves, really, really. It's frightening because the men have abdicated to women. The Sisterhood runs the show. Almost every men's club, first of all, doesn't represent all the men. It represents only a small percentage of the men, and only a small percentage of that percentage are active. You take Judaism the way it was for centuries--the men ran it. The show was a man's place. The women were upstairs or behind the curtain.

I'm not saying this is true everywhere, but it's true at least in the reform movement. It's just a horrible thing. It's a vicarious thing. We send our kids to the dentist to get their teeth straightened, to the oboe teacher to learn music, and we're sending them to religious school to become religious, even though we're not religious ourselves. That can't be done.

Kuhn: Have I told you the piano analogy? The piano analogy is this, and I told this at a parents' meeting one time. If you have a child and you want that child to learn to play the piano, you arrange for lessons and you buy records and tapes. You see Leonard Bernstein on television, and you have the kid watch that, and he hears the Standard School Broadcast. He may go to a symphony concert or hear a Young Audience concert. But the most important thing is that you have a piano in your home for the kid to practice on, because without that nothing else will work.

I'm saying that unless you have a piano in your home, a Jewish piano, nothing we do here can work. You're just kidding yourself, and I won't kid you, and I won't kid myself. Unless you do it in your home, it ain't going to work. There's just no way. The kid has to see his parents do it.

I said, "If you want it to start simply, without worrying about all these books on these shelves, just take this little pamphlet and observe the Kiddush each Friday night. There's no way you can do it wrong, even if you can't remember the prayers. Think up your own. You bless the candles, you bless the bread, the wine, you bless your children. That's all, and you've blessed yourself. Start with that."

Well, I have no idea how many do, but that's really how simple it is. But we've gotten so far away from it, it's just shocking. So that's what I mean. The parents are the last frontier, because up to a certain age the kids are going to do what the parents want.

I had a father who said to me, "I want you to get my kid to go to Sunday school." So I said, "Son, come over here. Why won't you go to Sunday school?" He said, "Well, my dad invites me out on his boat each Sunday." I said, "Is this true?" The father said, "Yes." I said to the boy, "Suppose your father said you had to go to Sunday school." He said, "Well, I'd go." So I turned to the father and said, "What are you talking to me for? Talk to yourself. Talk to your son. He's your son."

Whenever I used to make an appeal for funds to the Sunday school, I'd just tell the finance committee and the board of directors, "Look, they're your children. They're not my children. They're your children. What do you want for them?" And they never cut my budget.

Dorfman: They never cut your budget?

Kuhn: No, never, never.

Indications for Change in Religious School Instruction

Dorfman: How has religious instruction at Temple Emanu-El changed since your childhood?

Kuhn: Well, I'm not an expert in it, except for my own class, because the confirmation class and the high school class are in a separate division of the school, entirely set apart from the kindergarten and the first nine grades. It depends upon teachers. I'm really not impressed with the quality of the faculty at Emanu-El. There are some teachers who are exceptional, who have been there a long time, but a lot of others are there for only one year. Maybe they're a college student or an Israeli who doesn't have the time or the interest. I'm not sure they get all the support they need.

I base this not upon direct observation of the classes but upon what kids tell me and what parents tell me, that it's pretty much of a disaster area. I think this is really shocking. I think we should have learned something over the years that could make a teacher more effective. But it starts with teachers. It starts with recruitment, motivation, inspiration, praise--all the things that a teacher really wants. He really doesn't want compensation that much. He may need it for financial reasons, but what he really wants is recognition.

Years go by at Emanu-El, for example, where they completely disregard one of the Jewish holidays, Lag Baomer, which is a teacher-recognition day. It is rare that anyone ever says a good word for the teacher. By and large, no one cares.

In my thinking, the most important thing for a rabbi, who is my teacher, the teacher of children, is to get the congregation inspired to want to do what he's doing and give them more of his time. He should meet in his study and in his home, and spend time with them, and urge them to use the Jewish Community Library and take courses there and give some courses themselves, and really make the school a big thing. Then the future of your congregation is going to be assured. But if you can't inspire the kids, you're not going to inspire anybody else.

You only have them for ten years and that's really not much when you figure out it's thirty-four sessions a year, maximum, for two hours. But it can be built up more. You can use the camping program. You can use the summers. There are lots of ways it could be done, if you want to do it. But it's will. The resources are tremendous if you want to employ them. But it starts with deciding: (a) it's worthwhile, and (b) we can do it. In spite of setbacks we'll have, we can do it.

Kuhn: If you throw in the towel, you say, "Well, here we've tried it and it won't work," or, "They tried it somewhere else and it didn't work," or, "It isn't worth even trying"--only if you would participate. I don't know. Maybe one of the few would be a future rabbi. I don't know. I've had one kid who became a rabbi, Roger Herst, in my '53 class, and that's a good feeling.

Some of the teachers at Temple Emanu-El Religious School were John Gorfinkel; Louis Heilbron, prominent attorney and onetime president of the board of trustees of state colleges; David Rubenstein; Harold Levy; Myer Kahn; Daniel Berg; Walter Gabriel; George Goodday; and Ruth Samuelsen.

Then, in the year in which I was principal, I had three very distinguished teachers. One was George Karonsky, now a doctor of education and a prominent assistant superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District. David Robins, now the rabbi at Temple Emanu-El, San Jose. And another, William Zev Brinner, now professor of Near Eastern languages and thought at Berkeley.

Another fine teacher was Joseph B. Glaser, then a law student at the University of San Francisco, who was inspired by Rabbi Fine to go to rabbinical school when he finished his law studies and is now the executive vice-president of the Central Council of American Rabbis. So I wasn't dealing with a bunch of know-nothings, after all.

If you look at some schools over the years, they never produced enough kids for the rabbinate to even replace their own. It may be a symptom of our times in American life, in Jewish life, and in reform Jewish life. I don't know. The reform movement seems to me to spend an awful lot of time in narcissism, comforting ourselves that somehow we're better than the orthodox or conservative. I don't believe that anybody's better than anybody else. They're just different branches of the same school. But you've got to do something for the kids.

The point is that it's so rewarding. I've taken classes out to convalescent homes and had the kids conduct a seder for shut-ins, because hospitals have seders but nursing homes generally don't. The kids conducted the whole seder. They know how to read. They know how to chant or sing. The older people loved to hear them sing the songs, and the kids were doing something. An adult doesn't have to do it for them. He has to teach them the first time and then just sit back.

This is true of religion in the home. A little child can come along, seven years of age, and ask, "Mommy, can I set the table for Friday night?" Why not? Beautiful, beautiful. But if she pats the child on the head and says, "When you're older," or, "We're eating at McDonald's tonight"--no. Sometimes it gets very discouraging.

Kuhn:

But I'll tell you this. We have this summer program in Israel, and Temple Emanu-El actually sends a higher percentage of its kids than any other place in the country. This year I think we had forty-eight kids out of a class of seventy-three who spent seven weeks in Israel. Now, a lot of kids stay in the confirmation class in school just to qualify for that trip. That makes them more active in the high school class and the youth group afterwards, as teacher aides and so on.

Now, many of these kids continue their Hebrew studies or they go back to Israel to study, work, or travel. Certainly the level of Hebrew comprehension is much higher now. First of all, to be a bar mitzvah you have to go more years and more days a week than before. Secondly, as I say, because of this Israel experience a lot of kids are studying Hebrew particularly because it's recognized as an accepted foreign language by secondary schools and colleges. My own daughter Nancy goes now to the Bureau of Jewish Education each Wednesday night to study Hebrew. She went on the Israel summer trip five years ago.

All right, in a sense, even though I may have sounded pessimistic, it was only in relationship to the possibilities, because when I was in Sunday school it was far worse, far worse. It was so coldly performed. All the hymns were in English. There was very little Hebrew used, so that in a sense it's better now, and in another sense we are reversing the downward trend. We're doing something that we thought impossible, that in the fall from Judaism of the immigrant population--the orthodox became the reform; reform became atheist, sort of Universalist or Unitarians or Quakers--we're reversing that.

So the kids in many cases now--many cases--are a hell of a lot better Jews than their parents, particularly the ones who go to Israel on the summer trip. Their parents have never spent seven weeks in Israel, particularly of the intensity these kids get, the kind of experiences to which they're exposed. And then, if they go on to college, more and more universities are having courses in Judaica for credit. Berkeley certainly has far more now than it had when I was there. The Federation's endowment fund has just approved providing funds to assist Stanford in establishing a lectureship in Jewish Studies.

So it's better now. When I say it's bad now, it's still better than it was when I was there. When I was there, what did I do for bar mitzvah? I said the broches over the Torah in Hebrew and I read the Torah translation in English and the Haftorah in English. For that I had to give up a job that I really needed during the depression. It was ridiculous. Well, now you couldn't be bar mitzvah with that little preparation. You have to really train for several

Kuhn: years. So it is better. But, as I'm saying, related to the potential, it could be even better, I think. The parents are a large part of it.

Plus, the institution itself doesn't want to admit it's wrong. It doesn't really want to make a change, and unless there's a will to make a change there's no point in even having a survey to find out what kind of change you should make. If you do make a change, you don't change overnight.

I contend that any religious institution is just like any other educational institution. You can only make one major change a year, if that. You have to get everybody working together--parents, kids, faculty, administration--so you can't really turn around overnight. But I'm talking about educational level and the kids' interest and inspiration. It could be better, I think, than it is. But ours was just horrible. Ours was horrible.

Declining a Role in the Rabbinate

Dorfman: In view of your deep involvement and commitment to both Judaism and Jewish life, did you ever consider becoming a rabbi?

Kuhn: Oh, yes. During World War II, I got that idea and I talked to Rabbi Newman about it. Rabbi Reichert heard about it from him and was very disappointed that I hadn't discussed it with him first. But nothing came out of it because I really didn't have the Hebrew background, and that is a basic need.

Roger Herst didn't have it either, so when he was at Berkeley he studied Hebrew intensively as an undergraduate. But I was out of college by the time I was in the Navy, and it would have meant a tremendous involvement in time. I'm not really that good a student of foreign languages, and Hebrew is two foreign languages, two different alphabets.

Dorfman: Do you think you would have been a good rabbi?

Kuhn: Well, I might have been a good one. I don't know. I don't think I have a tough enough hide. You have to have a tough hide to be a rabbi. I don't like to be criticized, particularly unfairly, and rabbis are frequently criticized, no matter what kind of a stand they take. They aren't held in the esteem in which they should be held, but, of course, they're not perfect either.

Kuhn: The Central Conference of American Rabbis conducted a survey of the American Reform Rabbinate rabbis several years ago that revealed a tremendous number of rabbis have really serious doubts about their own commitment. That's a very shocking thing.

No, I felt that the way I've been able to serve, working with the kids, is possibly the best notch for me. I have a low threshold of tolerance with some of the adults in the congregation.

Dorfman: Have you ever regretted not becoming a rabbi?

Kuhn: Oh, no, no, no. There are a lot of things about being a rabbi that wouldn't appeal to me. I wouldn't want to conduct funerals particularly. I wouldn't want to put up with some of the absolute indignities to which a rabbi is frequently subjected by his board of directors, and that's true at Temple Emanu-El, believe me. They can be rough. I wouldn't want to be beholden to a group of laymen for my continued tenure. I'd be better off if I were a Catholic priest. The lay people don't have anything to say about it. No, I never regretted not becoming a rabbi at all, no.

Dorfman: I think we can stop here for tonight.

Kuhn: Okay.

[end tape 8, side B]

Perception of Teaching

[Interview 6: November 15, 1977]

[begin tape 9, side A]

Dorfman: Before we go on this evening, I would like to go back a little and pick up additional information. First of all, I would like to know how you feel about teaching.

Kuhn: I love to teach. I think it's one of the finest professions there is, and with everything I learned by reading or in experience I've always tried to figure out, what am I going to do with this, who am I going to share this with, and in what form can I use it to instruct the young, knowing all the time that you have no way at all of knowing what's going to stick with them. That's why it's like a beautiful--it's like a game. It comes back to you later on when you find out that some of the things you've said people remember and took seriously.

- Kuhn: It's just a marvelous thing. Maybe I say that because I feel like I've been a teacher, but I can't think of anything better. It's, first of all, the most beautiful part of the Jewish tradition. It's an exalted role. "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." This mitzvah set forth in the Torah represents the parents' primary obligation. And whether the teaching is conducted only by the parent or includes professional teachers engaged by the congregation, nonetheless it's an exalted role.
- Dorfman: You told me that Phoebe Litzberg Frank was one of the very memorable teachers at Temple Emanu-El.
- Kuhn: Yes, she was my kindergarten teacher. I wouldn't have any way of remembering what she taught, except that we had one game we played. Instead of musical chairs, it was musical squares, because we walked around. I remember I won and I got a book. She was just such a marvelous person and full of love for children, and you responded. I didn't have any idea why she did it. I think at that age the greatest thing is shyness. Small children have hang-ups the same as anybody else.
- Dorfman: Who was Dr. Henry Hart?
- Kuhn: Dr. Henry Hart was a man who was a great scholar, who had a degree in law and in pharmacy. He was secretary to Rabbi Martin Meyer and then he became active in Oriental fine arts groups. He and his wife had the big art goods store at Post and Powell, where United Airlines is today, which they operated, I guess, for several decades. After his wife passed away, he gave up the business. He would go over to China one or two times a year and buy things. He became quite an expert in Chinese and Japanese and translated a number of great classics, particularly from Chinese into English. I have copies of most of his books.
- He and I became friendly through Temple Emanu-El. I used to go over to his home and talk to him about all these things he knew. He had a great library and he had a great record collection. I even took several courses from him at UC Extension. He was a very unusual man, very hurt that he had never gotten more academic recognition. Of course, his training in Oriental subjects wasn't as formal as you would have to have had if you were a professor at Berkeley. The academicians, they take care of their own. We were good friends for just about ten years.
- Dorfman: When did you meet?
- Kuhn: We met about 1940. I was either still in college or working for the bank before I'd gone back to college. He was very kind to me. I had dinner in his home about two or three times a week. He was

Kuhn: a widower then and he later remarried. He was very, very kind to me and I think I was a good audience for him. But I was awed by his knowledge. He was just a great and rapid reader, and he had an encyclopedic knowledge of just about everything. Then we had a falling out and that ended that.

Dorfman: How do you remember him?

Kuhn: A very intense man in two demanding professions. He had the feeling that when he went out of business he suffered some unjustifiable losses, because his attorney had drawn up the lease with the owners of the property on a percentage basis of sales but did not include a clause that if you have a closing sale this percentage does not apply.

So he took a tremendous loss when he went out of business. He didn't have that much money to support him in the style to which he had become accustomed. He had great tragedies. Not only did his wife die of cancer, but both his daughters predeceased him, also of cancer, and it was just horrible.

Then he remarried a woman of considerable means and he had no more financial problems. He had other problems, but they weren't financial. [Chuckles]

Dorfman: How did he affect your life?

Kuhn: I would say in two ways. One, he was a man who studied all his life. He didn't just put his books on the shelf after he had gotten his degree. Two, in spite of that, I felt there were some weaknesses in his character, showing that even the greatest can fall. I don't want to go into it personally, what they were, but it proved to me that even though a man may know every religion in the world, from Buddhism to Shintoism to Hinduism and everything else, it takes force of character to follow it out. There were just, in my judgment, certain areas where he was lacking. But it took me a long time to figure that out.

Dorfman: How would you say you feel about children in relation to teaching?

Kuhn: Well, I like to teach any age group. My favorite age group is fifteen-year-olds, but I like to teach any age group. You have to use different approaches. Of course, teaching kindergarten is a cinch because these kids are so ready for it, it's a pleasure, even for someone who only teaches older children. They're just so responsive, so full of love, so full of questions, and they're not jaded in any way. It's amazing how a fourth-grade or a seventh-grade child can be jaded. So children are just terrific. I like teaching adults. It doesn't make any difference to me.

Dorfman: Why do you enjoy teaching fifteen-year-olds?

Kuhn: Well, because in a Sunday school set-up, which is where I've done most of my teaching, that's the top grade. They're the ones that you have to get now, or they're gone. What do you want them now for? You don't want them to leave. You want them to join the youth group, or enroll in a high school class, or at least have some kind of a pattern of reading. You have to make up for all the deficiencies in their prior Sunday school years. That's the challenge there. That's why this Israel study program has been such a tremendous thing, because they go out of the school with a great feeling.

Dorfman: How have you changed as a teacher?

Kuhn: Oh, I'm much better, much better prepared. I know far more and I'm not just a couple of chapters ahead of the kids. I don't have to depend upon the books so much. I've lived a lot of these things. I was born in 1916, the Balfour Declaration was in 1917, and the ground was broken for Temple Emanu-El in 1925. I heard Weitzmann here in San Francisco, as I told you. I've been to Israel three times and Europe twice, and I can talk from personal experience.

I don't need a book. I need a book to back me up, but in reality it's much more interesting just to talk things over and go over your own knowledge, to talk about people whom you've known and heard--much better, much looser, because I came from a tradition at Temple Emanu-El where the school was run like a public school.

The years were kind of like this when I was in religious school as a student. It ran for two hours. You got there; you were in class. You sat there in formal rows. You got academic grades, and then about thirty to forty-five minutes before the end of the session, every Sunday, you went to an assembly, and you sang the same songs, not once but three, four, or five times until Cantor Rinder (may he rest in peace) decided that you had sung them well enough, the whole school.

The singing was preceded by reciting the Temple Emanu-El Religious School Opening Prayer, which contains the Ten Commandments, and, boy, did we really know them, because it was ceaseless repetition. Every Sunday was exactly the same. You might have a movie, you might have something else, but it was a never-changing pattern. There was never any deviation and it was boring; that's the whole thing.

I tried to deviate from that by, one, teaching a different way, and, two, getting the kids out of the Sunday school by taking them to a home of one of the students who lived within walking distance.

Kuhn: When I went back to teaching at Emanu-El in '71, that's what we did. I'd analyze the confirmation class and call the parents and say, "Listen, I want to bring the kids over and sit in the rumpus room, and I'd like you to serve refreshments and make it like sitting around your home." That was very successful.

Assessing the Quality of Jewish Education

Dorfman: As the result of your experience, what would you say was the quality of the Jewish education?

Kuhn: Of their Jewish education?

Dorfman: Yes.

Kuhn: Well, let me tell you this. I've had parents say to me, too many parents say to me, "I'm not religious nor is my husband, but here is my child," and, of course, we can't do much about that. If the parents really want to do something, instead of loading them up with a bunch of books all you do is give them a little plastic card that has the Friday night Kiddush on it. You say, "Here, I want you to observe the Sabbath. There's no way you can do it wrong. If you don't read these words properly, make up your own. God doesn't care what you say. It's how you say it, how you feel, and your children will respond."

Now, I have to say this myself. There were certain things I never did. I never blessed my children. I just really wasn't too comfortable with that--a great loss. But you could teach a tremendous amount of Judaism just by the symbolism of the Friday night Kiddush service, the sanctification of the mother lighting the lights, the way the table's set. Ideally, the father should be coming home from shul. The blessing over the wine, the bread, blessing your children, a special meal--just a great symbolism.

If you observed Sabbath at least one quarter of the way you really should, a lot of our problems would be over. Here we have a two-day weekend in America and we don't observe either day as a Sabbath and it's a great tragedy.

I've talked to you before about the Polonsky Saga by Charles Angoff. Well, there are ten books and I've finished five of them now. The only reason I'm not onto the sixth yet is because none of the libraries I've approached has that particular volume on the shelf, but I'll get to it. He talks about his childhood in Boston in an orthodox setting and how the family began to drift away from

Kuhn: orthodoxy. The great tragedy of his father's life was that in America he had to work on the Sabbath. In fact, it killed him. The son does the same thing, but it doesn't hurt him anywhere near as much. The reform Jews have gotten away from it because we probably weren't ever with it.

It's a very, very simple thing because from the observance of the Sabbath everything else flows--reading, going to services, being an example to your children, particularly in your relationship with other people and your relationship with your family. That's the most important--in relationships with other people--and having your religion as a guide, so that when tough decisions have to be made, you follow the precepts of your faith.

All this, of course, depends on how much you know, so that the constancy of study is the main thing. In the old days, you had the example of the generations before you, and here we don't have that example. We're finding the kids know more now than their parents did, and this is something that I didn't think would ever happen. But we're reversing the trend toward watering down and assimilation, primarily because of this Israel summer trip experience, preparing for it, following up on it, so the kids are really, in many cases, better Jews than their parents are.

This, of course, causes a conflict. The child doesn't want to criticize his parents, and the teacher doesn't want to criticize the parents, even indirectly. So you have to teach the kids to criticize their parents in a very impersonal way, in a humble way, hoping that they don't do something like that to their own children. Nobody's going to be perfect. But you can't miss as many generations as we did without it coming out in a bad way.

The Role of the Religious School

Dorfman: What do you see as the role of the religious schools?

Kuhn: The religious school has to take the lead because the parents are either unable or unwilling to do it. The school should really be pressing for more time from the parents. It should be asking the parents to help them with the reading program, on field trips, on helping the classroom to be attractive. You can either do this on a formal basis, on a whole-school basis, or a skillful teacher can do it on his or her own. Many parents will go along, particularly if they had a good religious school education themselves. You have to remind them that, after all, "These are your children, not my children."

Kuhn: Lots of times you throw up your hands and say that nothing can be done, but that's not true. We cannot afford the luxury of being pessimistic. Every year, every Sunday, it starts all over again. You can always make it better. After all, if you compare the impressions in any kind of a school, it's not what you forget that's important; it's what you remember. In a way, if you're having a nonintense education, as a one-day-a-week school must provide, it's really attitudes that you're trying to build up. Of course, in Judaism the primary attitude relates to the concept of God, or of a supreme being, and somehow the feeling that follows, that there is a moral order in the universe.

Now, if you want to send a child to a Hebrew day school, followed by Hebrew high school, maybe by even going on to yeshiva or seminary, that's something else. There's just no way on a one-day-a-week basis, even supplemented by several years of after-school bar mitzvah training, that you can impart any significant amount of knowledge that's going to stick with them. Even Hebrew is not going to stick with you unless you use it.

But the impressions will stick with you if they're pleasant ones. And what do most people remember with the greatest of pleasure? A seder in a grandma's home, right? That's so gorgeous; it's almost beyond description what that means. And yet a lot of kids haven't ever had that--had a grandmother and grandfather that live here. Grandparents may still be in New York and the rest of the family came out here.

Then we have the parents who just won't do it, and this is why it's such a sin that every congregation has, on the second night of Passover, the congregational seder for the people who just never got around to it the first night. I just think that's terrible that a mother wouldn't do that for her child, for herself or her husband. I admit, of course, that in every congregation there are some members whose life situations are such that they could rarely, if ever, attend a home seder. It is for them, of course, that the congregational seder is primarily intended. But any seder where the number attending is so large that not everyone gets to read a portion of the Haggadah is too institutionalized for me.

When I was at Beth El (I think I may have said this before) there were so many fathers who couldn't do this, even on a model seder basis. They just didn't feel they knew how to be a father in front of fifteen or twenty children and, yet, there's no way you can do it wrong!

So the school has to be the leader. And who in the school but the rabbi? That's what he's for, to teach at all age levels. You can't lay it off on a principal or director of education or coordinator of adult education. The rabbi's got to do it himself, or have these people help him and be in constant contact and consultation with them.

Kuhn: There are many rabbis--I know this—who never meet with their religious school directors, even though their offices may be adjacent. Rabbis want to impress adults. But the way to impress adults, to me, is to impress the kids. They'll tell their parents about it and they'll remember the rabbi. They'll also be on the board of directors, and years hence when the rabbi wants his contract renewed, they won't forget.

Dorfman: How would you reach those who are nonparticipating Jews?

Kuhn: Well, it's a very tough thing. It depends upon the kind of professional personnel you have in the temple. If you have a religious school director who's full-time, he has time to do it. If he's a part-time man, as most of them are, they don't have the time. The rabbi, of course, if he wants to set aside the time, can help. Mostly it's a matter of meeting congregants in homes or in the rabbi's study and talking to them about Judaism. Show them an example; have these people attend a seder in somebody else's home as guests. They may never have been to a real seder in a real home. Or they may have been to a very orthodox seder in their great-grandmother's home and it may have repelled them because of its length and the adults were expected to read every page of the Haggadah.

There is no exact formula, except, I think, if people feel the rabbi and the leaders of the school and congregation are really interested in them; that's what they really want. If you feel someone really cares about you, then such an encounter might not get an immediate response, but it may get a delayed response. Someone will come along and say, "Well, you were talking about this last year, and I've been thinking about it, and I think I'm ready for it now." Caring, consistency, persistency. After all, you're trying to change the patterns of a lifetime, and that's not easy.

Dorfman: Can you tell me how your parents made the decision to join a reform rather than a conservative temple?

Kuhn: I have no idea. I have some thoughts. I don't think they had much of a religious education themselves. I don't know that for sure. I never heard them discuss it. I have no idea what religious education they may have had. I know my father had very little public school education. My mother went through grammar school. But I think that when they decided not to live in the Fillmore-McAllister, this was an expression that they wanted something more modern for their children.

Now, we were living on California Street near 9th Avenue, and the Temple was then at 450 Sutter Street, and Sunday school was at Sutter near Franklin. My father joined Emanu-El in 1922, I think

Kuhn: primarily because--I'm sure because--of my two brothers and myself; he wanted us to be in religious school.

Then, of course, when they built the new Temple at Arguello and Lake, and Rabbi Newman was here and filling the place every Friday night--just to be able to go, my father would dress up in his best tailor-made suit and my mother would go with him and this was a big thing. My father used to just glow.

But it never occurred to me that he might have joined anywhere else. First of all, in this neighborhood, I didn't know of anything else. Temple Beth Sholom hadn't been started yet. There was a group of Sephardim who met on 4th Avenue. But, really, there were no other places in this neighborhood. But I really don't know. Maybe he just wanted to be a member of the best, as he interpreted it. It may have been a matter of prestige, just like somebody might join the Masonic Lodge or B'nai B'rith or something like that. Maybe being a member of Temple Emanu-El to him was a matter of koved. I don't know.

XI FORTY YEARS AS A JEWISH WELFARE VOLUNTEER

Dorfman: How have your years of work with the Jewish Welfare Federation affected the organization?

Kuhn: Well, remember that I worked for almost four decades as a volunteer. Do you mean that?

Dorfman: Yes, those years.

Kuhn: I think the first effect would be to demonstrate that you can become a leader in the Federation and in the community by dedication and work and not necessarily by having inherited or acquired wealth. I really think I was perhaps the first "common man" to rise to a position of leadership, and I think that being campaign chairman or co-chairman is every bit as important and prestigious as being the president of the Federation. Of course, I served on the board of directors for ten years. So first, I think, would be showing that the Federation wasn't an organization whose leadership came entirely from the moneyed classes.

Secondly, the quality of my work. Even when I was a volunteer I tried to do a professional job. I never had anybody write my speeches for me. Sometimes someone in the public relations department wrote a speech without my knowing it and put my words in my mouth in articles they inserted in the Jewish Bulletin. [Chuckles] I'd read it Friday morning and I'd find out to my amazement that during the preceding week I'd said such-and-such.

I tried by application and hard work to do a really professional job. In the case, for example, of the review of Mt. Zion's capital needs in the capital fund drive of 1960, our committee met every other week, perhaps for a full year. We could have done it on a much shorter basis, but it wouldn't have been anywhere near as professional a job. So I think the professional aspect of the work, plus the capacity for doing a lot of things all together—sometimes I was not only chairman of the social planning committee, but I

Kuhn: would chair some of its subcommittees, sometimes in a special ad hoc situation. You really had to have a knowledge of the community and the personalities involved.

[The following inserted material was gathered during an editing session with Marshall H. Kuhn at his home at 30 7th Avenue, San Francisco, on March 27, 1978.]

Dorfman: You were going to come back to some incidents similar to those relating to your role in the men's club at Temple Emanu-El.

Kuhn: If you will recall, about the time of World War II and for years before that, the Temple and I were almost inseparable in my own mind. That was really my family, Temple Emanu-El. As the years went on, I found myself being more and more critical. And I brought out some of these incidents, not only with regard to Rabbi Reichert and my role in the men's club, but also the instance where my wife had become vice-president of the Sisterhood and, just as I had been passed over for the presidency of the men's club, she was passed over for the presidency of the Sisterhood. We never really found out why.

She was hurt, I was hurt, and while the argument may go that you should get over these hurts, nonetheless it's somewhat like the razor's edge. It's a very thin line between love and hate. If you love something deeply and it hurts you, I don't think there's anybody on the outside who can tell you when your particular emotional response should terminate. You can argue between rationality and emotion, but emotion is usually the controlling factor.

There were other things that came along, but I didn't assume that I was right in everything. But, nonetheless, at the time that I'm dictating this, when I read [in The Temple Chronicle of Temple Emanu-El] that I'm a long-time leader of Temple Emanu-El, and I realize that I have never been a director of the Temple or an officer, I wonder how my leadership has been made manifest. I assume it's just because of my role with the children, hundreds of them, and the position for which I've stood, even though I stood alone. And I don't regret that at all, because I'm a product of my education in Judaism, which says that if you're right, then stick by your position. There's absolutely no point in changing to be in the majority.

My old friend Joe Morrison used to say that if two men are on the board of directors and one always agrees with the other, that man is superfluous. So I've mellowed quite a bit about this. I realize that I became campaign co-chairman of the Federation, in spite of my not having been good enough to be president of the Emanu-El men's club. It gave me food for thought as to which organization was really more important in Jewish life. But that's water under the dam.

[end of insert]

128TH ANNUAL MEETING

CONGREGATION EMANU-EL

JANUARY 17, 1978

President Myer S. Kahn, Presiding

6:30-7:15 Reception

Invocation Rabbi Arnold Magid

D I N N E R

* * *

Request for motion to dispense with reading of the minutes of the last annual meeting and to approve the actions of the Board during the past year. Myer S. Kahn

Report of Nominating Committee and Election of Directors. Dr. Ernest S. Rogers

* * *

President's Report. Mr. Kahn

Introduction of New Officers. Mr. Kahn

Presentations to Retiring Directors Mrs. Oscar Rushakoff

Special Presentation to Marshall Kuhn Harold L. Levy

* * *

A Musical Interlude Cantor Joseph L. Portnoy

* * *

Program Honoring Rabbi Joseph Asher Mrs. Daniel Stone and Daniel E. Stone

Presentation. Mrs. Rushakoff

Response. Rabbi Asher

* * *

A D J O U R N M E N T

199b

INTRODUCTION TO PRESENTATION FOR MARSHALL KUHN

by Myer S. Kahn

This evening it is with great pleasure that the Temple is presenting a special award to one of its most dedicated members. As far as I can ascertain, this is the first time in the history of the temple that this honor has been conferred on anyone other than a member of the Board of Directors. We are honoring our friend, colleague, and devoted member of the congregation, MARSHALL KUHN. Unfortunately, due to illness, Marshall cannot be with us this evening, but we are delighted that his wife, Caroline, and his daughters, Alyson and Nancy, and son Bruce are present. Incidentally, this is being taped so Marshall will know what we are saying behind his back.

Much as I regret that Marshall is not here, I must admit it probably saves me from some embarrassment. Marshall and I started Emanu-El religious school in the same first grade and went on to be confirmed together. Were he here with his encyclopedic memory, it is quite likely he would remind me of some better to be forgotten episodes in our youthful escapades. He would undoubtedly refer to the times we were ejected from class for causing disturbance or, worse still, he would allude to the baskets I missed in crucial games when this Guild Hall was the religious school gymnasium.

It is particularly appropriate that another dedicated member of the congregation make the presentation. Harold Levy, a life long member of our Temple, a former Board member, a devoted friend of mine and a devoted friend of Marshall's.

A TRIBUTE TO MARSHALL KUHN

Marshall, like Mordecai, for whom you are named, you are the man whom we delight to honor. The family of Emanu-El misses you, and regrets that you are indisposed tonight and cannot be with us. We are here in Guild Hall, but for you and me, this place is a basket-ball court. Here the Religious School's Faculty played the Pathfinders in the annual "Chuppa Bowl." You remember those games, for you are Emanu-El's ex-officio Historian, keeper of its archives and recorder of this Temple's yesterdays.

Stand close aboard, old buddy, and read me! I bring you the affectionate greetings of our Rabbis and Cantor, Mike Kahn, and our newly elected President, Nadine Rushakoff, the officers and Board of Directors of the Congregation, its Executive Director and its Organist, the Temple Staff and Faculty — and the members of the Congregation, those who are here, and those who are not here.

We come to give you full honors — to you who has given so much of yourself in dedicated and unusual service — to Emanu-El, the Jewish Community of San Francisco, to this your native City, its Peninsula, Marin, Berkeley — yes, Oakland, too — and beyond to the distant tops in the Mother Lode, in the rivers, lakes, canyons, meadows, forests and mountain places of Sierra, Nevada, Placer, El Dorado, Yuba, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Merced, Mariposa, Madera and Tulare.

Last week I went to Portsmouth Square to visit a shrine of sorts. There stands a monument in granite surmounted by a little bronze ship with its sails spread, running with the wind, symbolic of the courage and spirit of Robert Louis Stevenson. The "Hispaniola" always sails to Treasure Island, and we are aboard!

I read to you the words engraved on the granite:

"To be honest, to be kind —

To earn a little and to spend a little less;

To make upon the whole a family happier for his presence;

To renounce when that shall be necessary and not to be embittered;

To keep a few friends, but these without capitulation —

Above all, on the same grim conditions, to keep friends with himself —

Here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy."

We give you, and Caroline — and your children who are here with us — to Alison, and Bruce and Nancy — our love and gratitude. You taught and you live by Torah. You are a mensch.

You exemplify the ideals of our Jewish faith — religious consecration, compassion and service. You have labored long and well in the vineyard of the Lord. You are a sagacious, dedicated and imaginative teacher, opening the eyes of our children to the past, the future and the undying life of our people and our faith. Your vitality and enthusiasm is the stuff of Jewish survival.

You have touched the lives of so many confirmands of Emanu-El and Peninsula Temple Beth-El. Your students will never forget those Sunday morning walks across the Golden Gate Bridge, as I shall always remember the Centennial Reconciliation Service in 1951, and the Confirmand Reunion Services in the early 1970's, which were the handiwork of Marshall Kuhn.

The hearts and minds of our children are the repositories of Marshall Kuhn's long and steadfast service to Emanu-El. Service to youth is your touchstone, and so much more.

and Louis Newman . . . Rowie and Rob Rinder . . . Mort and Hack . . . and the Marshall Kuhn Track Club . . . Save San Francisco Bay . . . Zelda Wiener's "Yours, Marshall, for Victory" . . . Bob Sproul and Brutus Hamilton . . . Newton Drury and Save the Redwoods League . . . United States Navy's Comservpac . . . the Irwin Blood Bank . . . The Diabetic Youth Foundation and Bear Skin Meadows, Royaneh and Tawonga . . . University of California Bancroft Library . . . Ishi and the Sierra Club . . . and your mentor, John Muir, whom you honored by creating the John Muir Nature Trail in Golden Gate Park.

John Muir was a mountain climber. The Sierra Nevadas are his and your "Range of Light."

John Muir said: "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees."

Moses, too, was a mountain climber. All of us here tonight send you the charge of the God of Israel, made through Moses to Joshua, son of Nun:

"Be strong and of good courage, and I will be with thee" (Emanu-El).

Now, by authority of Rabbi Asher, President Myer Kahn, and the Board of Directors of the Congregation Emanu-El, I present to you, Marshall Henry Kuhn, this Max Pollack colored etching. In it you will see the part of San Francisco where you were born and grew up — the Presidio Wall near your home, the panorama of the Bay, the Bridge towers, the fog pouring through the Golden Gate, the Marin Hills, Mount Tamalpais, the incredibly blue sky, and . . . of course . . . the Temple. It's all there, and it says to you, from us,

"Thank you, Marshall."

January 17, 1978

— Harold L. Levy

The Temple Chronicle of
Temple Emanu-El, San
Francisco, California

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CAROLINE KUHN'S STATEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE OF PRESENTATION
TO MARSHALL KUHN

Marshall has truly enjoyed his years of service at Temple Emanu-El as a teacher, principal, basketball coach, Cub Master, and counselor to many. His trips over the years to Mt. Tamalpais, the Mother Lode, and elsewhere with numerous confirmation classes remain a highlight in his book of memories, particularly in this kind of weather. Neither snow, nor rain, nor hail, nor taking the wrong trail ever stopped the happy hikers from following their leader. As I look around this room I see many families who have shared in these memorable adventures.

We are especially grateful to Harold Levy for his beautiful words based on years of friendship dating back to the days when they were students together at the Sunday school on Sutter Street. Some of you present this evening were also a part of these years.

On behalf of our family I would like to thank the congregation for this beautiful expression of gratitude to my Marshall. It will hang in our home as a constant reminder of the beauty of our temple and the role it has played in all of our lives.

Thank you.

Kuhn: Now, then, as far as my professional career with the Federation is concerned, I think what I had learned, as a volunteer, of the make-up of the community and the personalities involved--my knowledge and friendship with these people stood me in good stead in the sense that I was one of the senior members of the staff. After all, our top professional leadership in the Federation is quite young.

Rabbi Lurie is in his early or middle thirties, and I remember when he and I took a group to Israel in 1974, and we were staying at the King David Hotel. After breakfast he went back to our room to get a camera or something, and then a few minutes later I went back to get a sweater, and the maid said, "Your son was just here." [Chuckles]

So this is what I mean. It's sort of an older voice, a more mature judgment, the judgment of someone who has lived in the community nearly all his life and knows pretty much what's likely to work here or not work here, even if it might work somewhere else in the country. Plus, knowing an awful lot of seemingly unrelated and useless information about everything.

Effecting Change in the Jewish Welfare Federation

Dorfman: What changes did you bring about in the Jewish Welfare Federation?

Kuhn: Changes? Well, that's a difficult thing to know. When I was involved in the social planning process for many years, we had developed a pattern of reviewing every agency every year, at least with respect to some aspects of its service, and even though we might look at the spectrum of services in any given year and say that nothing really had changed over the years, actually plenty had changed. Organizations had gone out of business. New ones have taken their place. There has been a great deal of change.

Now, I participated in every one of those changes to some degree. I would say with pardonable pride, I think, that we have the Jewish Vocational Service today because I persisted for a long time to bring it about. It fills a vital need and I think it was overdue. But it took a lot of fighting to get it done. I think I made a definite contribution to the college programs that we support, not just through the Federation but through my activity in B'nai B'rith-Hillel. I know I made contributions to Mt. Zion because, having gotten involved in that year-long study in 1958 and '59, I got to know really every square inch of that hospital. Our committee had to.

[end tape 9, side A; begin tape 9, side B]

Kuhn: Over the years, I would say that in some way I've touched every single agency we have had one or more times, every one of them. I was involved with studies of Homewood Terrace, which is now being merged into the Jewish Family and Children's Service. I was in on the study of the Emanu-El Residence Club at the time it was phasing out. With just about every single agency there seemed to be some special situation which required a review by the Federation, representing the community; that is, the donors.

No agency by itself can do an adequate self-study. There has to be some input from people who are more objective, who can stand back and see how the agency relates to the whole complex of agencies in the community. So, therefore, I not only knew the program of each agency intimately, but I also knew its professional personnel, its lay board of directors, and where some of the bodies were buried.

As a matter of fact, we had a study of the Hebrew Free Loan Association, which is a marvelous organization. Its concept is just superb, but it really has always been more or less controlled by the more traditional Jews, conservative and orthodox, at least until recently. So, therefore, the Federation has never had a really full understanding of the agency and has never really supported it to the degree to which the agency feels it should be supported.

In other words, their directors feel they should get more of their operating expenses from the Federation and not have to depend upon income earned on those assets that happen not to be loaned out at the moment and therefore are not earning interest. It's a funny thing. If Hebrew Free Loan has a certain amount of assets which are lent to individuals and groups at no interest, obviously this is a different situation from when the Association has money available which is not on loan, but which can be invested and thus increase the corpus. But to understand this nuance takes some sophistication.

So we began this study and Ben Blumenthal (may he rest in peace) said, "Young man..." (And he points his finger at me.) "...I've been on the board of directors of this organization for thirty-eight years." I said, "That's too long." Well, I didn't make any points with him that way, but I believe my statement, although I had phrased it poorly, was true. Now all Federation agencies are much less dominated by directors who have served terms of excessive length. At that time there were organizations in the community, including congregations, that never had any board turnover.

But lately the attorney general of California and the Registry of Charitable Trusts have taken a dim view about self-perpetuating boards of directors. The most common provision today in every

Kuhn: organization I know of, every nonprofit organization, is the policy that a director may serve two terms consecutively of a maximum of three years each, after which he has to go off the board of directors for at least one year before being eligible to come back.

The Sierra Club actually made this change in 1970. We had members on the Sierra Club board, Ansel Adams and Richard Leonard among them, who had been continuously on the board for over thirty years. Well, this made them very knowledgeable, but it really didn't allow for any of the young blood coming up in the organization whose membership was rapidly expanding. So Leonard and Adams themselves moved and seconded the motion which, when carried, put them off the board. You might call this parliamentary hara-kiri.

Some of the ways to solve this problem, of course, are to create advisory boards or to upgrade long-time board members to honorary status, so long as they don't think they're being kicked upstairs, and this is a very delicate process.

Dorfman: I'm sure it is. Would you tell me, please, what you think you gave up to make the contributions you did?

Kuhn: Do you mean as a volunteer?

Dorfman: As a volunteer and as a professional.

Kuhn: As a volunteer, I didn't give up anything. Well, yes, I did. I gave up a lot of time with my family, too much time. I don't know if I told this story before in this interview, but when I had been chairman of the Federation campaign for two years and I had made extensive trips overseas, I was convinced that the best way to impress upon our community the absolute necessity of insuring Jewish survival by financial gifts was to talk to the donors. My talking on a group basis was much more effective than even talking on an individual basis. I'm a much better solicitor in a small group than on a one-to-one basis.

Well, that meant that I was out all the time. I had breakfast meetings, lunch meetings, cocktail meetings, dinner meetings, and evening meetings. My son Bruce, who had just learned to read, came up one night and he had my date book. I think he was about seven. It was a Tuesday night and he said, "You know what, Dad? You're going to be home a week from Saturday night." And the next day I wrote letters of resignation to twelve organizations, Jewish and non-Jewish, and said, "I just can't do this to my family."

It hit me like a ton of bricks because I was also a religious school principal, which is the most time-demanding of all, and that was a semi-professional commitment, not a volunteer one, and it was

Kuhn: just too much. I didn't have any time for my family or myself. No matter how effectively you do it--and I was very skillful at using dictating equipment, the phone, memos, automobiles--there's still a limit, because all of this came on top of my daily work, which most of the time was Blue Shield. So I did make a sacrifice.

Now, I'm not saying that if I had to do it over again I wouldn't have done it. I think I wouldn't have been so subject to the feeling that I might be indispensable to some organization because, after all, when people see that you are an effective volunteer, they want to latch onto you. This is why for so long I wouldn't join B'nai B'rith, because these friends of mine said, "We're going to get you, Kuhn. We know what a worker you are." I figured, "By God, you're not going to get me." I was right, but eventually even they got to me.

Dorfman: Do you have any regrets?

Kuhn: No, regrets are ridiculous. The only regret I have in my life is that my mother and father never had the opportunity to meet my wife or our children, and vice versa.

Camp Tawonga Remembrances

Dorfman: You mentioned earlier that you were a charter camper at Camp Tawonga. Can you tell me about your experiences?

Kuhn: Well, in the first place, Camp Tawonga--not with that name, but as a camp sponsored by the YMHA--started in 1921. My two brothers went to camp that year at Ben Lomond, and my parents and I drove down one weekend. I remember sleeping on the cushion of the front seat of our Model-T Ford. Then in 1925 Tawonga started at Lakeport on a rented site.

I had never been a camper before. I was eight and you were supposed to be a minimum of ten years. My two brothers were going, so the camp administration made an exception. They had a few other campers as young as I. There were two sessions of two weeks each and here we were coming to a camp that was really not prepared for us.

The first two weeks, I and everybody else spent part of our day preparing the camp site--rolling the softball diamond, the croquet court, and all this business, you see--so the kids who came the second two weeks could enjoy it. But my brothers and I were staying the whole full four weeks.

Kuhn: So when all the facilities were ready, I said, "Can I play croquet now?" They said, "No, you're too young." I said, "How come I'm not too young to help build it, but I'm too young to play on it? What do you mean, too young to play?" I was just furious and, if you want to know the truth, I'm still mad!

Well, the next year I was nine and it was about the same thing, except we set up camp at Cisco on the Yuba River. The camp site was beautiful, and swimming in the Yuba River was one of the great thrills of my life. We swam every morning and afternoon, and sometimes at night when there was a good moon we would have a moonlight swim. That was a lot of fun.

My oldest brother, Mort, decided that he wouldn't go back to camp after the first year because he had been the wood chopper and the bugler, and the day we left Lakeport they asked him to play assembly, and he had already packed his bugle down in the bottom of his duffel bag. They made him dig down for it and he swore, "I'll never come back here."

In the second year, my middle brother, HAK, and I went to Tawonga and he really had a racket. I never saw him dressed in campers' garb. He wore my father's old bathrobe and hat around the camp. He conned everybody into thinking that he was indispensable because his job was to trim the wicks on the coal oil lamps in the tents. Finally, the camp director, Louis Blumenthal, was just fed up with this and he grabbed my brother's hat and threw it in the campfire one night. So my brother HAK wouldn't go back the next year. That meant that in 1927 I'd be all by myself and I figured, "To heck with it, it's not that much fun," although I must admit I did have a lot of fun.

The memories of those two years are very vivid in my mind. I know a lot of fellows still who went to camp. I recall a lot of incidents. But basically it really wasn't fair because I loved sports and when they told me, "You can't play softball because you're too young, but it's okay to help roll the field"--that's dumb.

Dorfman: What kinds of activities did you participate in?

Kuhn: Oh, swimming. I learned to swim in Clear Lake. We had to walk what seemed about a mile--I guess it was less--in this tremendous summer heat, with gnats, and then we swam in the lake. They had been doing some blasting on the eastern side of Clear Lake and the dead fish from the blasting would float into our swimming area. I became a beginner swimmer in 1925 and an advanced swimmer in 1926 at Cisco. That was great.

Kuhn: I had a great counselor, Andy Cole, whom I admired tremendously. I remember one night when I couldn't sleep he brought me a cup of cold water to my cot. Years later, at a Federation dinner which I chaired, I said, "Now, here is Andy Cole. He was my counselor at Camp Tawonga. Do you think if he had known then, as a Stanford man, that I would grow up and go to Cal that he would have brought me that cold cup of water?"

Looking back, I don't think I really had the kind of disposition that a "good camper" needs in that environment.

I remember my parents had gone to Yosemite in 1926 for the first time and they drove from Yosemite to Cisco to visit us one day. That was a great thrill and so was going home after a month--clean sheets, a real tub bath, having your mother's cooking again. Those were just sensational.

A lot of the fellows that I know now went to camp after Tawonga moved to Tahoe. They think, of course, that because Tahoe was sort of a permanent site that Tawonga started in 1927, but actually Tawonga began in 1925.

Dorfman: It moved to Tahoe then?

Kuhn: It moved to Tahoe in '27. It may have had one or two different sites at Tahoe, but it ended up about four miles south of the lake at Myers. Then, after World War II, they sold that site. They didn't have a resident camp until maybe ten years ago, when the Jewish Center bought the Columbia Park Boys Camp in Stanislaus National Forest, which is adjacent to Yosemite National Park. I remember talking at that time to the executive director of the Center, Irwin Gold, who of course had come from the East, and he asked, "Tawonga! What kind of a name is Tawonga for Jewish kids?" "It's an Indian name." Irwin was adamant, "This camp is going to have a Jewish name." I teased him and asked, "Do you want to bet?" As you know, the camp was renamed Tawonga.

Dorfman: Why was it named that?

Kuhn: Because there is a long tradition in American camping that venerates Indian lore, so many, many camps bear Indian names, either actual Indian names or pseudo-Indian names.

For example, let's consider the Campfire Girls. The San Francisco Council has a camp called Caniya. The Campfire Girls' motto is "Wohelo," which derives from the first two letters of the words "work," "health," and "love."

Kuhn: When I served on the Campfire board, I announced at a meeting, "I've got an adult motto, 'Wiwoso.'" The board asked, "From what Indian source does that derive?" I responded, "From the first two letters of 'wine,' 'women,' and 'song!'" [Laughter]

Dorfman: Were there other activities at Tawonga?

Kuhn: Oh, yes. We'd go on overland hikes, have a campfire every night, sing, and then someone would tell some grisly stories which would keep us awake half the night. I was so gullible I even participated in a snipe hunt. I'm sure you know what a snipe hunt is.

The first year I made an ass of myself. There were wild turkeys running around our site at Clear Lake, so the counselors said, "If you put a little salt on their tails, you can catch them that way." So I went around like a maniac sprinkling with the salt shaker while running after these turkeys, with everybody howling at me. Oh, boy!

Then I had a kid in my tent named Aaron Rubino. He was a character. If you got a package from home, he had opened it before you got to it. Eventually he became such a pest that they sent him home before his four weeks were up. But they didn't just send him home. They had a campfire in his honor, and at the campfire they told what a great guy he was and that the only reason he was being sent home was because he wouldn't brush his teeth religiously. Well, this was such a fake!

I had adopted some of my older brothers' swear words, and Louis Blumenthal, in front of the campfire one night, said that if I didn't stop swearing he was going to wash my mouth out with soap in front of the whole camp.

Dorfman: Was it ever necessary?

Kuhn: No, no. His warning scared me. You got up in the morning, you washed and had your breakfast, and you made your bed (which was straw ticking inside of a cotton bag), saluted the flag, and prepared for inspection. You had your morning activities--sports of some kind, playing softball--or you watched them, and then you had swimming. Then you returned to camp, had lunch, and rested for an hour.

This rest was for several reasons. First, the temperature was tremendously hot in midday. Secondly, the American National Red Cross had mandated that if you swam less than an hour after eating, you would get stomach cramps and drown. Of course, this was later proven to be completely false. Third, the enforced rest period gave you time to write home to your folks and to eat raisins, thus combatting constipation, which camp directors considered the eleventh plague.

Kuhn: Then you had your afternoon activities, dinner, and a campfire. I really liked the campfire. I loved to sing. I loved those grisly stories. They would get a counselor up in the hills and the storyteller would relate a tale about how this Indian spirit had become liberated, at which point the counselor up on the hill would give out with unearthly howls. The campers, particularly the younger ones, would be paralyzed with fear. Then this counselor would wander through camp all during the night moaning and howling. [Laughter]

Dorfman: I think it would be interesting if you told me what a snipe hunt is.

Kuhn: A snipe hunt! The counselors tell you that there's a small bird called a snipe and that a flock of them congregates on the top of a hill above camp. The counselors then inform you that one of them is going to chase the snipe down the hill, and all you have to do to catch them is to wait at the bottom of the hill with a burlap sack, and you can trap a snipe easily. Then the counselors roll some big rocks down the hill; you trap these rocks in your sack and you think you've got a bird in there, but it's only just a rock. It's a little cruel, but it's harmless. It's like college hazing. Actually, of course, there is a well known bird named the snipe.

Dorfman: Where did you have your meals?

Kuhn: The first year, I don't know. We must have had a mess tent. The second year we had a very fine eating arrangement, a very fine mess tent. I remember one day it was pouring torrential rain and this counselor, Andy Cole, said that we didn't have to eat in the mess tent. We would go there and bring the food from the mess tent to our tent. I remember they had blueberry pudding. I have no idea why I remember that. But that was a big day; our tent group was special because we were the only ones allowed to do this.

The food was good. Really, we shouldn't have gotten any extra food from home, but Jewish parents always seem to want to supplement their children's camp diets with cookies, candy, and other snack foods.

There was a camper my age named Earl Hoffman and he won the award as Honor Camper. He had no demerits and I hated his guts. Years later, when we both were at Lowell, I found out he was really a very nice fellow. I told him the story about his being the Honor Camper and he actually apologized for it, saying that he was so young and inexperienced that he lacked the ingenuity to acquire any demerits!

Dorfman: Did you ever spend time at any other Jewish camps?

Kuhn: No, no other camps at all, which made it obvious that I would be the choice of the Camp Fire Girls to be chairman of their camping committee.

Camp Swig

Dorfman: You promised to tell about your involvement in Camp Swig.

Kuhn: In the late '40s, Rabbi Raphael H. Levine of Temple De-Hirsch [Sinai], Seattle, Washington, started what was called the Jewish Youth Conference. The first year it was held at Zephyr Cove, a Presbyterian campground on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe. For the next several years it was held at Asilomar. These were encampments primarily for children of confirmation age. Someone got the idea that, one, we should have our own camp, and, two, that by having our own camp we could involve children of a much broader age span. Now, the credit for actually bringing this to fruition is due to Ben Swig.

He located this property at Saratoga; it was on 203 acres. It was owned by Kathleen Norris, the novelist, who had it as a summer place, and each summer she would bring her entire family from all over the United States to spend the summer with her. When they all grew up and there was no more need for the place, she put it on the market for \$50,000. Ben put up \$20,000, of which \$10,000 was a gift, and the other \$10,000 was a loan. We took out a note with Mrs. Norris for the balance of \$30,000, at 2 percent, which was such a low rate of interest as to have us classify her as a Semitophile.

Anyway, they formed a corporation called the Jewish Religious Educational Foundation. Ben was active; also Albert Axelrod, the judge; one or more men from each reform congregation in Northern California; Al Sider from Stockton; men from Oakland, Fresno, San Jose, and Sherith Israel, of course; and eventually it got started.

But camp, as constituted, was really not satisfactory for our purposes, because if you have your own family there, no matter how big they are, there is nothing like the load of others visiting. So the camp had to be improved. From endless fund-raising drives, they put in a program building in memory of Rabbi Stern of Oakland.* They built a new pool; they built a whole new camp for the summer Hebrew program, Camp Solel. Much of the land was unusable because a lot of it headed on a sheer slope down the canyon to Stevens Creek and there was a lot of poison oak on the way down there. In the first few years, for example, the director each summer would be either a rabbi who was the Union of Hebrew Congregations regional rabbi in this area, or a visiting rabbi. They always called them by their first names--Rabbi Bill, Rabbi Joe, and so on. Eventually--it took a long time--they got a full-time camp director, which they have now.

* Rabbi Samuel G. Broude of Temple Sinai, Oakland, explained that a music room in the program building was dedicated to Rabbi Stern.

Kuhn: Now, the camp was open to all reform congregations up and down the whole Pacific Coast and they came from the whole coast, including those from the Wilshire Boulevard Temple in Los Angeles, which had its own Camp Hess-Kramer. Over the years, I think the camp has gotten a much better quality in its programs, much more participation, and is a genuine factor in the educational process.

It does have certain weaknesses, however. One of them is that the camp never lets the religious school know which kids went to camp and what they learned. So that the teacher of that child next year has no idea that this child had any kind of a special experience that would even help the teacher teach other children.

Secondly, Temple Emanu-El, which is the biggest temple, concentrates so heavily on its summer trip to Israel for the confirmands that the number of children it sends to Camp Swig is very, very minimal. They're in the middle of a fund-raising drive right now, not only to improve the camp for children, but also to make it suitable for an adult conference center. It's also been used for nonreform groups, which involves kashruthing the kitchen at each time. It's an absolutely spectacular setting among the redwoods. It's been a really great improvement.

At one time it was called Camp Saratoga, denoting its geographic location, and then all the Union camps throughout the country began adopting the names of the principal benefactor. Ben Swig certainly was responsible, not just for the first large donation, but for having the imagination to put the concept together, which, of course, is Ben's specialty.

At one time the telephone company put in new exchanges in the Saratoga area. Now, the camp was owned by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Believe it or not, as a coincidence, the new number assigned to camp was Union 7.

Dorfman: I understand that you possess a remarkable memory. Can you tell me of some of your experiences relating to this unusual skill?

Kuhn: Did I discuss with you Menninger's statement about memory?

Dorfman: No, you didn't.

Kuhn: At the Oral History Association Annual Colloquium in 1974 in Grand Teton National Park, our featured speaker one night was Dr. Robert Menninger, one of the second generation of the famous family of psychiatrists. He talked about the nature of memory, how little we really know about it, how we know it's a good thing because if we didn't have memory we would go out of the house in the morning and wouldn't know where to come back. We can't even explain why our

Kuhn: grandfather can tell us everything he did on January 21, 1912, but he has no idea where he was yesterday.

After he spoke, a group of us gathered around him and asked him individual questions. One fellow was sort of baiting him, although I have no idea why. He said, "Come on, Dr. Menninger. You're not telling us the whole story. What is memory?" And Menninger gave him, from a Jewish standpoint (he's not Jewish), a classic answer--not just the words, but the way in which he said them. He said, "Memory is survival."

That's as true a statement as I'd ever heard. It was first impressed on me when I started visiting Europe, North Africa, and Israel to study Jewish life in those areas. A cardinal sin of a modern Jew is to forget. All of us, Jewry collectively, must remember where we came from, where we are now, how we got there, and what obligations we have, to insure that "never again" are not just meaningless words.

Now, why my memory is the way it is, I have no idea. I don't think I do any exercises for it. I just think that certain things that have happened during my lifetime have impressed me and I have tried to use everything I've learned. For example, as I used to drive around, I didn't listen to my car radio. Instead, I composed speeches in my head, primarily for Federation audiences, although I've spoken for a couple of dozen different organizations over the years. I have tried to illustrate all of my talks, no matter where, with personal experiences from childhood or adulthood. Now, some of the things that have happened to me have been very, very meaningful. Some have been extremely humorous.

For years I assumed that other people had these same kind of experiences happen to them, but perhaps they don't. Possibly I've just been very fortunate, remembering something that happened in school, or in play, or working for the Anglo-California National Bank, or serving in the Navy, or working for Blue Shield, or being active in volunteer organizations. Just lots of memorable things have happened. They've impressed me so much that I've repeated them to others. The more I've told these stories, the more I have been able to derive from them in moral, spiritual, and human values.

How my memory focuses on some of this miscellaneous information, trivia, and minutiae, I don't really know, because I don't make any conscious efforts to accumulate this kind of subject matter. I would be a rank loser in any TV general information quiz, because I don't try to commit anything to memory unless it has a meaning for me.

Dorfman: There is an incident from your childhood that relates to Samuel Reshevsky.

Kuhn: Yes.

Dorfman: Could you tell me about that?

Kuhn: In 1970 or '71, the world chess championship was being played in Iceland between Boris Spassky of Russia and Bobby Fischer of the United States. Sports Illustrated carried an article about this match which said that each night the TV stations of New York would have an explanation of the day's play by one of America's chess masters. It listed them under channels and one of them was named Samuel Reshevsky, a name which somehow struck a note in my mind.

So I looked up his name and address in my New York phone book, which I had purloined from a hotel during the previous visit to New York.

I wrote to him approximately as follows: "Dear Mr. Reshevsky, Recently I read about you in Sports Illustrated. I recall that when I was a boy of about four or five my parents took me to the Hotel St. Francis so I could look through a door at a slightly older boy in velvet pants who was playing thirty-six simultaneous chess matches against grown men, and winning or drawing every one. I gathered from my parents that some of this lad's genius might rub off on me by osmosis. Now, they also said that he was one of a kind. My question is, could that have been you?"

I got an immediate response saying, "Dear Mr. Kuhn, You have a phenomenal memory. That boy was indeed me, and my wife says I am really one of a kind." Now, I have no idea how the name of Samuel Reshevsky could be stored in my brain for over fifty years, unless, of course, I am still waiting for his genius to rub off on me.

Dorfman: It certainly is unusual. Were there other such incidences?

Kuhn: Oh, they come up now and then, they do. I just can't think of any at the moment. Sometimes as you get older your memory isn't as good as when you were younger. Sometimes, to recall something, you have to think about it very hard, to physically concentrate on it. Somehow, the nervous impulses or circuit or whatever it is that constitutes memory will actually bring the fact you are seeking to your mind if you really devote your total mental energies to the problem. Then all of a sudden, maybe a few hours later, the light comes, whether it's a name, a date, or other bit of information.

We really know so little of how this functions, how this whole random access of the brain operates. But there's no question that the human brain is the most sophisticated computer ever made.

Dorfman: Has this unusual memory been a help to you?

Kuhn: When you say help to me--it's a help in the sense that it has given me great personal satisfaction, particularly when people come up and they say to me, and scores of people have said this to me, "Marshall, I just bet somebody that you'll know the answer to this question." And I'll know the answer because somehow it's stored somewhere in my brain.

It's a pleasure if you can come up with this sort of answer, particularly if you're the only person in your circle who does know it, or if you don't know the answer you can be helpful by knowing how the answer can be obtained. I think a large part of what education should teach you is how to get the answers you may not have.

Granted, one reason that I know the answers to a lot of strictly local questions is because I've lived in San Francisco almost all of my life.

I must confess that having a good memory is very pleasant and satisfying. I don't think it has any supreme practical value, except in my speaking engagements where I have access to all these fascinating incidents in my life. Their essence I feel very strongly, and as I relive and retell these stories my memory is further reinforced.

I'll tell you one story that I was telling my daughter the other day. I was at a party a year or two ago with people all of whom were about eight years younger than I was, but whom I had taught in religious school. One of them, Stanley Weiner, now a CPA, was the younger brother of a fellow I went to high school and college with. I used to eat at their home quite a bit after my mother passed away.

Stanley said to me at this party, "You told a story once at our home that's been our favorite family joke ever since. I said, "What was that?" He said, "Well, my mother said that she was going to a sale in the basement of the Emporium to look for pajamas for me. Because the packages were all broken open and she was looking to make up pairs, each pair with a small top but a large bottom, because I have a big keester, Marshall, you said, 'That's not fair. Who could use a big top and a small bottom? Only Babe Ruth!'" You would have to know that Babe Ruth had a tremendous torso and very small legs.

He just roared at his own story, and I said, "I don't even remember that."

Of course, you have to want to have faith in your memory. I recall that the only Yiddish words I knew as a child were lasum saroo, which my mother would say to my father, which means, "Lay off, already." Some friends challenged me on this, claiming that my memory wasn't correct. So I wrote to Samuel Kohs, who is a

Kuhn: famous Yiddishist and whose son was a camper at Tawonga with me. I told him this story and he wrote me back and said, "Marshall, One, you are a hundred percent right. That's exactly what lasum saroo means. And, two, never distrust your childhood memories. They are always correct."

Devotion to Jewish Life and Values

Dorfman: Others have had perhaps a more structured Jewish background than you've had, and yet you've been totally immersed in and totally devoted to Jewish life and values. Can you tell me how you can account for this?

Kuhn: No, I really can't, except--I'll take the negative side first.
[end tape 9, side B; begin tape 10, side A]

Kuhn: First we'll go into the negative sense. When I finished religious school at Emanu-El, there was no such thing as a high school class. I went to college, and Hillel didn't offer courses, and the only Judaica on campus was the study of Hebrew. Then, when I got out of college, I started being active in organizations, and working, and having a family.

I never really did well going to courses at night. One, I couldn't seem to arrange to have a given night of the week to be free for a whole semester. Two, I couldn't stay awake for three hours from seven to ten. For some courses I did. For Blue Shield I took a number of courses in prepaid medical care. I took some Jewish courses, but really not many compared to what I could have done. Basically it was a biological problem. It had something to do with my metabolism. I just couldn't stay awake after a full meal and a full day's work.

But I could do a lot of volunteer work. I could go to meetings, I could phone, I could type in my basement, because that was active rather than passive. So I admire greatly people who have taken a lot of courses. My absorption of Jewish knowledge has been indirect and also through reading. That leaves a lot of space there because if you take a course your study is more structured; you have a chance to have your questions answered and to hear questions of other students answered. But it just wasn't for me. So, as I say, it's been an indirect method. Does that cover the question?

Dorfman: Let me ask the question again. Others have had a more structured Jewish background than you, and yet you have been totally immersed in and devoted to Jewish life and values. How would you account for that?

Kuhn: Well, I think basically it's because I've had more fun being with people. It doesn't mean I didn't like to read. It just means that I like being with people more. Now, this has some very bad aspects. My knowledge of Hebrew is almost nil. I can't read or write it. I can't speak it. I can't understand it. I follow it in a prayer book very falteringly, because with my language skills, which are very, very bad, it would have taken so much effort to master Hebrew that I wouldn't have been able to do anything else.

It was just a choice I made, consciously or unconsciously, that that would have to be one of the regrets of my life, that I would have to get my knowledge of Judaica through translation, in spite of the fact that so many people have said, "Well, you're not going to get the flavor by reading the material in English." Maybe that's true for a scholar, but I don't think that's true for the average reader.

I don't think you really have to be a scholar to devote yourself to Jewish studies. I can think of so many examples of people who were leaders in the Jewish community, even though in childhood they were deprived of any formal Jewish education, sometimes quite consciously by their parents. You might wonder how they could in later life, with hardly any Jewish background, become leaders in the Jewish community.

The answer is because leadership is far less intellectual than emotional. You take some of these people and you send them to Israel or to Morocco or to Germany and something happens to them that you would hardly predict. There's a song we sang in Sunday school: "There is a mystic tie that binds the children of the martyr race." You're not going to flush Jewishness out of their genes that fast.

On the other hand, some of the most competent scholars I know in Judaic subjects are really devoid of Judaism as I conceive of it. They wouldn't contribute to a Jewish charity if their life depended upon it, or at least to a charity other than one that benefits their own particular narrow interest. So it's not how much you know; it's what you do with what you feel. I'm not knocking education at all, but I don't think it's that primary.

The Satisfaction as a Catalyst

Dorfman: What would you say were the triumphs of such a life?

Kuhn: My life?

Dorfman: Of a life so totally involved in Jewish life.

Kuhn: [Pauses] Well, I try not to spend all my energy on patting myself on the back, but it's a great satisfaction. First of all, you do see the community change. It's slow, but if you stop and think and analyze what we've done, how we've tried to meet the needs, we have kept pace, sometimes not as fast as we'd like or as complete as we'd like, but there has been movement. And if you've been a part of it, as I think I have, not just in Jewish organizations but presenting a Jewish way of doing things and looking at things in the non-Jewish organizations I've worked in, then you find you have made a contribution.

I can point to certain programs and projects that wouldn't have happened without me. At least I don't think they would have happened in quite that way, and it's a satisfaction. I don't think of that very often because I'm always thinking, "What am I going to do next?" I haven't run out of ideas at all. It's tough now in my present situation to implement any of them, but I look forward to what's going to happen next.

I'm not running down the way others use their leisure, but it wouldn't have been in the cards for me to be a gambler. I have never walked into a bar by myself in my life. You could spend a fortune on that, you know. I don't like spectator sports that much, even though I was an athlete and interested in and trained in physical education. It was never as a spectator that I found satisfaction.

But I have found satisfaction in this organizational work because other people with whom I've come in contact have been very, very pleasant associates. They form the bulk of our friendships--not all by any means, but most of them, because you have a commonality of interests and a fundamental sameness in the way you approach things, the Jewish point of view.

Dorfman: You said that some programs would not have come into being if not for you.

Kuhn: Well, in our local Jewish community we would not have had vocational service as early as we did, perhaps, if I hadn't, as chairman of social planning, attended the meeting in 1965 when two of the leaders of the top vocational services came here, Bill Gillman of Chicago and Maurie Grooman of L.A. They just met with a few of us and told what vocational services do. I was just absolutely--I had my imagination inflamed. I kept pushing for this service, or for a study to prove the need for it, and the Federation resisted. There were times when I almost gave the whole thing up.

Kuhn:

I kept on persisting at it and eventually we had two studies. The first study reached the conclusion that we didn't need the Jewish vocational service because kids had counseling services available at their public schools. This is absolutely such a ridiculous conclusion, because the quality and quantity of counseling services in public schools is extremely deficient. The second study validated the need. We created an agency and it's been a tremendous success, not just for native born Americans, but with this whole integration from Russia--getting them jobs, training them--and this is something we couldn't have accomplished any other way. So that's a program to which I really feel I made a substantial contribution.

In the non-Jewish field, building a pool for the Camp Fire Girls, creating a Young Audiences Week, building a recreation room for children with bone tuberculosis at San Francisco General Hospital--a lot of projects of that sort. I think in almost every organization I involved myself in, there was something that I did that was really special. I tried to act not just as a routine board member, but as a catalyst by bringing things together, making them move--something that would happen that wouldn't happen otherwise.

But I've thought that the role of the catalyst really doesn't describe what I tried to do. In chemical terms, a catalyst means a chemical or other agent that causes something to happen without changing itself. This can't happen with me because I change as a result of bringing these things together. But I've had the luck that usually something constructive has always happened.

I led the fund drive for the new camp for the Diabetic Youth Foundation, Bearskin Meadow. Actually, Dr. Mary Olney, the founder and camp director, was the spark plug, but she honored me by having me do this because of my fund-raising activities elsewhere. I started a cub pack at Temple Emanu-El and brought into scouting at the Temple, for the first time, nonwhite children.

People say, "Marshall, you must have been involved in every organization," and I say, "No, I've never done anything directly for the Mothers' Milk Bank. Indirectly, yes." [Chuckles]

Even at the Strybing Arboretum Society my role was being the catalyst that started the John Muir Nature Trail, which was just on the drawing board of the Arboretum. I suggested that they name the nature trail after John Muir and I helped them raise the money--\$134,000--and it's being developed. This is from a fellow who doesn't know one plant from another, except that plant life is a beautiful thing. The Arboretum is an educational institution and we have a tremendous educational program.

Kuhn: Unfortunately, I'm not qualified for it [chuckles], but I know it's a good thing, and so as much as the others on our board know about plants, there should be someone who knows about money. As a matter of fact, I think I may have told you that at our annual plant sale, which is our big fund-raising event, a woman stopped me and said, "Do you sell beech trees inside?" and I said, "Madame, I am the treasurer of this organization and all I know about trees is that money doesn't grow on them." [Laughter]

The Disappointments of a Volunteer

Dorfman: I've asked you about the triumphs of a life so deeply concerned with Jewish values. What were the disappointments?

Kuhn: The disappointments, I think, mainly were taking time away from my children and my wife. But I can't think of any other disappointments. I never expected that we were going to win every battle, but I think we won most of them. Just sitting here right now, I can't think of any case where something good didn't come out of it. Some of the organizations weren't as pleasant to work with as others.

But in some cases, as I realize now, I had no business being there. Young Audiences—I don't know anything about music, but I know that music education is good for children. This is an organization that devotes itself exclusively to providing a musical educational experience for kids in public, private, and parochial schools. So I helped them raise money.

Even my work as an historian for the Sierra Club is from a background where I never took a history course in college, and this, of course, has great advantages which I'll point out later. Some of your lack of background actually makes you look more objective when it is known that you are not deeply involved in a particular issue, not as immersed in the program or personally involved.

From Solicitor to Member of the Board of Directors

[Insert from tape 11, sides A and B]

Dorfman: Would you like to tell me something about your volunteer activities with the Jewish Welfare Federation?

Kuhn: Well, sure. First, in fund raising as a solicitor, as a chairman of various groups of solicitors, as the co-chairman of the campaign, as the speaker—that's all raising funds. Then, as the co-chairman of the campaign, I was more or less ex-officio on the board of directors. But at that time you were a nonvoting member, and when they announced this at the board meeting, that Marshall Kuhn and John Steinhart are now on the board of directors but without the right to vote, boy, we gave them the ha ha and, oh, they were very embarrassed. They said, "Well, we're changing the bylaws so that next year you'll be a member in your own right."

Now, my wife was also on the board of directors of the Federation as the president of the Emanu-El Residence Club, one of the agencies, and when her term finally ended she said, "Gentlemen, I want to thank you very much for having allowed me to have lunch with my husband once a month."

Then, when I was on the board, I became very active in some of the committee work, particularly in social planning. I was chairman of that for three years but a member of it for over ten years, and on budgeting--

[end tape 11, side A; begin tape 11, side B]

Dorfman: What motivated you in your first volunteer work?

Kuhn: At first, I guess it was because I heard the story in 1934 (when Rabbi Reichert at Temple Emanu-El was chairman that year) of the Jews in Europe needing help. That's a very impressive thing when you realize that but for the grace of God my parents might still have been in Europe with me rather than over here. How come I'm so fortunate? Etc.

So then I became a solicitor. I solicited a dollar, two dollars, five dollars, maybe, in the small business area near where the Bank of America is now--a little hat store, shoe repair, umbrella repairs. Then I became active in the insurance section of the business and professional division because that was the closest to what Blue Shield was. Eventually I became a vice-chairman. Every year I'd be a vice-chairman. It didn't mean anything.

Dorfman: What did you do when you were working within the insurance division of the Federation?

Kuhn: They gave you the cards of men in that position and you solicited them. You did it better if you went to see them and, eventually, maybe you had too many cards and you started phoning them.

LAUGHS FROM THE CAMPAIGN

by Marshall Kuhn

Campaigning is a serious business. But occasionally something humorous occurs to lighten the task.

The classic fundraising story, allegedly apocryphal, goes as follows: Cohn runs into Ginsberg in the Federation office, and the following conversation ensues:

Cohn: "Say, Ginsberg, did you hear about Schwartz? I'm told--and my source is reliable--that he made \$6,000,000 in steel last week."

Ginsberg: "I think you got it wrong."

Cohn: "What d'ya mean I got it wrong? The guy who told me has always been right before."

Ginsberg: "Well, in the first place, it wasn't Schwartz, it was Sobel. Second, it wasn't steel, it was rubber. Next, it wasn't \$6,000,000, it was \$13,000,000. And, lastly, he didn't make it, he lost it!"

All the following incidents actually involved members of our Federation:

Edward M. Warburg was chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee for 25 years. As the son of the legendary Felix Warburg, he

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LAUGHS FROM THE CAMPAIGN

Marshall Kuhn

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Edward M. M. Warburg was chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee for 25 years. As the son of the legendary Felix Warburg, he carried his honors modestly. Following his speech at a UJA Regional Conference in Palm Springs, someone asked him, "Isn't it unusual for anyone to have two middle names? What do the initials M. M. stand for?" To which Mr. Warburg replied, "Multi-Millionaire!"

During the Six Day War in 1967, UJA reported receiving a gift of \$250,000 from Herb Alpert. Someone in our office who was not familiar with the jazz scene said, "Say, I wonder, does the Tijuana Brass have anything to do with Anaconda Copper?"

A non-Jewish physician in the Central Valley was a great admirer of the Israelis and during the Yom Kippur War, he wished to donate an expensive foreign car to the Israel Emergency Fund. It was arranged that Bill Lowenberg would fly to Fresno, pick up the car and drive it back to San Francisco. There was only one problem. Bill had never met the doctor. While waiting at the airport, he wondered how he would recognize him. Suddenly a flashy Silver Cloud appears with an Israeli flag flying from the radio antenna. The doctor's wife had stayed up all the previous night making the flag.

A number of years ago, following a meeting at the home of the Israel Consul General, we were approached at the refreshment table by a Tall Distinguished Gentleman, and the conversation went like this:

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LAUGHS FROM THE CAMPAIGN

Marshall Kuhn -3-

TDG: "Good evening. I'm one of your workers."

Kuhn: "Oh ? In which division do you work?"

TDG: "Business and Professional."

Kuhn: "And in which section?"

TDG: "Apparel."

Kuhn: "Men's or women's?"

TDG: "Men's."

Kuhn: "Wholesale or retail?"

TDG: "Retail..."

And then he looked us over, rapidly but carefully, from top to bottom, and added, "I'm Kurt Gronowski of Jay Briggs--- and we carry 48 Long!"

Following the Six Day War, there arrived at a worker's meeting in Marin a self-appointed solicitor who hadn't been invited. He volunteered to take far more than the usual number of cards, but after a month, our records showed that he hadn't solicited one prospect. When we checked on this worker's own record, it appeared that during the past five campaigns, he had pledged \$100 each year and hadn't paid a penny. He still owed \$500. So the question was asked, "The S.O.B., if he's not going to pay his pledges, why can't he at least increase them?"

LAUGHS FROM THE CAMPAIGN

Marshall Kuhn -4-

When Don Seiler was Campaign Chairman, he called a meeting of 20 top Pacesetter Division leaders and told them, "The purpose of this meeting is to have you call out the name of the best solicitor you can think of for each of the 240 major prospects whose names I will read off. We have two hours for this meeting, which is 120 minutes. 120 minutes for 240 names means we have 30 seconds to consider each prospect, so there will be no time for any extraneous comments as to whether a certain person is or is not a good donor, etc." At that point, four men rose spontaneously and started moving toward the door. One of them turned and said, "Look, the only fun we have in this campaign is commenting about a donor who should be giving 10 times his actual gift. If you're going to take that pleasure away from us, Don, there'll be no fun at all!"

Finally, here are three stories from the 1975 Telethon: At one session, the Board members of a local agency were going to man the phones. When dinner was over, one volunteer set himself down at a phone and asked, "When do they start calling us?" It was explained to him gently that unlike the KQED auction, they don't call us--we call them!

At each Telethon session, every worker was instructed that if the operator indicated a change had been made in the prospect's phone number, to note the new number on the pledge card. Further, if

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LAUGHS FROM THE CAMPAIGN

Marshall Kuhn -5-

a worker phoned a prospect early in the evening and there was no answer, to put that card aside for calling just before the Telethon ended at 9 p.m. One worker phoned a prospect at 7 p.m. and was given a new number with a 412 area code. There was no answer, so she called again at 9 p.m. When a sleepy voice answered the phone, our volunteer began her solicitation, only to be interrupted by the prospect. "Your records must be wrong, I moved from San Francisco three years ago. I love the Federation, but you're calling me here at midnight in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. So, nu, I ask you, isn't that a bit much?"

Over the years, a worker may develop a close relationship with a particular prospect who refuses to make a pledge to any other worker. One elderly female prospect was called by a male worker whom she didn't know, and she replied, "Look, whoever I did it with last year, I want to do it with him again this year."

No, if you read anything off-color into that remark, it's not our fault.

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Kuhn: Then one day a man named Bennett Raffin, a good friend of mine, became the chairman of the business and professional division and he, of course, had to have a chairman for every section. He came to see me and he said, "Will you be the chairman next year of the insurance section?" I said, "Sure." He was dumbfounded that anybody would say yes so rapidly because he was having a lot of trouble. I did it and I did a superb job. I know that because from the time I went over and got the cards, I never heard from the staff again in the whole campaign.

I did such a good job that the next year they asked me to be the vice-chairman of the whole division, and after that the chairman of the division. Then they said to me, "How about repeating as chairman?" I said, "No soap." Then they said, "Will you be the vice-chairman of the whole campaign?" I said, "Sure."

It's easy to say, "Do something again. You're so good." After John Steinhart and I were co-chairmen of the whole campaign, the next year they asked us to repeat. We figured we really should repeat because, as co-chairmen say, you've done half. So at the meeting at which they announced this, Ben Swig was the president of the Federation and he said, "Now, John and Marshall did a great job last year, but next year we want someone who's more experienced, who's older, more mature. And who's aged more than these two guys during the last year? So they're going to repeat." [Laughter]

As you get into it, particularly after I'd had a chance to go to UJ co-regional conferences, and then with the trips I made overseas in '61 to Austria, Morocco, and France; in '62 to Poland, France, and Israel--they you really see Jewish life. You begin to wonder what's reality and what's illusion. This is illusion here. Reality is what's there for a Jew. That's where the tsouris is.

Your whole life becomes immersed in that--everything you do, work, other organizations, all secondary. That's the thing that eats you up day and night, and there are thousands of guys around the United States who feel the same way I do. They're just imbued with this actual saga of Jewish life in the twentieth century, with the whole demography of the Jewish world changed, not just because of Hitler, but all the migrations out of Arab countries to Israel and, of course, from North Africa to France have just been staggering.

Meeting Great Leaders

Kuhn: Also, the fact that you run up against some marvelous people in your own community that feel the same way you do. You see the sacrifices they are making, and then you meet national and

Kuhn: international leaders. I figured out the other day that I've shaken hands with or listened to or met every single prime minister of Israel.

I shook hands with Ben Gurion, who came from the little shtetl that my father came from and gave me a picture for him. I met Moshe Sharet at Palm Springs and in Israel. Levi Eshkol. We gave a birthday party to Rabbi Saul White. Golda was here. We heard her at a special party at Madeleine Russell's before she spoke at Emanu-El. I had heard her at Sherith Israel as Golda Myerson in 1948.

Shimon Paris, who had a very short duration as prime minister--in '73, right after the Yom Kippur War, he was here and I took him around the whole area on Thanksgiving Day before he went to Los Angeles. It was raining. I remember I took him to Muir Woods. He said, "Marshall, it's pouring rain. Are the rest of your woods like this part?" I said, "Yes." He said, "All right, I've seen it." [Chuckles] So we went to Sally Stanford's for a drink.

Yitzhak Rabin I've heard speak here. Even Begin! Rabbi Louis I. Newman of New York had said to me in '62, "If you go to Israel and see Menachem Begin, give him my regards." Rabbi Newman, who had bar mitzvahed me here in San Francisco, was also a revisionist. So my driver drove me around Jerusalem and he said, "That's Mr. Begin." So we stopped the car and I ran over and I said, "Mr. Begin, I bring you greetings from Rabbi Newman of New York." "Thank you." We shook hands and that was it.

I heard Weizmann here, as I told you. So I've heard some great American Jewish leaders--people like Eddie Warburg, who was the chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee for twenty-five years and a marvelous guy. When you hear these people talk about Jewish life--Charlie Jordan, who was murdered in Czechoslovakia. When you see the expertise these guys have in dealing with refugee problems--this is what it's been.

Then you say, "Ah, I've tied my star to something of substance. We're going to change the life of Jewish people around. It's a great opportunity." The second year I was co-chairman, they said, "Would you like to go to Poland?" I said, "I'd be co-chairman if all you said I had to do was go to Poland. I think that's a fantastic privilege, even though it's going to be horrible to see Auschwitz." But it was something I had to do. So it's been no sacrifice at all. I think I worked very hard for the Federation; I'm talking about my volunteer career, but it was something that I believed in every second.

Kuhn: Finally, you get some sophistication because you say, "Look, you can't just be concerned with the overseas picture, even though most of our funds are overseas. You have to have a balanced view. You have to have a strong local community. You just can't be a 'UJAnik.'" And finally you get a more balanced viewpoint.

But it takes a while because the overseas picture is so compelling. Here we were in Morocco and were being shown around by Henry Kirsch, American Joint Distribution Committee representative. We're going to a soup kitchen and we see three blind Jewish men who are in old black rags. One comes in first with his cane, and each of the others is behind with his arm on the shoulder of the man in front of him, and they're groping their way toward the soup kitchen. They had all been blinded by trachoma.

The big three diseases there are trachoma, tinea (which is ring-worm), and tuberculosis. We go inside and here these three men are sitting there, these three blind men, with their hands in their soup bowl, bread, they can't see. I figured, "My God, my God."

So then I got to Israel; you saw the reverse of the coin. It was Israel's observance of the twentieth anniversary of the United Jewish Appeal and they gave a show for us in Mann Auditorium, Tel Aviv. The hit of the show was these ninety-two kids of a children's chorus singing "Do Re Mi" in Hebrew. I sat there. I was bawling because they were so beautiful, and when I edited all of my slides, hundreds of slides of the two trips overseas, I took these two. I said, "Here are the opposite sides of the coin. The three blind men and these beautiful children, and you can make the difference." I have tears in my eyes right now.

Dorfman: And so do I. That's a beautiful, beautiful story. Can you tell me about your work on the social planning committee?

Kuhn: The social planning committee at that time did not involve budgeting. It was just a study of every agency which we funded, every local agency, to see how it operated, particularly if it had any problems. Were they thinking of any expansion? We didn't do all of them every year. We did, maybe, two or three a year, and as chairman I would appoint a committee to delve into these.

We'd do the Hebrew Free Loan to find out if they could appropriate more from their reserves toward operating costs. Homewood Terrace at that time was changing from a cottage system to a residential home situation. Mount Zion Hospital was getting ready for a capital funds drive. The Home for the Aged was getting ready for a big building program. Every agency had something doing, and our idea was to validate it because everything that they'd change would cost the Federation more eventually.

Kuhn: The Jewish Family Service was thinking of expanding to the Peninsula. The Jewish Center was thinking of building a center out in Brotherhood Way and then in Marin and down the Peninsula. That's what it was, a study of how things were changing and how we're going to react to the changing needs and population redistribution in the Jewish community, which has been dramatic. Here you find in twenty years, fifteen years maybe, 20,000 Jews have left San Francisco to move to the Peninsula.

So from 55,000 it's dropped to 35,000. This is a staggering change. Of the 35,000, very few of the ones who moved were elderly. They stayed here. That was the social planning process. Now it's combined with the budgeting process.

Initiating a Jewish Vocational Education Service

Dorfman: Were there other committees on which you served?

Kuhn: Yes, I was on the nominating committee; the committee for the study of special relationships between our Federation and the San Jose Federation, as to whether we should merge or not. It was a special study committee as to whether to start a vocational service, which we did eventually.

Dorfman: Yes, why don't you tell me about that?

Kuhn: Well, in 1965, I think it was, Bill Gillman of Chicago and Maurie Grooman of L.A. came to San Francisco. They were here for some other conference and they met with Dan Koshland, who was then chairman of social planning, and myself, and Federation staff. They talked about what a real vocational service can do, not just in finding jobs but testing, motivating, and working with kids, retraining study habits, everything.

I was really taken with this and my imagination was really fired up. I tried to see why we couldn't have one. We had one year before when I was in college. We had a Jewish Vocational Guidance Bureau run by Morton Gaba, who later became the executive director of the New Orleans Federation.

Eventually this Federation had a study which I felt reached a completely untenable conclusion, that no special vocational services were needed because kids have counselors in high school. Well, now, if you know anything about counseling in the San Francisco schools, you'd realize that this is ridiculous. It took years and years, and finally we had a study process headed by Frank Sloss which did validate the need for this. The Federation board approved it, funded it, and it's been a big success.

Kuhn: Right now its major caseload would be the incoming refugees from Russia and Rumania. But that's one of my babies, although I admit that at times I got very discouraged about it. I just felt that it should be implemented. But the professional staff of the Federation didn't seem to--they either didn't see the need for it or they felt that maybe they wouldn't be backed by the lay leadership.

Dorfman: You must be very proud of having achieved that.

Kuhn: I am. At one time we thought that it really should be part of the Jewish Family Service Agency, but the professional of that agency did not want it, so we said, "Well, then we'll have to found a complete new agency." This involves a lot more. Maybe it's all to the better, however, when you're dealing with only one particular problem rather than having it as part of a complex of problems.

Dorfman: What do you see as that agency's role in the future?

Kuhn: The vocational service? Oh, it hasn't even scratched the surface. In L.A., for example, they may have established twenty-five vocational services. First of all, we'll have to broaden the service to Marin and the Peninsula, both north and south, I would say, maybe half a day a week in each place. You have to really start working with kids, developing their study habits so that they qualify to get into college. It's not just a question of saying, "Do you want to be a doctor? Well, maybe you've just wasted four years of your life. You should have thought about that before."

Retraining older people. When you say that people make all these occupational changes during their life, are they really qualified for this? Women re-entering the labor market after they've had their children, people coping with technological unemployment, all sorts of things. Aptitude training. Right now we don't do any testing. We pay to have them tested either at State College or at Berkeley. But that's part of it. What are they really qualified for?

A lot of it is doing things that people have assumed are being done in the public schools, and they're not. Everybody we can get a job for, get them off the relief rolls and make them income-producing taxpayers, is just that much better for everybody.

"A Portrait of Federation - The Family of Federations"

Dorfman: Were there other committees with which you were involved?

Kuhn: Well, I'm trying to think if there was any committee I wasn't involved in at one time or another. Just about every single committee--I was on the executive committee because I was chairman of social planning, which is one of the permanent standing committees in the Federation. Then I was in charge of the annual meeting in about 1972 when we put on a special program called "A Portrait of Federation - The Family of Federations." I conceived the idea of having a representative of each agency that we supported be present, seated in the audience, just as though they were any other luncheon guest.

Then I would, on the rostrum, describe each of these agencies that had helped somebody, and then I would call upon that person to move to the end of the Gold Room of the Fairmont and be part of the group for a group photograph. Now, we had all rehearsed this photograph before the luncheon, but no one knew that, and I had people there who had been brought over here by the Joint Distribution Committee and by Hillel. I had a woman who was a doctor in Germany and was retrained in Mt. Zion, Dr. Bausch. I had a woman who was a resident at the Home for the Aged who had been the obstetrician for World Family in the Round.

I had Art Zimmerman, who started his hamburger business with a loan from Hebrew Free Loan. I had Sam Ladar, the past president of the Federation, who had been a Homewood Terrace orphan. I had kids from all the centers. In fact, I've got this photograph hanging in our hall there. We got them up there and I said, "This is your family. These are the people you deal with. It isn't just abstract numbers we deal with; we deal with so many thousand people, so many millions, that it is incomprehensible. This is flesh and blood." Of course, they got a huge hand.

And one person thanked me--Marcel Hirsch wrote me a note. He said, "Marshall, that was a beautiful program. You must have worked like hell." I mean, people thanked me. Walter Haas, of course--he came up immediately afterwards. He's a man of infinite grace and whenever I've spoken to the Federation he's always come up and thanked me. But Marcel Hirsch was kind enough to write it.

Dorfman: It must have been a thrilling program.

Kuhn: Well, it was a luncheon, and to me it was very meaningful because I'd worked on it for years and it took a lot of things to get thirty-five people together. At first, I thought I was going to get them to participate by saying something and then I realized that would never work in a limited time. So I wrote this script and like clockwork they would come up there and everybody was thinking, "Who's next? Who's going to be next? Who's that?" It was just terrific.

MARSHALL KUHN IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY



1934 or 1935 Marshall H. Kuhn and Rabbi Irving Reichert at Temple Emanu-El, San Francisco



Peninsula Temple Beth El Religious School visit to Sonora Pioneer Jewish Cemetery, late 60's or 1970



Bay Area Teachers' Conference, fall of 1959, Temple Sherith Israel, San Francisco. Presentation of Chanuko menorahs to principals of Bay Area Jewish religious schools who have served a minimum of seven years. *Left to right:* Norman Shapiro, George Karonsky, Coleman Herts, Rabbi Eugene Borowitz, Rabbi Bernard Ducoff, Marshall H. Kuhn, Roger Coffee, Chester Zeff, Seymour Fromer.



A Portrait of Federation - The Family of Federations
Identification of names on following page

"A PORTRAIT OF FEDERATION"

Photograph taken at Annual Meeting of Jewish Welfare Federation of San Francisco, Marin County and the Peninsula, Tuesday, December 12, 1972, Gold Room, Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco.

LEFT TO RIGHT:

REAR ROW:

Shlomo Globerson, Israeli Speakers Bureau, San Francisco Chapter, American Jewish Committee;
Sp/4 Henry Lazarus, Letterman Army Institute of Research;
Robert Lent, Vice President, Central Region, AZA (BBYO);
Chaim Milstein, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, University of California, Berkeley;
Rod Cohan, patient, Veterans Administration Hospital, San Francisco;
Miss Jessica Simmonds, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, California State University, SF;
John Lewin, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, City College of San Francisco;
Mrs. Michelle Chemla, Hebrew Free Loan Association;
Rabbi H. David Teitelbaum, Temple Beth Jacob, Redwood City, alumnus of Central Hebrew School of the Jewish Education Society, forerunner of the Bureau of Jewish Education;
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Goodman, Young Adults Division alumni.

MIDDLE ROW:

Douglas Roberts, Adult Program, Peninsula Jewish Community Center;
Miss Linda Lowney, student, San Francisco College of Judaic Studies;
Mrs. Sarah Shilgi, accredited Hebrew teacher, Bureau of Jewish Education;
Miss Carol Belotz, President, Central Region, B'nai B'rith Girls (BBYO);
Eric Eisenman, Temple Beth Sholom Post-Confirmation Class; graduate, Hebrew High School; member, 1972 "Youth to Israel Study Program"; Most Valuable Player, Beth Sholom Basketball Team, 1972 Jewish Youth Athletic League;
Mrs. Leon Schlosser, Jewish Community Relations Council;
Mrs. Fortuna Lichaa, San Francisco Committee for Service to Emigres (JFSA);
Arthur Zimmerman, Hebrew Free Loan Association;
Bruce Lazar, Camp Tawonga, United Jewish Community Centers;
Miss Katya Miller, Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum.

FRONT ROW:

Karen Goldsmith, Brandeis Day School;
Loren Katzovitz, Hebrew Academy;
Miriam Ferziger, Children's Program, South Peninsula Jewish Community Center;
Samuel A. Ladar, alumnus of Pacific Hebrew Orphanage, forerunner of Homewood Terrace;
Miss Francine Yellin, Teen Program, Brotherhood Way Jewish Community Center;
Joe Levy, Montefiore Senior Adult Program, San Francisco Jewish Community Center;
Dr. Olga Kissner, resident, Jewish Home for the Aged;
Tama Goodman, Nursery School, Marin Jewish Community Center;
Moussa Ezial, Utility Workshop (JFSA);
Mrs. Myron Goldsmith, volunteer, Mount Zion Hospital and Medical Center;
Dr. Christa Basch, resident, Mount Zion Hospital and Medical Center;
Mrs. Tillie Gintz, Community Chaplaincy.

Identification prepared by Marshall H. Kuhn, December 21, 1972.

Kuhn: I had a woman, Pauline Goldsmith, who was very well thought of in the community. She was the one representing the volunteers at Mt. Zion, having given five thousand hours of service. She was up there. Oh, the last kid, the last person of the thirty-five, was a little four-year-old girl who was in the nursery school at Marin Center, and we figured this out. She comes up there and she jumps on the lap of this woman who had been the obstetrician to the World Family in the Round. It was just like, "That's my grandma," see? It was just beautiful, just beautiful.

Dorfman: That was quite a program.

Kuhn: It was.
[end of insert]

XII SIERRA CLUB MEMBERSHIP, 1949 TO PRESENT

Dorfman: Can you tell me, please, what drew you to the Sierra Club?

Kuhn: Well, I'll tell you very simply. I had hiked in the Sierra in 1940 in Yosemite National Park on a week-long trip sponsored by the Park Service. I was interested in hiking and I got the idea that someday I wanted to climb to the top of Mount Whitney. It's the highest peak in the forty-eight contiguous states. Well, the obvious means was through the Sierra Club. So in 1949 I found out that they were sponsoring their usual High Trip, part of which would feature the opportunity for a selected group to leave the main group and climb Mount Whitney.

So I had to join the Sierra Club and at that time you had to get two sponsors. I asked Edgar Kahn, who was an old Sierra Clubber and a friend of mine, if he would sponsor me and he was glad to. Then I said, "I need another one." Well, he got a friend of his who worked for Standard Oil and who became my second sponsor.

I went on this trip and it was just sensational, just marvelous. But I never had the opportunity to go on another Sierra Club trip because they take two weeks, and if that's all the vacation time you have, when are you going to have any time to spend with your family? I suggested to the Sierra Club something which they later adopted, which is to have a number of one-week experiences for the fellow who cannot give up two weeks.

Their argument at first was, "Well, in one week you really don't shake civilization out that much. On the other hand, you have a point that it's better to have one week than none. It's simply a matter of logistics, and that's what we're in business for, so we'll do it." And they did it.

In fact, the whole nature of their outing program has changed over the last twenty years. Before, they used to have one or two big trips a year in the Sierra, and maybe with staff there might be

Kuhn: two hundred people. They realized they were doing to the Sierra what they told everybody else not to do. They were denuding it of vegetation because the pack animals that brought in all the food and carried the dunnage were eating all the grass. We decided we had to have far more trips of smaller size.

So now they have, maybe, in a given year, three hundred trips all over the world, all seasons. Several years ago the average size was eighteen people and the maximum of any one of the three hundred groups was twenty-seven. So they've taken their own advice.

But I've never had the opportunity to go again. My kids never seemed to want to go on a Sierra Club trip, but it wasn't only that. When my oldest child, Alyson, was nine, I took her on part of the same trip I had taken in 1940. It's called the High Sierra Camps, which are operated by the Yosemite Park and Curry Company under the direction of the National Park Service, and it's the only national park that has this kind of setup.

The camps are situated a day's hiking apart. Only one is near a road, Tuolumne Meadows, and there are six of them in all. All year long, except for summer, they're under snow. So when the summer comes along, they have to erect a camp with all the wood and metal and canvas that's been stowed and create this camp for two months of operation, July and August. In a year which has had a heavy snowfall, they can't even operate some of the camps for the whole month of July.

Alyson took to this like a duck to water, so when Bruce and Nancy got older they started making the circuit, and maybe five or six times we did this trip, which is really beautiful, except that it was confining ourselves only to Yosemite. But we never really broadened out and went to other parks in the Sierra or with the Sierra Club because it's--well, I'll tell you, the High Sierra Camps have great attraction. You don't have to carry your own food, the food is great, and you have a nice mattress and clean sheets and hot showers, and you don't have to carry all the stuff on your back.

Not that with the Sierra Club you have to carry all of your bags, because they have animals, but the Sierra Club trips are a little more rugged. But I should have done that. I should have, after a few years at least, alternated and gone somewhere else down the John Muir Trail or to some other part of the country-- Rainier or Glacier or someplace like that.

We did hiking in the Sierra, but it was pretty much always the same thing. But I never made another Sierra Club trip. However, I always maintained my organizational membership because I felt

Kuhn: that I was helping to support conservation, in which I am vitally interested. I never paid much attention to the club other than reading their magazine occasionally and going to the seventy-fifth anniversary dinner and reveling in some of their battles and great personalities.

Dorfman: When did you become a member?

Kuhn: In 1949. There were 7,000 members then and now there are 176,000.

Jewish and Other Minority Members

Dorfman: Were there other Jewish members when you joined?

Kuhn: Very few that I know of. Edgar Kahn was the only one I can really think of offhand. When it first started in 1892, it was primarily a Protestant organization. I'm not sure whether intentionally or not, nowhere near as intensively as the Save-the-Redwoods League. But religion was something that was frowned upon as a subject for discussion, as was politics, or even what business you were in, or how much you made or were worth, or anything like that. Those were sort of verboten subjects. In a Navy ward room they add women to that list of subjects. [Chuckles]

Dorfman: Was there anti-Semitism?

Kuhn: No, I didn't see any. There might have been. I don't know. There certainly wasn't any on any organizational basis. What there was, however, was a lack of minority participants, I include the Jews as part of the majority. There were very few nonwhites. There are more today but not enough.

Dorfman: Was there any racism evident?

Kuhn: Well, not evident, but it existed in this sense. In Southern California they had a couple of incidents and these are documented in oral histories by a few of the interviewees who were willing to really lay it on the line. Most of them didn't want to talk about this.

There was one case where the Angeles Chapter had been using a special review policy of not only requiring two sponsors but insisting that application of a prospective member of their chapter be acted upon first by the chapter. If the chapter executive committee found the applicant acceptable, the application would then be sent along to the national headquarters in San Francisco. One of the

Kuhn: reasons was to control "the type of applicant," however you define that, whether it's religious or racial or whatever it was. Well, the practice of prior review could no longer be justified and the board of directors of the club put an end to it.

Then they had another incident where the Angeles Chapter felt that a new applicant should sign a loyalty oath. This was during the McCarthy era. Now, to you and me it might seem crazy that an applicant might have to certify that he's not a communist just to hike on a mountain. But at that time the basis of the Angeles Chapter life was social. Every Friday night they'd have a big dinner at a downtown restaurant or a cafeteria in Los Angeles and that's when the chapter conducted its business. Everybody came and saw everybody else and so on.

Well, that loyalty oath thing actually got on the national ballot of the Sierra Club and it lost overwhelmingly nationally, but it only lost two to one in Southern California. Gradually the club dropped the requirement of sponsors to one, and then they eliminated it completely, as it is now. We'd be delighted to have more minority members.

Dorfman: Do you feel that this questionnaire was used at any time to discourage Jews?

Kuhn: It wasn't a questionnaire. It was a practice of reviewing the application. I wouldn't know if it was to discourage Jews or not. Seemingly I recall reading in one of the oral histories that that might have happened in some instances. It might have. It's something up here in Northern California that we just wouldn't understand. But the whole basis of the Sierra Club membership in Southern California was different. As a matter of fact, they felt that Northern California was trying to dominate them. They even talked about seceding from the Sierra Club. But it all was smoothed over.

Sierra Club Concerns, 1949

Dorfman: What were the concerns of the club when you joined?

Kuhn: Oh, I have no idea. When I say I have no idea, that's not quite true. I have no detailed idea. I have to look it up. It was basically trying to save California and the West. It was getting to the point where there were going to be real threats in the Grand Canyon, which was one of our first--I would say that one of our top battles was to save Grand Canyon.

Kuhn: That was done primarily by David Brower and his advertising campaign in the New York Times where he showed the Grand Canyon and the Sistine Chapel both flooded and, of course, it got thousands of members to send in lots of money out of the East to fight this cause.

We also learned the lesson that there's a very great incongruity in all this. You have legislation passed to create a national park, which means it will be inviolate forever, and who are the principal supporters and defenders of the park? The United States government, which is supported by your taxes. Then you find out that federal officials are the first to violate this concept of conservation. It's a horrible thing that the government doesn't support its own policies which are set down by law. They have to be watched eternally.

Significant Members of the Sierra Club

Dorfman: Who were the great personalities at that time?

Kuhn: Well, at that time there was Will Colby, who was a director for forty-nine years, and he spanned the time from Muir. He actually led the first High Trips back in 1901. There was Norman Clyde, who was a fantastic climber in the Sierra. Edgar Wayburn--well, he still is now, but he was active then in a number of conservation issues.

Brower, of course, was the executive director and the foremost figure in American conservation. What happened to him in the club is, of course, a great area of interest for an oral history program because we are in the midst of interviewing him and some of his supporters. Everyone who was interviewed on the anti-Brower side who had any part in this controversy has also given his or her view. We thought even of having a book of all these excerpts called The Brower Affair because it was a landmark instance in conservation in America.

But this organization became so big that its executive became dominant, and because the board of directors were lay people and volunteers and couldn't give the time, they really couldn't control him. They just didn't want him to go off and bankrupt the club.

His attitude was, "Look, we're here to save the face of the United States and, if we lose, all the money in the world ain't going to put Humpty Dumpty back together again, so we've got to spend it whether we've got it or not." Then, of course, his actions

Kuhn: led to the fact that the club became the first nonprofit organization in the United States to lose its tax exemption because of his very hard line and unyielding attitude toward the Internal Revenue Service. This is all fascinating.

I got involved in the history committee just shortly after he had been fired. Of course, he's reconciled with the club. He's now an honorary vice-president and last May he was given the John Muir Award, which is the highest award the club can give. It's all such a change in his relationships with the club which had fired him eight years before. But many of his members in the Friends of the Earth are Sierra Club members who admire him for what he's done. But he was just in the wrong slot in the club.

He wouldn't be controlled. He had a lot of hubris. He went into this publishing program, these format books which sell for \$25 apiece, and he had millions of dollars of the club's money tied up in inventory. This was great or not great, depending on how you looked at it. Richard Leonard, who was Brower's greatest supporter at one time, but [who was also] the man who really helped to formulate the strategy that led to his ousting, told me, "You know, we complained about Dave spending all this money, and here he's been gone for years, and we're still broke." So maybe there's a fundamental problem.

Dorfman: That, of course, was the problem you spoke of.

Kuhn: That was one of them. Also, his taking positions without any consultation with the board or directors, placing ads in the New York Times without clearing with anybody, or sometimes placing them in spite of the fact that he was ordered not to. He just was a one-man gang.

Dorfman: You said that the concerns of the club when you joined were conservation.

Kuhn: Well, I didn't join for any of those reasons. I joined to climb Mount Whitney. Everything else was secondary. But every year now, maybe 5,000 people go on these various trips throughout the world, but that's out of 176,000 members. In the early days, maybe a third of the members went. In 1901, they had 600 members and 200 of them went on the High Trip. That's a very high percentage.

So most people do not join for the same reason that I joined them. Once I got into it, I identified with their battles. I have a book called the Sierra Club Handbook which gives a full chronology of the club, year by year from 1892, and I could look and see what we were battling then, but it was building up toward the great issue of Grand Canyon.

Dorfman: What were the political issues when you joined?

Kuhn: Do you mean political within the club?

Dorfman: Yes.

Kuhn: Well, there weren't any at that time. Brower had become the first paid executive. Everyone was happy with him. He had come from the University of California Press. He was very good at writing and everything seemed to be going quite smoothly. I was unaware of any political issues within the club. Of course, there were always personal things--jockeying around for position on the board of directors and so on. But it was very difficult because of this policy that once you were on the board it was almost impossible to get you off.

Dorfman: We'll have to stop here.

[end tape 10, side A]

The History Committee

[Insert from tape 11, side B; and from tape 12, side A]

Founding Chairman

Dorfman: You are chairman of the history committee of the Sierra Club. Have you been chairman since the initiation of that committee?

Kuhn: Yes. I'm the founding chairman. It's quite a story. In 1969 my children and I were hiking in Yosemite in the high country. We visited the High Sierra Camps near Glen Aulin on the Tuolumne River and I got talking with a man. He said, "That's my father [Tom Rieger] over there and this is my kid. That's three generations. My father has been hiking up here every year since 1905 in the Army Patrol of Yosemite. There wasn't even a National Park Service in 1916." [The park was controlled by the U.S. Cavalry.] Tom had seen tremendous changes in the park in the intervening sixty-four years.

So I got back and I wrote to the Sierra Club and asked, "Did anybody ever take down reminiscences of men like this elderly gentleman, Tom Rieger?" "Well, yes and no. We should, but we don't, and Bancroft Library does it." But my letter somehow got

Kuhn: photocopied and one copy went to the executive director of the club, who answered me in that vein. The other one went to the president of the club, who said, "We've set aside \$1,000 from the Sierra Club Foundation to get started on this thing."

Now, the Sierra Club, you have to realize, is an organization that is really a volunteer organization, and they say, "Here it is, go run with it." There are no written rules. Well, I had never read the bylaws of the Sierra Club, and they wouldn't tell you much about what I was trying to do anyway. So there I was, and so I asked the people from Bancroft to come over and meet with the Sierra Club and tell us what's involved in an oral history program. Then I said, "I've got to really get some support. I'm unknown. I've belonged to the club since '49, but that's not good enough."

So on my own I called a meeting of several past presidents. The leading one was Francis Farquhar, who was then honorary president of the club. He and his wife attended. We had it at The Bancroft Library at Berkeley. Lewis Clark, another past president, came. Charlotte Mauk, who was an honorary vice-president, came--I had hiked with her in my only trip with the Sierra Club in '49--and a number of others. We passed this resolution that, "Here a committee of club members feels that the club should have a history committee." I got Will Siri, who was a past president of the club and a member of the board, to introduce this at the annual meeting, which was in May of that year, and the board approved it.

Then I took these same people who had been in the ad hoc committee and we expanded it and had a history committee. The first resolution we came up with was to put all our papers in Bancroft. Now, can we stop for a moment?

[end tape 11, side B; begin tape 12, side A]

Dorfman: You were telling me about your involvement as chairman of the history committee and your participation in the oral history project.

Kuhn: I had asked the question--which was rather embarrassing, I found out later--as to where all the records were in the historical archives of the Sierra Club. Well, they were here, there, and everywhere. Many of them were in commercial storage, and they were in nooks and crannies everywhere. So I got our history committee to recommend that they all be placed at Bancroft, because at that time, the moment the history committee was organized, we were approached by other institutions--the Denver Public Library, Cornell. Anyone who was interested in conservation would find that the Sierra Club papers would be a very, very handsome addition. But it made no sense to anyone who had ever been in Bancroft, because of the historical association of the Sierra Club and the University and because Bancroft wanted them. So we voted to go to Bancroft.

Kuhn: Then this was going to go to the board of directors at its meeting in September, 1970 at Clair Tappaan Lodge at Norden. This was going to be on a Saturday or a Sunday. Friday I got a call from the Sierra Club. They had a volunteer go through all the past minutes of the board of directors for twenty years, because the board of directors would meet on the weekends and maybe covered a hundred subjects. The minutes were maybe twenty single-spaced typewritten pages and they were trying to find out what happened to all this business.

They found out that in 1958 the board of directors had passed two motions: one, to lend The Bancroft Library 302 letters from John Muir to his younger daughter, Helen; and, two, to lend all historical papers belonging to the club to The Bancroft Library.

Well, now, this made clear to me why various people had said to me, "Gee whiz, the history committee. That came up once," but no one could remember when. So when I went to the meeting and Will Siri again introduced this on our behalf, I said, "Gentlemen, the 302 letters have been loaned to Bancroft, but no one ever followed through with this other resolution, so I'm really not asking for anything new. I'm asking you to confirm what you've already passed twelve years ago. Except in both cases I want you to give the material rather than lend it, for the simple reason that the original papers of John Muir were loaned to Bancroft by his family, his grandchildren, eight of them. Bancroft maintained them for twenty, thirty, or forty years and all of a sudden the family decided somehow they wanted them to go to the University of the Pacific at Stockton. They took them out of Bancroft and loaned them to the University of the Pacific where they are now on loan, not a gift. That's not fair to the institution."

They agreed and we changed the status of the 302 letters from a loan to a gift and we gave them all this other material. Richard Leonard, who was a director of the club and is now its honorary president, said, "Mr. Kuhn, what you said is completely correct. I have a lot of historical records. I wouldn't give anything to the Sierra Club, because they have no competence in retaining it, but if you'll give it to Bancroft, you come to my office on Monday and I'll give you priceless things," and he did.

He was an attorney for mining interests and he gave me fantastic documentation--he's one of the world's great conservationists--including all the ore samples from the Minarets area, east of Yosemite, which is a private mining claim which could still be exploited.

Then I went around and I started collecting stuff elsewhere. The club had 123 cases of papers, unsorted, in commercial storage. That went over there. When the club moved its headquarters two

Kuhn: years ago, every nook and cranny was looked at in the club's office, which it had occupied in the Mills Building for seventy years. That went to Bancroft. Ansel Adams had catalogued 4,000 glass plates taken by Joseph LeConte ("Little Joe") and they had been in the vault at the Bank of California for thirty years. That went over to Bancroft.

I called Dr. Stewart Kimball, who had been chairman of the outings committee, and I said, "Doctor, where are the outings committee records?" He said, "Well, I've got them all from 1901. They're all in my basement." I said, "Supposing the next chairman is not so conscientious?" He said, "I've got the idea." That afternoon--you may not believe it--that afternoon he took them to Bancroft. The same day.

Joel Hildebrand gave all of his records. Everyone we interviewed gave all of their records. Ansel Adams sent up two cartons. That went over. He said, "It's been over thirty-eight years. I should have more than two cartons, but I don't like to save paper."

The reason I say that I'm a better chairman by not being an historian--if I had taken a history course at Cal and was a true historian, I'd be sitting in my basement reading Ansel Adams's papers instead of giving them to Berkeley for someone else to read and then going out and getting some more, because it was a battle against time because no one at that point knew that we were interested in getting this material.

We had a man named Joe Momyer who was a leader in the fight to save San Geronio from being a big ski resort with one of these tramways. All of his papers were taken. His wife said, "I don't know when I can get them out and organize them." I said, "Don't organize them; bring them up," and she did. And Bancroft will organize them because they have a system which is part of the archivist's skill, which is different from a librarian's.

I have just written to the executive in charge of our Washington, D.C. office, which has these huge files of all the national conservation issues. He doesn't know what to do with them. He said, "I don't have the staff to organize them." I said, "Don't organize them. You just ship them off to Bancroft, we'll pay for it, and they'll organize it."

So over the years we've acquired all this material. A woman came into the club about three or four years ago and she had a painting. This is a portrait of John Muir done by his brother in the early 1860s and it had been in her family in Pacific Grove ever since. A part of Muir's family settled in Pacific Grove, where there was a big religious colony. Even Stevenson mentioned

Kuhn: that in his book on the Monterey Peninsula. This had been there for over eighty years. She said, "Do you want this?" So that's at Bancroft.

A woman wrote me from Texas that her grandfather was a member of the Donner Party: "Would you like his materials?" Even though it had nothing to do with the Sierra Club, we took them and put them in Bancroft because that's the leading collection of things on the Donner Party. Fascinating stuff comes up all the time.

So then we had alerted the club leadership to the fact that their papers would eventually go to Bancroft. I met with every past president, board members, general members who would give me their albums of photographs taken on High Trips, and there were a lot of interesting and humorous sidelights. You would get someone to bring in a photograph of a High Trip in 1903 and say, "My grandfather's in there somewhere. Can you tell me who everybody in this photograph is?" "I can't tell you who anybody is."

So we were established then. Then the next thing we did--we had a young woman named Dr. Susan Schrepfer. She had gotten her Ph.D. in history at UC Riverside and her thesis was on the history of the redwoods preservation movement. She is now teaching at Rutgers. But for the first three or four years of our committee, she was our oral history consultant. She had done a lot of oral history work for the Forest History Society and the Save-the-Redwoods League and she was working with Willa Baum.

She devised a questionnaire which we went over and we sent it to 275 people who had joined the club in 1930 or before, because we figured, "Time is against us. If we have to interview someone, we'd better hit the old-timers first." So we sent this questionnaire out and we got a certain response. We sent it out again to those who hadn't responded, and a third time. By the third time, we had gotten 55 percent of all 275 who had filled out this very exhaustive six-page questionnaire, a lot of them adding other materials.

From that we could trace their career and find out, is this person a good candidate to be interviewed and what material does he or she have that they could either give or lend our collection of papers? Some of them were just absolutely tremendous. They also had questions, such as, "What is your reaction to the changes made in the Sierra Club since you joined in those early days?" and invariably they were against the changes. What they were saying is, "I'd really like to be young again."

One man particularly--instead of just not answering, he answered his questionnaire and sent it back saying, "I'm not going to answer this thing because I've belonged to the Sierra Club for fifty years, and no one's ever asked me my opinion about anything yet, and it's too late now." So I then read that and I didn't say who it was from

Kuhn: and Francis Farquhar said, "I bet that's from Joe So-and-So from Palo Alto. He always was a crank." I said, "That's right." [Chuckles] So everyone is known, you see, by his reputation. But we got some great material from that.

We purposely eliminated any questions dealing with religion, economic status, or political parties. We thought that might hamper people from answering. We talked about having an anonymous questionnaire to go out to the same people who responded, asking about material. We haven't done it yet and maybe we never will get around to it.

Then the question came up, when are we really going to get together on this oral history? That's what it's all about. It wasn't so easy because none of us had ever done it before. We couldn't have it all done by Bancroft professionally because we didn't have that kind of money. So we figured, "Well, the committee will have to do some itself. We'll have to save the big ones for Bancroft."

Well, we got assurance of money from the Sierra Club Foundation to do Richard Leonard's on an entirely professional basis and that was the first one that was ever completed that way--two volumes, a magnificent thing, because he is, as I say, one of the world's great conservationists. All the others in the early years were done by committee members. In the last few years we've had them completed also by history students at Cal State Fullerton who enrolled in an oral history program and get academic credit for this. They've done primarily Southern California interviewees.

We've finished twenty-five so far, one by Bancroft, as I say--the Leonard interview--and the rest by committee members or the Fullerton students. The big question is how to get started. So we got started by having Eleanor Bade interview her mother-in-law, who was the widow of William F. Badè, who was Muir's literary executor.

When I went over to see the elder Mrs. Badè and I explained to her what this was all about, her husband's desk at the Pacific School of Religion, where he had been president at the time of his death, had been locked since 1926. She went over that afternoon and took all its contents and took them over to Bancroft because she knew that we would preserve them. Bancroft became the historical arm of the Sierra Club and we don't pay a thing for it. How are you going to get that service?

When we give it to them, we give it to them, because if we want something, if we want to get a copy of something, we have to pay for it the same as anybody else. One time we had a demonstration in economic value over this. There had been a Los Angeles attorney

Kuhn: named Johnson who had given about \$2.5 million to Nature Conservancy. Although he had no direct heirs, someone protested that he was going to bring a lawsuit contending that the Sierra Club and the Nature Conservancy had exercised undue pressure on him.

Well, someone in the club remembered he had written a letter and they called Bancroft. Within twenty-four hours they had a copy of this letter which he had written thanking the Sierra Club for the advice he had asked them for about what he should do with this huge legacy, and the lawsuit was dropped. So that shows the value.

Now, the club itself--had the records been in Bekins Storage, they never could have found it. So it had an economic advantage, besides the fact that Marie Byrne, over at Bancroft, probably knows as much about the Sierra Club as anybody because she handles hundreds of thousands of pieces of material, and it's being organized gradually. As I said, these 123 cases were completely unorganized. The files were unlabeled. Everything was mixed up. No one knew what it was.

They have a system of a three-way sorting process. Eventually, when it's all done, she'll produce a catalogue, The Holdings of the Sierra Club Papers, which will be distributed widely entirely within the club and then to every institution interested about the country and conservation. So you'll be able to see what the Sierra Club has at Berkeley. Of course, we're always adding to it. This material that will come from our Washington, D.C. office--I don't know how large it will be--hundreds and hundreds of files which we'll have to do. Eventually this will be cross-indexed with Sierra Club chapter holdings.

For example, the Los Angeles Chapter (the Angeles Chapter, it's called) has their own historical materials. We don't really want them to go to Bancroft because they have nothing to do with the national issues that the club faced. They're going to UCLA. The Pacific-Northwest Chapter will go to the University of Washington, and so on, and eventually all of the major chapters will have their own archives, and this will be cross-indexed with what we have at Berkeley. It just takes time, particularly when Bancroft is under a financial squeeze.

In having to decide several years ago between buying up new books or cutting their hours, they opted to cut their hours because they have to buy the books. But their hours are shortened and they're open from nine to five on weekdays and one to five on Saturdays, so they've been a tremendous help to us.

At our history committee meeting here next week, Bob Becker, the associate director of the library, will be present and give a report on just where we are on all the organizing of this material. If

Kuhn: someone, for example, wants to do an interview, the first place they would go would be to research the career of the potential interviewee, at Bancroft. That's where you're going to find out about this guy's life and the interviewer has to know more about the guy's life than he knows himself.

You may recall that it's my goal to someday have a fund set up so that we have a Sierra Club fellowship in conservation history at the University of California at Berkeley. The outstanding student in conservation and history will have a stipend and a nice award to continue his study on conservation history within Bancroft. That would be a beautiful thing.

So, then, we've done a lot of other things besides the oral histories. We've involved more and more members who were willing to take a chance. A lot of them didn't want to fail. They didn't know how to use a tape recorder, so Willa [Baum] came and we distributed her manual. We had training sessions at the history committee meetings and gradually they got into it--not many, it's true, but we had some involvement; we've produced twenty-five interviews.

The average member of the history committee, however, just comes to meetings and sits back. A lot of them are elderly and this is not a skill they're going to pick up. In fact, a lot of them don't even like to talk into a tape recorder and we had to trick some of them when we interviewed them. We have some going on now that are really historic. We've almost completed the oral histories of Ansel Adams and of David Brower. Of course, with Brower being the central figure in this huge cataclysmic change in the club in the late '60s, this will be a magnificent document to have.

The interviewer there also is Susan Schrepfer, who did Leonard. Even though she started Brower here, when she moved to Rutgers--Brower comes to New York frequently and she'll go up there to New York and interview him there. Then she also started last year Edgar Wayburn.

Her place was taken by Ann Lage, who is a member of our committee, but who also has an M.A. in history. She and her husband do interviews together. They did Mr. Farquhar together and they did Mrs. Farquhar. Now they're doing Will Siri, who not only is a past president of the club but also a guiding light of the Save-the-Bay Association and was a member of the club's expedition to Mt. Everest.

So when I delivered Leonard's interview to the trustees of the Sierra Club Foundation a year ago, I pointed out that one of the reasons we've been able to get such great financial support from the Foundation is the fact that we're counting on egos. Every president

- Kuhn: of the Foundation wants to eventually be interviewed himself. So he figures, "We better give the money to everybody else and then they can't hold it back from us." [Chuckles]
- Dorfman: To perpetuate it long enough.
- Kuhn: That's right. And as I looked around that board meeting of the trustees, seven of the men there we had either interviewed, were interviewing, or were about to interview. Then I realized that we interviewed Farquhar, Bradley, and Bernays, all just before they died, and that would have been all gone if we hadn't done that. So we are battling against time.
- Dorfman: How many interviews do you have in all?
- Kuhn: Twenty-five, and we'll finish about maybe ten more. We present them every year at the annual club meeting in May and introduce the interviewee, the interviewer, and the person who wrote the introduction--the foreword--who is generally a very close friend of the interviewee, and they all get a big hand. The club loves it because some of these people are elder statesmen of the club. Last year we had a woman from Los Angeles, Mrs. Johnson. Well, she came up all the way from L.A. because we were presenting her interview, and she brought her son from Palo Alto and his wife, and she got a tremendous ovation.

Mrs. Farquhar--we presented her interview. She is one of the great women climbers of all time, besides being the widow of Francis Farquhar. She got a great ovation. This is nostalgia for the club coming back.

But it isn't only nostalgia, because I point out that when we document the club's progress, then we won't make the same mistake over and over again. We just, as a matter of fact, sent out two mailings, one to the internal people within the club, and one to the outside world--the institutions, libraries, etc., or the conservation organizations. All three men (the interviewee, the interviewer, and the person who wrote the introduction), the interviews, the costs--and we've gotten a pretty good response, because I keep telling myself, "It doesn't do any good to have these on the shelves."

Our normal distribution is to the person who did the interview, the person who was interviewed, to Bancroft, to the Sierra Club's Colby Library, and UCLA. But we want the chapters to buy copies. We want people to read them. It doesn't do any good if they're sitting up on a shelf. They will be read and people will be using them for research. So it has been a great contribution in the sense that if we hadn't done it, there is so much more we would have lost.

Kuhn: After all, the club had seventy-eight years of history without ever doing anything about its own history, primarily because it was too busy trying to save the country and just didn't think about it.

I told the board when I took the chairmanship, "We'll never divert any of your energies or funds from your principal job. We'll always be something valuable but peripheral." And I've gotten tremendous support. As a matter of fact, the history committee's budget for next year is the only budget in the club that wasn't cut, because it was explained that we've had ongoing commitments with Bancroft for some of these interviews and we just have to complete them. So it's been a great expression of confidence in what we're trying to do.

[end tape 12, side A; end of insert]

The History of the Committee

[The following inserted material was dictated and recorded by Marshall Kuhn on February 17, 1978 during a work session at his home at 30 7th Avenue, San Francisco, with Ann Lage, vice-chairman of the Sierra Club history committee.]

Kuhn: In 1949, I joined the Sierra Club in order to climb Mt. Whitney on that year's High Trip. Unfortunately, as I said, this was my first and only Sierra Club outing.

In 1967, I suggested to the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department that the nature trail then under consideration for the most westerly twenty acres of the Strybing Arboretum be named in honor of John Muir, this being the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Sierra Club in San Francisco, with Muir as founding president from 1892 until his death in 1914.

The suggestion was received enthusiastically. I assisted in raising private funds for the project and ground was broken in 1970 at a ceremony in which the president of the Sierra Club, Phil Berry, took part along with several of Muir's grandchildren. The John Muir Nature Trail was the only addition to Golden Gate Park during 1970, the park's centennial year.

Upon returning home from the 1969 Yosemite hiking trip during which I met the three generations of the Rieger family, as I mentioned before, I wrote to the Sierra Club to tell them about Tom Rieger and to ask if the club had any program by which the reminiscences of persons like Tom could be recorded. I received two immediate and seemingly independent replies. Mike McCloskey suggested that I consult with ROHO of Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley. President Berry informed me that \$1,000 was being

Kuhn: appropriated for this purpose and asked that we begin. I later found that Phil had sat next to Willa Baum, the head of ROHO, on the bus taking them to the dedication of the Redwood National Park, so doubtless he got the "ROHO treatment."

In all my years of working with organizations, none had ever provided \$1,000 for a project without being specifically asked to do so. I was somewhat aware of ROHO, as it had conducted several oral interviews in the California Jewish Community interview series on behalf of the Judah Magnes Memorial Museum of Berkeley.

My roots in Bancroft go back to 1935, when I was commuting from San Francisco to Berkeley, and each week I would lug on the train and ferryboat a large bundle of out-of-town newspapers which Bancroft was sending to Allen's Press Clipping Bureau. For this I was paid fifty cents.

I spoke with Willa Baum and arranged an appointment with Mike McCloskey at which we could discuss just what this oral interview project would entail. Willa brought with her Susan Schrepfer, a doctoral candidate in history at UC Riverside, who had recorded oral histories for both the Forest Historical Society and the Save-the-Redwoods League.

In the course of the meeting, I asked what seemed to be an innocent but relevant question. To wit, "Where are the club's records located?"

Mike McCloskey answered, "Well, there are some of them in this office and there are over 120 cases of records in commercial storage. We don't really know what's in them. And there are other records in our safe deposit box and others in the safe deposit vault. And I guess that some committee chairmen have records in their basements; no one really knows." In any case, we decided to go forward with this.

Never having even worked on a Sierra Club committee before, I was a little mystified as to how to proceed. There didn't seem to be any guidelines for chairmen, so in time I realized that you had to formulate your own, and unless you violated some principle of the club or got them further into debt, you were okay. Shortly thereafter, we approached a number of people with interest in the club's history and asked them to serve on an ad hoc committee to consider whether or not the club should have a history committee. These people included Francis and Marjory Farquhar, Lewis Clark, Charlotte Mauk, and Harriet Parsons.

Kuhn: We had our first and only meeting in 1970, at The Bancroft Library. The ad hoc committee voted to recommend to the board of directors of the Sierra Club that a history committee be formed and established with one of the chief purposes being to record the reminiscences of the club leaders.

This was at a time when there'd been some violence on the UC campus and Francis Farquhar moved that the minutes reflect that during the course of our meeting no bricks were thrown through the windows of the library. As a matter of fact, the windows no longer were [made of] glass, but of lexan, a GE plastic which is about fifty to a hundred times more resistant to bricks than is glass.

At the annual meeting, the first Saturday in May of 1970, Will Siri, then a director of the club, carried this motion and it was passed by the board of directors, without opposition. Shortly thereafter, President Berry wrote to me and asked if I would consent to serve as the chairman of the committee, which I was pleased to do.

We formed a committee consisting primarily of people who had served in an ad hoc capacity, plus others, including several academicians--Dr. Robert Nash of UC Santa Barbara, Dr. Robin Brooks of San Jose State University, and Holvig Jones, who is the social sciences librarian of the University of Oregon and author of John Muir and the Sierra Club.

Other members of the committee were club members who were interested in this history and it seemed that every one of them had taken courses in college in history and I was the only one who had never taken a course at Cal in history. For a time, that really gave me an inferiority complex until I realized that the lack of this history background was a great asset.

At our first meeting, the newly formed history committee voted to propose to the board of directors of the club that the records of the club be placed in The Bancroft Library. Already we had received requests from other institutions, including the Denver Public Library and Cornell University, who were realizing that Sierra Club papers had not been given to institutions, that they might be "up for grabs." But to us it seemed logical that with the relationship between Cal and the Sierra Club, the proximity of The Bancroft Library to the club headquarters, and Bancroft's desire to house this material, that Cal should be the logical choice.

Kuhn:

The quarterly meeting of the club was scheduled for the first weekend in September at Clair Tappaan Lodge. A few days before the meeting, I was called by a volunteer from the club who was going through the minutes of the board of directors for the past twenty years and classifying each action taken by the board. Each quarterly meeting considers up to a hundred different subjects.

She asked me, as I mentioned before, if I knew that in 1958 the board of directors of the club had passed two motions: first, to lend to The Bancroft Library 302 letters written by John Muir to his younger daughter; and, second, to lend to The Bancroft Library all other historical papers of the Sierra Club. I hadn't known that. But this explained why numerous persons around the club, including some board members, had said to me, "Gee, I thought we did something about that years ago."

I checked and, yes, Bancroft had received the 302 letters on loan, but nothing else from the club had ever come. The following year, when I had a chance to meet with Dave Brower, he explained that his failure to implement the 1958 resolution, with respect to all other records of the club going to Bancroft on loan, was merely an oversight.

So now we were faced with the fact that what we were asking the board to do was merely to reconfirm what they'd already done in 1958.

However, we had before us the example of the Muir papers, wherein the Muir family had loaned to Bancroft all the papers on John Muir that they had, including those used by Linnie Marsh Wolf in her book, Son of the Wilderness. And then years later--in fact, just about 1970--the heirs of John Muir withdrew their letters from Bancroft and loaned them to the University of the Pacific at Stockton.

As I have said, I felt that it was manifestly unfair to Bancroft that had spent so much time and effort and money over the years in maintaining the papers, only to have them taken away. So when the motion was made at the Clair Tappaan Lodge, it was in two parts: one, to give to The Bancroft Library all the Sierra Club papers; and, two, to change the previous gift of 302 letters to his daughter from loan to a gift. The board approved these motions, which allowed the papers to be used by any qualified scholar and by such other persons as the board of directors of the Sierra Club may direct.

Well, this was a great triumph, to get this type of endorsement, and I promised the board of directors that the activity of the history committee would never be of such a nature as to distract the attention of the world from matters more pressing in the area of conservation. In the evening of that day, I spoke about the history project to members of the Sierra Club council. Subsequently there began a determined effort on my part to get as much material as we could over to Bancroft.

Kuhn: It started with the papers of the past president Harold Bradley, when at the May meeting he and his wife headed for me. He said that he had five cartons of Sierra Club papers which he had intended to give to the Berkeley City Dump to reduce the fire hazard, because Berkeley had said that if you would eliminate any potential fire hazard from your home, they wouldn't charge you for removing the garbage, as it were. You may remember not only the Berkeley fire in 1923, but there was a big canyon fire above them a few years ago in Berkeley.

So I asked Harold to please filter this [material] through our committee first. I recall going to his home and taking his five cartons right to Bancroft long before we even had authorized Bancroft to be our depository.

Earlier I mentioned that more material came along, including the very famous file on the Minarets. I recall Dr. Kimball, who was then chairman of the outings committee, and he said that he had in his basement the records of all outings dating back to 1901. And I asked, "What happens when you're no longer chairman of the committee?" He said, "Then I'll give them to my successor."

"Yes, but suppose he doesn't have a basement or is not as conscientious?" He got the point immediately and, believe it or not, that afternoon, the same day, he delivered all these materials, and I gave every one to Bancroft.

You know the story of how the same occurred with Mrs. William Badè, the widow of the literary executive. She had not been to her husband's office in the Pacific School of Religion since his death in 1926, I believe. When she heard my story, she went over that afternoon with her key, which she'd kept for forty-four years. She emptied his desk drawers and took everything over there to Bancroft. So we had a great deal of cooperation on this, particularly because we asked people to give us the material and if they wanted it back we'd make photocopies. Also we got material from people who were being interviewed.

And now, literally, we have tons and tons of material at Bancroft, all being absorbed slowly, because it was a mammoth job when you consider that there were 123 cases of unclassified material in commercial storage, including, you might say, some books "borrowed" from the Sierra Club Library, which is noncirculating.

Regrettably, we have about 10,000 photographs in the archives at Bancroft, the overwhelming majority of which are not identified in any way, as to who took the picture, or when and where it was taken, or of what. It is a tragedy that someone who spent so much effort lugging all his photographic equipment to the mountains couldn't have taken a few more minutes to just write in pencil on the back of the photograph what it was.

Kuhn: It took our committee longer, however, to figure out just exactly how we were going to handle it, the oral history program. It became apparent that we would not be able to finance this entirely on a professional basis with ROHO doing all the interviewing. But ROHO, through Willa Baum, was delighted to more or less guide our program, and I might say that Willa Baum has been a tower of strength throughout. Her national reputation has rubbed off on our program.

We decided, if we could, to do a number of interviews by volunteer members of the committee. Finally, this caught on. I am enclosing a page from the 1977 completed interviews that shows a list of the twenty-five interviews completed to date. Of course, in 1978 we hope to add more.

We've had interviews done by our committee members; and by Bancroft, such as the interview completed by Susan Schrepfer, who was also working on Brower and Wayburn. We have the interviews on Southern California personalities by students at Cal State Fullerton. And now this year we have interviews being done with several prominent members of our Atlantic Chapter, with interviews being done by Columbia University, the director of which is Louis M. Starr, spiritual successor of the historian Allan Nevins who started the whole oral history program back in Columbia [University] in the late '40s.

Susan Schrepfer's article in Forest History gives a record of the history committee's activities to that point.* Including those activities and those engaged in subsequently, it might look like this:

- (1) The transfer of historical materials to Bancroft.
- (2) The oral history program.
- (3) The development of the program, "One Hundred Years of Yosemite Photography."
- (4) Work done by the committee in furthering the program presented each summer at the Le Conte Memorial Lodge in Yosemite Valley.
- (5) Work done by the history committee in furthering relationships for the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez, culminating in their developing a room just south of Muir's "scribble den" into a "Sierra Club Room" within his home.
- (6) Participation by the chairman in the filming of a training film for National Park Service personnel regarding the bicentennial, entitled Interpreting the Bicentennial.

* Susan R. Schrepfer, "Sierra Club History Program," Journal of Forest History, pp. 34-35.

Kuhn: (7) Ten years ago or more, Tredman Lachalt, San Anselmo, traveled wherever Muir had lived or visited and made a slide presentation that was called, "John Muir, His Life and Legacy." Lachalt presented this with a suggested narration to the club. The history committee was the first to use it. Copies have since been made on nationwide distribution. We have shown it at numerous meetings in this area. One showing was to the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and before I presented the slides I was thrilled to know that the real hot issue before the group that year was the news coming from Washington that their efforts to grant amnesty to Robert E. Lee would probably be successful!

(8) The committee has also participated in the club's publishing program: first, by articles in the Sierra Club Bulletin; and, second, by working with the publications committee to urge that the series, which started with John Muir and the Sierra Club, be continued.

(9) Incidentally, at Martinez our relationship with the community was not of the most sanguine nature, as they had previously felt they had been insulted by the Sierra Club. So our efforts to heal this breach have been successful, as evidenced by the fact that the club was one of the sponsors of a community presentation of a play about John Muir held in the bicentennial year in one of the public parks in Martinez. It was a delightful show, written by Anne Ley, who was also interested in doing a one-man show on the road, such as James Whitmore did with Give 'em Hell, Harry.

(10) One of the most distinguished members of the history committee is William F. Kimes of Mariposa. I must also include his wife, Maymie. He is possibly the world's outstanding authority on John Muir. His assistance has been invaluable. He has a tremendous library in his home with everything written by or about Muir. He has recently had published a beautiful volume, now in the Colby Library, entitled John Muir: A Reading Bibliography.

(11) We have also cooperated with outside authors who have developed works on John Muir--one particularly, John Muir's America, text by Tom Watkins, photographs by DeWitt Jones.

(12) By having a history committee, members of the club know that we are interested in maintaining our records and we have attracted some remarkable gifts, including an original painting of Muir done by one of his brothers about 1865. This had been sitting in a relative's home in Pacific Grove, California for over eight decades. It was given to the club when it was realized that we were interested in this type of material. So this has been a fascinating part of it.

(13) The most fascinating part, however, is that the committee has had access to meeting and recording the reminiscences of some wonderful people who have really made great contributions to the Sierra Club

Kuhn: and to conservation. We are delighted, of course, that of the interviews done "professionally," Richard Leonard's were the first. And it was a great example to have of this kind of interview.

(14) The economic value of this program was underscored the very first year it was in operation. I think this story is worth repeating. A Los Angeles attorney had left close to \$3 million to the Nature Conservancy, and it was contended by some people opposing this bequest that the Sierra Club and the Nature Conservancy had conspired to influence this donor in some type of illegal combination. A search of the Bancroft records, as a result of a simple phone call from the club headquarters to Bancroft, resulted in Bancroft's providing within one day a copy of the original letter in which this attorney--whose name, I believe, was Rodney Johnson--had written to the Sierra Club, asking the club to suggest uses for this money. As a result, the lawsuit was dropped. This was a value of the program we never had even anticipated.

(15) I repeat that I look forward to the time when, if we could get the funding, we could set up at Berkeley a Sierra Club fellowship in conservation history, perhaps not to be awarded every year, but when a qualified candidate in history comes along. This could be a distinguished contribution to American scholarship and conservation history.

As for funding, generally, we have been very fortunate in that the Sierra Club Foundation has been so generous to our program. Of course, as I mentioned, at the quarterly meeting of the Sierra Club Foundation, at which our oral interview is presented, the reason we get funding so easily is perhaps because every member of the board wants to be included in the interview program.

Actually, as I looked around the room, there were seven men among the trustees who have been interviewed or are being interviewed or whom we've made definite arrangements to interview shortly. So we'll get around to everybody eventually, starting with the oldest ones first.

I've always viewed the history committee as a joint effort, even though at times we wished we'd had more participation. Therefore, it was with considerable forethought when we wrote the introduction to the oral history volumes that so many people are credited for the successful program. I think our team approach should be stressed. My own role has been that of a quarterback or catalyst.

Our committee has worked closely with the national committee on awards. As a result, an honorary life membership was granted by the board of directors of the club to Ryoza Azuma, who as a young man met John Muir. That meeting changed Azuma's life. The story will be written up in the April, 1978 issue of Sierra.

MARSHALL KUHN

The Sierra Club...

Remembering the Early Years



ON JUNE 4, 1892, twenty-seven men gathered in the office of Attorney Warren Olney at 101 Sansome Street, San Francisco, to sign the Articles of Incorporation of the Sierra Club.

Article III stated that the purposes of the club were "To explore, enjoy, and render accessible the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast; to publish authentic information concerning them; to enlist the support and cooperation of the people and the government in preserving the forests and other natural features of the Sierra Nevada Mountains."

The charter membership totaled 182 and included many faculty members from the University of California, Mills College, and the newly formed Stanford University, along with nu-

merous men prominent in the business and cultural life of San Francisco. One of the few female charter members was Wanda Muir, whose father, John, was elected president, a position he held until his death in 1914.

To understand why the club was organized at this particular time, we must go back to the 1850's and 1860's when the newly discovered Yosemite Valley was fast becoming a tourist attraction. Its scenic marvels were such that protective legislation was introduced in Congress and signed by President Lincoln in 1864, ceding the federally owned Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Trees Grove to the state of California to become its first state park. The park was managed, or mis-managed, depending upon one's point of view, by a board of commis-

sioners, over which the governor presided.

Early photographs of Yosemite Valley reveal the presence of several hotels as well as a mill, farms and other developments which some sensitive observers at the time felt were out of place.

Other portions of the Sierra Nevada also were being explored during these and later decades, both by those who reveled in their natural beauty, and by those intent on commercial exploitation. The latter were principally sheepmen, cattlemen, lumbermen, and mining prospectors. To denude this land of its trees and other vegetation by lumbering or grazing would have destroyed the watershed that provided the fundamental irrigation system of the Central Valley, soon to be the world's most productive fruit orchard and vegetable garden.

Thus, in 1890, efforts of pioneer conservationists resulted in two congressional acts, which were signed by President Benjamin Harrison within five days of each other. The first bill established Sequoia National Park and General Grant National Monument. The second bill expanded Sequoia and established Yosemite National Park, which encircled the state-controlled Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Big Trees Grove. In 1891, the Forest Reserves Act—the forebear of the national forests—became law.

For a number of years, there had been increasing sentiment favoring the formation of a voluntary group of citizens committed to the preservation of California's mountain heritage. The





incorporation of the Sierra Club in 1892 was a logical consequence.

The club immediately became involved in defeating a proposal in Congress that would have reduced drastically the size of Yosemite National Park, then just two years old. It became readily apparent that the club would not only have to contend with commercial interests but also with all levels of the government itself, if its purposes were to be achieved. The following year, the "Sierra Forest Reserves," which had been advocated by the club, were established, covering much of the area between Sequoia and Yosemite. The next successful "battle" culminated in 1905, when the state legislature voted to cede Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Big Trees Grove back to the federal

government, an action which was accepted by Congress the following year.

The club's final major legislative fight during this early period was to become its most famous: this was the battle over the Hetch Hetchy Valley. Formed by the Tuolumne River and scoured by an ancient glacier, the Hetch Hetchy lay entirely within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park, and though less known than Yosemite Valley, rivaled it in beauty. The city of San Francisco wanted to dam the Tuolumne, thereby flooding Hetch Hetchy, in order to provide water for a growing population, and was lobbying Congress for legislation that would authorize the dam. The club opposed the project and fought back vigorously—but to no avail. The



To serve its increasing membership, the club maintained a downtown office in San Francisco, began publishing the *Sierra Club Bulletin* in 1893, produced maps of the Sierra regions, devoted much effort to mountaineering, and placed climbing registers on the summits of scores of peaks.

Club Outings

John Muir's spiritual successor was William E. Colby, who served the club in many capacities for six decades. He organized and led the first annual outing in 1901, held at Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows. In 1902, the outing was in the Kings River region; the following year, at the Kern River. In 1905, the outing was for the first time held outside California, with an ascent of Mount Rainier.

The charming photographs which accompany this article portray these early outings which had far more participants than any individual outing today. In 1903, for example, outing participants totaled 210, almost one-third of the club's 663 members. One

hundred and thirty-nine of them made the ascent of Mt. Whitney.

While the hiking and climbing were about the same as now, the early outings featured tents, army cots, Chinese cooks using metal ranges, and the opportunity to pay to have one's laundry done. The 1902 outing lasted five weeks, and to accommodate the nearly 200 persons encamped, the transportation of 25,000 pounds of personal baggage and camp equipment was required.

The outings were extremely popular and were more responsible for the annual growth in club membership than any other factor. Colby issued a word of caution, however, pointing out that while the outings gave club members the opportunity to experience wilderness first hand, it was even more important that the club instill a lifelong commitment to the preservation of the mountain environment even when the member could no longer participate in the outings.

There are club members and ex-members living today who can recall these early outings and who have memories of encountering John Muir



on the trail, or hearing him at the campfire, spreading the gospel of conservation.

The History Committee is trying to preserve the records of the club's activities since its founding. Any members who have photographs, letters, diaries or other memorabilia, based

either on their own participation or that of their parents or grandparents, are encouraged to send these materials, either in original or photocopied form, to: Sierra Club History Committee, 1050 Mills Tower, San Francisco 94104. These items will then be placed in the "Sierra Club Papers" at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, where a large volume of club archives has already been organized.

Local chapters and groups are urged to safeguard their own records by depositing them in a local library, university, or other institution, where they can be maintained for future use. The purpose of such safekeeping is twofold: first, the personal element—the nostalgic remembrance of experiences and battles fought in company with others of like sentiment; second, the study of what has gone before may help us to improve our "batting average" in the struggles that inevitably lie ahead in our common efforts to protect the natural scene for future generations.

Marshall Kubn is chairman of the Sierra Club History Committee.

Kuhn: Bancroft estimates that it has about 50,000 items of Sierra Club material, including the photographs, and when the processing of this material is completed, a catalog, referred to earlier in this interview, will be prepared and distributed to research institutions all over the country. So that the whole extent of the "Sierra Club Papers" will be public knowledge.

(16) The Sierra Club history committee has become a focus toward which all questions regarding the club's history have been and are being addressed. Thus, we act as an adjunct to the club's own information services.

(17) The history committee has begun to cooperate quite strongly with the National Park Service, not only at the John Muir National Historic Site at Martinez, and Yosemite Valley, but also we are cooperating with the National Park Service in funding sponsorship of an oral interview of a retired Park Service executive, George Collins. Richard Leonard was the one most instrumental in seeing this through.

(18) I had the privilege of writing an article for the Sierra Club Bulletin of August-September, 1975, entitled "The Sierra Club...Remembering the Early Years."

[end of insert]

[Insert from tape 13, sides A and B; and from tape 14, side A]

Dorfman: Can you tell me who you have interviewed for the Sierra Club?

Kuhn: Who I personally have interviewed?

Dorfman: Yes.

Kuhn: I've only done one interview for the Sierra Club and that's a member of the history committee, a past president of the club, Lewis Clark, who's an honorary vice-president. He was on the board of directors for over thirty-five years. He's served in every office in the club. He's in his late seventies--still skis. He was co-leader of our trip to Scotland this summer for the club, a marvelous man. I did six interviews with him, which he is editing now, and then we'll meet again and then we'll do one final interview. I hope to present that at the annual meeting in May.

The only other interview I've really done is in regard to Ishi, which is really not a Sierra Club matter. But in the Sierra Club I've just done that one interview. I just haven't had time to do any others. I told the history committee, which met here a week ago, that there's a lot of difference between being interviewed and being the interviewer.

OHP Assists Sierra Club in Conserving its Record of Service

For the Sierra Club, service is synonymous with the name of the late Marshall Kuhn (see inset). At the club's annual banquet in Berkeley this May, a special service award was presented to Kuhn for his many years of service. Unable to attend because of illness, Kuhn was represented at the gathering by his wife Caroline.

Kuhn was primarily responsible for the formation of the History Committee. Feeling that the rapid growth in members and the club's involvement in national environmental issues during the 1960s left neither time nor resources to document its internal and external history, Kuhn became instrumental in setting up a committee for this purpose. After approval by the club's Board of Directors, the History Committee was established in 1970 and the Bancroft Library at U.C. Berkeley designated as the depository for the Sierra Club archives.

In Memory of . . .



Marshall H. Kuhn
1916-1978

"Marshall wasn't very good at delegating jobs because he could probably do it faster and better himself."

—Willi K. Baum,
Head, Regional Oral History Office

Among Marshall Kuhn's many contributions to the Sierra Club, the one which stands out most is his role in forming the History Committee (see story). Until this year, Kuhn served as the committee's chair.

Kuhn was born in San Francisco, graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, and was an active and prominent member of the San Francisco Jewish community.

Ann Lage, co-Chair of the Sierra Club History Committee, first met Kuhn when she joined the committee. Aside from his extraordinary energy and warmth, plus his ability to inspire people, Lage remembers Kuhn's tremendous sense of humor: "Marshall told beautiful stories. He saw humor that would pass other people by. He saw humor as a human quality."

In 1977, Kuhn was asked to serve on OHP's Board of Directors to represent the Sierra Club Project.

An oral memoir on Kuhn has been completed by Elaine Dorsman and is currently in the processing stages at the Regional Oral History Office at U.C. Berkeley.

Kuhn is survived by his wife Caroline and three children Alvison, Bruce and Nancy.

The committee first chose to develop a significant oral history program. Questionnaires were mailed out to members who had joined the club prior to 1931. More than half responded, and suitable candidates for interviewing—some had hiked with John Muir!—were identified and prioritized.

Next, the committee turned to Willi K. Baum, head of the Bancroft's Regional Oral History Office (ROHO), to train volunteers in oral history techniques. Among the first volunteers were Ann and Ray Lage, who later, in 1974, became coordinators of the oral history project and who now serve as the History Committee's co-Chairs.



OHP's involvement in the project came during the Oral History Association Regional Workshop held at Fullerton in January 1975. Having learned of the impressive work being done by CSUF students, Ms. Lage inquired about the possibilities of developing a joint project between the University and the Sierra Club. Dr. Gary Shumway, the workshop chairman and then OHP director, shared Lage's excitement for such an undertaking. Kuhn was immediately receptive, and within weeks the project, under the aegis of the Sierra Club History Committee, was on its way.

Southern California Sierra Club activists Stanley Jones, Richard Searle, Dorothy Pepper, J. Gordon Chelew and Marion Jones were selected as the first interviewees by CSUF students Virginia Bennett, Paul Clark, Terry Kirker, Frances Levsack and Cheryl Patterson, respectively. These first interviews were published as *Southern Sierrans* in 1976.

Terry Kirker's interview with Dorothy Pepper highlights the lighter side of the club's high trips:

DP: Ansel Adams [renowned American photographer] wrote a series of plays . . . take-offs on the Greek tragedies . . . [everyone] would be so willing to take part in these things . . . One play starred Nathan Clark. We called him Naked Clark . . . Naked . . . was clothed in a

G-string and a big red sort of thing. They took a tin plate and bent it for a hat. He had sword and sandals that were laced up the side. He was the hero in the play.

Then Paul Pavne appeared, and he was wrapped like the burlap. The toilets were made out of burlap, and the great joke was that you never called it "the john" or anything else except "the burlap." He was draped in burlap, and he had a roll of toilet paper on his head and a shovel in his hand. Ansel gave the prologue and he appeared in long white underwear . . . thin as a rail.

Following the completion of *Southern Sierrans*, the History Committee contracted OHP to continue this joint effort in Southern California. Thus, *Southern Sierrans II* became a published reality in 1977. Four long-standing members and prominent leaders of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club were interviewed: Irene Charnock, Bob Marshall, Olivia Johnson and Tom Amneus; the interviewers were Paul Clark, Reed Holderman, Terry Kirker and Eric Redo—all Sierra Club members themselves.

Many aspects of the Sierra Club are illustrated in these documents. In an interview with Reed Holderman, Robert Marshall talks about nature and the value of wilderness:

RM: . . . the crucial thing about wilderness is each individual's position toward it. Do you come as a conquerer, 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.

According to the Lages, the committee's goal is to expand the club's oral history program throughout the country. Through their efforts they have helped to keep the project a going and growing concern.

OHP Profile

California State University, Fullerton/Oral History Program

Vol. 1, No. 4/Spring, 1978

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The Reliability of Oral History

Dorfman: Yes. Would you like to tell me about that?

Kuhn: When you're the interviewer, you're trying to figure out, "What can I ask that would be interesting to learn the answer to?" and as an interviewee you're trying to give a measured, balanced answer that will be the truth but, nonetheless, not embarrass anybody and not be a malicious answer. That's a tough thing to do sometimes, to strike that balance. But without it, without telling the truth, where are you?

The Oral History Association's annual colloquium in San Diego in October was attended by Ann Lage--she is our vice-chairman--and one of the speakers discussed memory. He felt memory is so unreliable as to make many of these oral histories worthless. I don't really believe that. I think there's a compensating factor of people remembering things from their youth. Sam Kohs says, "Never distrust your childhood memories; they're always correct." Of course, there's unquestionably a tendency over the years to romanticize some of these things.

For example, some of the stories I tell I start embellishing and embellishing. I edit what happened to make it a better story, consciously or unconsciously. But I certainly wouldn't go that far as to say they're worthless. What I would like to get done, though, and I've discussed this with Willa Baum, is some situation where if I read the interview of someone and I feel that his answer was incorrect or incomplete, there should be some place for me to record my version of that.

Otherwise, it's just that one interviewee's version and there's no chance for an opposing statement and it's almost like a Rashomon kind of thing where everybody sees things differently. I say this particularly if it's either a very important subject or a very important person being interviewed. There should be some system.

I'm always reminded of a friend of mine, Dick Alberton, who's an attorney, and his big passion is trying to get perjury really dealt with. The way it is now, if you are found to be perjuring yourself, the only thing they throw out in your testimony is that portion of it that deals with that one subject. His view is that the whole testimony that you've given should be thrown out and he has a lot of other things like that.

Well, I'm saying this, that I have read a few interviews of people where I felt that their version of it, rightly or wrongly, was not all to be said on it. But oral history has not yet perfected this technique where people can also have some input. I think there should be some system.

Dorfman: It's an interesting viewpoint.

Kuhn: Particularly where we've interviewed everyone, we've always asked them, "What do you think about Dave Brower?" Well, we have, of the twenty-five interviews the Sierra Club has done, maybe fifteen of them with people who had contact with Brower. If I read someone's views of Brower and I know that those views are colored by that person's particular prejudice, there ought to be some way where I can go on record with that.

Dorfman: As a rebuttal?

Kuhn: Yes. But maybe someday the Oral History Association can put that on the agenda for their annual colloquium. If you're seeking the truth, and this is part of it, then there should be simply a mechanical solution as to how to obtain that.

Ishi

Dorfman: Since we're discussing oral history, this might be a good place for you to tell me about your Ishi interview.

Kuhn: Well, when Ishi [Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America] first came out, I became aware of it by reading the review. I said, "Here's a book I'm going to read sometime." When my daughter bought a copy for her high school class in social science, I read it and I was absolutely inflamed. My imagination was just soaring at such a marvelous story.

I became very curious about it, and particularly about 1914 when Ishi took Doctors Waterman and Kroeber back to Deer and Mill Creeks, along with Dr. Saxton Pope and Pope's eleven-year-old son. Well, you have the version of three older men and their relationship with Ishi, but you never had anything on the boy. I thought that must have been a unique thing for that kid to have had the opportunity. How come no one ever wrote that down? So I decided to do it.

I first called on Mrs. Kroeber, who by this time had remarried. Her name is Mrs. Quinn now and she's a regent of the University of California, as you may know, serving a short unexpired term. She has this beautiful little Maybeck home in Berkeley. She autographed my daughter's book and explained the book had really not had a success until the second version, the child's version, came out, and then both of them had a greater success. I told her what I had in mind, to interview Saxton Pope, Jr., and she had some very great hesitancy, I thought. So I thought, "I'll have to pursue this on my own."

Kuhn: I went up to College Avenue where Dr. Pope practiced psychiatry and I copied all the names off the building directory. I cross-checked them against the records of the Sierra Club and identified two other psychiatrists who were members of the club and I called them both and one said he would do for me what I wanted. He would approach Dr. Pope personally and tell him that the Sierra Club wanted to interview him. I thought it wasn't a personal approach if I called him without his knowing me or wrote him a letter. It would be too easy for him to turn me down.

So he agreed to see me and one afternoon I went over to Berkeley and we spent an hour of my telling him what I wanted to do, providing him with some questions. Naturally, speaking since the book had come out, people reading the book came across his name and would ask him, "Are you the Dr. Pope who went up with Ishi?" "Oh, yes." So his memory had been refurbished, renewed by the coming out of the book.

A Related, Unwritten Story

Kuhn: One January, I guess--in '73, I think it was--I went over to his home in Moraga and got a twenty-nine-minute interview with him. It's the first interview I ever did. He spoke from notes for about ten minutes and then I asked him questions and it was a very good interview. He explained his relationship with Mrs. Quinn.

In her second book, the one for children, she made Dr. Pope, this eleven-year-old boy who later became a doctor, the protagonist. He was Ishi's protege and the three older men are hardly even mentioned. Ishi would show him how to fish, how to trap animals, how to kill a deer with a bow and arrow. This is completely opposite to what Dr. Pope was. He wouldn't hurt an animal in the world. She told him what she wanted to do and then he protested, but she did it anyway, which I thought was a great violation of confidence.

When I decided--I asked him this question. I said, "In American Heritage recently, there was a story on Ishi by C.E. Ceram, an anthropologist, and it has some photographs in there I've never seen before and these are attributed to Elizabeth Davis." He said, "That's my older sister--actually younger, but the older of my two sisters. She lives in Carmel. She's the family historian."

So I got in touch with her and I went down a month later and interviewed her and, of course, I didn't let her hear her brother's interview until I had finished with her. She was actually much closer to Ishi than he was. She held his hand while he was dying of tuberculosis and so on, whereas her brother's remembrances dealt

Kuhn: with three things: first, that trip up to Deer and Mill Creeks; second, his father and Ishi shooting a bow and arrow behind the UC Medical School; third, the family going on a picnic out to Stern Grove, shooting rabbits. And then, also, Ishi coming for dinner on a Sunday to their family and the way he would watch everybody--what fork they would pick up and so on.

But the sister was much closer to Ishi, even though she was younger. She went into this thing of Mrs. Quinn. She was really much more angry than her brother was, because she said, "It wasn't until eleven that I even knew I wasn't a boy, because my father tried to make me the boy, the son that Saxton, Jr. wasn't," because he didn't have the same interests as his father did.

His father was truly a Renaissance man. He was a surgeon, he was a singer, a musician, a magician--anything; he could do anything and the son wasn't that way. He was inclined toward medicine, but he was nowhere near as flamboyant as the father, so much so that when he went to medical school, he went to McGill just so he wouldn't be at UC San Francisco.

[end tape 13, side A; begin tape 13, side B]

Dorfman: You were saying that he went to McGill.

Kuhn: Yes, and then his father died while he was in medical school and then he came back and finished at UC San Francisco. His father actually had been number two in his medical class at UC San Francisco and his mother was number one. The only reason, of course, his father married his mother was so that number one would be in the family. The mother, incidentally, after her husband's death, became the executive secretary of the California Medical Association, which is almost unheard of for a woman to do. She must have been a brilliant woman.

Anyway, after I finished taping Elizabeth Davis, we went out in the living room of her home, which had been built for her by Julia Morgan, who did Hearst Castle. Next door her younger sister Virginia lives, and the two of them and Elizabeth's husband and a family friend listened to her tape and to Saxton's tape.

Then I showed a movie which had been made from still shots of Ishi by a photographer coming down and taking these shots and making a movie out of it. In other words, the movie was made using her photographic material, which Elizabeth had inherited from her mother, and no one had ever had the courtesy to show her the finished film. So I brought it down from UC and showed her the film.

Kuhn: Then I decided to do some other checking. Various friends of mine who heard me talk about Ishi would volunteer the information that they as children had been taken by their parents up to UC to see Ishi on a Saturday afternoon.

One of them was a woman named Mrs. Samuel Roeder and she said, "Well, without reference to Mrs. Quinn's book, there might have been ten or twenty people at the most." In her book she says there were crowds of hundreds. Well, someone is right and someone is wrong. I found a number of errors in her book. I sent copies of the tapes to the Lowie Museum of Anthropology at Berkeley, which has the largest collection of Ishiana in the world, and I'm also about half way through dictating a long memorandum summarizing everything I've learned about Ishi in my various researches.

Dorfman: It should be fascinating.

Kuhn: It is. One thing, for example--Mrs. Kroeber, now Mrs. Quinn, never knew Ishi. She was a student of Dr. Kroeber, who was then married to somebody else, and he was teaching a class in Berkeley and he would describe his latest adventures. She was in San Francisco. She never knew Ishi, but all through the years she would say to Kroeber and Waterman, "When are you going to write up this story?" Finally, they said, "Here's all the material. You write it up." She did a marvelous job.

It's just that there are certain errors that I think should be corrected while people are alive who could challenge them. One is the Indians' attitude toward Ishi. Another is a very simple thing which could have been checked. All through her book she makes the point that Ishi was a Yaqui Indian, which was a tribe near the Yana. That's repeated all the time. Then when he died, his ashes, she says, were placed in an urn in the Olivet Memorial Cemetery in Colma and the inscription on the urn is, "Ishi, the last Yana Indian in 1916."

Well, I thought that was strange, so one Saturday I decided to check this out for myself. I went to Olivet Cemetery. The man in charge of the office was a fellow who, like me, had been a cub master in the Richmond district in the early '50s. Being distributed along the counter was a leaflet consisting of the last four pages of Mrs. Kroeber's book, describing the fact that these ashes were at the Olivet Cemetery, publicizing the name of this unknown Indian, whereas there were probably 100,000 others who were buried there without any publicity.

So I went over there to the crypt, the niche, and sure enough it says, "Ishi, the last Yaqui Indian." So it proved to me that, one, she had never visited the cemetery; and, two, that the people who worked in the cemetery had never gone over and checked it out either. So that will be corrected.

Kuhn: Now, Saxton Pope's statement on Ishi's death, I think, is one of the great statements in the English language: "There dies Ishi, the last wild man"--something like that. I've read it to my confirmation classes every year when I've gone up to the pioneer Jewish cemeteries because it's a beautiful statement. It says just what he meant. "He had the soul of a child and the mind of a philosopher," I think it was. It's just a beautiful statement.

But the younger sister Virginia and the youngest brother Lee--neither have had any memory of Ishi. All they knew is what had been told them, so I didn't bother to interview either of them at all. But I keep in touch with them and I've sent all the members of the family and Saxton's widow copies of his interview.

He died about eight months after I interviewed him and his sister told me--she said, "You know, I heard his tape that one time when you played it, but he was alive then, and now that he's dead I don't know if I could listen to it." But I sent her one and she told me, "I'm so glad you did because it's the only thing we have of him."

Now, if I had procrastinated, we wouldn't have anything of him and I say that because in all Sierra Club work we try to interview the oldest people first. There are three people we interviewed, past presidents--Francis Farquhar, Phil Bernays, and Harold Bradley--who are dead now. If we hadn't done them when we did, given them the priority, we wouldn't have their stories, and all were very, very influential people. So age is a factor, but he went so fast--I think it was probably lung cancer. He was an inveterate smoker, but a very gentle man.

This thing with Mrs. Kroeber was really, I think, a disaster, to portray him as he wasn't, because he was as gentle as could be. As a matter of fact, when the men went out hunting with Ishi or fishing, he would stay in camp pretending he was the cook. He didn't even go out with Ishi, and Ishi impressed him less than Dr. Kroeber, whose sleeping bag was near his, and at night Dr. Kroeber would identify all of the stars and the constellations for him.

Then Dr. Pope said, "I seem to remember--just a vague memory--that just before we left to come back, Mt. Lassen started to erupt." But that may be just--that may not be so. So I wrote to Mt. Lassen Volcanic National Park and they wrote back to me, "His memory is perfect. Three days or two days before he left, Mt. Lassen started to erupt and erupted for five years, until 1919." So, again, there is the childhood memory. It isn't falsified. The Pope family itself is just utterly fantastic.

Kuhn: My uncle was a dentist at UC at the time Ishi was there and I asked him one time, "Did you know Ishi?" He said, "Did I? He was the campus character. In the first place, I, along with every other dental student, paid him fifty cents--that was his coin of the realm; he loved fifty-cent pieces--for the purpose of allowing us to make a plaster cast of his mouth. I practiced dentistry for sixty years; his was the most perfect mouth I ever saw."

Then he said he had another habit. He would take pebbles, gravel, from this path and let them filter through his hands and pick the right size and put it on the finger nail of his thumb or one of his fingers and aim it at a light pole across the street, and he hit it every time. [Chuckles] He said, "He was unbelievable."

Dorfman: How do you feel about oral history?

Kuhn: Oh, I love it. I love it because you're going to get things there that you'll never get any other way from people who never take the time to write down what they do. They don't take the time. They don't think they have the ability to write. They're afraid of it, who would read it. But they'll talk.

Let me give you an example. There's a man here named Lawrence Arnstein, "Mr. Public Health." He's now in his upper nineties and he was interviewed by Bancroft. But I wanted to get his impression of John Muir. I had heard him speak at lunch once. He said that he had belonged to the Sierra Club briefly and was on a mountain trip with John Muir and he had never met a more brilliant speaker. So I interviewed him one time in his home and then I kept the recorder on and asked him about these other things on public health. He told a story about Dr. Geiger that was not in his original interview by Bancroft and which Willa Baum has added.

Dr. Geiger was the director of public health and Arnstein was sort of a consultant to him. Geiger told him one time, in about 1938, that he was going to Germany and get a medal from Goering. Now, Geiger loved medallions. He'd go to these diplomatic receptions and have a whole chest full of medals, decorations from foreign countries. Of course, Arnstein, being Jewish, thought this was obscene and he told him so. Geiger had the bad taste when he came back to call Arnstein to come over to his house. He wanted to show Arnstein something and when Arnstein got there he showed him the medals Goering gave him and, of course, Arnstein lashed him again. So this we have on tape now.

Well, this is exactly the same thing that happened with [Charles] Lindbergh, as narrated at the oral history conference colloquium I went to in 1974 at Jackson Hole by Alden Whitman, who was then obituarian for the New York Times. He became very friendly with Lindbergh. When Lindbergh went to Germany in '38 to get a medal

Kuhn: from Goering, his wife Anne Morrow Lindbergh told him, "You are through with the American people if you take that medal." Lindbergh was so naive--not anti-Semitic, but naive--that he didn't realize what he was doing. So it was a parallel--"Come over and we'll give you a medal," for people who can't resist honors.

Oral history I had just--well, I really bit off more than I could chew. I had no idea what I was getting into when I first suggested this to the Sierra Club, but it's become fascinating. Now that we have twenty-five interviews on the shelf, and we'll have maybe six or eight more this year, of stories that are really important to the history of conservation and would never have been achieved any other way, I really feel a sense of accomplishment. Even though I've only done one myself, I've gotten the other ones done and the club has really supported it. If you take the time to read these things, you get a tremendous amount out of them.

We have just notified a large number of conservation organizations and libraries with archives in conservation of the availability of these by purchase at cost, so we'll probably sell them all over the country. I hope so. It doesn't do any good if we have them on the shelf. They have to be read. I think that that could be one of the major problems with oral history.

If I want to read Mrs. Rinder's interview, I have to either go to Magnes or to Bancroft, even though I tried to convince Mrs. Rinder, inasmuch as I was responsible for having her interviewed, "Why can't you lend me your own copy?" But she's reluctant to do that, not realizing that I can read the same copy and she's just making it inconvenient for me to do it, that's all.

There sort of has to be some better method of distributing these things or they won't be read by people who don't have the time to go over and sit in Berkeley to read these things, unless they're a graduate student, and that's a very elite classification. I'm not knocking it, and maybe the greatest contribution will come out of that, but there ought to be something for others whose interest isn't quite that elevated.

Dorfman: Perhaps that's another contribution you'll make.

Kuhn: Well, there could be a series of them in the San Francisco Public Library. As a matter of fact, that gives me an idea. I think I'll try to get some of them bought by the San Francisco Public Library. I'll see if we're on their list. You might have to use them there, but it's certainly a lot simpler than going to Berkeley. I wouldn't be surprised but that some of the people who are on the board of the Friends of the Public Library are active in the Sierra Club. It's a good idea.

Dorfman: How important has your work as chairman of the history committee of the Sierra Club been to you?

Kuhn: To me?

Dorfman: To you.

Kuhn: It's been delightful because I'm involved with people who are professional historians or past presidents of the Sierra Club or who have M.A.s in history, and I'm the only one who never even took a history course in college, [chuckles] which is very valuable because if I were a true historian and Ansel Adams sent me all his papers for thirty-eight years as its director, I would sit in my basement and try to read them all.

But, not being a professional historian, I've become a collector. I take the stuff to Berkeley and go out and get some more. My job is to save all these things while they're available and not worry about someone else analyzing them, because this stuff has to be used.

Dorfman: Do you see that as a major problem?

Kuhn: What? The funding?

Dorfman: No, the fact that the material is not used.

Kuhn: Oh, absolutely. Let me give you a parallel. Every industrial corporation in the United States eventually makes a film. Some do it in a big way. These films are first distributed by the company. Then they find it's too much bother. They don't have the facilities for reviewing the frames or repairing them, so they give them to someone like Modern Talking Picture Company who are paid to distribute it. Now the film libraries of this country have maybe a million films, most of them just sitting there. Getting the stuff to be used is of equal or greater importance than making it.

When something's brand new--for example, in the Welfare Federation of UJA, someone wants a film that was taken in Israel last week; last year's film isn't good enough. People have seen it at a meeting, a rally, or on television. What's new? Well, of course, Israel is a country that changes every day. What I'm saying is that Americans are so used to things that are new, that the stuff that is old, even if it's just as good--parts of a paper mill or a steel plant. That doesn't change that much, but it's sitting there. To get it used is a big trick.

As I say, millions and millions of dollars have been put into producing these things. They're great films and, of course, they have to be used right. In the school system you have to be sure that you're using it not as a substitute for teaching but as an adjunct to it.

Kuhn: But it's the same thing with these oral histories. They've got to be made more available. They've got to be brought down to the local level. Someone in L.A., in the Angeles Chapter, has to be able to go to the chapter office and use it, and that's what they're doing. The Angeles Chapter is buying a whole set of these histories.

Dorfman: Do you see the funding as a problem as well?

Kuhn: The funding for what part of it?

Dorfman: For oral histories.

Kuhn: You mean for copies of it? No, it's just the cost of photocopying and binding. No, I don't think that's a big problem. It's mostly organizing to do it. Actually, I shouldn't be too concerned because the oral history program at Sierra Club is still relatively new and, as I say, we've just now announced the availability. The first oral history we've completed was in 1974. It took us four years to really get rolling.

So we'll see who buys these things and we'll get local chapters to put some pressure on their universities or public libraries where there's a large population of Sierra Club members to get these sets. If they can't buy the whole thing, they can buy appropriate portions of it. It will come.

But I'm saying that what has to be one of the committee's concerns is distribution. You just can't put it on the shelf somewhere and think it's going to be used. It's not going to be used. First of all, it's under lock and key, as it should be, and people don't say, "I'm going to spend my next twenty-eight lunch hours walking twelve blocks to the Sierra Club to read a part of Richard Leonard's interview." There has to be a better way.

Writing the Introduction to Stickeen

Dorfman: You wrote the introduction to the reprint of John Muir's book, Stickeen. *

Kuhn: Yes.

Dorfman: How did that come about?

Kuhn: Well, when you are involved in the history of the Sierra Club, you're interested in Muir. So I'd heard about this book and I went to the public library, the main one in San Francisco. The whole library system had one copy dating back to the last printing in 1937 and you

* John Muir, Stickeen: The Story of a Dog, Introduction by Marshall Kuhn (New York: Doubleday, 1974), pp. vii-xiii.

Kuhn: had to read it there. I thought, "That's a shame that children grow up without having this book available." It's just a marvelous story of adventure, and this dog, and Muir when he describes the most exciting day of his life.

So I tried to get the club to reprint the book, to buy the paperback rights. Houghton Mifflin had originally put it out in hardback. And the club didn't move on it.

When I was in New York having some dealings with Doubleday, I was talking to one of the editors and he was very much interested in Muir. I had a copy of Stickeen and I said, "Here, have you ever read this?" So he read it at night and I saw him the next day and he said, "We'll do it. We'll buy the paperback rights from Houghton Mifflin and we'll pay you to write the introduction and we'll pay you for the idea," and that's the way it came about. It came out about three years ago.

Its distribution has been very, very meager, about 8,000 copies, because with a paperback they don't have enough budget to do much advertising or promotion, but it's a delightful book, really delightful. I'm trying to get--actually trying to see how many other Muir books we can get into paperback.

Of the twelve books he wrote, several of which were published posthumously, only four were available in paperback. Almost all of them are available now in hardback through a publisher named Norman Berg in Georgia who's a salesman for Houghton Mifflin and who owns this little press and he brings out the Muir books, reproducing the original type. But they cost, hardback, \$14.95 and that's a little steep for the average reader.

Dorfman: What other writing have you done?

Kuhn: Oh, nothing that's ever been published. I've written little sermons here and there and reports. I wrote a sort of a history of the Beth El Religious School for their ad book, which will be coming out about now in connection with their twenty-fifth anniversary. Just little things here and there, humor things sometimes, nothing really of any length or substance. I just haven't really devoted myself to it. Did I ever tell you about the greatest thing I ever wrote?

Dorfman: No.

Kuhn: I was in a class in English at Berkeley. You had to write a paper describing a technical process. Well, all my life I'd visited my uncle's office. He was a dentist in Oakland and the train passed a shredded wheat factory. So I decided, "I'm going to go to the shredded wheat factory," and I did.

Kuhn: I wrote it up and I really polished that. So, when I came to class, the instructor said, "Do you want to hear some beautiful writing? Let me read you this." She started reading my composition and, of course, I sat there mortified. It was really great and it must have been great because she picked it.

Then, at the end, she said, "Now, I'm going to read you something that I think--I want to hear your viewpoints on this, whether it's appropriate to end it this way," because at the end of the trip, when you go through the shredded wheat factory, they sit you down in the cafeteria and they give you a shredded wheat biscuit with some jam on it. So that was enough for me. I had to put in the oldest joke I knew. I said, "That night I dreamed I was back in the shredded wheat factory and when I woke up the next morning, half of my mattress was gone."

Well, the class roared. She said, "That's terrible! He ruined the whole composition." So we had a big discussion as to whether I ruined it or I didn't and I was sitting there and I was completely mortified because I knew I had ruined it, but I just couldn't resist it.

Dorfman: What year were you in?

Kuhn: Oh, this was about 1940 or '41. It was after I had gone back to college after three years out. I really poured my heart out in that thing. It actually was a beautiful description of the whole process and [chuckles] if I just could have resisted putting that humor in there, I would have gotten an A. I don't know what I got--an A-maybe--but it was amazing the people who would jump to my defense, because I thought I had no defense.

Dorfman: I understand that you also wrote an early history of the Sierra Club which was published in the Sierra Club Bulletin.

Kuhn: I wrote one article, right. Yes, that was a lot of pleasure for that. What made it good was that the editor of the Bulletin selected some beautiful photographs to illustrate the article. It was a good article and one phrase I used, I think, is very apt. I described the forest growth of the Sierras as the fundamental irrigation system of the Central Valley, which it is. It's the trees holding the water that really gives a sustained flow and if you rip that forest cover off, then all you get is floods and droughts and everything else.

I think I could write if I had the time, but I never--it's very time-consuming. If you really want to do something right, it takes endless polishing. Even that little introduction to Stickeen I stalled for months. I remember getting telegrams and phone calls from New York: "When are you going to do it?" So, finally, I'd

Kuhn: gotten all of Muir's books from the public library and I had had them there for months and I had to pay huge fines on about three or four of them, about three dollars apiece. Finally, I sat down one Saturday and I wrote it out in an hour, typed it, polished it up in ten minutes. That was it. But I tortured myself for months. I just kept procrastinating.

Dorfman: Had you done the reading prior to that?

Kuhn: [Chuckles] Oh, yes, but that's got nothing to do with it. That's got nothing to do with it. You can't explain a procrastinator. There's no logic to it; it's masochism.

Publication, Unrelated to the Sierra Club

Dorfman: There is a book that was published by Doubleday in 1949, Diabetic Menus, Meals, and Recipes. You had something to do with that, didn't you?

Kuhn: Yes. This is sort of the role I play, sort of as an intermediary or as a catalyst. I met a woman named Betty West socially during the mid-'40s and then she and her husband, after the death of their son in World War II, moved up to a place called Freshwater, outside of Eureka. I was up there on Blue Shield business and I called on them.

She showed me this manuscript and said that she had been a very severe diabetic and had been traveling around because her husband was a Marine officer and when she got to UC San Francisco she was out of control. When she was under control, she asked the doctor, Dr. Salvatore Lucia, what she could cook for her family and he gave her a list and said, "Just eliminate these foods forever from your diet." She said, "That's ridiculous. I love all these things." "Well, you can't have them." She said, "I'll buy a diabetic cook book." He said, "Nobody's ever written one." He was just a little wrong. There had been one written before that. She said, "I'll write one." He said, "Ha, ha, ha."

So she went back to Cal. She was a schoolteacher. She studied dietetics and came up with this idea that a diabetic could eat anything he wants, so long as daily intake of protein, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, vitamins, and total calories are what he needs for his activity. She wrote this manuscript and then moved up to Freshwater and didn't know what to do with it.

So I said, "Let me see what I can do with it." I had all her computations checked; I got Dr. Russel Rypins, who is head of the Mt. Zion Metabolic Clinic, it was called, to do the introduction;

Kuhn: and I sold it to Doubleday. They thought, "Well, we'll print 5,000 copies. How many diabetics can there be? There are more cook books every year. She has a very highly specialized one." Well, the answer is, it's never out of print. It sold 150,000 copies.

In 1959, we revised it to include a chapter on sucaryl, the cyclamate sweeteners, because in '49 only saccharin was known, and now we've just revised it again. Dr. Rachmiel Levine, who was then medical director of the City of Hope, and his dietician, Nancy Greene Eash, have revised it because, first of all, we have a whole new chapter on sweeteners, so regardless of whether the government allows or disallows either or both saccharin and cyclamates, it's covered. It also covers convenience foods, alcohol intake, whereas Mrs. West didn't even discuss alcohol, as if we can't even handle that. The completely revised edition should be out the week after next.

Of course, there are huge numbers of diabetics, and for every known one, in the millions, there's at least one who hasn't been diagnosed yet even though he is diabetic.

Dorfman: Is that so?

Kuhn: Absolutely. So this had been a boon, because in addition to helping the diabetic contend with this, the book can be used with recipes for the whole family so that if there is anyone else in the family who has a diabetic tendency, this will forestall its coming out. It's been a very successful project. I think it's probably sold more than all other diabetic cook books ever put out together. Of course, she had the right idea.

Dorfman: That too should have been a source of great satisfaction.

Kuhn: Well, not only satisfaction, but I own 20 percent of the book.

Dorfman: That's even better.

Kuhn: Yes.

Sierra Club Strong Personalities

Dorfman: We talked a little bit last time, to come back to the Sierra Club, about sacred cows which you mentioned.

Kuhn: Sacred cows. You mean strong personalities?

Dorfman: Yes.

Kuhn: When we finished Richard Leonard's interview, which was the first one done completely by Bancroft--you might say the first completely done professionally--because the Sierra Foundation had funded it, I presented the first copies to the Foundation at their trustees' meeting in February of '76 and then, officially, I presented it at the club at their annual meeting in May of that year. I talked about the interview and Dick Leonard spoke and I read them this particular chapter, the particular episode which is very, very funny about the way Sierra Club outings were and how the dietary needs were taken care of.

Dorfman: Why don't you tell us about that?

Kuhn: Dick Leonard, of course, is one of the top conservationists in the world, and in this two-volume oral history, which was done by Susan Schrepfer as an interviewer--she's also doing Brower and Dr. Wayburn--he recalls that in 1901 Muir and Colby got the idea of having these Sierra Club High Trips to get the membership out and see the Sierra, and that way they'd be better able to protect it. So Colby became chairman of the outings committee and the board of directors of the club ruled that those funds for outings had to be kept completely separate from the club funds because if you made a mistake--
[end tape 13, side B; begin tape 14, side A]

Kuhn: So from 1901 on, until the present, the outings program has been funded differently from the rest of the Sierra Club's budget. Well, this went along fine under Colby's chairmanship until 1936, at which point Francis Farquhar became president of the Sierra Club, and he was a CPA.

So he said, "Colby, I want an accounting of all the income and expense for the outings program for the past thirty-six years," and Colby said, "Go to hell. I quit," and the rest of the committee quit with him. He said, "I handle this out of my own pocket and in thirty-six years we made \$2,800. That's less than \$100 a year, but if it was a loss I would have lost it, and I'm not going to put up with this kind of nonsense."

So they had to have a new committee and they said, "Richard Leonard, you've been with the club for four years. You're the new chairman of the outings program." Colby said, "Here's the \$2,800, because that's what we made. Some years we make; some years we lose."

Then Leonard asked, "Do you have a list of food?" because you take 200 people into the Sierra plus fifty staff for four weeks sometimes. And Colby said, "No, I don't have any food list." Leonard was incredulous. "You don't have any food list? How do you do it?"

Kuhn: He said, "Well, I'm a busy lawyer. So I pick up the phone two weeks before the trip and I call the Sierra Club and ask them how many are going and they tell me. Then I call Goldberg Bowen and I say, 'Send food for 250 people for the Sierra for four weeks,' and that's how you do it." [Laughter]

Leonard said, "At that point, I figured he could have probably saved by doing it differently," because Goldberg Bowen was the fancy food purveyor in those days--rattlesnake meat and all that stuff. Well, when I read this story to them, they just absolutely cracked up and then when I did it at the annual meeting, I said, "All you trip leaders out there who are measuring the grains of salt and pepper, that's the way it was done in the old days!"

But, anyway, I floundered around there, and among the Sierra Club trustees which started out in 1960--the Sierra Club Foundation--the board was all the past presidents and there are still a lot of past presidents on the board. There were seven men there among those trustees that day who were being interviewed, were interviewed, or about to be interviewed, and I told them, "The way we've got you now, the way we get our funding, is because every president of the Sierra Club Foundation wants to get interviewed, so we're playing on your vanity. I want you to know that, because it's a resource we'll never run out of." [Chuckles]

Of course, the men who were the trustees of the Foundation are the men who really have seen how the club operates. Some of them, a number of them, were on the board for over thirty years, which is not possible any longer. We've amended the bylaws. But in those days people just went on and on. There were some great men, really, and women too. We interviewed a number of women, both in Northern California and Southern California. One of the chapters that we interviewed was called "High Jinks at the High Camps."

I'd like to mention a few other activities of the history committee beyond the oral histories, which is the most important part. There's the storage of our papers at Bancroft, the Sierra Club papers, which will be a huge archival resource, and eventually Bancroft will put out a catalogue, which will be distributed all over the country, of the kind of files we have available. We have 10,000 photographs. Almost all of them are unidentified as to place, time, or subject matter. People will carry their photographic equipment up to the Sierra in tremendous quantities and it won't take five minutes to write on the back of the print who it was.

Then we put together a photographic exhibit called "A Hundred Years of Yosemite Photography," which still circulates around the country. These are one or two prints by maybe fifteen of the great photographers dating back to 1859 through 1970--in fact, later than that. Edward Mybridge, Taber, Ansel Adams, Richard Coughman--just

Kuhn: some fabulous stuff, one or two of each of their best prints. Some of the ones taken in 1870 are as good as the ones taken today. Here they had to lug all this stuff, all this equipment, by muleback, wet plates--just unbelievable.

There were two Joseph LeContes; both of them were charter members of the club: Joseph LeConte, who was a professor at Cal when it started in 1870, and his son, "Little Joe," who was also a professor at Berkeley, and he took over 4,000 glass plates of the Sierra. Ansel Adams catalogued these and we have them now over at Bancroft. They were in a vault at the Bank of California for maybe forty years.

Then we've done a lot of work at LeConte Lodge in the Florida Valley. This is a lodge owned by the Sierra Club and built in memory of Joseph LeConte, Sr., who was in the valley in 1901 when the first High Trips took off, and the son was married that day and left on a High Trip. Joseph LeConte stayed in the valley and he passed away quietly the next day. This lodge was built in his memory and it's the summer headquarters of the club. We have a lot of scientific exhibits, ecology, educational programs for children and adults, every summer there. It's just a beautiful thing.

There was a woman named Barbara Lachalt who with her husband went all around the world wherever Muir had gone--Alaska, Scotland, Wisconsin--and took slides. Along with slides they obtained from other sources, they produced 120 slides which I call "John Muir's Life and Legacy." I've shown that many times. Any Sierra Club chapter can show it. But she's a schoolteacher and she's built up the collection now to about 200 because she can take a whole week to show it to her class. We don't have that luxury.

Last summer I was up in the valley--in the summer of '76--and gave two showings of this, and this year she went up, which was very great--the woman who had taken the slides--and it's just a beautiful presentation. People really don't realize the extent of Muir's life and accomplishments.

Then we've done a lot of work out at Martinez, the John Muir National Historic Site. On the top floor there's Muir's--what he called a "scribble den"--facing north, where he wrote, and immediately south of that is his former bedroom, which is now the Sierra Club Room, dedicated to his accomplishments as the founding president, with appropriate photographs and exhibits.

Last year we helped the community of Martinez put on a bicentennial pageant because the only thing really that ever happened to Martinez was John Muir living there. This is a delightful little historical pageant about Muir's life, what the people and the

Kuhn: community thought about him and his life, and everybody in the community was involved in this, all ages. It was really a lovely little presentation.

Then I was involved in--in January of '75, the National Park Service was making a film called Interpreting the Bicentennial. It was a training film for National Park Service personnel, anticipating the bicentennial. They went from East to West and this was the last place. They not only did the John Muir National Historic Site, but also the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and for some reason they asked me to come out and participate.

I had no idea what I was going out there for. I sat on the steps of the Muir home where he had sat and they began asking me questions--what did I think of the bicentennial? My response was that the United States next year (in '76, that would be) has an 8 percent unemployment rate still. It's more opportunity for a year of prayer than for self-congratulation. Well, I guess we were talking for about ten or fifteen minutes. I was very restrained in my response because I think of it as a very somber time, a time for study, rededication, rather than a "ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" type of thing. I figured, "The government is represented by the Park Service. They'll never permit any of my views to be heard."

Several months later they said, "Come on out and see the finished film. You're in it in five places." What they had done--they sort of divided things into subjects. Maybe they had fifteen different views and then they would go on to the next subject and the same people might be involved. They had, following me every time, a man who in his active days was considered one of the philosophers of the National Park Service movement. He's an elder gentleman, a very, very perceptive guy. I was really amazed that the government would take this. But that was the general thought of everybody, that this is a very serious time in American history. I was very, very pleased with this thing. We've shown that a couple of times.

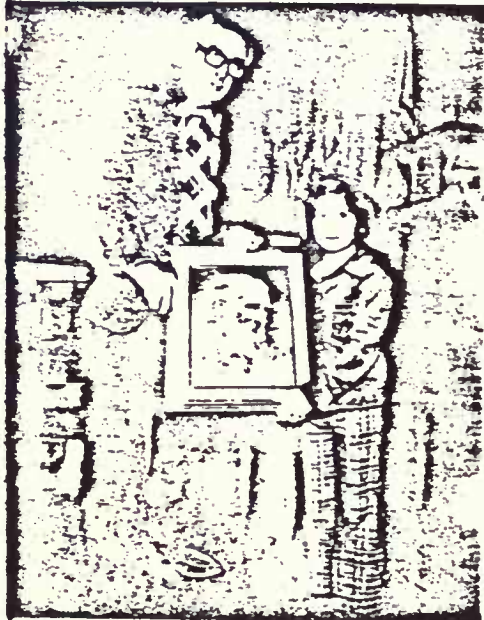
Now, also at Bancroft we have several hundred mountaineering films and conservation films contributed by various sources. One of these is "A Sense of Mountains." One of the members of our committee, Larry Dawson, who is the film consultant for the Sierra Club, checks all these out to make sure they're in perfect shape and maybe even transfers them onto permanent film, and they're in storage. Eventually we hope to put over there mint copies of all the films the Sierra Club itself has made. This is a major film resource.

San Francisco Unified School District

February 23, 1976

Newsletters

Community Takes Part In John Muir Re-opening



Marshall Kuhn presents a portrait of John Muir to student Marcus Zbinden at recent re-opening ceremonies at John Muir School.

Hundreds of parents and friends were part of an over-flow crowd at the re-opening and re-dedication ceremonies for John Muir School which had been closed for over a year due to earthquake safety reconstruction work as required by the state Field Act.

Strong support for the public schools and John Muir in particular was evidenced by the crowd and comments made by various speakers.

Harvey Luster, president of the Page-Laguna Streets Association, emphasized the community's recognition and appreciation of the high educational standards and quality education offered by Mrs. Leola Havard, principal, and staff.

Ms. Fannie McElroy, parent, spoke of the friendly, warm spirit — the "John Muir" way — in the parent/school relationships.

Marshall Kuhn, chairman of the History Committee of the Sierra Club, presented a gift on behalf of that organization of a framed portrait of John Muir, founding president of the Sierra Club.

... John Muir School Re-opens (Continued from Page 1)

Mr. Kuhn, an executive with the Jewish Welfare Federation and treasurer of the Strybing Arboretum Society, told the audience about the John Muir Nature Trail which students in the school had helped to institute in Golden Gate Park in 1970 and about the history of the great American whom the U. S. Post Office has honored with a memorial stamp.

A gift of a book by John Muir, *Stickeen*, the story of a dog who tramped the Alaskan glacier with Muir, was donated to the school's library as a personal gift by Mr. Kuhn.

Martinez News-Gazette, Vol. 121, No. 75, Thursday, April 20, 1978

John Muir Award To Conservationist

The widely respected conservationist and community leader, Marshall Kuhn, has become the first recipient of the newly established John Muir Memorial Association Conservation Award.

This award is being given annually to the person "who best exemplifies the civic virtues of John

Muir in his or her concern for both the environment and the human community."

Kuhn, a resident of San Francisco, has shown a lifetime of concern for his fellow man and the environment.

One of his contributions to the community was quite literal: he is a charter member of the Red Cross "Ten Gallon Club" made up of those who have donated more than 10 gallons of blood.

He has acted as treasurer of the Strybing Arboretum Society of Golden Gate Park, and, in that capacity, raised money for the establishment of the John Muir Nature Trail in that park.

A life-long member of the Sierra Club, he conceived the idea of an oral history committee to tape record the recollections of pioneer conservationist before they pass on.

Bancroft Library, University of California, considers these tapes to be a unique and precious contribution to the history of the state and nation.

Kuhn sponsored and led hundreds of young people on trips into the high country of the Sierra. For many city children, it was their first introduction to wild nature.

Due to his lifelong interest in trees and the Strybing Arboretum, the award to him took the form of a Japanese Bonsai tree.

The award was presented by Justice A.F. Bray at the annual dinner this week of the John Muir Memorial Association.

The tree was accepted by Caroline Kuhn in place of her husband who was unable to attend due to illness.

Ryozo Azuma, an Admirer of John Muir Since 1914

Kuhn: Then I want to talk about Ryozo Azuma. This was a Japanese man who, in his twenties, was a great mountain climber; all his life he was. Did I tell this story before?

Dorfman: No, you didn't.

Kuhn: Well, he was climbing Mt. Rainier in Washington in 1914 and he stopped at a place on the way up called Camp Muir, where Muir had stayed in his ascent of Rainier. So he asked, "Who was Muir?" When he was told who he was, he immediately wrote Muir at Martinez and asked, "Can I visit you?" and Muir said, "Certainly." He came down to visit Muir, spent several days with him, and Muir convinced him to take a job as cabin boy on a government vessel going up to rescue somebody in the ice north of Alaska. The vessel got ice-bound and Azuma spent eighteen months wandering around the Arctic. He was one of the founders of the Japanese National Park. Along the way, he wrote a number of biographies and twenty-seven other books.

Well, he came back to the United States several times, and two years ago he and his wife, on their wedding anniversary, made the final trip. He was eighty-seven or eighty-eight; he'll be ninety on January 1, 1978. Bill Kimes, from Mariposa, who's the outstanding Muirist in the world, was their host and took them to Sequoia, where they'd been many times before; also, the Grand Canyon and Yosemite.

But before that he brought them out to Martinez. Azuma had never been to Martinez since 1914, and here he was in Muir's home. So the Park Service gave a luncheon for him. My wife and I were privileged to sit at the same table with him and his wife, and during the program he told about meeting Muir, how he dropped on his knees.

I had my picture taken with him on the steps of the Martinez adobe there [1975] and it may be in the Sierra Club Bulletin because I got the members of the board of directors to make him an honorary life member of the club. He recently wrote a letter to the president of the club and to me, having found out from Kimes that I was the instigator of this. His language is so delightful because it's what he really thinks, this Japanese gentleman writing English, and he thanks us profusely for this great honor.

As I say, he will be ninety and he's had some ill health recently, but he was a great mountain climber, a great ornithologist, and a great botanist. Ryozo Azuma. [Spells out name] He's close to the royal family and to everyone in Japan involved in national parks, and it stemmed from Muir. So it's an extension of Muir's influence.

Dorfman: His first experience with Muir was in--

Kuhn: In 1914. In fact, that was the only time, because Muir died later that same year. But he was so imbued with what Muir had done and written that he became a Muir faddist all the rest of his life. He's just an unbelievable guy, a tough little man. I hope the Bulletin runs an article on him, because his accomplishments are just unbelievable.

Now, lastly, over here on my coffee table there's a book called John Muir's America, which came out about a year and a half ago. The photography is by a man named DeWitt Jones, who is as skillfull in still photography as he is in motion picture photography, which is very rare. He did the photography for a National Geographic article about five years ago on Muir.

[Tom] Watkins [author of the text of John Muir's America] is now one of the editors of American Heritage, but several years ago he did some writing for American West and also for the Sierra Club. One of his great strong points is his use of graphic material, illustration. He has resources you wouldn't believe. I had heard about this film that Jones had made called John Muir's Sierra, and I got him and Watkins together. They did this book together, and on page ten of the book they pay a very nice tribute to me for having brought them together, because this was the concept of the whole book.

Watkins took an unusual approach. In three places in the book he pretends that he's a contemporary of Muir, and the publisher wanted to know my opinion of how this could be done without people getting confused, like with the "Man from Mars," Orson Welles. So we put those three portions in italics, hoping that that would be enough difference in type and would be enough to call to their attention the fact that there was something different here.

But, unfortunately for the authors, later the same year National Geographic came out with a book with almost the same title, John Muir's Wild America, at \$4.95, whereas their book sells for \$19.95. And National Geographic has some 8,000,000 members of whom 90,000 have subscribed to any book they publish at \$4.95; regardless of what it is, just send it.

So, by that time, American West Publishing had sold out to Crown Publishers, who figured that our book, John Muir's America, can't compete with the other one just on price. So they printed several hundred copies and they held off on any further, so you can't even buy the book anymore. But it's an absolutely gorgeous book and, as I say, it's Jones's photography.

Kuhn: In the National Geographic book they have some extra pictures which you might say Jones had done on their budget years before for their article in the National Geographic, and the cover photograph is by him, even though every other photograph in the book is by somebody else. He's a great photographer. He lives over in Marin near Point Reyes. DeWitt Jones, a great photographer.

So those were some of the activities that we get involved with on the history committee. I get all sorts of correspondence from people who either want to give material or want us to identify some photographs. You may remember that I told you that I got material from a woman in Texas, merely because we have a history committee. She didn't know to whom else to send it. She asked if we wanted material about her grandfather, who was in the Donner Party as a boy of ten.

We got all the material from her. She remembered him telling her. While her husband was very ill in the hospital, it gave her something to do, and she admitted in the letter that her own children and grandchildren weren't interested in the story. She wanted it to go somewhere where there would be interest and, of course, we gave it to Bancroft because they have more material on the Donner Party than anyone else. She sent along little arrow points that her grandfather collected crossing Utah and things like that.

On the trip, he became very close to a man named Moses Schallenberger, whose name is on the Donner Monument up there by Donner Lake, and they split, one with one group and one with the other group. And for fifty years this man, this grandfather of this woman, resettled in the southern part of the San Joaquin Valley, and every time anybody came through he'd just ask them, "Did you ever meet a man named Moses Schallenberger?" Fifty years later, in 1900, he found out he was living in San Jose, and they were reunited. Isn't that amazing?

Dorfman: It certainly is.

Kuhn: So this is a little history byplay that has nothing to do with the Sierra Club, but it's historical and it deals with the West.

One time we got a photograph--not a photograph--a painting. Muir's brother had painted Muir about 1865 and I'd seen that portrait reproduced someplace, but no one knew where the original was. Then five years ago a woman came into the Sierra Club Library and said, "This has been in our house in Pacific Grove for eighty years. Would you like it?"

This was the original painting. And if you are familiar with Muir's life--part of his family lived in Pacific Grove, which is a religious community, in the early days. Even Stevenson remarked

Kuhn: upon that in 1879. Those were the days like Chautauqua circuits, and he went through there--Stevenson--at a time other than summers, and all the places were boarded up.

But by having this historical facility, we've shown people that we're interested in our own history, in collecting archives, and people offer us things. If we didn't have it, no one would be even interested in collecting the history of the Sierra Club. So it's been a very popular committee because it started seventy-eight years after the Sierra Club was founded, and no one had ever paid attention to it before.

They've been too busy with everything else, and I assured the board of directors of the club that we would never use their time or efforts to divert from their principal thing, which is to save America. This would be something extra that the history committee would do on its own, and we've pretty much kept that pledge.

Dorfman: Was there much material that might have been lost forever?

Kuhn: A tremendous amount of stuff. Absolutely, because not only did the club put its material in Bancroft, but I got it from scores and scores of members, some as a result of our interviewing the people, others just by their knowing that we have this.

Of course, everything we put in Bancroft is an irrevocable gift. The Sierra Club no longer owns it and so it's protected. Now, again, that material has to be used, and eventually students will be doing their master's and doctoral theses using the Sierra Club archives.

But they're not fully organized yet because, one, the quantity of stuff we've sent them is tremendous; and, two, a lot of it was disorganized--just cartons and cartons of files, not labeled. They have to be sorted by the archivist, and Marie Byrne, who is the assistant head of the manuscript division at Bancroft, probably knows as much about the Sierra Club as anybody else because she's handled literally millions of pieces of paper, sorting it out and filing it. And, of course, this has--I don't know if I mentioned this before--this has an economic effect. Did I tell you about this lawyer, Johnson?

Dorfman: Yes, you did.

Kuhn: Now, this is \$2 1/2 million worth of economic advantage of having proper archives, because if that [letter of Johnson's had been] buried in deep storage at Bekins, where the papers were before, no one would even have known where it was or if we had it. All of those papers before were completely inaccessible. If you said to the Sierra Club, "I want to do some research on your papers," they'd say, "Well, look, they're all in storage. We can't get it out just for you. We have no idea what boxes it's in, anyway. 123 cartons of unsorted materials? Oh, boy!"

Kuhn: As I say, this is done for us without cost by Bancroft, which has its own problems, because when the state cut its budget, Bancroft opted to keep on buying books and to shorten their hours open to the public. But they're doing the best they can, and I think in a year or two we'll have this catalogue. Of course, it will have to be updated periodically, but it will have a tremendous amount, probably more than any other place in the United States.

As I say, because our papers are there, a lot of prominent conservationists also put their own personal papers in Bancroft. So when you go over there to research the Sierra Club, you can also look at the personal files of maybe fifteen of the past presidents and so on, and this is--not just dealing with the Sierra Club activities, but with all of our activities.

Dorfman: There are additional advantages.

Kuhn: Of course, none of this was anticipated when we started the committee because I had no idea where we were going. I didn't know how to do it. I learned that in the Sierra Club you just do it, and if you do it honestly, the best you can, everybody is going to applaud your efforts because there is no manual or textbook for chairmen, particularly for the history committee. It never had a history committee.

Dorfman: The committee as it stands today has certainly been substantially expanded.

Kuhn: Absolutely, absolutely. And anything that comes to the club with any kind of an historical context, they refer to us.

[end tape 14, side A; end of insert]

XIII FURTHER EXPERIENCES OF A RELIGIOUS SCHOOL EDUCATOR

[Interview 7: November 29, 1977]
[begin tape 10, side B]

Dorfman: Before we continue further, I'd like to go back to clarify and perhaps expand on some of the areas we've previously discussed. Did you ever go to the Top of the Mark?

Kuhn: Well, I took a confirmation class one Sunday morning in the early '50s to the Mark Hopkins Hotel. We went on a Sunday morning because there was a meeting, I think, of the regional group of the American Jewish Committee, and I said, "I want you kids to see how an adult Jewish group operates. First of all, you're going to notice they start late. For all intents and purposes, what they talk about is really not all that fantastic unless they have a real great speaker."

It really wasn't very illuminating and maybe that was a good thing. But, anyway, as we got ready to leave and go back to the Temple, the kids wouldn't leave the lobby of the hotel. This was so unusual that I said, "Look, we've got to get going. I've got to get you back so your parents can pick you up." One student said, "Mr. Kuhn, all our lives we've heard our parents say that they went to the Top of the Mark. Can we go?" I said, "Sure. It's a Sunday morning. The place looks horrible, but let's go."

We went up to the Top of the Mark, we got out of the elevator and looked around, and they shook their heads and got back in and went down. They were perfectly satisfied. But their parents had talked about it and they wanted to see it.

Dorfman: Did you ever go to the Top of the Mark as a young man?

Kuhn: I think when I came out of midshipmen's school I must have gone up there. It was a very, very glamorous place. I had been in the Skyroom of the Empire Hotel before the war, but that had been taken over by the federal government as office space. I never went back and, of course, there was no Crown Room in the Fairmont. You had

Kuhn: no room on the top of the Hotel Sir Francis Drake, so the Mark Hopkins--that was it. It was very, very glamorous and known all over the world. [Tape interruption for telephone call]

About adults' perceptions--I had a friend in Oakland named Charles Kushins, a very well known shoe merchant. In the days before air travel, he would go to New York on a buying trip four times a year. [Tape interruption for telephone call] The whole family would go down to the 16th Street Southern Pacific Station in Oakland to see Grandpa off to New York.

So one week before Grandpa was going to leave on Sunday, I was speaking with one of his teenage grandsons. I said, "I guess it's a thrill for you to go down and see Grandpa off Sunday night," and he said, "Damn it, it certainly is not. My whole life I've spent going down to see my grandpa off. I want to go to New York! Let them go down and see me off!" Well, I'd never thought about that. So that's the perception that adults don't have of kids, but you have to think about it.

Dorfman: What year was that?

Kuhn: That was during the war, World War II.

Dorfman: Do you have any further comments on how the Temple Emanu-El Religious School was operated when you were a student?

Kuhn: Well, it wasn't very uplifting and maybe that's in the nature of it. I think there were good teachers, but the concept of teaching was so parallel to what the techniques were in public school that it wasn't that much different. I think that was my main objection, the fact that there was no deviation from the routine. Every Sunday you had an assembly and you had to read so many pages in the book and have a test and have reports. There was nothing that really gave any life to it, unless you happened to be in drama or the choir or something like that. Now, I played basketball. Maybe that was it. That was muscular Judaism.

Dorfman: You referred to a Scroll, a 1972 Scroll. Could you tell me about that?

Kuhn: Yes. I had taught at Emanu-El before these eighteen years at Beth El. When I came back to Emanu-El after that time, my first confirmation class included my daughter. I wanted it to be something special, and so I conceived of this method.

You have to realize that of the two hours each week, the rabbi had the first hour, so I had just an hour, in addition to which, the class was divided; one semester I had half the class, and the other semester I had the other half of the class. So I really

Kuhn: didn't have the children as long as I would have liked. Normally, if I had the two hours by myself for a group of students for the whole year, I would have had four times the amount of time with them.

One week we would discuss what we were going to do the next week, a special program. Then the next week we'd have that special program, and the following week we'd discuss and analyze what that program was and then discuss what the next week's program would be. Now, for the special programs we would generally go to the home of a student who lived near by and whose mother would serve refreshments. We'd sit around on cushions--very informal.

I had, for example, Dr. Edward Falces, who had been a plastic surgeon on the S.S. Hope. Then he would go to Vietnam and teach the Vietnamese surgeons how to be plastic surgeons. At that time, he was giving about four months a year to society, freely. I wanted the kids to see a man who was truly representative of the best in America.

Then, another time, we met with a fellow named Percy Pinkney, who was a black. (I think he's in Governor Brown's cabinet now.) He ran a community street work project on 3rd Street in San Francisco. He told the kids about the real personal problems that these black kids have, teenagers their own age. Our children would never even perceive them, coming from a different socio-economic stratum.

Then one time I had my friend Fred Graebe, who was a great non-Jewish hero to Jewish people, who saved several hundred Jews in World War II. We had people of this quality and caliber, and I told the kids, "You're going to have to figure out what every speaker has that deals with Judaism, because this is what it's about. You're going to have to make this linkage yourself. That's your assignment. What does all this have to do with Judaism?"

It was written up in the '72 Scroll, exactly what the content of the course was, and I was very proud of it. We went out to the Home for the Aged and spent a whole day there putting on a Hanukkah program, touring the place, and visiting individually with the residents, and really getting involved, much more so than just a pro forma tour. It was a beautiful thing the way the kids responded and the old people responded to the kids. They were, in effect, their grandchildren for that day.

I kept my daughter both semesters. That was the deal I made with the rabbi, but she was the only one. Everybody else had only half the year with me, but she had the whole year's experience, and it was very, very meaningful.

Dorfman: I'm sure it was very rewarding.

Kuhn: It was. Now, at one time when I was at Beth El, we had one of the top Jewish educators in the reform movement come down, and he told us that in his view the best teaching would be having a class of no more than ten and using the Socratic method of posing questions. I took a negative viewpoint, because I said, "There's no way we could afford that. The teacher would only have ten kids, while we have twenty or thirty maybe."

But in thinking it over, over the years, I must admit that at least in theory he was right, because Judaism--its study, that is--consists of questions and questions and thinking up more questions in an attempt to answer, at least partially, some of this. You're never going to run out of these questions, and the point is that these questions are the ones that bother not only kids, but also their parents and other adults. They are questions that really have no long-range answer.

You don't answer them in perpetuity. Two and two is four; you know that. But questions about philosophy and Judaism and human relationships--they have changing answers, and your convictions change, and you have ambivalences. Judaism is a great religion of ambivalences, and some days you think that being Jewish is the greatest thing that ever happened to you. Two weeks later, you've had it with the Jewish people and you're discouraged. Then all of a sudden Anwar Sadat comes to Jerusalem and you're encouraged.

So I try not to get too much one way or the other, because I remember my uncle writing me from Jerusalem in 1947 or '48 and thereafter, "No war, no peace." If he didn't get excited, why should I?

XIV COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Bay Area Crusade

Dorfman: I wanted to ask you about your volunteer service, first about your involvement in the United Bay Area Crusade.

Kuhn: Well, that started at a very early age. When I was in grammar school at Sutro Elementary, we devoted one whole issue of the Sutro News to the Community Chest drive. I think it had a poem in there. In fact, I still have a copy of that issue and I loaned it to the Crusade when they observed their fiftieth anniversary a few years ago and they photocopied the whole thing. This is something that they don't do in the public schools in San Francisco County any more. It's a great loss.

Then I became active again, I guess, when I started working after the war and my firm made me a loaned executive. I was with Blue Shield then. Then I began advancing in the Crusade, finally becoming chairman of all the medium-sized firms in San Francisco. There were about 1,100 of them and I had about 110 volunteers under me. Then, for years, I was on the speakers' bureau and was chairman of it several times. I really did a tremendous amount of work for the Crusade. I won a number of awards, just because I really believed in them and I worked very, very hard.

Then I found out that the organization was very difficult to deal with if you had any innovative ideas to present. They'd just listen to you and then they figured, "This guy eventually will go away." I did go away because I figured that if my ideas weren't good, at least they were worthy of being studied and maybe being tried. If four counties could have an involvement of school children, I couldn't figure out why San Francisco wouldn't have that, particularly when the board of education had authorized it. But the Crusade had stopped pursuing it.

Kuhn: So I resented my child in public school knowing only the March of Dimes and the American Red Cross as far as charitable drives were concerned. There was nothing that gave them any education as to what the United Bay Area Crusade was, a major charity. They used to come out of school knowing nothing about it, and the Crusade defended itself by saying, "Well, a project like that wouldn't raise any money." I said, "That's not the point. I'm thinking of the future." That was one of the main reasons that I became inactive.

Dorfman: When did you become inactive?

Kuhn: Oh, I would say maybe ten years ago.

Dorfman: What were your duties as chairman of the speakers' bureau.

Kuhn: Basically the duties of the chairman are to take most of the assignments, particularly the less desirable ones early on a Saturday morning or late some night at an inconvenient place. I spoke far more often than anyone else. It wasn't a question of your training anybody, because they had a professional staff that did that, but at the organization meeting of the speakers' bureau I would give them a typical talk and, as a matter of fact, my best results came when I quoted the eight degrees of charity as outlined by Maimonides. That went over fantastically.

I enjoyed speaking for the Crusade because I really believed in it. But they took you pretty much for granted. They liked to really work you hard, which was all right, but I had so many other volunteer activities that I figured it would take me years to crack this thing. But it was working for four other counties, and the people in San Francisco just wouldn't extend themselves to try it here.

As a matter of fact, a Crusade staff member had put out a social science unit for high schools and none of the other professional staff members of the Crusade were even aware of it. Pretty weird.

Dorfman: It certainly was. What year was this?

Kuhn: This was about twenty years ago.

Dorfman: You also acted as San Francisco's chairman of the commerce and industry division.

Kuhn: Well, that was this group of about 1,100 business firms, and the Crusade would recruit people who would take a block. Your job was to inspire these people, work with them, keep after them through a pyramidal structure, so that they finished their job. This was working with people whom you had never seen before and whose knowledge of the Crusade you didn't know. Some of them were just assigned by their firms.

Kuhn: There was a tremendous amount of contact work because you had no idea how much the Crusade professional really was going to do. I took the assumption that it wasn't going to do much and I had better do it.

Young Audiences

Dorfman: You were also active in the Young Audiences of San Francisco as vice-chairman.

Kuhn: Yes. Well, this was one of these activities I had no business belonging to. First of all, I know very little about music other than that I like it. Some friends were on the board and they invited me to join them. At the first meeting I went to, they were borrowing money and going in the hole, a huge deficit. I thought, "What am I doing here?"

So I did only two things. We got out of the hole, and we sponsored Young Audiences Week as a means of calling the attention of the public to what we were trying to do, which was basically to give musical education to small groups, instrumental and vocal, to school children--public, private, and parochial. That's the whole purpose of the organization. Most of the groups were made up of people from the symphony.

It's a great organization; it's a national organization. I was handicapped by the fact that I don't know music. I don't know the jargon or anything else like that, and I had no personal relationships with any of the musicians. But from an organizational standpoint, I had a pretty good idea of what I was doing.

Dorfman: That, then, was your contribution?

Kuhn: Yes. I conceived of the idea of this Young Audiences Week as a public relations educational thing and it really worked fine.

Dorfman: Were there other Jews in that organization?

Kuhn: There were two types. There were other Jews who were known to be Jews, and there were several Jews who had long since passed out of the fold. That bothered me for a while, but I got over it.

Dorfman: Can you tell me who they were?

Kuhn: The other Jewish people?

Dorfman: Yes, in each group.

Kuhn: Well, I'd rather not, really.

Dorfman: How about other Jews, those who elected to identify as Jews?

Kuhn: Well, you find this in various organizations of the general community nature. Sometimes the civic activity is their means of expressing their Judaism, even if they don't realize it. They have some kind of a civic consciousness. I always like a person who has a balance between Jewish and general. I also don't like to see someone who will work only in a Jewish organization. There are some people who take a hard line, and that's all they're going to do, and let the goyim look out for themselves. I don't believe that.

I think that you have to take a leadership role. You have a responsibility to the community. If you put it on the basis of what's good for your child, it's good for your child to have a good general community whose members know a lot of the input is Jewish.

Dorfman: Do you think that many Jews in San Francisco share your feelings?

Kuhn: Oh, yes, yes. I think that almost every civic organization has a great input of Jewish manpower and womanpower. I don't care what it is--health organizations, cultural--absolutely, absolutely. What it meant, however, was that all these organizations have a certain kind of a social atmosphere, and when it came to socializing I was limited. I wouldn't socialize with anybody who was Jewish but didn't act that way.

San Francisco Camp Fire Girls

Dorfman: That's understandable. Can you tell me about your work with the San Francisco Camp Fire Girls?

Kuhn: Ah, yes. I was asked to go on their board in 1955 [until 1960]. My wife had been a Camp Fire Girl when she was a girl, and when our oldest one became of Bluebird age, my wife was a leader of her group, and also when both girls grew up to Camp Fire. From the second year on, I was on the camping committee. I was on the board for six years in total. The last four of those six years, I was the chairman of the camping committee and I put in a tremendous amount of time. We had a marvelous camp in the High Sierra, in the Sierra Buttes Recreation Area in the Tahoe National Forest. That's in Sierra County on a Forest Service lease.

When I first visited it, I was disturbed because the swimming was about two or three miles from camp. The girls would be taken over there several times a week by a bus, and the bus didn't run



Next year, when the Campfire Girls, celebrate the tenth anniversary of Camp Caniya, one of the highlights of the celebration will be the christening of a new 30x60 foot swimming pool. Ground was recently broken for the project by, left to right, Mrs. Allen Charles, Marshall Kuhn, Mrs.

Campfire Girls Get Fund For New Swimming Pool

Contributions from several foundations and other sources have assured the necessary funds for construction of a 30x60 ft. swimming pool at Camp Caniya, operated by the San Francisco Council of Camp Fire Girls. Mrs. Samuel I. Jacobs, Council president, announced. The pool will be designed for recreational swimming and for instruction in elementary and advanced swimming, life saving and water ballet.

Ground Broken

Preceding the announcement, symbolic ground breaking ceremonies were held at the resident camp near Sierra

City just prior to winding up the season's camping activities last Friday. About 250 San Francisco girls attended two-week camping sessions at Camp Caniya this summer.

Among others taking part in the ceremonies were Mrs. Allan Charles, 212 Spruce St., special fund committee member; Marshall Kuhn, 30 7th Ave., camping committee chairman; Mrs. Hans Berken, 2959 Divisadero St., chairman of the special fund committee, and Mrs. Xenia B. Nail, acting executive director of the Council.

Other members of the special fund committee are: Ben Swig, William Kent Jr., Mrs. Mortimer Feishhacker Jr. and Russell P. Hastings.

Actual construction on the pool is expected to commence shortly and the project will be completed by the 1958 camp season which is the 10th anniversary of the camp.

Kuhn: every day. When I had gone to camp, swimming was the thing, at least twice a day, maybe three times a day. So I conceived the idea that maybe we could build a pool.

I got the board of directors to approve my motion that--at our annual mint candy sale, we normally would use the proceeds to supplant what we got from the United Crusade campaign. But I said, "Let's take \$5,000 each year and put that aside especially for a pool fund and let the girls know this. Maybe they'll sell more mints, hoping that they or at least their younger sisters will have a pool."

We got several philanthropists, including Walter Haas, who contributed from the Lucy Stern Fund; once he found out the girls were raising money, he felt, "Well, we'll match it." It didn't take long to raise the money and have the pool designed and built. It's an absolutely magnificent pool and I think it opened in 1958, which really didn't take that long. For that I received the highest award in Camp Fire, the Luther Gulick Award.

I had a lot of other fun there because we would have the fiftieth anniversary celebration at the armory, and I would be the narrator for that, and then we'd have the candy sale rallies, and I'd be the emcee. I really put my heart into it because these little girls were absolutely beautiful.

Now, the Bluebird is seven or eight years old, and there's a thing called the Bluebird wish, which is a seven-part creed, and one of the parts is the most sophisticated of any youth or adult movement in America. This little girl pipes in her little high voice, "I will try to keep my temper most of the time." Now, I submit to you, that is sophistication. [Laughter]

Dorfman: You should have been very proud of your contribution.

Kuhn: I was, I was. And my wife was very much involved, and my oldest daughter was involved, and she went to camp four times. It was then that they started for the first time allowing the Bluebirds to go to summer camp. Before that you had to be a Camp Fire Girl. So she went four years and I'd visit the camp while she was up there.

One thing happened. Each time I would go up there, I would take a Sierra Club film and show it to the girls and I'd talk about it. Years later, I received a letter from a girl, a woman in Alaska, saying, "Dear Mr. Kuhn, You won't remember me, but I was a Camp Fire Girl at Caniya, and you used to show Sierra Club films. I became so imbued with their beauty that I decided to become a teacher, and I am now teaching high school science here in Alaska, and I wonder if you'd be good enough to sponsor my application for membership in the Sierra Club."

Kuhn: I wrote back, "You bet I would." Isn't that a beautiful thing? How often do you get those? You have no idea what you're creating. That's the fun.

Boy Scouts of America

Dorfman: You also made contributions to the San Francisco Area Council of Boy Scouts of America.

Kuhn: Yes. My brother had been a Boy Scout, and he started taking me around when I was about ten, and by the time I was eleven I'd reached that plateau. You had to be twelve at that time to go into the Boy Scouts. Between eleven and twelve, my father died and I never went into the Boy Scouts. But I had all these friends who were scouts, and eventually I became a merit badge counselor. Then I became an honorary member of a troop and an assistant scout master. Then when I became a cub master and started the cub pack at Emanu-El, that was also part of it. And I was on the troop committee. I put a lot of time in scouting.

Diabetic Youth Foundation

Dorfman: You were also, I understand, a member of the board of directors and a member of the advisory board at the Diabetic Youth Foundation.

Kuhn: Yes. Our pediatrician, Dr. Mary B. Olney, started this camp in 1938, so it's now just finished its fortieth season. She asked me shortly after our oldest child was born if I would join their group, which I did. I was on their board of directors for ten or fifteen years, I guess, and I've been on the advisory board ever since. This is a unique camp because diabetic children cannot go to a camp with normal children.

There are just too many dietary problems, and the average counselor at a regular camp would have no way of coping with the insulin reactions or insulin shots, whereas her counselors were all trained very assiduously in how to handle these emergencies. They get campers from all over the country and from foreign countries. It's just been a beautiful camp. It's now up in the Sequoia National Forest a mile from Kings Canyon National Park and it serves several hundred children every year.

Kuhn: It's really a marvelous thing. These children are taught the discipline of being a diabetic. They learn how to compute their own food intake, give themselves their insulin shots, and test their own urine. The big thing, of course, is that when they're a little older they get to go on a week-long pack trip--of course, a doctor is with them the whole time--and they become very self-sufficient.

They've gone to camp and many of them had been under the impression that they were the only diabetic child in the world. They had never seen another one. So the fact that they could make friends with children with the same problem and meet them again and again, year after year, at camp and at the Christmas reunions, is a wonderful thing.

Dorfman: I imagine it creates a great deal of independence.

Kuhn: It does, it does.

John Muir Nature Trail

Dorfman: You had a role in naming a nature trail in honor of John Muir. Can you tell me something about that?

Kuhn: In 1967, it was the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Sierra Club, and the club was having internal problems, and it had not announced any plans for observing the anniversary. So I was wandering through Golden Gate Park thinking about this and thinking that there was really nothing in San Francisco that commemorated Muir when the Sierra Club was founded. Sure, there was a John Muir School. My wife had gone to it, and a school is a lovely thing, but it's really not a natural thing.

I entered the Arboretum and I picked up a map. On the map it showed "the most westerly twenty acres, site of proposed future nature trail." So I thought, "Why don't they call this the John Muir Nature Trail?" I wrote my suggestion to the Recreation Department and I got a response the next day: "Great idea. Take it up with the Arboretum people."

Well, I didn't know anything about them, but I took it up and began meeting with them. At first they explained that this was the idea of Jock Brydon, who was then the director of the Arboretum. He conceived it in 1964, but nothing had happened. I asked, "How much would it cost?" He said, "Well, about \$6,000." I went to Walter Haas; he'd been a past president of the Recreation and Park Commission and he gave me the money immediately.

Kuhn: Then when we finally began figuring out really what it would cost to make a trail like this, which would be a simulation walk through eleven plant communities in California, it wasn't \$6,000. It was \$135,000!

So I helped them raise the money and got \$40,000 from the San Francisco Foundation, from the Nepert family fund. One of the Nepert sisters had been a music teacher at Lowell. Then we found out that there was a bequest to the city for the parks, which had never really been tapped before because the restriction had to be that it was for the "adornment" of Golden Gate Park.

Various administrations had wanted to use it for repairing the sewers or something like that and the city attorney wouldn't allow them. But this time he said, "Building a nature trail is really adornment."

[end tape 10, side B; begin tape 11, side A]

Kuhn: So, with the money at hand, we had a ceremony of ground-breaking in 1970 where the nature trail was going to be. We had the president of the Sierra Club, Phil Berry, and we had four of Muir's grandchildren, and we had the children from the John Muir School here. Muir's grandchildren symbolically broke the ground for the trail.

Margot Patterson Doss was there and she subsequently wrote an article about the walk around the trail the following week. It was a very, very thrilling thing. Supervisor von Beroldingen was there, and I explained that she would be very pleased to know that this was all being done without any tax money whatsoever.

But implementing it was a little difficult [chuckles] because it took us a year to design the plans in detail. Then every time there was a shortage of gardeners in the Arboretum, they would take the remaining gardeners and put them to work, of course, on the already developed parts of the Arboretum, and then the weeds would come back. What we did was to spend most of the money to relocate the contours of the land and put up the fence and the water course and the pond and a convenience station and things like this, and then we started this planting.

Well, there was frustration, and I found out that dealing with the city bureaucracy can be pretty, pretty devastating. There was a pond--a freshwater marsh, it was called. Now, a pond is supposed to be waterproof, but when we filled this up, four hours later it was bone dry. The contractor hadn't put the lining in properly. The city paid for it and left us with this big worthless thing. So, subsequently, after several years, the city replaced it, and then we changed the whole concept of it, realizing that eleven plant communities can't be done together without a tremendous amount of gardening time, just to keep out weeds blowing and seed spores.

Kuhn: So we're changing the whole concept and making it in miniature and replication of the coastal strand between Point Arena and Point Lobos because that's really what that area is. We're changing it around now and it will take a few more years to develop it.

The Strybing Arboretum Society

Kuhn: In the meantime, they asked me to go on the board of the Arboretum Society and that has been a lot of fun. Again, just as with the Young Audiences--my not being musical--I'm not plant-oriented either. So they used me primarily in financial matters. I found out at my first board meeting that they had no budget, had never had a budget. I said, "You mean you haven't had one 'til now." So I've been treasurer for about the last six or seven years.

When we have our annual plant sale, which is our major fund-raising event, they put me up in the front with the people who wait, just to jolly them up while they're in line. As I mentioned before, one lady asked me, "Do they have beech trees for sale?" I said, "Lady, I'm the treasurer and all I know about trees is that money doesn't grow on them." [Laughter]

But we have a very fine group of people and the Arboretum is actually an educational institution. It's a botanical resource and our main emphasis is on programs we develop for children. With the help of the Zellerbach family fund, we have a program where teachers bring their elementary classes to the Arboretum twelve times in a given year. They're prepared in advance for each visit by material which we prepare and when they come they'll spend half a day. Each time they leave, they take home a little potted plant, so that at the end of the year they have twelve plants. One of them is the redwood.

Now, what they do? Well, there are a number of trails in the Arboretum, seventy acres in the Arboretum. We have one trail that's on coniferous plants, another on redwoods, another on pollination, plants the Indians used, and poisonous plants. Then there's the nature trail. Then the timber industry wants to put in a trail of wood used in construction. So there are really some great walks in there, including the California natives, and it's a beautiful, beautiful place.

We have courses for women who want to be docents and they get academic credit for this. We also have students from Davis and from City College who are studying horticulture, who do their in-service training there, and all in all it's a really great educational institution.

Kuhn: We also operate the only botanical library, the Allen Crocker Russell Library, which is open six days a week and has a huge collection of books on plants, and it's really been a great source of satisfaction to be involved with that, particularly the children's angle. Plants attract a whole different segment of the population. Plants are quiet, they're nonviolent, and there are people who are attracted to that, even to the point of talking to their plants.

The California Historical Society

Dorfman: Can you tell me about your contribution to the California Historical Society with regard to Robert Louis Stevenson?

Kuhn: Yes. I happen to be a great admirer of Robert Louis Stevenson, not only of his works, but I'm absolutely intrigued by the type of life he lived. I discovered that between 1879 and 1880 he lived at 1608 Bush Street in San Francisco, which is right above the Stockton Street Tunnel. I got the idea that maybe there should be an historical marker there. So I approached the California Historical Society and they agreed to sponsor this.

We got the permission okayed from the owner of the building and we had a big ceremony with Supervisor Pelosi representing the mayor. We had bagpipers and we all marched down from there to a restaurant on the next block and had a nice dinner at which Norman Strauss, who's one of the great Stevensonians and who developed the Stevenson Museum at St. Helena, spoke, as did Dr. James Hart, the director of Bancroft Library at Berkeley, another great Stevensonian and the editor of the book From Scotland to Silverado.

I spoke on the coincidence that in 1879 to 1880 three great Scotsmen were in this area: Stevenson at 1608 Bush, John Muir at 1419 Taylor Street, and John McLaren, who developed Golden Gate Park, down in San Mateo County. These men were born in Scotland within thirty-five miles of each other, and we know that McLaren and Muir knew each other, because I have a photograph, given to me by Muir's granddaughter, of McLaren and Muir in Golden Gate Park in 1910.

I've tried to find out if Stevenson and Muir ever met each other because they had one great friend in common, an author named Charles Warren Stoddard, who had come back from the South Seas. All his South Seas stories so intrigued Stevenson that when he became famous as an author in the 1880s, he came back in 1888 and set sail for the South Seas, never to return, and this man was a friend of Muir's.

Kuhn: You might think, "Well, knowing that both of them were Scotch, maybe he brought them together," but I have found no reference and I have done a lot of research and I am still trying to do it.

Other Jews in Community Volunteer Services

Dorfman: That's very interesting. I'm also interested in other Jewish members of the organizations we have just discussed, such as those within the United Bay Area Crusade.

Kuhn: Well, the Crusade would have a lot of Jewish members because they not only have a big fund-raising apparatus, but they have a big social planning apparatus wherein every agency is examined year to year. You've had people like Frank Sloss and Joe Blumlein who have been president of the Crusade. Morty Fleishhacker, Peter Haas.

You have a woman like Adele Corvin who's been very high up in the social planning process; Marilyn Borovoy--because they all are associated with agencies, Crusade agencies, and they really believe in this, in this whole community approach. They're not competing for funds with each other; they're doing what's best for the community.

In the Crusade, I think it's really been--well, first of all, when it started as the Community Chest, this was a direct duplication of what we'd worked out in 1910 as the Federation of Jewish Charities, so it's a Jewish-inspired idea.

Dorfman: How many of those people that you named did you relate with?

Kuhn: All of the ones I've mentioned.

Dorfman: And within the Young Audiences?

Kuhn: The Young Audiences had, as I say, a few non-Jewish Jewish members, but all musical organizations have Jewish members because Jews love music. If you look at the national board of Young Audiences, with Isaac Stern and people of that caliber--it's been so long since I've been active with them, it's hard to remember just who was really on the board who was Jewish specifically. It's just sort of a hazy thing with me now. But there were Jewish people there.

Dorfman: We can come back to that.

Kuhn: Right.

Dorfman: With the Camp Fire Girls?

Kuhn: Lots of Jews, again because they wanted this for their children and for others' children. As a matter of fact, in one year in the '50s, the presidents of the San Francisco Council of Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Camp Fire Girls were not only all Jewish, but they were all members of Temple Emanu-El.

Dorfman: What year was that?

Kuhn: I think it was in the '50s. Walter Heller was president of the Boy Scouts, Mrs. Daniel Stone was president of the Girl Scouts, and Mrs. Samuel Jacobs was president of the Camp Fire Girls.

Dorfman: That's remarkable.

Kuhn: It was remarkable. I had a lot of fun in the Camp Fire Girls. I first learned there the role a man might play in an otherwise entirely women's organization. I thought, "I better find something that I can do where I'm not going to get involved in this political byplay between the women," because at that time Camp Fire had a tremendous number of changes of its executive leadership, the paid professional staff.

Every time they began to change the top personnel, the leaders would begin to feel their oats and pretty soon they just weren't content with leading their own groups; they wanted to run the organization. They had this battle between them. So you had to have a strong board to say, "Look, you ladies do your thing, and we'll do our thing."

Of course, you had different types of leadership in the organization--in fact, in every organization. Every president is different from every other president. One time we had a president, Mrs. Terwilliger, who was just a marvelous lady, but she really didn't have all that much knowledge of parliamentary procedure.

During the early part of one meeting, I made a motion on which she said, "Let's vote." I said, "It has to be seconded." The next time I made another motion and it was seconded, she rose and said, "Wait a minute, we have to vote on it." The third time I said something, I looked at the head of the table and there was no president up at the head of the table. She was out in the kitchen making coffee for the board! [Laughter]

So I had a lot of fun with these organizations, but, as I say, a man has to find out what his role is. They had wanted me to actually be president of the Camp Fire Girls, but I was so involved with other things I just couldn't do it. I would have liked to have done it.

Dorfman: Were there other Jews whom you knew and related with on the Diabetic Youth Center?

Kuhn: Oh, yes, because again diabetes is a very ethnically related disease. It's a "Jewish disease," whether it's because of the tendency of some elements in the Jewish population to be obese, or for whatever reason. Peggy and Bill Kaplan are among our closest friends. Ben Breit. Ruth Snow is the current president. A number of others. Some had diabetic children; some did not.

Then there was a group in the East Bay, led by Morris Abouaf, whose daughter was diabetic. He supported the camps tremendously and after he died we thought that maybe the East Bay support would cease. But every year since his death (and that's fifteen years ago) they send us \$20,000 or \$25,000 that they've raised in some kind of a park fair or other effort, in his memory. They've been a great bulwark of strength, the East Bay Foundation for Diabetic Children, our first auxiliary. It's just a group of maybe twenty or twenty-five Jewish couples in Oakland who did this; self-perpetuating, they run it themselves.

Dr. Mary Olney started the camp and has directed it for forty consecutive seasons. It's a personal commitment to her ideals and dedication.

Dorfman: Could you tell me whether there were and are other Jews on the Strybing Arboretum Foundation?

Kuhn: Yes. We've had as one of our past presidents Jane Coney, who was the granddaughter of Jenny Zellerbach. Mrs. Lawrence Stein is on our advisory board. There are a number of others whose names unfortunately fail me right now.

Dorfman: Well, we can come back to that. I'd like to know about your participation in another organization, the California Historical Society.

Kuhn: I was really only on the periphery there. As a matter of fact, I resigned from them because of their insensitivity to Jewish affairs. They scheduled an event that conflicted with the Jewish New Year. I wrote them about it and said, "You ought to have a better method of clearing your calendar." The next year their event conflicted with Yom Kippur and I wrote them again. The third year it conflicted with Passover and I just quit.

I figured, "There's no way I can make these people see this thing." It's not a question only of the fact that some Jews who were members of the organization might want to attend the event and couldn't do it, but the fact that they should avoid conflicting with any religious holiday, not just Jewish.

Kuhn: It wasn't, I think, because of any anti-Semitic attitude on their part. I think that they were just disorganized. They really weren't thinking in that direction. There are many good things they do. Their publication program is excellent, but that was too much for me. I couldn't fight that. I thought that maybe someone would call me and say, "How come you quit?" But no one ever did.

The San Francisco General Hospital Auxiliary

Dorfman: That was unfortunate for them. You were also on the board of directors of an auxiliary to the General Hospital where there was a recreation room built for tubercular patients. What was your role in building that room?

Kuhn: Well, the president of the auxiliary to the--it started out known as the auxiliary to the City and County Hospital; now it's known as San Francisco General Hospital. But it's a municipal institution. The president was Caroline Charles, a very famous lady in volunteer work in San Francisco. She had been president of the board of KQED, a trustee of Stanford--just a remarkable woman. She had headed a fund-raising committee for building this pool for Camp Fire and we worked together.

She's the only woman I know that when she was a young married woman, her husband wanted to do something for her, and instead of saying, "I want a boat or a car," she said, "Hire me a secretary." That enabled her to do a lot more volunteer work than anybody else I know and she was a crackerjack at it.

So she asked me to go on this board. My main function was to shnorr money or materials for the patients. Almost every patient was an indigent. Many of them did not speak English, and the city, because of budgetary problems and its attitude, treated such things as toothpaste and toothbrushes as luxury items. That was something the patient was not entitled to. So we had to go out and get this stuff.

I put together several things involving several organizations. I would get the Lions Club, of which I was a member, to pay for materials which the Camp Fire Girls would convert into table favors for the Christmas trays of the patients.

[Chuckles] I got the Lions Club to pay for materials with which the students of the California School of Fine Arts made mobiles to hang over the beds of the child tubercular patients, except that they forgot the principles of physics and these were so huge that they didn't just spin in the wind; you had to hit them. Luckily,

Kuhn: of course, with the introduction of drugs, the number of children who were there for any period of time for that condition has been much fewer.

They had a lot of adult tuberculars and really no recreation room. So I raised the money and did a lot of work in creating this room for the benefit of these types of patients. Then I also would go around shnorring clothing. A man might go in the hospital very, very thin and after three or four months he'd be fattened up so his clothes wouldn't fit him. So I used to get my fellow Lions to contribute their suits. We'd get them cleaned and we had a clothing exchange out there.

The woman who was then the executive director, Mrs. Horace Clifton, had worked with my wife Caroline in the juvenile court. She was a marvel and just had a great heart, and I would do almost anything for her because I really--I thought, "All I'm doing is raising money." We had volunteers, some of whom were employed by the hospital, who would come back on their days off to feed patients, hold their hands, mop their brows while they were dying. Now, that is service. I never did anything like that. So it was a straight organization.

We tried to put a little heart into it. We felt that just because it's a city institution is no reason why it shouldn't have a heart. Just as Mt. Zion or St. Luke's has an auxiliary, why shouldn't City and County [Hospital] have an auxiliary? We did a great deal there. Some of it was tough to do.

I felt, for example, we should have a cardiac defibrillator in the hospital. This is a device to deliver 800 volts to the chest of a patient whose cardiac rhythm is so rapid and irregular as to be ineffectual in the delivery of blood and oxygen to the other tissues, particularly the brain. This then restores the normal rhythm of blood flow for the patient.

I got the hospital administration to agree that they would--they directed the administrator of the hospital to change his budget line so that they could get one immediately. I went overseas on behalf of the Federation and when I came back he hadn't done a thing. There'd been maybe half a dozen people who would have had a chance to live if they'd had that equipment. They suspended this superintendent of the hospital for five days. But the next day, the auxiliary had bought a defibrillator. The manufacturer in Palo Alto had it delivered, and then the city bought one.

Of course, you should have one in every emergency hospital. So we were providing life-saving equipment which was really the city's responsibility, but we wouldn't quibble about it. We said, "We've got to have it; we'll do it." That was when I think I first ran

Kuhn: afoul of city bureaucracy, which really shouldn't have surprised me when I got involved at the Arboretum, which was a different kind of bureaucracy.

All these organizations that work with city departments--I call them "citizen support groups," and I've had for a long time an idea of sponsoring a conference of all of them--the Friends of the Library, the Friends of the Zoo, the Friends of Rec Park. There are about twenty of them--of getting together all of them to show what they all do, how big this movement is, how many thousands of people are trying to make this a better city.

They're frustrated because the better job they do, the more the city leans on them to provide things that really should be part of the city budget. There are a lot of things the Friends of the Library are doing--buying books--which really should be in the book budget of the public library, but they feel, "Well, we've got these good schnooks; they won't allow the library to go down." The same is true of a lot of the organizations.

Dorfman: Is there any move at the hospital to stop such activity--this leaning for things that really should be a part of the city's responsibility?

Kuhn: Well, we couldn't. As a matter of fact, I went to see the chief administrative officer in an effort to see if we couldn't get this hospital superintendent out of there, but politically it was impossible. He was almost near retirement and we just had to wait until he finished his career. But it was a grossly inefficient operation.

It's a tough thing, of course. But, for example, at that time there wasn't one subscription in that hospital to any magazine in hospital management. Not one.

You see, we learn a lot of this from the University of California Medical School, because they are responsible for providing the medical care there and were in contact with the city. That was part of the in-service training of the medical students, interns, and residents. At one time, of course, Stanford shared it with Cal, but Stanford moved from San Francisco to Palo Alto, and now it's all run by Cal.

Dorfman: Did you work with other Jews on this auxiliary?

Kuhn: Yes. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Irving Reichert, Sr. was the woman who started the auxiliary and there were a number of other Jewish people on the board. Harold Dobbs became president of it after I had left the board. It was a very fine institution.

The American Association of Blood Banks

Dorfman: You were also involved with the American Association of Blood Banks.

Kuhn: Oh, yes. Yes, I was.

Dorfman: They had a program for you and you received an award. Can you tell me about that?

Kuhn: Sure. I started out as a blood donor in 1941 and I gave my eighty-eighth and last pint of blood in Israel in 1974. I not only became a blood donor, but I also became involved as chairman of the blood donating activity where I was working, Blue Shield. We became a very, very excellent blood donor group.

So then I conceived the idea that maybe I could help by organizing blood donor groups at other firms. Well, I didn't know anybody, and this required a certain technique that I developed, which I couldn't get anybody else ever to do with me. No matter how much they liked blood banking, they just didn't want to go anywhere. They'd say, "Look, I'm head of this blood donor club at the bank where I work, and that's enough. That's enough of a headache. I don't want to go somewhere where I don't know anybody."

But I considered it a big challenge because sometimes it would take you ten years to crack it. At other times you could do it just by walking in. But you had a marvelous thing to sell. So eventually I became active in the California Blood Bank System, which was all the non-Red Cross voluntary blood banks in California, most of them sponsored by medical societies but some by community groups, as it is in San Mateo. I spoke at several of the meetings of the California Blood Bank System.

Then I became a member of the American Association of Blood Banks, representing Irwin. In 1967, they asked me to be chairman of the administrative program committee. I didn't even know what that was. It was the first time a nonprofessional blood banker was even on the committee, much less chairman.

The point is that at the annual meeting of the American Association of Blood Banks there are scientific sections and administrative sections. This dealt with all of the administrative sections--of blood donor recruitment, public relations, legal aspects, personnel, everything of that nature, everything other than the scientific.

Our meeting was in New York. It was a great success. Before that we had a meeting of our committee in Chicago. For the first time, we had a planning meeting before the main meeting and it was a big success. I enjoyed it. I attended a number of the American

Kuhn: Association of Blood Banks meetings, not just here, but the one in Los Angeles and the one in Detroit I spoke to on blood donor recruitment. I went to the College of American Pathologists in Dallas and talked about blood donating and motivation. I think my title there was "It Doesn't Grow on Trees."

A lot of us think that if you just want a pint of blood for a patient, just open the refrigerator and there it is. Well, it isn't that way at all, and I became quite an authority on blood donor recruitment. This was all while I was a volunteer. Then for a year and a half I worked for Irwin, during which period I'm proud to say that the Blood Bank finally eliminated any paid donors--the first blood bank in the United States to meet all the needs of a huge metropolitan community without recourse to paid donors. That means that we really developed a pool of volunteer donors.

My main technique there was speaking wherever I could, as I had done as a volunteer. I spoke for the Blood Bank over the years maybe a thousand times, everywhere--showed films, spoke, and had very good results.

But some of these motivations in why people do not give blood are just unbelievable. You wouldn't really believe that a man says--when you ask him a question, "If your child needed blood and was dying, would you give then?" He says, "I'd have to think about it first." You wonder, "Where does this person come from?" Particularly if you ask him to do something that doesn't endanger him in any way. His body replaces the blood in a few hours, even though you can't give for maybe eight weeks. But some people, the moment they think of blood and the needle, boy, that's gruesome.

Now, my two daughters--one of them was called by the Blood Bank last night and she went over, and the other one went with her, and they both gave. My son has yet to give his first pint and he's somewhat squeamish about it, even though he's come to a blood bank and watched me give. He just has not been able to put it together for himself.

Dorfman: Was it in relation to your most recent achievement with the Blood Bank--that is, nonpaid donors--that you received the award?

Kuhn: Oh, no, no, no. The award I received from the Blood Bank, the American Association of Blood Banks, was for having given eighty pints. That's the ten-gallon award. That had nothing to do with volunteer work other than as a donor, and that, I tell you, is a very rare award. That's a lot of blood.

Dorfman: Yes, it certainly is!

Kuhn: Now I'll tell you a serious story. In 1974, on my trip to Israel, I had a few extra minutes, so I went down to the Mogen David Adom Blood Bank in Jaffa to give a pint of blood. There was a young volunteer there named Phillips. We began talking about the fact that during the Yom Kippur War, American Jews wanted to give blood, but the Israelis said that they could handle it by themselves, that the Israelis could give all the blood they needed.

But in Britain, the Jewish civilian population insisted upon giving the blood, and it came out to Jaffa and sat in a big refrigerator for a few days, without any need for it, and then the Israelis put it in a big truck and drove it down to the Sinai and gave it to the Egyptian Third Army, who were wrapped around by the Israeli forces and who would die without it. The Israelis felt that these were human beings too, to their wives, their sons. But they never told the British Jews about this because they knew the British Jews would be furious if they felt their blood was being used to save Arab lives. That's an essential difference between the Jew and the Arab; the Arabs do not give sufficient blood to save their own lives.

Dorfman: This story was never publicized?

Kuhn: I've never seen it, no. But I've no reason to doubt it.

University of California, Berkeley, Extension Program

Dorfman: What was your involvement with the University of California Extension Program?

Kuhn: I'd try to take a lot of Extension courses, night courses. I always found it very difficult after a busy day at work; I just couldn't stay awake. I figured, "Supposing I took the course at noon?" I checked up and I found out that in London, for example, during the blitz, they had a whole university going in the middle of London this way. USC had been doing it for years. So I conceived the idea of having UC Extension have courses downtown in the business community--not out at 55 Laguna Street, but down here in the Bank of America board room, in the Insurance Securities Auditorium, the Giannini Auditorium in the Bank of America, etc.

First I had to convince UC Extension. It took me years. They never said it wasn't a good idea. I said, "Look, if you don't think it's a good idea, say so. Be honest with me." They never would be honest with me. Finally, I called two meetings. I brought in the top personnel people of the five biggest employers--Southern Pacific, Bank of America, the Telephone Company, PG&E, and Standard Oil--and they said, "We'll support it." So I really pushed UC to the wall.

Kuhn: At that time, they tried to get out of it. Instead of giving it to the Extension, they tried to give it to UC Medical School, saying, "That's UC San Francisco." Well, a medical school had no interest in this thing. So finally the Extension was stuck with it, and they put together a course of six weeks, three professors each talking twice, and they were just terrific. We had forty-five people who met every other Wednesday, I think, in the board room of the Bank of America, and you could buy your lunch, a box lunch.

These people came from all over the city. It was on the general theme of education. I remember the first speaker. I can't think of his name right now. He was just utterly unbelievable.

Then they gave another course and that was less well attended, and the third one was even less, and then they gave it up. But my contention is that they made no effort. They never sent anybody over here to call on any of these five corporations or any other corporation and say, "Look, will you pay the fees for these people?" If you go to a service club, it takes an hour and a half. If you go to a business luncheon, it takes an hour and a half. If you go to a course, it takes an hour and a half.

There are over 100,000 college graduates in downtown San Francisco and many of them would love to go to a thing like this. All I'm saying is, "Don't make them go after work to 55 Laguna Street. They have to bring their car in, get home late. Let them go during the working day." I think it's valid, and I'll tell you when it's going to be proven--when City College opens its new educational center downtown at 4th and Mission, then you'll see it, when they start giving things like this. State could get involved with it; USF could bring it downtown.

I wanted to give Cal, my alma mater, the first crack, and I had a political reason. At that time, Cal was being shut out from all over the place. Its budget was in real bad shape. And I said, "Here's a chance. If you're so great, Berkeley, and you've got such a great faculty, show them to the San Francisco people--what great teachers you have. Don't just keep them for the kids."

But the Extension Division, of course, receives no money from the state budget. It has to be self-supporting. But I felt that they just wouldn't level with me. I felt we proved a point, but that you have to really--you can't do it all just by sending out notices. I wanted them to go around and really sell the thing in the business community. I thought it would really go. I'm positive it would. It's just a discouraging thing. As a matter of fact, the fellow who hosted one of the lunches is my friend Bill Coblentz, who's now chairman of the Board of Regents. I think he was just beginning his terms as a regent then.

Dorfman: During what years were you speaking?

Kuhn: This must be somewhere in the mid-'60s, as I recall. Very discouraging. I mentioned this to Roger Heyns, the chancellor of Berkeley at one time, and he said, "I want to hear more about this." But then he left shortly thereafter.

Dorfman: Do you feel this is likely to come about in the near future?

Kuhn: It will come about. Someone will figure out it's a good idea. If USC can do it in L.A., why can't we do it here? The business community is delighted to give you the space. There are all sorts of buildings and auditoriums and conference rooms, so that's no problem, and organizationally it's not very difficult to do. But you have to want to do it.

The National Parks, a 4,000-Mile Adventure, 1938

Dorfman: Before we go on, I'd like to hear about your very first trip out of state. You mentioned that you took a 4,000-mile trip in the national parks.

Kuhn: Yes. I had a friend named Merv Silberman. We'd gone to high school together and played basketball together, and he and I and his younger brother started this trip, and we were joined by one other fellow later on. We went from here down through the Central Valley, over the Tehachapi Pass, over to Las Vegas, and into Bryce and Zion Canyon in Utah, Salt Lake City.

We went through the Mormon Tabernacle and swam in the Great Salt Lake; up to Yellowstone; over to Glacier National Park; down to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; down to Pasco, Washington, where the Snake and Columbia Rivers come together; down to Portland; and down the Redwood Highway, home--4,500 miles in thirteen days at a cost, including everything, of a penny a mile; \$45.13 I think it cost me, because we slept out all the time. We never slept indoors.

For example, it was dark when we left Las Vegas. We just parked by the side of the road. The next morning we woke up, and here we were above the Virgin River, and a farmer was picking cantaloupes, which we bought for a nickel a piece, and then we swam in that same river in Utah. In twenty-four hours we swam in the same river in three different states.

Dorfman: What year was this?

Kuhn: '38. It was just great. I was twenty-one and we saw everything that there was to see. It was just beautiful. I don't know which is greater, Zion or Bryce or Yellowstone (which was magnificent), and then, of course, Glacier was so peaceful and beautiful.

And coming down the Redwood Highway--let me give you an example of the Redwood Highway. We came into Crescent City late at night, had dinner. We said, "Where can we camp?" They said, "Well, the Smith Yuba State Park is just down here a bit." So we drove there, pitch black, parked the car, got out our sleeping bags.

The next morning we wake up under a gorgeous redwood tree and there down fifty feet away is the Smith River. So I dive into the Smith River. I'm swimming and underneath me salmon are going upstream to spawn.

Now, that Smith River State Park is the site where I helped friends of mine establish a redwood grove in memory to members of their family, the Lisberger family grove. Sylvan Lisberger was a past president of the Federation. It's in memory of him and his two sons, who were schoolmates of mine and who both predeceased their father. So the Smith River--it will now be part of the Redwood National Park.

But just to know--I never--I had heard about this, but I never dreamt that--every single day was a new kind of an impression. Just magnificent.

Then I really got the travel bug after that, and the next year Merv and I went to the New York World's Fair, had a marvelous time. However, we resented the World's Fair. We said we had to go to it, but we found New York City itself far more fascinating.

Dorfman: Than the World's Fair?

Kuhn: Yes.

Dorfman: What a comparison between the two trips.

Kuhn: Oh, yes. One was civilized--

Dorfman: Did you drive to New York City?

Kuhn: No. Well, we took the train to Chicago and to Detroit. We got a new Ford. We went to Cleveland to see an aunt of his. Then we crossed New York State and went to Boston to see my uncle, whom I'd never seen, and came down the Meritt Parkway to New York City on May 6, 1939, the last time the Atlantic fleet was in the Hudson prior to World War II. After a week in New York, we went down to Washington, D.C., saw a cousin of mine, took all the tours of the White House, and then drove west through Kansas City and Denver and all of those places. A marvelous time. Three weeks, \$150.

Dorfman: That's quite a comparison to today's prices.

Kuhn: Well, even the financing. I was then working for the Anglo-California National Bank. They frowned upon you borrowing from the bank where you worked, but they would arrange for you to borrow elsewhere. I borrowed \$150 from the Bank of America and the next year I paid them back \$159. Interest was 6 percent. Unbelievable.

Further Episodes as a Volunteer

[Interview 8: December 13, 1977]

[begin tape 12, side B]

Dorfman: Why don't we start this evening with some of the anecdotes that you wanted to share?

Kuhn: Well, I wanted to give you some names of people, Jewish people, on the boards of these various community organizations. Over the years, in the United Bay Area Crusade, which is now the United Way, for example, I worked with Richard Gump. I worked with Lloyd Hanford, Jr., Fred Freund, John Blumlein, and his cousin Joe.

In the Diabetic Youth Foundation: Ruth Snow, Ben Breit, Bill Kaplan, Dr. Moses Grossman, and Morris Abouaf, as well as Janet Nicklesburg.

In the Camp Fire Girls, on their board, we had Dr. and Mrs. Louis Goldstein, Mrs. Samuel Jacobs, Mrs. Moses Lasky, Mrs. William Corvin, Robert Borovoy, and also on the fiftiety anniversary program I had Marian Otsea.

In Young Audiences, one of the presidents was Mrs. Stephen Varnhagen. Also on the board was Mrs. Ernest Rogers, and Mrs.-- (I can't read my writing.)

On Camp Fire again, continuing on Camp Fire: Bob Pollack, Mr. and Mrs. (she's a doctor) Alan Heringhi, Dr. Maurice Hartage, and Mrs. Nicklesburg was also on that board.

Then in the Strybing Arboretum Society we had Mrs. Stephen Coney, Mrs. Laurence Stein, Mrs. Richard Swillinger, and Mrs. Jules Heumann.

In Boy Scouting, I worked with Joshua Kurzman, Mrs. Perry Harris, Mrs. Edward Weiss, Mrs. Paul Klein, Mrs. Bennett Raffin--these were all my den mothers. Our scout master in Troop 17 was Arthur Myer. On the troop committee were Dr. David Rytand, Henry Bettman, Walter Miller, Jr., and Walter Geballe.

Kuhn: On the auxiliary to the San Francisco General Hospital--it was started by Mrs. Irving F. Reichert, and on the board was Mrs. Robert Levison, Sr.

In the Sierra Club, there was George Marshall, a past president of the club and also of the Wilderness Society, and the son, incidentally, of Louis Marshall, a great American Jewish leader. I think that covers the board members.

Fund-Raising Experiences

Dorfman: I would be interested in how you related to these people you just mentioned.

Kuhn: Some of them were good friends of mine before; others became friends during. I had obviously much more rapport if I thought they were a good Jew. If they had no Jewish connections other than being just pro forma Jewish, particularly if they took no part in Jewish philanthropy, I had a very dim view of them. But, after all, it was a community organization.

There was another activity I'd like to mention. After my trips to Europe and Israel and North Africa in 1961 and '62 for the United Jewish Appeal, I was asked to speak by UJA. I did, for about three or four years in the western region, all the way from Denver to Hawaii, and Spokane to San Diego. I have a little bicycle outside there on the shelf, outside there--a little award: "A man on the go."

I had two very interesting things that happened. I would do two different things. One, I would go to a community and give a talk whose primary purpose was fund raising. Then later on I would go to a community sometimes, at UJ request, and meet with their budget committee.

One year the Seattle community had a disastrous campaign, and they cut everybody except the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League, because both of those agencies had national board members in Seattle. So I thought this was a disgrace, and UJ asked me if I would go up there. So I said, "Certainly." So they wired Seattle and they said, "Kuhn is coming," and they got a wire back saying, "Don't send Kuhn. We're sending \$5,000 more." [Chuckles] I thought that was negative fund raising.

Then I almost had what would have been the greatest experience in my life. They were going to link me together with Harpo Marx. He and I were going to go to the Northwest--Portland, Seattle, Vancouver. He would play his harp and then I would give a pitch. I

Kuhn: thought, "Oh, what an act to follow." Of all the Marx brothers, he was my favorite. Then he got sick and he died and we didn't go. It would have been a marvelous, marvelous thing. But, anyway, I eventually ended up as vice-chairman of the western states region of UJA, and that was a tremendous amount of satisfaction.

Now, I mentioned these UC Extension courses that I started downtown, and the first one, which was the most successful of the three, had three different professors, each of whom spoke twice. The first one was sensational. His name was Michael Scriven, Ph.D., professor of philosophy and of education and special assistant for program evaluation to the vice-chancellor of UC Berkeley. I'm going to give you this [course description] because his name is on here and he has an article in here, in one of these announcements written some years after this, on "Common Fallacies in Program Evaluation," which is just a sensational article. He's worthwhile for anybody to hear.

I have another one here. At Temple Emanu-El during the summer it was the custom for many years to ask a layman to give a five-minute meditation during the Friday night service at 5:30 p.m., a half-hour service, and I would always be asked by Rabbi Fine to do this once a year. He'd write a letter in which he'd tell me what it was not supposed to be. It was not supposed to be a miniature sermon, and about ten other things it wasn't supposed to be. So I finally figured, "I'm going to give what I want and if it's not what he wants, he won't ask me back. That's the worst that could happen. He can't stop me in the middle."

So one year--this was in 1955--it was April, and I was supposed to give it at 5:30 on a Friday, and all day long I couldn't figure out what I wanted to say. At four o'clock it hit me and I sat down at my typewriter in my office and I banged this out and I gave it. It was so good (I have to say that) that they printed it in the Student Scroll; they gave it at Temple Beth El. What it was was a Sabbath meditation. That was the day that they announced the Salk vaccine, and I announced it as a biblical story, and people came up afterwards and said, "That was beautiful. Can you tell me where that was in the Bible?"

Dorfman: That's wonderful.

Kuhn: Really, it was just--. Now, some of the times my activities would get a little in conflict with each other. When I was at Blue Shield, for many years I ran the blood drives for the employees and also the United Crusade drive. Many times I would go to a department in any kind of a business and they would say, "Uh-oh, here comes Kuhn. What is it this time, blood or money?" [Laughter]

SABBATH MEDITATION

EDITOR'S NOTE: This meditation was written by a former member of the faculty of our Religious School. Because it concerns itself with the lives of children, we have included it in our SCROLL.

"And in those days the inhabitants of the land were fearful and trembling, for a scourge had descended upon them, so that men and women, and not least the children, were increasingly stricken. And there was none in the land, no matter how high his station, whose life was not touched by this plague which paralyzed and killed or crippled wherever it struck.

"Now one of the leaders of the people was a man named Franklin, himself a victim of the disease. And the people rallied around him and each gave according to his portion so that wise men and sages might study how to overcome the scourge.

"For a half-score of years the people waited and hoped but still ever greater numbers were cut down to wither or to die. And Franklin was called to his fathers. And another half-score years passed.

"And then there arose in the land a man named Jonas. And he was surrounded by a legion of others learned in natural things. Yea, and they burned the oil in their laboratories, even unto midnight, for many months. For they were anxious that the cause of this pestilence be laid bare.

"And, lo, the work of Jonas and his helpers was crowned with success. So that the people once more felt secure in their homes. And there was much rejoicing throughout the land, and the hearts of parents were filled with gladness.

"Now all this took place in that season of the year when the Jews celebrated their ancient festival of Passover. And even as the Angel of Death had passed over the houses of the Jews when they were slaves in Egypt, so even now he passed over the homes of *all* the inhabitants of the land. And none was afraid, and the Festival of Freedom took on an added meaning in that mankind was now free of this plague."

Accept, O Lord, our gratitude for this boon which has come to America and to the world during the past week. As we observe the Sabbath this night in our homes, with the lights perhaps a little brighter than usual, may we be mindful of the sacrifices, the ordeals, and the suffering experienced by the many responsible for this triumph of medical science. May we never forget what has gone before nor be unmindful that ultimate causation is Thine alone.

Blessings and praise of Thee are ever in our hearts. Grant all who worship here tonight and their loved ones a week of joy, fulfillment, health and peace. Amen.

MARSHALL H. KUHN

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Common Fallacies in Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is just one type of evaluation; examples of fallacies could equally be given from personnel evaluation, proposal evaluation, or product evaluation. But program evaluation is often very controversial, threatening, difficult, expensive—and mandatory; so it affects people profoundly.

Because program evaluation has such a powerful impact, and because it has so often been done badly, there is a strong tendency among program people to avoid it. It may be useful to mention some questions that can be used to discriminate between superficial and serious criticism of program evaluation. I'll express these questions in the form of fallacies—that is, apparently plausible but in fact erroneous or superficial claims made by program people. The list is unending, but let me illustrate the usual errors with just five examples. You may want to test yourself by formulating your own comments on each quotation before reading my comments. (If you really want to test yourself, write down your comments; it's much harder to persuade yourself that you've actually seen a point if you have a written record that doesn't include it.)

Just for fun, and because the chance so rarely arises, I'm going to role-play a tough evaluator reacting to common defenses or criticisms coming from program managers; I'm going to say what the evaluator would say (at least under his or her breath). Of course, it would be bad practice to come on this strong with most program people; but setting up a tough adversary is a good way to make yourself face the problems implicit in the quoted positions.

1. "External evaluation no doubt has its uses, but it's terribly intrusive and just too expensive; and all that money comes out of what we're really here for—to deliver services."

Responses: (a) You're not "really here" to deliver just any kind of service, but high quality service. Good intentions do not make a good program; either you have a quality-control system, to see if the program is good, or you don't. If you don't, you should be closed down: Why should you be funded for what may be, as far as you or anyone else knows, shoddy or damaging intervention? Even if you have your own quality-control system, do you really suppose you can objectively evaluate your own services? If you do, you're mistaken. External evaluation is essential—not because it's "purely objective" but because it's more objective in certain respects than self-evaluation, especially if you pick your evaluator carefully.

(b) Calling external evaluation "terribly intrusive" means that you once had a bad experience with an evaluator (in which case you should try again but not until the evaluation plan reduces intrusion to a bare minimum), or that you can't tolerate even a minimum of intrusion (which means you haven't faced up to what accountability in the management of funds means), or that you think your operation can't be improved (which is touching—but if your operation is indeed perfect you owe it to the rest of the world to show us how you became the first to achieve this, and showing an evaluator is the least intrusive way to do so).

(c) Calling evaluation "just too expensive" means either that you've been taken in the past or that you don't insist that evaluations pay off for you. Certain types of externally mandated evaluations, done for accountability reasons, may have relatively little payoff for you, but these are paid for by the funding agency. Whenever you have some control over whether or not to put money into evaluation—as the comment we're discussing implies—you should expect and require that the evaluation gives you a very good return on your investment. An evaluation can pay for itself in two ways. First, it can identify program components that are wasting resources; these can then be cut, representing a direct cost saving that often covers far more than the cost of the evaluation. Second, the evaluation can identify components that are extremely cost-effective, where you can get more results for a little extra support than elsewhere, thereby generating a larger quantity of quality service for the same money—again, a major payoff for you and the client population.

Good evaluators will often make contributions in other ways: they may be able to suggest sources of funds that hadn't occurred to you, or personnel you need, or ways of making substantial savings on copying or communications costs. It depends on the range of their experience and expertise. But you should expect that on the average external evaluation will pay off in the same way as other management consulting services or office equipment—that is, it should improve your performance and/or reduce your costs. If you have a truly excellent program it won't pay you, because there won't be much room for improvement. But even a person who feels very healthy should have an occasional checkup: the cost of being wrong is much higher than the cost of the checkup.

2. "Look, it's easy to show that we're meeting our program goals, which is exactly what we were funded to do; what is there to evaluate?" What there is to evaluate includes, among other things, the question of whether:

(a) You're also producing unfortunate side-effects, for example on community property values (a typical halfway house problem), on clients (methadone), or on staff (overwork).

(b) The program goals are still appropriate, or are appropriate for your clientele in this location (for example, sex- or race-segregated experimental schools, separate special education classes, vocational training for jobs that no longer exist).

(c) The cost is excessive; could the same be done for less or more be done for the same amount? Perhaps the specific goals (objectives) were set too low.

3. "What we're doing is obviously better than anyone else in the same field, around here; and a client/staff survey shows very positive feelings toward the program. In short, we have a very high quality program, and that's not just our opinion, it's the opinion of some very distinguished consultants and observers who know this area."

(a) "Better than anyone else" may still not be worth funding (electroshock therapy and totally unstructured classrooms are possible examples).

(b) Your consultants and local observers may easily have become co-opted, because they're paid by you, admired by you, or related to you (for example, do you refer clients to them?).

(c) Even if the preceding queries were answered, there's a basic point that by now should be recognized as an automatic refutation of number 3, just as it was of number 2. It can be summed up in this slogan: **Quality is not enough.** Program people always feel deeply offended by this assertion—and, indeed, delivering quality is hard. But it's not enough. Not only quality but also the severity of the needs being served, the extent to which other programs are meeting those needs (that is, the indispensability of your program) and the cost of the program must be considered—in effect, evaluated.

4. "No other program is doing what we're doing; no one provides the unique combination of services we offer these clients." Like the preceding comment (number 3), this is often uttered in a hurt tone, as if uniqueness were a virtue in itself. In human-service areas, from education to health, uniqueness or novelty is not a value at all, and it most certainly does not establish indispensability. At first it looks as if this comment means that the program is indispensable, is meeting a need no one else is meeting. But what nearly always turns out to be the case is that no one is offering this **combination** of services, though the important components of the combination are available elsewhere. **Now** the decision is much more difficult. We have to ask whether the convenience of the single package is worth any extra expense and perhaps also some loss of quality in the individual components: multipurpose agencies rarely perform as well on each dimension as the specialized agencies. Uniqueness is not enough either.

If these are some fallacies in program evaluation, what is the right way to go about conducting an evaluation? You can get a fair idea from my comments on the fallacies. At the very least, the examples above should provide you with some idea of whether you were yourself aware of the various dimensions in and perspectives on program evaluation as it is today.

Michael Scriven, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy and Education, and Special Assistant for Program Evaluation to the Vice Chancellor, University of California, Berkeley

A United States Naval Officer in Australia

Kuhn: Now I want to tell you about the two experiences I had in Australia during the war. The first was in Sydney. A friend of mine in San Francisco had given me the names of a mother and daughter, friends of hers, who lived in Sydney and I called on them. When I sat down in their apartment, I saw on the wall a painting of Yosemite by Albert Bierstadt, a very famous landscapist, and on the coffee table was the exact same scene.

So I asked them--I said, "Did friends in America when you visited there send these?" "Yes." I said, "Well, did the same friends send both the wall painting and the coffee table?" "No." I said, "Well, it's the same scene." "Oh, that's true." I said, "Doesn't that strike you as coincidental?" "Well, maybe." I said, "Do you know what it is?" "No." I said, "That's Yosemite Valley." "Oh." "And it's by Albert Bierstadt, a very famous painter." "Oh." So I thought, "Oh, my God, these people don't even know what they're looking at."

A year and a half later, I was in Brisbane in Queensland and I went to a barbershop. As I sat back in the barber chair for my haircut, I saw on the opposite wall those two photographs of the Palace of Fine Arts. Those were about eighteen inches square, and on the same cardboard mount in the lower corners was a little print, maybe about three-quarters of an inch square. Someone had obviously taken that in 1915 during the Fair at the Panama Pacific International Exposition and then blown it up to show fine-grain photography. So I looked at that and I said, "Oh, boy, that's home," and the barber merely grunted. So I said, "Gee, that really is nostalgic."

So several weeks later, I was back in the barbershop and I said to the barber, "Boy, I sure like those photographs." He said, "One of you guys was in here a couple of weeks ago admiring it." "That was me." He looked at me and he said, "Oh, yeah." I said, "I'd like to buy them." "Oh, no, I couldn't sell them." I said, "Why not?" He said, "Well, the walls would be bare." I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll buy something else for you and we'll swap. What do you like?" He said, "Something with lots of color."

So I went down to Trinton's, a big furniture store, and I bought two paintings. One was a bunch of cows at a water hole and the other was Cleopatra on her couch surrounded by various people. I brought them back wrapped up and I said, "Here they are." He said, "Don't take them out now." I said, "Why not?" He said, "I don't want to be caught trading with a Yank during business hours." So when the store closed and the barbershop closed, we swapped them. He was delirious to have his new paintings and I had these.

Dorfman: And you were equally as delighted.

Kuhn: I took them down to the photography store where they were from, and they couldn't remember who it was in Australia that had taken them in 1915. Then I took them to a place where I got them framed, and then I put them up in my BOQ, because at that time I was running a hotel for the Navy for officers of the various stations around Brisbane. It was a hotel for boarding and rooming.

My greatest delight was to have any friend from San Francisco or Cal come and visit me. The first thing that I would do when I'd see them--I'd take them, particularly if they were Army officers--first I would give them a great meal because we had good food and I was the boss. Then I would take them up to my BOQ, and I would sit them down, and they would see these paintings, these photographs, and they would say, "It can't be." I said, "What?" "They look like the Palace of Fine Arts." I said, "Well, they are." "Well, how could you get them over here?"

I would say, "I want to explain something to you. In the Army, they have a philosophy: 'You may have to live like a dog, so start doing it now. Get in practice.' The Navy takes the opposite tack: 'You may never have to live like a dog, so live like a gentleman as long as you can.' You don't understand the Navy. When we came over here, they told us, 'Bring your paintings, bring your photographs, bring your books, your athletic equipment, your records.'"

These guys would look at me completely befuddled, because what other explanation was there? Where would he get them over there? You could take them over there. So I had more fun with that! Oh, God! [Laughter] Great.

The Strybing Arboretum

Kuhn: Now I'm going to tell you a story. I have a friend named Francis Mair who's a great industrial designer. He's with the Walter Landor Company and their office is on a converted ferryboat down at Pier 5 in San Francisco. One time they were giving a party for various friends. I was invited, and he had done some voluntary work for the Arboretum, so Arboretum people were there.

Now, I was talking with a woman named Mrs. James Kilburg whose husband is one of the world's greatest inventors. As we were talking, John E. Bryan, the director of the Arboretum, came in and I introduced them. I said, "Mrs. Kilburg, I would like you to meet Mr. Bryan," and she said to him, "What do you do?" She said, "How did you meet Mr. Kuhn?" He said, "Through the Strybing Arboretum Society," but as

Kuhn: he said it, his mouth was full of crackers and cheese, and it didn't come out that way. She turned to me incredulously, "You're with the Starving Armenian Society?" [Laughter] Fantastic, fantastic.

Well, that about does my humor for the night.

The Jewish Home for the Aged

Dorfman: I'd like to return to your very impressive history of volunteer activity and contribution and to your work with the Jewish Home for the Aged.

Kuhn: Well, actually speaking, I started out in the late '30s by going out there occasionally on Friday nights to conduct Sabbath services. Then, in '64, I was asked to go on their board of directors. Dan Koshland was on the nominating committee and I couldn't turn him down. But I told him, "Dan, look, I'm up to my ears in activities. I don't know if I'll be able to keep this up." He said, "Well, start out and see how it goes."

All their board meetings and committee meetings were out at the Home, which meant that in addition to the time of the meeting, the travel time--you had to get your car out of the garage--so I didn't last a full year on their board. I wanted to, because I thought it was a great thing, but I just was up to my ears. That was the time, I think, when I quit twelve organizations in one day. Did I discuss that?

Dorfman: You touched on the incident earlier.

Kuhn: Well, I'd been campaign chairman of the Federation for the preceding two years, and anybody who's in that position gets invited to be on other boards. So I was invited to go on the boards of the Home, the Bureau of Jewish Education, the Jewish National Fund, Magnes Museum.

One night my son Bruce came up to me. I guess he was about seven and just loved to read. He had my date book. It was a week night, a Tuesday night.

He said, "Dad, guess what? You're going to be home a week from Saturday night." I said, "Oh, my God, what am I doing to my kids?" because I had a full-time job, I was running the Sunday school, and there were the non-Jewish organizations I was committed to besides the Jewish ones.

Kuhn: The next day, I resigned from twelve organizations, and it was very therapeutic because if anybody asked me then to go on another board, I said, "Look, I just quit twelve organizations. What are they going to say if they find out I went on your board?" And they understood that. I've never gotten built up to any kind of a load like that again.

It's just beyond belief if you get the idea that you're that indispensable, that some organization is going to collapse because you're not running it, because it's not true. I've seen a lot of other guys work to death because they're willing, including Federation, to get a willing guy and just run him ragged. They figure that eventually he may get disinterested anyway, so they might as well get the maximum out of him while he's interested, which is not fair to him or his family.

Dorfman: Could you tell me how the Jewish Home for the Aged has changed since 1938?

Kuhn: Oh, it's changed tremendously. First of all, it's much larger now. They built an addition. Secondly, the age level of the residents is much higher, at least ten years higher. And, thirdly, they're much more in need of nursing care because of that age factor. Before, it was a home primarily for well elderly. Now the great majority of them need some kind of nursing care. They've got a huge staff of registered nurses and LVNs, and that, of course, raises the cost tremendously. But those are the primary changes.

I also did something while I was on their board. I felt, through this experience with two of my elderly cousins (my father's cousins, really), that many people who need hearing aids don't get them, and some people who get them don't need them. So I worked out an arrangement at the Home and the San Francisco Hearing Society, and every one of the residents was tested. If they needed a device, they were given one. Some wouldn't accept it because of reasons of vanity, but it was the first time in the United States that any home for the aged had ever had as comprehensive a survey.

Dorfman: That certainly was very worthwhile.

Kuhn: It was. It was worthwhile because a lot of these people were also encouraged at the same time to watch KQED. There were lessons on television in lip reading and this is a very fine thing for them. It's a huge problem because hearing deteriorates with age so rapidly, and it's the greatest means of communication, the human voice. So that was the idea--to preserve that as long as we could.

Dorfman: Was that an ongoing project?

Kuhn: I really don't know what's happened to it since.

Dorfman: Would you tell me, please, about your work with the State of Israel bonds?

Kuhn: That was another one of these short-term things that I had to quit along with the others. I just couldn't handle it. Mainly what I did, however, was I gave them leads with union trust funds that I'd had dealings with, by virtue of my appointment with Blue Shield, so that gave them some avenues of success. That was the only thing that I really did for them.

Judah Magnes Memorial Museum

Dorfman: And the Judah Magnes Memorial Museum?

Kuhn: That was on the fringe. I was invited to be on the board and resigned from them and the eleven other organizations without ever having gone to a Magnes board meeting. You've got to be really good to resign from something you weren't even on. As they say in Porgy and Bess, "Divorce is a dollar; two dollars to get a divorce if you're not married." [Laughter]

United Jewish Appeal

Dorfman: And your work with the United Jewish Appeal?

Kuhn: Well, that was the UJ work. Of course, the Federation is a large part of it because 70 percent of our money goes overseas, but primarily we were speaking in all of these different communities, sometimes more than once--Spokane, Seattle, Portland, Denver, Salt Lake, San Diego, Stockton. I'm getting from the sublime to the ridiculous now--Chico, for twelve people, would you believe? [Chuckles] I would go anywhere for them. I even went to Hawaii for them. There you were in Temple Emanu-El in Hawaii and, of course, I belong to Temple Emanu-El here. But during the 1950s, while they were raising money to build the temple, the community didn't send one cent to UJA.

Dorfman: On which island is that temple?

Kuhn: This is Oahu. I thought that that was a disgrace. So I arrived on a Wednesday, only to find my campaign chairman in the hospital. That slowed me up a little bit. I made some calls on Thursday, went to a meeting Thursday night of advance donors, and nobody--repeat, nobody--showed up.

Dorfman: Oh, my!

Kuhn: There were just four committeemen who had dinner together, staring at each other. Then, on Friday, I was supposed to speak at the Temple at their services, and as I walked up with the rabbi I saw on the announcement board, "Rabbi Rosenberg will discuss the Dead Sea Scrolls at Sabbath service." I said, "Wait a minute, I thought I was speaking." He said, "You are." I said, "Why doesn't it say so?" He said, "Who would come to listen to anybody from the United Jewish Appeal?" I said, "Boy, I resent that."

Anyway, the service was very interesting. We had a good audience, a good congregation. The Torah had been given the congregation by the last king of Hawaii, King Kalakaua, who spoke Hebrew.

Dorfman: Oh.

Kuhn: Yes, and he gave them the Torah.

Dorfman: What year was that?

Kuhn: Well, he gave it before the turn of the century. He was the last king, and the last queen was Liliuokalani, and then, of course, America took over in 1900. So that's a famous thing there. Then I left that night and went back on a midnight flight to San Francisco, laden with baby orchids, because on Saturday morning I went to my daughter's religious school class, conducted a model seder, and gave each of the little girls an orchid from Hawaii, which was very nice.

But I had one interesting thing, one humorous thing. This group of four people at this advance meeting where no one showed up--they thought they had to make it up to me somehow, so they took me out to the Kuhali Hilton and they said, "Do you see this lobby? This is the highest lobby of any hotel in the world, and last year we were thinking of having our congregational seder here." I said, "What a waste. All that height for those little flat matzos." [Laughter]

By Thursday the campaign chairman was in the hospital, and on Wednesday he had gotten out of the hospital, but he was so discouraged by that Thursday night meeting that he didn't come to service on Friday night. You talk about community support of an outside speaker--wow! It was unbelievable. But they've done much better since then. People have gone over there regularly, volunteers and UJ professionals, and the women's division has been very active, and it's done very, very well since. It's primarily based on Oahu.

[end tape 12, side B; begin tape 13, side A]

Dorfman: I understand that in 1970 you worked for the Council of Jewish Federations relating with college youth and with the faculty. Could you tell me about that?

Kuhn: I was a volunteer on the committee, I guess, for colleges and faculty. We were trying to develop a statewide approach in California to funding Hillel programs, because the common thing is that the great majority of Jewish children in California go to a state college campus or a huge state university and generally away from home.

So I conceived of the idea that it's like taking a voucher with you. If you stayed at home, your community might fund a Hillel program at a community college or university near your home. Why don't they do the same thing if you go away? Because they cancel out: the northern kids go south, and the southern kids go north. And we were trying to get the Council of Jewish Federations, which had just started a program for the Institute of Jewish Life, to fund an experiment on this basis, but they didn't do it. At that time, I think I was chairman of Hillel programs for the District Grand Lodge Number 4 of B'nai B'rith.

Incidentally, going back just one minute to UJA--this is an amazing organization. I went to maybe twenty or twenty-five different communities--Albuquerque, Tucson, all the other ones I've mentioned--and you just had to say, "I'm with UJA." That gave you instant prestige because you were there on behalf of the Jewish people, on behalf of the people that were behind the Iron Curtain or in Israel who couldn't speak for themselves. It was just a fabulous thing. Everybody--the whole thing--the people you spoke with and yourself, you were all--it was like an aliyah.

There was one case in Albuquerque. I went to see a man named A.B. Cohen. He ran a big chain of drugstores and he was one of the leading contributors. They said, "If you can get him to go up, everyone will go up, but he's just had a fire which wasn't covered by insurance." I said, "Oh, my Lord." So I talked to him at a special meeting ahead of time, and then I went to this meeting with these men, and I gave a good talk on what I had just seen overseas, and he increased.

After the meeting, I said, "Thank you very much. I knew that anybody named Abraham Cohen wouldn't let me down." He said, "It's Abraham Benjamin Cohen." [Chuckles] Of course, he had a son who was just starting at the University of California at Berkeley, and my friend George Wolfman was the baseball coach there. So I said, "My friend will look after your son," and he did.

Dorfman: I'm sure that was very comforting. To come back to Berkeley for just a moment, with the funding of the Hillel program--that was in 1970. Can you draw any comparison between 1970 and 1934, when you were at Berkeley?

Kuhn: The director of Hillel when I was at Berkeley as a student was eventually a big supporter of the American Council of Judaism, an anti-Zionist. Well, that isn't going to attract many kids, and it was just mostly a very heavily Jewish-oriented program in the sense of studies and so on. I was commuting at that time and I just didn't--I was involved with youth activities at Temple Emanu-El. So I really didn't get involved too much in Berkeley Hillel. But Hillel is as good as the director. I've had enough experience to know that. If he's good, that's all you need. If he's no good, nothing else will help.

Dorfman: What was the funding like at that time?

Kuhn: I have no idea. I have no idea. I think it all came out of the national headquarters of Washington, D.C. I don't think there was any support by local federations except maybe some mothers' group or something like that.

Joint Distribution Committee, United Jewish Appeal

Dorfman: In 1952, you were active in the Joint Distribution Committee on the national council. What were your activities?

Kuhn: Anybody who gets involved with overseas trips for UJA sees a lot of Joint Distribution Committee activities--relief, rescue, rehabilitation--and so it's sort of an honorary thing. They have thousands of people on this national council. It just means that you get special mailings of literature to keep you up to date on what's going on in every community of the thirty countries that are served by JDC.

I may say something else about Berkeley Hillel which was unusual. Berkeley Hillel, from the time of the starting of the Community Chest in 1922, was always a Community Chest agency until maybe six or seven years ago. At that time, the United Bay Area Crusade notified them on December 15, by letter, that as of December 31 they were out and funding ceased.

We had a special hearing at United Crusade and we said, "You know something, we may not be relevant because you are doing a lot of the stuff with affirmative action and minority groups and protesters and so on, but I want to say that we've got an ungoing relationship since 1922, and you don't treat people that way. You can pick up the phone and say, 'I want to talk with you. Can you come down?' You don't send a cold letter cancelling the whole thing because you will lose."

Kuhn: As a matter of fact, they did lose. They did the same thing with the Children's Hospital of the East Bay, which had not only been an agency since the beginning, but was the model agency. When anybody in the East Bay wanted to have a come-see tour for the United Crusade, they took them to Children's Hospital in the East Bay. Then they decided to get rid of hospital programs because they decided to put the money elsewhere, and they gave them the same fifteen days' notice. Then they softened it by saying, "Well, we'll give you 70 percent of the money you got last year, but you still have to give 100 percent of the service," and some hospitals accepted this for a year.

But the Children's Hospital in the East Bay, through its administrator, Harold Norman--he told them, "Anybody that would throw us out on fifteen days' notice, we don't want to do business with them, anybody who would treat us that way. We'll take any child from any place in the world who needs help and can't pay for it, and we'll take care of that child, and you're telling us we're not relevant to people's needs?" He also told them, "We'll do find without the Crusade. We have 6,000 women involved in various auxiliaries and they will bring in the money that we used to get from you."

I'm not saying that because the United Crusade has perennial problems. They're having one right now and it involves giving in to the demands of unions. The Teamsters Union has notified one agency that they want to unionize the Crusade, and if they don't organize the United Crusade, they cut off funds to that agency. Well, that's dirty pool. That's not the first time the Crusaders caved in on a thing like that. I say that because I'm a big supporter of the Crusade idea, but in actuality some of the stupid--it's beyond belief.

Family Service and Homewood Terrace

Dorfman: The Jewish Family Service and Homewood Terrace are reported to be merging.

Kuhn: They have.

Dorfman: Were you involved with those organizations?

Kuhn: I was involved in both of them as far as social planning studies by the Federation were concerned, starting with the one with Homewood Terrace, when they wanted to abandon the idea of having the campus-like structure on Ocean Avenue, which consisted of ten cottages, each holding twenty children. They wanted resident homes in the Richmond district.

Dorfman: What year was that?

Kuhn: That was--it was sometime in the '50s, I think. Then they wanted to move their headquarters from Homewood Terrace over to Richmond. We had a study, which I chaired, in which we insisted that the building they were going to build on Arguello Boulevard, just south of Geary, had to be built on a module plan, so if the agency ever went out of business, the building could be sold with the least amount required for conversion. I don't know what the future of that building is going to be.

Jewish Family Service--I was involved with studies leading to their expansion to the Peninsula or Marin. Before that, they just had an office here, which they still do, of course. But I had nothing to do with the actual merger, except I thought it was long overdue and I was all for it because there were a number of children served by Homewood Terrace. It not only dropped dramatically, but half or more of the children are non-Jewish, so I failed to see what the Jewish community responsibility is.

Dorfman: Would you know how those organizations compare today to what they were like prior, let's say, to 1940?

Kuhn: My first experience with Homewood Terrace involved bringing their children over to Emanu-El whenever we had a father-and-son night with the men's club, and if a man had a nine-year-old son we'd give him a nine-year-old Homewood Terrace boy.

Then our basketball teams at Emanu-El used to play Homewood Terrace, both in our gym and in their gym. They had a little cracker box gym and it was worth your life to play in there. There was no space between the boundary line and the wall, and we had some really interesting times.

At one time, the Emanu-El father-and-son dinner was at the Concordia Club, and the Homewood Terrace boys would come, and they had a swim, and they'd go to dinner. After the war, Emanu-El felt, "Well, let's popularize our own Temple. Let's have our dinner in our own gymnasium." So one of the boys came up and said, "Hey, Mr. Kuhn, what's the matter with this place? No swimming pool!"
[Laughter]

Did I ever tell you about my cub pack with the Homewood Terrace boys?

Dorfman: You may have.

Kuhn: Well, I had the cub pack at Emanu-El, and we were going to go out and see the San Francisco Seals play an exhibition game against the Cleveland Indians, and Bob Feller was going to pitch the Cleveland

Kuhn: team. So we got out to old Seal Stadium about 7:45, and you couldn't get near the ticket booths, and you looked through the slots, and it looked like the place was packed. I figured, "We'll never get in." It was a father-son night, so we said, "Kids, we'll have to go downtown to a movie." "No, we want to go to the game." [Chuckles] I said, "Well, we just won't be able to get in."

So we were all walking out back to the parking lot, and the kids were just really downhearted, and I saw these Homewood Terrace boys, and they were going, it looked like, to the left field stands. So I said, "Hey, you kids can't get in there." They said, "Mr. Kuhn, you don't realize we're orphans. In the first place, they send cabs for us, and in the second place, we give the grounds people the high sign." I said, "I want to tell you something, Homewood Terrace boys. You've just adopted thirty-five younger brothers tonight." So the keeper opened the gate, they marched in, and we were marching right behind them.

Dorfman: And everyone saw the game that night?

Kuhn: Everyone saw the game. I had another experience with them. My first experience as a member of the downtown Lions Club was a Christmas party, to which they invited all of the orphans. They had Santa Claus and all this stuff. But before Santa Claus could give his gifts, all these kids from Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic charities stood up, as if on signal, and they started to leave. So the chairman of the day said, "Boys, boys, you haven't even had your gifts yet! You can't leave now." The kids turned around and they said, "We've got to. We have to be at the Union Label Christmas party by two o'clock." [Laughter] So I thought, "Orphans, hell!" That was the last Christmas party the Lions ever gave.

Dorfman: Are there any other volunteer activities in which you were active?

Marshall Kuhn Track Club

Kuhn: Oh, I think I've covered just about all of them. I think I mentioned the Kuhn Track Club to you.

Dorfman: I don't think you've mentioned that.

Kuhn: The Kuhn Track Club is an organization I founded about twenty years ago. Its sole purpose was to encourage friends of mine to go to the best track meet at Cal or Stanford any year, a meet for which you had to buy reserve seat tickets. If you waited too late, you

Kuhn: wouldn't get a good ticket. Gradually this built up to a huge thing for the Olympic trials and the Russian meet at Stanford; I had maybe 125 people. It was just a huge thing.

So my friend Bill Lowenberg wanted to know about it and I said, "Bill, this organization is the only one you'll ever know that has no dues, no bylaws, only one officer (and that's me), and its only meeting is once a year out in the sun without any agenda." He said, "It's not like any Jewish organization I've heard of, but I'll join." [Laughter] Last year we went up to Oregon to the Olympic track and field tryouts in Eugene, ten of us. We had on our shirts "Kuhn Track Club, San Francisco" and mine was silk-screened "The Founder."

The Importance of Volunteer Activity

Dorfman: What difference has your volunteer activity made to you?

Kuhn: Oh, a tremendous amount of difference. It's been such a varied thing. Sometimes it's been merely fund raising; sometimes it's direct service. For example, when I was in the auxiliary to the S.F. General Hospital, my primary job was to raise money, and I would look at people who worked as volunteers in the hospital. Some of the employees would come back on their day off to feed a patient, wash them, hold their hand when they were dying, and I said, "Now, that is service. I don't do that. I don't know if I could do that."

So you do whatever level you think appeals to you. It's given me a sense of achievement, of contributing to both the Jewish and the general community. It's taken care of a lot of nervous energy. It's taken care of a lot of frustration that I had while employed by Blue Shield, because I thought I wasn't getting ahead the way I should have because of various reasons, including some anti-Jewish feeling, perhaps.

Also, because there were certain things I wouldn't do that one had to do to get ahead. I wouldn't play politics. So my achievement was out in the community where I could get a sense of satisfaction and not have to worry about all this other playing politics, not that there isn't politics involved in these organizations.

Dorfman: What would you say is your most important contribution?

Kuhn: Well, I would say certainly getting the Blood Bank down to the point where it no longer uses paid donors. I think it's a great contribution to the community in terms of health. A volunteer

Kuhn: donor is a healthier one than a paid donor because of the fact that a volunteer has no reason to falsify any history of hepatitis, one form of which cannot be detected by any test, whereas a paid donor has an economic incentive to lie. It could be a horrible thing, but it's been done. I wouldn't rate that second to anything, but I wouldn't want to classify these, because in each case so many of the results of the things are--you can't measure the results. Sometimes you touch a child's life and you don't know anything about it for twenty-five years. Did I mention that situation with Barbara Berelson?

Dorfman: No, you didn't.

Kuhn: Well, she was in my 1949 confirmation class, and the class met on Sunday, and that was fine. Then we switched to Saturday, so that the children could be encouraged to go to services after class. She had a horse which she rode on Saturday, and so she didn't want to come on Saturday, and her parents said, "That's okay. You can make up your own mind." Shortly afterward, she dropped out, and I figured, "Of anybody in the class, she probably got the least out of it." Incidentally, Dianne Feinstein was in that class.

Dorfman: Oh, was she?

Kuhn: Yes. She was a lovely girl and she's a lovely woman.

Dorfman: What kind of student was Dianne Feinstein?

Kuhn: She was a good student. She went to Convent of the Sacred Heart during the week because her mother was Catholic, but that didn't cause any conflict or any confusion with her. I have known children that it caused a conflict.

Anyway, years go by, and about three years ago we went to a home where one of the children was going to go to Israel on the post-confirmation study tour. The parents had invited maybe six other sets of parents and their children to meet Rabbi Magid, who was going to take the class. Included in the group of parents was the former Barbara Berelson, now Barbara Wiltsek. She said, "Marshall, you taught me something in confirmation class that I have never forgotten."

I said, "I can't believe it. What did I say?" She said, "You were talking about the fact that, all things being equal, you're better off marrying within your faith than getting involved with a mixed marriage. That really hit me because I was going around high school then with a non-Jewish boy, and I really thought about that. Then years later, when I was in college, I came home one weekend. Apropos of nothing, I just threw my books down on the table and said, 'I am never going to marry anybody but a Jew.' My parents were stunned; they didn't know what I was talking about. I've never forgotten that in my whole life."

Kuhn: I said, "I want to tell you thank you, because I would have guessed because of your dropping out that I had made no impression on you." She said, "Oh, that's not so." So how do you know? You never know.

Dorfman: That should have been very rewarding.

Kuhn: It was, it was.

XV COMMENTS ON PERSONALITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

[Interview 9: December 27, 1977]
[begin tape 15, side A]

Dorfman: Did you want to add something about blood banking?

Kuhn: Yes. During World War II, the bloodbanks throughout America would reward donors with some booze, and you'd be surprised how many people were attracted just by a free drink. It's not worth very much. So in California the Alcoholic Beverages Control people said, "You can give them a drink, but you can't advertise it as an incentive. Liquor cannot be used as an incentive."

You can give them a drink if, in your judgment, that would be helpful, but actually it isn't the greatest thing in the world to take a drink after giving blood unless you have some food with it. But, nonetheless, I've seen parties arranged for donors by companies who wanted to have a big turnout at which the booze flowed freely, and it was very, very bad, so it's not used any more in California. Orange juice and coffee are the big attractions now and cookies and doughnuts.

Dorfman: Which are much better for you.

Kuhn: Which are much better, much better.

More About Ryozo Azuma

Dorfman: That's an interesting sidelight. All right, you were telling me that Mr. Azuma was illustrating something relating to his relationship with and his memories of Muir by bowing, much to the embarrassment of his wife.

Kuhn: Yes. When he had been climbing Mt. Ranier and came across Camp Muir on the slopes of the mountain, he inquired who Muir was. When he learned that Muir was a major figure in American conservation and that he was still alive, he wrote to Muir, and Muir said, "Come on down and visit me." When Muir opened the door of his home in Martinez, Azuma dropped on his knees, clasped Muir's hands, and said, "I'm worshipping my idol."

Well, this is what Azuma, sixty-one years later, was demonstrating at this luncheon at the Martinez Adobe on the Muir property, and this is what caused his wife so much embarrassment. She said [lowers voice to whisper], "Get up, get up, you're making a fool of yourself!" But he kept on going, and my wife was just absolutely thrilled with it.

Dorfman: There was an honorary membership awarded?

Kuhn: We gave an honorary life membership, just recently, to Azuma.

Dorfman: This was the Sierra Club?

Kuhn: The Sierra Club. And he's written, both to the club and to me, beautiful letters of thanks. He'll be ninety years old on New Year's Day.

Dorfman: On New Year's Day? That's in just a few days.

Kuhn: Right. And he's writing his twenty-seventh book on Catholic instruction for children. He's a very devout Catholic who has never missed Mass in his adult life.

Dorfman: He remains an ardent conservationist?

Kuhn: Oh, absolutely.

Dorfman: Is he still climbing mountains?

Kuhn: I doubt it. He had a stroke in the last few years.

Organizations and Their Jewish Members

Dorfman: We talked also a little bit last week about the names of Jewish members of the boards of community organizations on which you served. Could you tell me now of some of your experiences with some of those people?

Kuhn: Well, on the Strybing Arboretum Society, Mrs. Jules Heumann (Sally) is a board member. I didn't know her before, although I knew her husband back from Sunday school days, and she's just an absolutely marvelous woman. She spent the whole time during the month-long strike of park employees two years ago crawling over the fence of the Arboretum each day to water the plants.

Dorfman: When was this?

Kuhn: This was two years ago. Ira Marquette is our public relations person on our board. She is from the East. Carol Swillinger is one of my former eighth-grade students at Temple Emanu-El. She's a big plant person.

Dorfman: Did you werve with these people at about the same time?

Kuhn: I am currently serving with them. Mrs. Stephen Coney is now on our advisory council. She's a past president of the Arboretum Society and she is the daughter of Mrs. A.B. Seroney, who was a Zellerbach. She was the only grandchild of Jenny Zellerbach who really cared about plants. Jenny Zellerbach, who died at age ninety-six a few years ago, had this beautiful home in San Mateo with a magnificent garden, and she left it to Jane because she knew she was the only one who would take care of it. It's absolutely a magnificent place. Now, let's see. [Pauses]

On the Diabetic Youth Foundation, the current president is Ruth Snow. I've served in that organization for a number of years; Ben Ereit, the same. Bill Kaplan and his wife Peggy are among our closest friends.

Dorfman: What can you tell me about those people?

Kuhn: First of all, they're all very close to Dr. Mary Olney, who started the camp and who has directed it for forty consecutive seasons. It's a personal commitment to her ideals and dedication, and they've done many, many things--raised money, provided service, really kept the thing going. Well, she is the guiding light.

Morris Abouaf. He was a contractor in the East Bay. He had a diabetic child and he wanted to help the camp. So he did, and he created our first auxiliary, the Diabetic Youth Foundation of the East Bay.

Dorfman: What year was that?

Kuhn: That's probably close to twenty years ago. Now, I was opposed to it because I felt that Morrie was so dynamic and aggressive that it might be overwhelming, whereas Dr. Olney's approach was much more understated. Morrie had the idea, for example, in building

Kuhn: mass houses, to require all his suppliers to kick in so much for bathtubs, or so much for a hundred feet of lumber sold, or something like this. I was a little afraid of his approach, but experience has proven me wrong. First of all, he is responsible for much of the campus's present development. Then he had a series of heart attacks and he died.

There were some who felt, as I did, "Well, that's the end of the East Bay Foundation, because it was all built around him," but that's not so. There were about twenty Jewish couples who formed this East Bay group and they have continued to support the camp every single year. They have an art show in the lobby of the Paramount Theater. They do a lot of things, and we get approximately, on the average, about \$25,000 a year from them.

Dorfman: Has his family continued to--?

Kuhn: His family has continued to support it, but they're not the prime movers any more. It's sort of rotating. A lot of the early members of that group are still active, and this is one where I really had it figured wrong. Now I'm glad to admit it.

There's a woman on the board of the Diabetic Youth Foundation, Janet Nicklesburg, who's a great person teaching science for children. I had the pleasure when I was on the Camp Fire Girls board of having four acres of our Camp Caniya set aside as a Janet Nicklesburg Nature Sanctuary. It was a big thrill for her and for us because she's really dedicated her life toward this and also care of the deaf.

Dorfman: What motivated her to such dedication?

Kuhn: She's just a good person and she loves kids and she loves science. She'll take a group out to the beach, or she did when she was a little younger, and every kid will bring a milk carton and go home loaded with all sorts of horrible looking creatures from the ocean, much to their parents' dismay and the kids' joy.

Now, in the Young Audiences, there were several people, but the only one really that I cared much for was Barbara Rodgers (Mrs. Ernest Rodgers).

Dorfman: Why was that?

Kuhn: Well, she's just a super person, and the other Jews on the board weren't very Jewish. This may be a snobbishness on my part to think that Jewish good works start with Jewish organizations first, Jewish philanthropy; that the only people who are really going to help Jews throughout the world are fellow Jews; and if you're only

Kuhn: interested in community organizations and turn your backs on your fellow Jews, to me, you're not as good a person as one who is dedicated all the way around. As I say, that's a personal predilection. I may be wrong, but I don't think so.

Now, in Camp Fire Girls, Dr. and Mrs. Louis Goldstein were both on the board, and they asked me to go on, and I did. Mrs. Moses Lasky was on the board. I had had her from the Sunday school. Mrs. William Corvin.

Dorfman: What kind of people were they?

Kuhn: Well, most of them were people who had daughters who were active in Camp Fire Girls at some point, either presently or in the past. These women had been leaders. Bernice Jacobs was on the board-- Mrs. Samuel Jacobs, who became president when I was vice-president of Camp Fire Girls. They loved the program and its content.

Camp Fire Girls is a marvelous program. It's not a copy of anything. Girl Scouting is so much a copy of Boy Scouting. Camp Fire Girls is unique. All things being equal, which they never are, we'd rather have a girl in Camp Fire than in Girl Scouting, but, on the other hand, if Girl Scouting had a superior leader, then that would be a better thing. The quality of the leader is always more important than the quality of the program.

Dorfman: Is that true, do you feel, in education as well?

Kuhn: Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. Bob Borovoy was active in Camp Fire. He was our treasurer perennially. He's a good personal friend, a fellow with a good sense of humor, which you need in a women's organization. A man must sort of carve out his own niche, as it were. I'm going to take a little time out at this point. [Tape interruption]

Dorfman: We were talking about your experiences with Jewish board members.

Kuhn: Well, we had another doctor and spouse who were members on the board of Camp Fire. In this case, the wife was the physician, Mrs. Heringhi, and Alan, who was also on the board. He was chairman of the day camping program. Frequently, a physician will go on the board because he has a definite role to play, examining the children before camp and so on. Mrs. Nicklesburg was also on the Camp Fire board. There was a fellow I had gone to camp with myself in 1935 and '36, Bob Pollack, who preceded me as camping committee chairman.

Dorfman: What kind of person was he?

Kuhn: Bob was the kind who loved camping, but he had never been active in Camp Fire Girls, and he really was sold the position of being camping chairman on the basis that it would take him one night a month. But he found out, in the end, he was home one night a month. [Chuckles] So he left the board early, and he died a premature death while he was--dropped dead one day hiking on Mt. Tamalpais, probably as good a way to go as any.

Dorfman: Had he changed much?

Kuhn: Well, he was always a very intense fellow, very intense. I hadn't known him all that well over the years. We just knew each other, but then when we got involved in camping, why--that's probably the best place for a man to be in Camp Fire Girls, on either the finance end or camping, because there are so many things of a physical nature to do. Men have a tendency to idealize the program, the Camp Fire Girls program.

Dorfman: Why is that?

Kuhn: Because they want their daughters to be following in the footsteps of their mothers. If you know the Camp Fire Girls song--"With rings on our fingers and bells on our toes, we go to camp." The third verse is: "And when we are leaving, our eyes are filled with tears. It helps to ease the parting if we take some souvenirs." The girls all unload all the silver they've walked off with. To them it's just good fun, but it is a lovely program.

Now, on the auxiliary of the San Francisco Hospital, Mrs. Irving F. Reichert, Sr. was the founder of the auxiliary. That was before I was involved with it. In the years I was involved with it, Gertrude Levison--

Dorfman: What was Mrs. Reichert's primary contribution at that time?

Kuhn: I think she just felt a general satisfaction about serving where she was really needed. Now, it's very simple to have a hospital auxiliary at Presbyterian or Mt. Zion or Children's Hospitals--beautiful institutions, lovely gift shops, people who can afford to buy the gifts. But at the City and County [Hospital] you've got far more patients, many of whom can't speak English, who have no relatives, who have no one to give them good, nice things. They're in a municipal institution, which considers toothpaste and toothbrushes luxuries, and the auxiliary had to furnish that.

It's the institution at which the auxiliary members are never going to find themselves hospitalized, except in the case of an accident, so it's not the same as being on the auxiliary of Mt. Zion, where you or a member of your family has been confined,

Kuhn: sometimes. But it's definitely a place where volunteers are needed, and she had a very great sense of community commitment. It's going to this day.

Their big thing, of course, at Christmas time, is to get gifts for the patients, and the best source of that is to have Herb Caen put one little squib in his column that it will be a cold Christmas for the patients at S.F. General unless more gifts come through. He does the same that he does for St. Anthony's dining room for Thanksgiving, and the turkeys come through. The power of his column is unbelievable, unbelievable.

Then, following my years of service on the auxiliary, after I left, Harold Dobbs, a member of the board, of course, became president.

On the Sierra Club, I've never served with many Jews. George Marshall, a past president of the club and of the Wilderness Society, was one of the three sons of Louis Marshall, one of the founders of the American Jewish Committee. His father, Louis Marshall, was also president of the state board of forestry in New York, so that one of George's brothers, Bob Marshall, went into forestry and was one of the greatest backpackers in the West. He died prematurely, and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area in Idaho is named in his memory.

I mentioned all this one time to Mike McCloskey, the executive director of the Sierra Club, before he gave a talk one time to a regional meeting of the Jewish Committee, and he announced that the two organizations have much in common because the founder of the American Jewish Committee, Louis Marshall, has a son who is past president of the Sierra Club. Well, this knocked the American Jewish Committee people right on their behinds because none of them knew this, but they figured out where McCloskey got the information. [Chuckles]

Now, with the scouting movement and the cub pack at Temple Emanu-El, there were many Jews who were active with me, almost all of them parents of the boys. There were Josua Kurzman; Perry Harris; Sophie Weiss; Anita Klein; Bennett and Caroline Raffin, who had two boys in the pack, both of whom are physicians now.

Dorfman: How did you relate with those people? Were there experiences that you could tell us about?

Kuhn: I was a cub master really for only a little over two years. The Temple had never sponsored a cub pack. It had sponsored one of the finest Boy Scout troops, and I really got sold into this at a time when I really didn't need any more activities. So I kept it up as long as I could. Coincidentally, the people who succeeded me were both good friends of mine and were part of our group of the Kuhn Track Club that went to Oregon last year--just a coincidence.

Kuhn: Well, some of these people I knew before as parents of these boys. Others I didn't know before, but I was teaching the Sunday school at that time, so they knew me. We had a lot of fun. One of my advantages was that I had never been a scout, although I was an adult scout leader, so I didn't make the cubs junior Boy Scouting, which is what happens many times, and that spoils scouting later for the boy. I tried to do a little unusual things--take the kids on hikes, take them over to Cal and Stanford for a football game. Most of them enjoyed the bus ride more than the game.

We had a night at which the local--what do you call that thing that they have? It's like a yo-yo.

Dorfman: Jai alai?

Kuhn: No, it's a yo-yo. The local yo-yo champion gave a demonstration. Then all the boys competed, and then all the parents competed. I had Rabbi Fine's stepson in the pack, and to see Rabbi and Mrs. Fine slinging yo-yo's around was just unbelievable, a lot of fun. At one time, I had as many as fifty boys. Now, in cubbing, the cub master's best friend is the den mother because she has a weekly meeting with the boys. Of course, they only come to a pack meeting once a month, so a lot of these women were den mothers and would march on Clement Street on Scout Week in their uniforms. We had a lot of fun.

Dorfman: Would you say that the quality of parent participation was high?

Kuhn: Yes. Yes, because if it wasn't high, I didn't want the boys, really. I didn't want it to be just a babysitting thing once a month. Parents had to come with their kids.

Dorfman: Then the people whom you've told me about who served with you also made valuable contributions?

Kuhn: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. Most of them are friends of mine to this day.

Dorfman: You mentioned Harold Dobbs. What experiences did you have with him?

Kuhn: I was on the board of the Federation with Harold. I think that was the only board I was on with him, although I was in organizations with him in which he had served. Harold's a very fine man, very dedicated to community betterment, very impatient with inefficiency or sloppy organization, and he makes his feelings known, and he gets results. He's very efficiently organized as far as getting things done is concerned. He's a very fine man. His wife, with whom I worked very closely on the Welfare Federation, is equally dedicated. It's a real tough couple. You don't find them like that very often.

Dorfman: It's unusual.

Kuhn: Yes. Incidentally, Dr. Goldstein, who with his wife got involved in Camp Fire, was my wife's obstetrician, and my son is his godson-- Louis Bruce Goldstein and Bruce Marshall Kuhn.

Dorfman: Were there other Jewish people with whom you served on community organization boards?

Kuhn: I would say lots, but my big contact would be if they were affiliated with Temple Emanu-El or active in the Federation. And if they weren't, if they were unaffiliated or belonged to some other congregation, I wouldn't be as close to them because our paths didn't cross that much. But, frankly, I looked very closely at the performance on any board of Jewish members. I expected more from them because I felt that this was a Jewish tradition, to reward the community for what they've offered to us. In general, those expectations were met. Not always.

Dorfman: What can you tell me about the testimonial dinners given you by Temple Beth El?

Kuhn: When I'd been there ten years, they were going to give a dinner for me, but it took them about thirteen years to put it together. I really didn't like it because people had to pay to come to the dinner. It was before a Friday night service. I guess I shouldn't have been concerned, but I wanted people to come because it gave me a chance to tell them what I thought about the school and their children's Jewish education. But then when I left after eighteen years, they had a reception on Friday night following the service. Of course, people paid tribute to me during the service and I responded.

The rabbi unfortunately was in Cleveland, but his father was dying at the time, so he asked Rabbi Fine to come down from San Francisco to San Mateo to conduct the service and to speak, which was very pleasurable to me because Rabbi Fine and I were very close. Then at the reception following, I pointed out to the Temple administrator, Guy Landsberg, that the inscription on the cake said, "Honoring Marshall Kuhn for eighteen years of delegated service." [Chuckles] He immediately took a knife and knocked it all off so no one would realize how illiterate the pastry man was.

One of my remarks was that this was the kind of event I wouldn't attend unless it were in my own honor. I did attend one event like this, however, when Sol Madfes retired as principal at George Washington High School. There was a dinner given in his honor by his many friends, and I had lived in the same boarding house at Cal with him. Every speaker was funny. They had Ollie Matson there, one of his boys, who was one of the greatest athletes turned

Kuhn: out in San Francisco. Then they had a fellow there named Allen Addleston, a faculty member whom I hadn't seen since we went to camp together in the '20s. He was the funniest of all. If you would look at him, you would say, "That fellow hasn't laughed in fifty years." He was marvelous.

We kidded Sol. We had pictures of him, as a three-year-old baby in Brooklyn, hanging from the walls of the Del Webb Townehouse. It was just a riot. The whole thing was in marvelous taste. But most of the time they're just filled with ponderous and pompous speeches and are terrible.

Dorfman: What kind of tributes were paid to you?

Kuhn: Oh, I guess in connection with my various community services in Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, and the fact that I had really extended myself as religious school principal by doing it by remote control--by living in San Francisco and going to the Peninsula so frequently. They had given me a tape of it, but I haven't had occasion in eight years to listen to it. It would be a little too sad, I think.

Several years ago, they observed their twenty-fifth anniversary and, of course, invited me to come, but I didn't go because I felt it would be just a little too much of an emotional wrench. The people who belong to the congregation now who didn't know me--my name would be nothing to them. And if they knew me, it would just be, you know--some of these reunions are tough to do, and I figured that out in advance.

I did, however, write a humorous article for their ad book--but that hasn't come out yet--telling some of the funny stories over the years, and not only funny. I pointed out that each Passover we tried to have model seders based upon single class's being a family, with a father of one of the children being the father, and one of the mothers being the room mother, as it were, providing the food symbolically, and getting the men to assume this role was very difficult. So many fathers felt threatened by this situation of actually going to a classroom with children of their own child's age and trying to perform the ritual of the seder. Some men would even go through a week before of rehearsing and then pull out at the last minute.

Dorfman: Why?

Kuhn: I don't know why--a general feeling of inadequacy in Jewish affairs, and it's very sad.

Dorfman: What were some of the other stories that you recalled?

Kuhn: My favorite one is about a boy who was in the fourth grade and one winter day came into the office very downcast. I said, "Son, you look like you've lost your last friend. What's the trouble?" He said [imitates a saddened child's voice], "The teacher told me to come to the office. I was bad." I said, "What did you do that was so terrible, kid?" "We were talking about Hanukkah, and the teacher asked when would we light the menorah, and I said, 'When Liberace plays,' and he threw me out of the class!" I said, "There's a teacher with no sense of humor."

Then I had a request from a woman once who was new to the community who wanted to get her ninth-grade girl in a car pool with a good looking tenth-grade boy. [Laughter] I said, "Until they get a computer, there's no way we can do it."

There were a lot of interesting things. I remember going down there one Sunday morning at a time when we were building our new sanctuary, and we were occupying for Sunday the building we had previously owned but which we sold to a private school, and now we were the tenants of a building now owned by someone who had been our tenant. But we weren't allowed to store anything there, so every Sunday we had to lug the stuff from a storage depot to school and back.

So one Sunday I was down there and my pants split at 8:00 in the morning. School started at 8:45. So I went over to Ben Ashrow's house and I rang the bell. He answered the door and he asked, "What's the matter?" I said, "Lend me a pair of your pants." He was the only fellow in the congregation as big as I was, and it worked out fine.

[end tape 15, side A; begin tape 15, side B]

Dorfman: Was there anything else that you can tell me about either of those testimonial dinners?

Kuhn: Well, they were very nice. The one, when I was leaving after eighteen years, was attended by the president of the congregation and by every single religious school committee chairman I'd worked with, ten or more, and even by some teachers who lived far away, or they sent a message from far away. That was the nicest thing, the people and their children.

Dorfman: It was obviously quite a tribute.

Kuhn: Well, religious school teachers--and I consider myself a teacher; the principal is really the principal teacher--they really don't get as much recognition. They're supposed to be honored on Lag Baomer, which is a holiday that reform Jews observe very infrequently. I think it's sad because our schools need improvement

Kuhn: in motivating people to become teachers by showing that teachers are held in high esteem as a practical matter, not just a theoretical one.

Dorfman: Could you tell me, please, about your experiences at the dinner for Golda Meir at Madeleine Haas Russell's?

Kuhn: Well, this was not really a dinner. She was going to speak at Temple Emanu-El at eight o'clock that night. I guess it was about two years ago. And so a group of our major donors was invited to meet her at cocktails at Madeleine Russell's home beforehand, and my wife and I met Mrs. Meir.

My wife was especially thrilled to shake Golda Meir's hand because she had always heard about this woman. She was very gracious. She spoke beautifully and, as I remember, someone quoted that Ben Gurion had said that she was the only man he really had in the cabinet. She said, "I don't really consider that a compliment. I'm not a man; I'm a woman."

It was just a very heartwarming evening. People had asked to make their commitments, and they all increased in her honor, and then we all went over to the Temple, which was an even greater affair. The place was packed. They had two overflow rooms with closed circuit TV. It was just a great evening.

XVI OTHER SIERRA CLUB RECOLLECTIONS

- Dorfman: You spoke last week of strong personalities in the Sierra Club. What more can you tell me of such people, especially those who might have been considered sacred cows?
- Kuhn: This stems back from the days when a man could be on the Sierra Club [board] indefinitely because there was no rule that limited you to two terms of three years each, as there is now. There were numbers of men who served in excess of thirty years consecutively. They had a tremendous investment in time and friendships and everything else.
- Dorfman: Who were those men?
- Kuhn: Lewis Clark, Ansel Adams, Richard Leonard, Francis Farquhar, William Colby--all men with decades of service. Their friendships were so close because of their service on the board and, when hiking together as part of a club group or separately, mingling their lives socially if their wives got along, so that they frequently began to think alike. And from that comes the projection that people who don't think their way maybe are wrong, that there really is only one side to a question, and that's their side.

This is a natural thing, but when it became involved in what I choose to call the Brower affair, it was really heading towards a cataclysm, and this, I think, was a watershed in conservation history in the United States. David Brower had become the first executive director of the Sierra Club--I guess, in the late '40s or early '50s--and he was a dynamo. He started a book publishing program of format books, he took ads in the New York Times showing the Sistine Chapel flooded, and a lot of these things he did were without anybody's approval. He just did them and without regard to financial consequences. Eventually the board began to figure, "We have to control this man," and they tried, all to no avail.

Kuhn: Now, everybody on the board didn't think he was wrong. Some agreed with his theory that money is unimportant because if we lose the things we're trying to protect, what good is money going to do us, if we don't have the natural world? It got very tense. The board was really divided. The club was polarized and you had battles within the club. Actually, organizations of people were for or against him. Then he tried to run for the board of directors at the same time that he was executive director and he lost. So he was out. That was about 1969.

Then people thought that this was going to have a catastrophic effect on the Sierra Club, but it didn't. The membership continued to grow. He eventually reconciled himself to this. Many of his members of Friends of the Earth are present members of the Sierra Club. He himself has been made an honorary vice-president of the Sierra Club several years ago and, at the annual dinner this year, was given the John Muir Award by the club, which is the highest honor you can get.

So that breach is more or less healed. More or less, I say, because there are still some people who are very pro or against him whose rate of mellowness is not the same. But if you were really involved in the club there and were a strong personality-- you had people on the board, for example, who had a reputation that they wouldn't ever let anybody else speak. They would just talk and talk and talk and pay no attention to anybody else and, of course, this bothered others who felt they had a right to their opinion. It was a bad situation in that regard because the margin between the two sides was a hairline, and no board can succeed that way. You've got to have a better mandate than just one vote.

Conservation is a subject which attracts people who have very strong feelings and are frequently able to express them very well.

Dorfman: Can you tell me who participated in each of these actions, who were for and against Brower?

Kuhn: Richard Leonard, who had gotten Brower active in the club and in climbing, was really the leader in the anti-Brower forces. A fellow named Fred Eissler and another one named Martin Litton were very strongly pro-Brower.

Now, as we participated in our oral history program, we always asked the interviewee if he were involved in the Brower affair and what his views about it were. We try to get a balanced viewpoint. Frankly, we haven't had the opportunity yet to interview too many pro-Brower people. We hope to rectify that.

Kuhn: Every interviewer and every interviewee who has spoken about it admits that Brower's a great conservationist, but they felt he was uncontrollable, fiscally irresponsible, not a good administrative organizer. He would have been ideal as the club's conservation director and not as its executive director.

Joel Hildebrand, a past president of the club and a world famous chemist, felt that Brower was ignorant from the chemical standpoint. He just didn't understand some of the reactions that go on when natural compounds of the earth--which is a technical defect, but much of conservation hinges upon technical knowledge nowadays. It's possible when we finish all this that we may put out a book tentatively entitled The Brower Affair showing all the views on both sides.

Dorfman: That's under consideration now?

Kuhn: That's under consideration. Dick Leonard, for example, in his interview (the first and only one we've finished under complete ROHO auspices), has seventy-two pages on Brower, which I contended-- I was in on the interview. I said, "These are printed on asbestos." But they weren't quite that bad, and the Browsers and the Leonards are very close personal friends again. It takes a real tough hide to lose a conservation battle and still maintain your goodwill and sense of balance and good humor.

Dorfman: One of my questions is, are you aware of Jewish members in the club's early days?

Kuhn: No.

Dorfman: You did mention a Jewish president.

Kuhn: That was George Marshall. We finished his interview and we can't get him to commit himself to edit it. It's taken about three years now to convince him to get around to editing it, and you know the dangers of an unedited interview. Incidentally, I spoke with the Lowie Museum of Anthropology at Berkeley today because I noticed that the Chronicle announced that NBC is going to produce a three-hour program on Ishi. Of course, I have those tapes, so it's possible I'll be called upon to do some consulting on that. I hope so.

Dorfman: That would be very exciting. That would be an important contribution.

Kuhn: My fear is that if they just take the books on Ishi and accept them as completely factual, they'll misrepresent the whole--not the whole thing, but a good part of the story.

Dorfman: Can you tell me, please, about internal divisions within the Sierra Club over such issues that you've mentioned, such as McCarthyism?

Kuhn: The McCarthyism issue came out of the Angeles Chapter, and Southern California, as you know, is more conservative than otherwise. They thought it would be a good idea to have a loyalty oath to join the Sierra Club and, of course, many of the liberal members of the club, who were far in the majority, felt that this was ridiculous.

There's no real point of having to declare your loyalty to the country just to climb a mountain, and also it violated the principle that the only authority for acceptance to membership is the board of directors and that its local chapter doesn't have that authority. In Southern California, the local chapter wanted to have that authority, and their base of operation was a Friday night dinner held in downtown L.A. every week, in which all of the chapter's business was transacted. They wanted to interview prospective members, and not just about loyalty, but about their race and religion in some cases.

But when it came to a national vote of the club membership on this loyalty thing, it lost by eight to one, but it only lost two to one in Southern California. But that's long gone. It took us a long time to get any Southern California interviewee to even discuss this. They didn't want to talk about anything unpleasant. But it's a part of the history of the club.

Of course, now you don't have to have a sponsor, but at one time you had to have two sponsors because they wanted people to be in the club who were like they were, and they had a reputation of being elitist. We still don't have enough minority membership in the club.

Dorfman: Were there tensions between Northern and Southern California?

Kuhn: Oh, yes.

Dorfman: What about those?

Kuhn: At one time, the Southern California contingent on the board felt that the Northern California people were out to get them. It was a personal thing. Of course, this was a time when there weren't many chapters or groups about the country. The Angeles Chapter had been the first one, and most of the board, of course, came from around the Bay Area, and here we had five from Southern California. I think, about five; I could be wrong. But once they began thinking that they were being persecuted, I guess maybe the people who were being suspected of being the persecutors maybe adopted that stance. I don't know. It was very unpleasant, and it's all over, as far as I know.

Kuhn: Now, these differences, of course, can rise in other forms later on. However, the club is now national in scope. You have had presidents who have lived in other states. The present president, Bill Futrell, is from the South. Larry I. Moss had a base of operation in Washington, D.C. when he was president, and this has added a whole new dimension. Before, it really was a California-dominated organization, so that's really a--there's more chance of there being three or four physicists on the board than three or four people of the same state.

I think that one of the toughest things is to vote for Sierra Club directors, because they're all so qualified. It's difficult to make a decision if you don't know them personally and to maintain a balance on the board.

Dorfman: Were there other divisive issues?

Kuhn: One of the things we've always had to contend with is the question, when is an issue a local one and when is it a national one? It's a local issue capable of being national in scope if it involves a precedent in conservation. Generally, the feeling is now that if it's a local issue, a local chapter or group takes care of it.

But there was one case at Nipomo Dunes in San Luis Obispo County. PG&E wanted to build a nuclear reactor, and the club learned that the Nipomo Dunes were really a unique formation in the world. For thousands of years, the sand had a grain in one direction. In the last several hundred years, the sand grain was exactly ninety degrees perpendicular to that original direction, and no one knew why, but it was scientifically unique.

So the club urged the PG&E to site the plant somewhere else, and they picked a place called Diablo Canyon, and we told the PG&E the Sierra Club would stand by that choice if the PG&E wanted to develop there, and they did.

Then someone found out that Diablo Canyon had a big earthquake, so they wanted to change our stance once again. We had a plebiscite in our club and we affirmed the Diablo Canyon site on the grounds that to change it again would destroy our credibility. You can't change for every one point. You have to say, "This is it. We've studied it and this is our decision." If you study it and you can't come to a decision, then you're not really entitled to have that much influence. So that really deserved our credibility.

I think since then, however, that the PG&E had discovered for itself that there is an earthquake hazard down there. In any case, the plan isn't complete yet. Richard Leonard's wife is now a member of the board of directors of the PG&E, and maybe that's the way to do it. If you can't lick them, join them.

Kuhn: Each board of directors' meeting (which occurred generally quarterly), the agenda will be a two-day meeting. The agenda may have a hundred items, single-spaced typing of twenty pages for the minutes. To process this many items in advance and do your homework and your committee work requires a tremendous commitment on the part of any conscientious board member who has all this great scientific knowledge.

Ansel Adams told me that he didn't feel he was qualified to be a board member any more because he's a generalist. He's not a scientist. You start talking about pollution in the atmosphere and using chemical terms and requiring chemical knowledge. This is really a highly specialized field. You have to know all about sun's rays, and there aren't many people who have this knowledge. But he wasn't one of them, and he knew it.

Sometimes legal principles are involved, so a lawyer's services are involved, or maybe a financier's, but someone who has to bring some specific skill to the board; or you can still be a generalist, but you better be a very well informed one, able to pick between opposing viewpoints or to realize they're both wrong or both right. There are some tough choices that have to be made. But that will be the case always.

But if they hadn't--in the fall of '70 at a board meeting up at Clair Tappaan Lodge, Adams and Leonard made and seconded a motion, which was carried, which limited a board member to two consecutive terms of three years [each], and then he'd have to step down and run again; it had to be at least a year in between.

The first one that this affected was Wayburn, who thought that this motion was really directed at him, but it wasn't. It was just that Leonard and Adams felt that this was the time to eliminate domination by a few and give the growing numbers of young, and not so young, qualified persons a chance to serve on the board. If you hold a board office for thirty years, a board position, when will anybody else get a chance? It's been a lot healthier, I think.

We've had a number of qualified women. Claire Dedrick, who was a vice-president of the club, became Governor Brown's secretary of natural resources, although she's since given up that post.

People make a big mistake when they think the Sierra Club is really monolithic. The Sierra Club believes that--well, some people believe it, perhaps a majority. Perhaps the board has taken a position after investigation. It doesn't mean everybody believes it, because it's just too diffuse a membership.

Dorfman: Was the tax status of the club a divisive issue?

Kuhn: It was at the time. A friend of mine, Sheldon Cohen, who was then commissioner of the Internal Revenue, told me later that there was absolutely no need for the club to have lost its tax exemption. It was possibly the only nonprofit organization in the country who ever lost their exemption. But when the IRS challenged the club that it was spending too much money on trying to affect legislation, which is a real test--the key word is "substantial," "substantial portion of your resources"--and the question is, what does "substantial" mean?

Well, now, in the last year or two, the IRS has adopted certain definitions. But it didn't have any then, and Brower took a very uncompromising viewpoint. The IRS, I guess, knew that the directors of the club were very concerned about this, about the possibility of losing the exemption, and, in anticipation of it, they [the directors] had formed the Sierra Club Foundation, which is a tax-deductible organization to which contributions are given which cannot be used to affect legislation, whereas my dues to the Sierra Club can be used in legislative ways. It was just a question of Brower or the IRS.

Well, the government was not going to back down. After all, they've got the big chips, and we lost it, and we lost some financial support, but anybody who wanted to give big money would give their regular membership contribution to the club and then give the balance to the foundation.

We also have a thing called the Legal Defense Fund, but that's really for court work, not in Congress. That's the difference. Affecting legislation is an entirely different thing.

Now, there are some people who feel that we ought to go the whole way, that we should abandon our present organization so that we could, in effect, endorse candidates, not just issues, and that the real tax angle has nothing to do with it because you're only going to pay tax if you show a profit, and we don't show any profit. But there's been no budging either way, either trying to get the exemption restored or to change our organization even further. People, I think, are reconciled with the whole idea, so the average person's dues, the average deduction, is very small. But it was divisive.

Dorfman: What about the issue of nuclear power? How divisive is that?

Kuhn: How divisive was it or is it? I don't really know. That's an area in which I lack the scientific competence. There are all sorts of reactors. There are all sorts of problems of disposing wastes and the safety of it. I'm sure the average club member was for state propositions. I think it was Proposition 15 that lost, but they

Kuhn: didn't lose until the legislature had already adopted most of the provisions of that proposition in regular legislation, as opposed to the initiative.

Richard Leonard, I know, thinks that the future of the energy problem in America is through nuclear power. It is divisive, but I couldn't participate in that because I'm not really informed, except that I was for the proposition because it said you can't do anything until you prove what you are doing is safe, and it can be made safe, but you have to spend more money and take more time. That was the issue.

Dorfman: We talked a little bit about the possible opposition to Jewish members.

Kuhn: Well, that was a long, long time ago and--

Dorfman: About what time would you say?

Kuhn: About from the earliest days up to maybe the early '30s or middle '30s. I don't think it was ever as strong here as in Southern California. I'm not sure how strong it was down there. I know that it did exist, but to what extent, I don't know. For every Jew who might have been excluded, there might have been ten who were accepted without anybody referring to the fact that they were Jewish. I just don't know.

Dorfman: Do you know of opposition to Jewish leadership?

Kuhn: No, I really don't. You see, you can be a leader of the club without being a national leader. There are plenty of Jews, locally or regionally.

Dorfman: So, in answer to the question, is there any substance to the claim of anti-Semitism?

Kuhn: I don't think now you could substantiate that. I don't think there's any evidence about that.

Dorfman: Other than what you have just cited?

Kuhn: The current editor of The Sierra, which is the new name of the Sierra Club Bulletin, is a Jewish woman, Frances Gendlin, who at one time was the editor of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, and that is the first time a Jew or a woman has been editor of the Sierra Club Bulletin. Before that, they were either prejudiced against one or the other, but I suspect that their prejudice against women was even stronger.

Dorfman: You may be right. How has your involvement in your activities changed the Sierra Club?

Kuhn: Well, I don't know if it's changed it much. The leadership of the club and some of the membership realize now that we do have a history program and what it consists of, because every year at the annual meeting I have the chance to present completed interviews. I've done that four times now.

So they know we're interested in documenting the history of the club, and not just for nostalgic purposes, but for increasing our batting average, as it were. Now, eventually someone will really use the materials we've produced for some great research program and analysis. Someday, perhaps, we'll have the Sierra Club fellowship in conservation history over at Cal. Since we announced last fall that the interviews are available for purchase, we've had a number of purchases by groups.

[end tape 15, side B; begin tape 16, side A]

Kuhn: A number of purchases by groups and chapters throughout the country, and there'll be more, so that people at the local level will be reading these interviews, which really do no good if they're just sitting on the shelf somewhere in a library. That will make the difference, I think, particularly if someone comes along and begins writing a history of the Sierra Club in which they take excerpts of these interviews and weave them in. I think that's the only thing that you could say for it, that generally you've created a greater consciousness of our history.

Of course, we don't have yet any general history of the club. We have Jones's "History of the First Twenty-Two Years." We, perhaps, may have the years from 1914 to 1940 covered. There are authors who talk about doing a whole history of the club, but I haven't seen any yet. But the average member coming into the club really finds it difficult to get a whole, lucid picture of the way the club developed and changed. He can find it in the Sierra Club Handbook, the chronology of key dates, but there's nothing that fleshes out the story.

You talked about this prejudice. I only went on one High Trip. That was the first year I joined. A day or two before we finished the two-week trip, we went to a canyon, and there was a party up there given by old-time members of the club at which selected freshmen, the first-timers from the High Trip, were invited. I was invited, perhaps because I had been part of the group that had taken the side trip up to Whitney.

It was called a "Penny Royal Party." Someone had lugged into the Sierra all this way a bottle of bourbon, and they picked all these penny royal herbs and took the Sierra Club cup and filled it with ice, and you made yourself a nice little drink.

Kuhn: This had a ritualistic character that I didn't really catch at the time, until I realized later that there were a lot of freshmen on the trip who weren't invited to the party. Now, no one kept a record of who came and who didn't come, and I would say in the years since, perhaps, I've encountered only one or two people out of the 250 who were on that trip. But I was not a very avid High Tripper. Some people may go twenty or thirty years at a time.

But I realize now that this was their way of saying, "We still consider the party a social organization, and we want to maintain our own friendships this way and extend a hand to new people on a selective basis." For example, they couldn't keep me out of the club if I got the signatures, but they didn't have to have me in their Penny Royal Group. On the other hand, I could have started my own Penny Royal Group. This is what a lot of people don't realize. It can work both ways.

Dorfman: So there might have been exclusion--

Kuhn: But I'm sure that everyone who was a first-timer was not at that party, and I'm sure that there every old-timer wasn't at the party either. It was just a group that considered themselves old-timers.

XVII FAMILY AND SIGNIFICANT PERSONAL VALUES

Marriage to Caroline Nahman

Dorfman: This would seem a good time to ask you about your wife, Caroline.

Kuhn: Well, she is a sensational person and tremendously dedicated in her own way. She was trained as a social worker and went to work for the juvenile court, where they placed her as the teacher out at the Ocean View School for Girls out at 48th Avenue and Noriega, long before there was a youth guidance center in San Francisco. So while she was working there as a social worker and teacher, she had to pick up a teaching credential, which she did.

We were married in 1950 and she gave up her job. Then, when our oldest child entered Madison School, my wife decided to find a place in the school where she could sort of hide from the possibility of ever having to be on the PTA.

She noticed that there was a library in the school, but there was no librarian, so she became a volunteer librarian and found children's books so fascinating that she went back to school at night and got a degree in librarianship and started doing work in service, work for Cathedral High School, which is a Catholic four-year girls' high school in San Francisco.

After several years of that, they asked her to become the director of counseling and guidance, and she protested that she had no direct training for this, and they said, "We think you do, and the girls respect you. They know you have children their own ages, and what you don't have technically you can pick up along the way," which she has done, because she continues going to courses, seminars, institutes, reading. She's doing a very fine job. You might wonder what a Jewish mother is doing as a director of counseling and guidance in a Catholic girls' school, and all I can say is that it couldn't have happened twenty years ago.

Kuhn: Now, she herself has been very active in organizations, and my oldest daughter and I jotted down a number of them just to see if she could come up with a list. In the Jewish field, she was president of the Emanu-El Residence Club, vice-president of the Jewish Family Service Agency, and vice-president of the Temple Emanu-El Sisterhood. She was treasurer of the San Francisco Committee of Brandeis Women. She was director of the Jewish Welfare Federation in the women's division. As a matter of fact, we were on the Federation board together because she was president of an agency, and when her term ended she thanked the board of directors for allowing her to have lunch every month with her husband.

Dorfman: What year was that?

Kuhn: I guess that was about 1962 or '63. Then she's been active on the National Council of Jewish Women, was a member of the national study "Windows on Day Care."

Dorfman: When was that?

Kuhn: That was about five years ago. Then she's been very active in a rap room project, and she was also chairman of the Mt. Zion Hospital teenage volunteer program. Now, those are the Jewish organizations.

To look at the non-Jewish organizations--she was on the board of the Women's City Club; the Page-Laguna Neighbors' Association; the Richmond Maxi Center, which is a relatively new mental health program in the Richmond district at which the majority of board members are required by law to be Asian. She is presently on the advisory board of St. Elizabeth Hospital, and she was a Camp Fire and Blue Bird leader. She's an officer of the Northern California Personal Guidance Association, was very active in the United Way, and was a member of three PTAs simultaneously, as was I.

So, besides that, she's a sensational wife and mother. But she really sometimes put me to shame as far as her activities were concerned.

Dorfman: She certainly sounds very active.

Kuhn: This is a whole lifetime. She continues to get into things that I don't find out about for quite some time. She says, "By the way, our new board that I'm on is meeting at our house tomorrow night." I say, "What new board?" "Oh, didn't I tell you?" "No, you didn't." "Oh, I meant to."

Dorfman: Why is she a sensational wife and mother?

Kuhn: Well, because she sees potential in children and she wanted her own kids to develop their own potential. All three children are different. She has a very great compassionate heart. She's the type of

Kuhn: person, if she hears some rumors that somebody said that she and So-and-So aren't getting along or something, she'll call that person and go over and see them and say, "Look, let's talk this out." She just won't sit there on grudges which the average person would allow to fester.

There are some activities, of course, in which she and I have been active together and on which we've both been active but not at the same time. She's an excellent board member of any organization because she knows her stuff.

Dorfman: What special qualities does she have as a wife?

Kuhn: I mentioned compassion. She has extreme conscientiousness. Her father was ill the last five years of his life. He didn't want to go into an institution. He could afford to live at home. He didn't want anybody to take care of him. So every bit of food he ate the last five years, she cooked for him, and once or twice a week I would lug it to his house in my car and put it in his refrigerator. He wanted it that way, and she knew it, and when he passed away she had terrible misgivings that maybe she hadn't been as dedicated a Jewish daughter as she should have been. But, believe me, no one could have been more dedicated.

Dorfman: It certainly sounds that way.

Kuhn: She has had her own health problems and she's living above them. She believes that it's very important to be active, to give what you have--for which you should be thankful--to others, to make it a better world, regardless of race, color, or creed. When she was about five, her mother died and her father had her raised by a housekeeper who was Catholic--she and her younger brother--so she's always had an excellent relationship with Catholics, as evidenced by her present position.

She's always had excellent relationships with any minority group, and she can see beyond--as a matter of fact, a week ago Saturday night she attended the debut of the president of her student body at the Links Cotillion, which is an all-black cotillion. She was one of the few Caucasian people present. Why? Because that girl wanted her there, because she looked up to her.

Dorfman: That invitation was tribute.

Kuhn: Yes, and she went to the cotillion from a conciada, which is a ceremony held at the Cuban Club at 26th and Army, where one of her sophomore students had sort of had her debut. So frequently my wife is the only faculty member to be invited to these things because, again, the kids have the feeling that she's interested. What is the evidence?

Kuhn: Well, she gets them summer jobs, she helps them get into college, and she helps them guide themselves toward a successful high school career and college entrance. She put on a program a month ago at which about fifty women participated to show the kids that a woman can make it. She had women physicians, women attorneys, women FBI agents. She had a few men in the program, but she really didn't want them, but for one reason or another she couldn't get women in those particular roles.

These women were very frank with the children. They said, "Don't go around feeling sorry for yourself because you're a minority or you're a woman." (Because this school is very heavily minority even though it's a private school.) "I made it and you can make it, but you have to work." This had a very strong effect on them. When one of her kids gets a scholarship toward a college or ends up in medical school, my wife has a very justifiable pride.

Dorfman: How would you characterize your marriage?

Kuhn: Oh, I think it's been excellent. I was married before in Australia. I was married to an Australian girl, not Jewish, during the war. It lasted five years. It never would have taken place had there not been a war. Happily, there were no children. It was pretty amicable. We were divorced in 1949, and I met Caroline shortly thereafter at the home of Rabbi and Mrs. Fine.

Mrs. Fine was the shadchen. She claimed she never was more successful. It was one of those second time around things. The older I get, the more fortunate I realize I've been. I think she feels the same way. My only regret in my married life is that I took up too many outside things and deprived myself of my children's company and them of mine, and that I wouldn't want to do over again, but I did it.

Dorfman: What are the special qualities of your marriage that support your relationship?

Kuhn: We're interested in the same things. We're interested in kids, social betterment, liberal trends, hard work. There are certain things we've always done separately. I've always taken the kids up to the mountains by myself because my wife no longer hikes that way and she thinks it's great for the kids to be with their father.

My kids have asked her, "Don't you and father ever fight like we see other kids' parents fight where the husband comes home drunk or something?" My wife said, "No, we never had any like that." Well, the kids find it almost impossible to believe and they say, "We're so lucky having you and Dad."

Kuhn: Another thing we have going for us is the fact that we've lived in the same house here for twenty-five years, so that even though the oldest one was eight months when we moved here, she doesn't remember any other place but 7th Avenue, and that is rare today.

Dorfman: Yes, it's unusually stable.

Kuhn: I don't know. I never really tried to analyze it. I just maybe had my fingers crossed, but you don't analyze it. You just let it be. A woman of valor. Her price is beyond rubies.

Dorfman: What particularly is the most important in helping you and Caroline to endure difficult times?

Kuhn: I think mutual love and the desire to support each other. We've had some pretty severe health problems, which I think are the toughest thing we've had. We haven't had any real health problems with our children. We've had the normal amount of debts--her father, the woman who raised her, my brothers, nothing beyond--they've always been in the natural sequence of things, the oldest ones dying first.

Again, I think it's trying to put yourself in the shoes of the other person. How would you feel? What would you want? When I write a note to someone who's suffered a loss, I always like to say, "My thoughts are with you at this sad time," and that's the greatest thing you can do, to let someone know that you're thinking of them.

Dorfman: What things would you say that your marriage has meant to you?

Kuhn: Well, it was the difference between happiness and misery. I told Caroline before we were married, "I've got to have a child, or I'm going to die." She's been a marvelous mother. I think married life for the average male, heterosexual male, is just a natural thing. I can't see really any satisfaction without it. I don't believe in all this experimental thing where they say, "A man can get anything he wants without having the obligation of marriage." I think that obligation and responsibility are the hallmarks of a responsible adult. Unless you are willing to take the responsibility, you don't have society. Someone has got to say, "I'm responsible."

Children

Dorfman: What did you mean by that statement to Caroline that you had to have a child?

Kuhn: I just felt then that time was passing me by, unless I had a child. It wasn't so much continuing my name. I just felt, well, I guess, the male equivalent of whatever a woman feels when she wants to be a mother. It was just a very emotional statement I made without premeditation. But she really liked my saying it.

I was the kind of father who, within twenty-four hours of the birth of our first one, had already sent to my child in her mother's room at Children's Hospital a huge teddy bear about three and a half feet high named Cocoa Brownie. Our first child, incidentally, was born on November 30, 1951, the only date in history that the Golden Gate Bridge was closed to traffic because of storms. The wind was blowing over the top of Tamalpais about 150 miles per hour, and the bridge was swaying tremendously. Subsequently, the bridge was reinforced so it couldn't sway that much, but that's an easy date to remember. We called her "Stormy" for a while.

The Meaning of "A Jewish Family"

Dorfman: What does the phrase "to have a Jewish family" mean to you?

Kuhn: Well, again, it starts with responsibility. The traditional Jewish family has been observant. The parents let the children know by direction and indirection that their religion means something to them--what they believe; how they do it; the social responsibility; the relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children, and between the family and the people with whom they do business, with whom they go to school, and so on. And the kids get the message, generally.

When I say acting responsibly, it means putting yourself in secondary positions very often. You just don't do what you want to because that gratifies your desires and needs or what you interpret them to be. Generally you get the implication of that by looking at your own parents. My mother was that way. The kids finally-- I think they catch on, particularly when they begin to observe the way things are in the homes of friends. I was really amazed at their perception, because they'll know more about what's going on in their friend's house than I would.

We adults always have our defenses up. You go to a cocktail party across the street--it's a show. Only with real close neighbors do you ever let your guard down. But the kids are there much more around the clock, and they hear the other kids talk, and they get the feeling whether their friends really care for their parents or have any respect for them.

Kuhn: I would want my kids to have respect for me, and I told them years ago that I want them to have respect for each other. I didn't want them to fink on each other. I wanted them to have more loyalty to each other than they have to me, because they're going to be with each other longer, and that message got through. I don't know. It's not by reading Dr. Spock, because I never read Dr. Spock. It was always one of the books I was going to read, but we had three children before that ever came up to the top of the list.

Dorfman: What other Jewish values did you emphasize to your children?

Kuhn: When you say Jewish values, they are really values of simplified living, starting with the Ten Commandments and everything else we read in the Torah--truth, honesty, mercy, compassion, love, not coveting, not hurting anybody else, not telling lies about them. I'm not really so concerned with belief, because who knows what's on another person's mind? And though he may say he's God-fearing, his concept of what God is is his, whether it's a life force or an anthropomorphic figure, and it really doesn't make any difference. If you feel there is something in the universe stronger than you, bigger than you, that's good enough for me.

But it's what stems from that, what kind of a feeling. One of my points in confirmation was the moral order of the universe. If you believe in that and what stems from it, that pretty much explains what Jewish values are. They certainly are not the gratification of instant desires.

One is the preservation of Jewish life, survival, particularly in this twentieth century, with the holocaust and with Israel. We've had a huge history in geography lesson.

I don't want to imply anywhere that just because I've made these statements that I think I'm uniformly successful at having achieved all these things. I never have; I've known that for a long, long time. Maybe you learn it quite by accident; maybe somebody tells you what your child thinks of you.

I find that I'm very close-mouthed and uncommunicative in many things. When I was a young man, I would have no more told my mother the name of any girl I took out--"What time did you come home last night, Marshall?" "Plenty past twelve," hoping she'd think I said, "Twenty past twelve." [Chuckles]

Of course, those are the things you have to respect for a kid's privacy. I would not open any of my child's mail, no matter how enticing, without asking, any more than I would expect a child to open my mail. Of course, I contend that a boy reaches maturity at

Kuhn: six, because that's the maximum age at which he could enter a ladies' room with his mother, and after that he's got to be with his father.

Dorfman: How would you say this compares to what "to have a Jewish family" meant when you were a child?

Kuhn: There were a few overt evidences of Jewishness in my family. As I say, on the Sabbath our house was cleaned beautifully. We never had a Kiddush. We had beautiful napery and silver and china and glass crystal. But there were no services, and my parents belonged to Temple Emanu-El, and they attended very often. But we weren't a religious family in that sense.

But there was nothing in the neighborhood to compare it with. We didn't live in an orthodox neighborhood. I never saw it in the homes of any other Jewish children, not that I went to very many of their homes. So I would say that we created our own Jewish environment, which is possible to do, and as a Jewish educator I have always stressed this because there's no way you can do the Friday night Kiddush wrong. If someone's trying to find out--if someone considers the Friday night Kiddush like a Japanese tea ceremony, they've got the wrong idea. It's not that perfect; it's of the heart.

Maybe that's why Catholic children have asked me--when I've talked to groups about Jewish holidays, their first question is, "Tell us about a Jewish wedding," because they've all seen Fiddler on the Roof and they know there's something special about this. As a matter of fact, at this next cotillion when the debutantes finish doing the minuet, the orchestra plays dances and each girl dances the first dance with her father to the music of "Sunrise, Sunset." "Is this the little girl I carried?"--it's universal.

Dorfman: Would you say, then, that the values you have attempted to instill in your own children are the values that you saw in your childhood?

Kuhn: Oh, yes, yes, very definitely, very definitely. I still go along with Stevenson. To him, the greatest virtue was kindness, because he was on the brink of death so often with his tuberculosis or whatever it was, and when someone was kind and gave him a hot meal and took care of him, this was kindness. It didn't cost anything, but he never forgot it, and we lack a lot of that today. "We'll drink a cup of kindness yet for auld lang syne," as Bobbie Burns said.

Dorfman: If I were to ask you how did you raise your children, what would you say?

Kuhn: I would say mostly straight, but with a lot of tempering. For example, when my son reached the age of eight, I tried to get him to visit the Cub Scouts and couldn't get him to do it. Then I realized that I had never been a Cub Scout. I had been a scout leader, but not a cub. When he got to be eleven, I wanted him to visit the Boy Scouts because one of his buddies in the block was going. He said, "Listen, Dad. I go to public school, right? I go to Sunday school, right? I'm training for bar mitzvah, right? Well, the rest of the time is mine."

Anything that can't be done willingly is a tough thing, because I had the example of my wife's brother who was forced to go to cheder against his wishes, and when he was confirmed he never set foot in a synagogue again except for our wedding. So what do you have to prove? You made the kid go to cheder and he developed a great antipathy. So that's what I try to look for. What am I trying to accomplish? Am I doing it the best way?

My son--when he got to be fifteen in the confirmation class was the year in which Emanu-El was trying to promote the idea that confirmands would have a trip to Israel at the end of the year, and he didn't want to go. He really wasn't mature enough and he resented the fact--

[end tape 16, side A; begin tape 16, side B]

Kuhn: --the fact that those who weren't going to Israel were treated differently in the confirmation year than others, and he thought that was hypocritical, that he would be a hypocrite to be confirmed.

Well, with a month to go, he said, "I want to quit." I was a principal at Beth El in San Mateo, but I could see both sides of it, so I said, "All right, you've got to go up and explain it to the rabbis," which he did. He didn't get confirmed. No, I didn't consider it the end of the world. It would be worse if he got confirmed and took out his hatred on somebody else. So now I think you have to--what are you trying to accomplish, and is this the best way? Not just a traditional way.

Dorfman: What was life like in your home?

Kuhn: In my parents'?

Dorfman: No, in your own home.

Kuhn: Well, it was built around a cycle. The cycle was: a couple of nights before the school started in the fall, we went out to some big stationery store and we got all the kids binders and paper and all that stuff; and school started; and the kids had new clothes, new classes, new teachers, new friends. The year went along, and they had their own friends and their own activities. Once in a while we'd all go to a movie together, not too often.

Kuhn: Then we would aim toward a mid-winter trip to Carmel, because I had no religious school then, and in the spring we would go over to Stinson Beach for a week, rent a house.

We had certain different patterns during the summer. One was the Tahoe pattern. I think in the first few years of the kids' ages, we went to Tahoe every summer. Then we started the summer home park routine on the Russian River and they loved that. They loved it and I hated it. They'd go up for six weeks, and I'd go up every weekend and maybe the last week. I didn't like the heat. And the river was so dirty, I called it the Sonoma Ganges. But it was a very healthful environment. Then we got tired of that about 1965.

But both before and after that, my kids have gone with me hiking in the summer in the High Sierra country. Then, when that was over, we just didn't do anything together any more because the kids all went out with different interests, so there was no way you could possibly get them all in one place willingly, except maybe Carmel, Carmel Valley. There were some summers we went to the Carmel Valley because the heat was always there. There wasn't any fog.

Then we started getting ready for school again. It was a routine that varied as the kids matured. But they always knew they were going to have great vacations, and we all looked forward to that.

For my wife, that meant she didn't have to cook all the time. She had to cook, but she didn't have to cook this exact minute. That's why we never went to the Lair of the Bear; she didn't want to live out of an orange crate, which was supposed to be characteristic of the early camps up there. She didn't want to have to be at any meal when it was convenient for the camp to serve the meal. She wanted to go to a place where she could eat breakfast late or whatever. I respected that because she worked hard enough during the year.

She's an early morning person. She gets up about 5:30, and between then and 7:15, when she leaves for school, she has made everyone's breakfast, a couple of people's lunches, started dinner, done a load of wash--I don't know what else--helped me get dressed. And I don't know how she does it. I really don't. Early in the morning--it is remarkable.

Dorfman: Has she always been an early morning person?

Kuhn: Yes.

Dorfman: Were you?

Kuhn: Was I? Well, much more so than I am now. My kids all seem to be night people. They can sleep right through their mother's working in the morning.

Kuhn: I would work at night down in the basement; the kids call it the pit. I had an office in the basement there with my typewriter and my radio and record player; and whatever organization work I was doing, I'd put in an hour down there every night. I'd frequently come up and everybody was asleep. Or maybe I'd go to bed early and get up early then and do the work. But this was a great producing family.

The first--I would say almost the first twenty years of our life together, my wife didn't have a job. She just did volunteer work. She always wanted to be home when the kids came home from school, and it's only when they had really grown up that she really took this job as librarian and was counseling director at Cathedral.

Dorfman: Who are your individual children?

Kuhn: The oldest one is sort of my wunderkind.

Dorfman: Why?

Kuhn: Well, because she has the capability to do anything she sets her mind to. Unfortunately, she really hasn't achieved as much as I think she could have, not for my pleasure but for her pleasure. She got excellent grades all through school, was chosen as the outstanding graduate in her class in high school by the principal, and won a number of prizes--the Governor's Prize, the Bank of America, the whole bit.

Then she went to Irvine because it offered an intercurricular program in music, dance, drama, and art. She was there a year, and they abolished the major, so she switched back. She switched to French, which she had been taking at junior high and high school, and she graduated in French. Meanwhile, in her junior year, she went abroad to France, did a semester at Aix-en-Provence, and then went to Israel for four months, traveled around Europe. She was away for a year and three days.

She returned to Irvine, graduated, and went back to the Sorbonne, thinking she would get a teacher's credential in French--a semester there and a semester back at Irvine. But then she decided to stay in France, so she worked a year for the Joint Distribution Committee. Then she did transcriptions of scientific translations and has just come home now after four years in France. Of course, she's been home once or twice every year for a visit.

But she's very sharp, very fast, a trigger-like mind, plays the piano, dances well. You name it, she can do it--a good scrabble player, a great hiker, swimmer. But she never wanted to be in the position where she was responsible for supervising people who were

Kuhn: less efficient than she is. She has a low tolerance for that. Really, it's almost an intolerance, and so she'll have to learn the hard way, I think, unless--she'd really like to write children's books. She wanted to really get into nursery school work, but you have to get a general secondary credential, and she just wouldn't discipline herself to learn to teach fifth-grade math and fourth-grade science in order to teach a three-year-old.

Now, the boy is twenty-three now. He's got a very good mind, but he hates anything that's abstract like economics or social science. Yet, the last year in high school he was on the honor roll. It beats me how. He's finished about a year and a half at City College, but in very scattered doses. He works for Budget Rent-a-Car down at the Downtown Center Garage. Before that, he worked at one of the parking garages downtown. He's a member of the Teamsters Union. He hasn't lived here for several years. He rents a house out in Daly City and is pretty independent.

He never really settled the fact that to really get to where he wants to be, he's going to have to do more studying. He sort of thinks he'll absorb everything he needs to know by osmosis. It's sort of a difficult thing for him.

The youngest one, Nancy, who is just twenty-one--she's always worked, even in high school. She worked at the ice rink cooking hamburgers so she could get free ice time. She worked for a jewelry store in high school and after high school; and while she was going to State (she's finished a year and a half at State), in the last year, she's worked for Fred's Fruit Bowl. It's a fruit bar downtown owned by the family of her best girl friend. She's always worked.

They're all different, and yet they're all the same. All I know, and I told them--I said, "There's no way I can be fair to all of you. All I can do is try to be fair. There's no way I can convince you of being fair. You'll always think that I'm partial to one of the others. So I'm not going to even ever tell you I'm fair. All I can say is that I'll try to be fair, to give you what you need in relationship to your need, not somebody else's." Sometimes they get the feeling that one or the other of them is getting the better deal or something, but they're about to the age where none of them need anything any more.

The two girls live here and they don't pay anything for their board and room, and eventually they'll move on, and I hope eventually they'll get married and have their own families. But I would not try to rate myself as a parent.

Dorfman: What would you say that they have in common?

Kuhn: They have an appreciation of their parents' values. I'm quite sure of that. Now, my son, before he moved out several years ago, protested that his values and ours were miles apart, and I'm not sure whether that was just protest or how much is actual facts. I suspect a lot of it is facts because he's part of a new generation, as it were, in many ways, and the things he does we wouldn't approve of. So he figures the thing to do is to do his thing and let us see it, and I think that's good. It shows a consideration on their part for not upsetting us. Whether they consider us old fogeys or not, I don't know. Maybe in years to come they'll figure out that we were pretty smart, at least for ourselves.

They see so much among friends of theirs, like the kid in school, a close friend, who died from an overdose of drugs. One of my son's best friends was killed on a motorcycle, and my son had been a big motorcycle guy up to that point. He used to repair Hondas in the basement here, got paid, made a lot of money. The moment that kid died, my son gave it all up. If we had wanted him to give it up, he never would have, until it hit his closest friend. So they see a lot of things that reinforce all that we've tried to tell them. When they get it from the outside, it's a more effective lesson.

I think one of the toughest things they have to deal with is the prevalence of divorce among the families of kids they know. I think they had the feeling, "What is marriage? Marriage can't seem to be a very permanent affair. Look at So-and-So's parents." Then sometimes they ask my wife, "Don't you and Daddy ever have big classic fights?" And I said, "No." I believe, with Dr. George Bach, who wrote The Intimate Enemy, that the secret is to have a fight with your wife every day, like a small earthquake, draining off the big earthquake, but fighting in such a way that you both win, which takes consummate skill.

My son, incidentally, is very, very unliberal. He's anti-gay. In some ways he's racist, but his closest friends are Chinese and black, and many times they can't figure him out. But he contends that it's not a general sympathy toward those races. His closest friends just happen to be guys he likes very much who also happen to be black and Chinese. But he's a black and white guy, like my oldest brother was. You're either good or you're bad, nothing in between, no grades. That's wrong, I think.

Dorfman: Do you think he'll change?

Kuhn: I hope so. I hope he matures.

Personal Concerns

Dorfman: What are your concerns for yourself?

Kuhn: My concerns for myself? My health and my wife's health. Those are primary. They're really the only concerns I have. I used to have the feeling, "What am I going to do when I retire?" And, having such a backlog of activities, I felt I never would be bored. But all I hope now is just that I last it out to retirement.

Dorfman: What do you give a lot of thought to?

Kuhn: Well, less and less about things I have no control over. If there's a big flood in La Porte, Indiana, I can't worry about that too much. There's nothing I can do about it. I can try to have some influence still with my kids--not much. Mostly I've tried to make life a little more liberal for my wife. I've often said that the proper concern of mankind is the perfection of the soul, but then you have to figure out what do you really mean by that. I'm not quite sure.

Dorfman: We all have experienced loneliness within a lifetime. How have you dealt with it?

Kuhn: Well, in 1969, I had a severe bicycle accident. I think that due primarily to the drugs I took to control my blood pressure, due to the fact that I was very much overweight at that time, I sustained a very severe depression, and I saw a psychiatrist several times, and he said, "You're undergoing quite a normal thing. You're undergoing a crisis confronting your own mortality." I wanted to deal with that. As far as loneliness is concerned, I don't think I'm lonely. I agree that no one can really see into the mind of anyone else. Do you want to stop the machine for a minute? [Tape interruption]

Dorfman: You have a very meaningful note that you received that you were going to talk about.

Kuhn: Yes, this is a card I received from a woman whose own life has been marred by severe illness on the part of her husband and his subsequent death from cancer. I don't know her all that well.

She writes me, "Erev shabbat, November 13, 1977. Dear Marshall, Although I really don't know you very well, or you me, I just wanted to say a couple of things on paper that are hard to say when we visit so briefly in the office or at meetings. I want to share my feelings as follows.

No one can understand what another human being thinks, feels, and therefore lives through in the process of life. However, I know you are a brave man for so many, many reasons. Even when the

Kuhn: price for strength, faith, and gutsiness has huge measure, it is an individual's ability to deal with his finiteness, when having to deal with constant physical reminders, that makes me appreciate so much, Marshall, what you are managing so beautifully. Kol ha kabod. Warm regards."

That's the most beautiful letter I ever got, because I know where it comes from.

Dorfman: It certainly is lovely.

Kuhn: Now, I'm saying a lot of things on this tape that I normally wouldn't say, and I'm not even sure at this point that when I edit them I'll even let them remain. The prime thing is that I have a disease called amotrophic lateral sclerosis, which is Lou Gehrig's disease. My wife has myasthenia gravis. The odds of a husband and wife having these two rare muscular disorders are on the order of maybe twenty-five million to one. Now she can take care of herself with drugs and take care of me.

I can't take care of myself anymore, in the sense that there are certain things that I just can't do. I can't shave myself. I can't bathe myself. But I'm unimpaired mentally. There's no mental impairment with this disease whatsoever. But it's a tough thing, because when you ask what has brought us together, it's the mutual knowledge that we both have these really in some ways terrifying disorders and for no really apparent reason. No one knows their cause. No one knows if there ever will be a cure.

Although my wife does, with the miracle of a drug called mestanon, have her condition pretty much under control. She'll wake up in the morning very listless, and when she takes one pill of this drug, in five minutes it's like 880 volts in her body. She can function fantastically. She knows more about her own dosage during the day than any physician. She's been asked by her neurologist to meet with national authorities to explain how the lay person can really cope with this.

So this may explain when I say that the only thing I really am concerned about is health, because nothing else makes a difference.

I like to meet friends. I work out of my home now, using the phone, my secretary will come out once or twice a week, and I function quite well. But for a long time people didn't realize that. Now I get visitors every day--morning, noon, and night, whatever it may be. Last Friday was my birthday. There were twenty people who came in six different groups. This is wonderful, and I'm sure it's tough for them to see me sitting here with this pneumobelt on, but they do it, except for those who can't take it.

Kuhn: Whether they can't take it for me or they can't take it for themselves, I don't know. Maybe they don't know. But I think I've had--I'm sixty-one. I had sixty good years, which is really a good thing, and if this is what the Lord intended for me, that's good enough for me.

Dorfman: You're still giving of yourself.

Kuhn: Well, my parents and my two brothers died of circulatory disorders, heart or stroke, so I figured that was going to happen to me, but something else came along. Ours is not to reason why. The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord. So that's my sermon for this Tuesday night, as Walter Cronkite.
[Chuckles]

Dorfman: In view of the serious things you've told me now, I have another question which I'll ask now. It might be wiser to save it for next time, but I'll ask it now anyhow.

Kuhn: All right.

Dorfman: In view of everything, what has been your greatest joy?

Kuhn: Oh, my wife. My wife. Well, you might say my family, because they're inseparable, my wife and the kids. I don't know. I say that, but there are really no ways of measuring. The kids would have fulfilled their potential in the sense that--not 100 percent, because no one gets that. But in the sense that I would feel that whatever happiness they got, I somehow contributed to--I'd feel better about it. Maybe they're still too young and immature. It's a tough world we brought them into. I just don't know. There are certain things now I just feel so incompetent to deal with. I lack mobility.

Dorfman: Because of this illness?

Kuhn: Yes. I'm pretty much confined here. I may go out once or twice a month to some function or meeting or doctor's appointment or something like that. So, therefore, I'm not really controlling myself as I used to, although I'm still involved heavily, particularly in the Sierra Club. As long as I can get near a dictating situation, dictate to my daughter--but I've really cut down my outside activities. The Diabetic Youth Foundation doesn't require anything of me, and my work as treasurer of the Arboretum Society is very undemanding, and it will be my last year there.

But the Sierra Club--I hope to finish out my year in May, which will be eight years since we started it, and I told the committee at our meeting recently that while I've talked about stepping down as chairman before, I would really have to do it this time.

Kuhn: First of all, it's too long for any one person to dominate it, and it's an admission of failure on my part that I haven't developed anyone to succeed me, even though I have someone in mind whom I know could do it, if I could convince them that they are capable of doing it. They look at some of the achievements we made, and they feel, "Well, gee, we couldn't do that," but everyone has their own style.

Dorfman: Do you think you'll be permitted to step down?

Kuhn: Oh, yes, with a stroke of the pen. Sure. It's just so tough to do some of these things in the sense that while I'm on this pneumobelt here, this respirator, that's fine. But to go off and go around the house and go to my office inside there, you have to move the whole apparatus--have someone move it for me, actually--and this is quite enervating.

So, therefore, I sit here at this table and people bring me things, but I'm really trying to catch up with paperwork and throw stuff out by the bushel. I'm at the point now--I tell my wife, "Find the file on so-and-so and throw it out, but don't show it to me because if you show it to me, I'll start to read it."

Dorfman: Do you think that's the historian in you that you've talked about?

Kuhn: Well, it's amazing, the stuff I've collected over the years. I was really involved in opposing the SST on the grounds that it would exacerbate the effect of jet lag. I had a file that thick [gestures] on this thing. I saved every clipping in the world to send to Dr. Schickel at MIT. But then it's clear that America won't have an SST, but we're allowing the French version to fly here. So I said, "Throw the whole thing out. It's moot."

I had a project on the drawing board called the Conference of Citizen Support Groups, groups like the Arboretum Society, the Friends of Rec Park, and the Friends of the Library--bring them all together to see what things we had going for us, just how big a contribution were these voluntary citizens making to the community? I had it all lined up, program and everything, but I just can't pull it off, so I threw the whole thing out because I couldn't get anyone else really interested to the extent--well, they'd all benefit from it.

What I used to say is, "Who will bake the bread? They'll eat it. Who's going to bake it?" It's too bad, because I think we could demonstrate something very vital.

Now, I could still achieve some of it by phoning all these twenty organizations and just asking them for their budget, taking out how much in cash they provided to the library to hire personnel and buy books, how much we put in the Arboretum educational

Kuhn: programs and in plants, how many animals the Zoological Society bought for the zoo, and so on; then adding in the factor for volunteer hours, which would be staggering. This would represent either the saving of a tremendous amount of money in this city, or if the city hadn't put the money in, it would be a reduction in the services provided the citizens, and no one's really looked at the whole thing altogether.

I took this up with the political science department at Berkeley, and they said, "We've never even considered that as far as a problem in municipal government is concerned." I said, "Well, it's staggering in its size."

You take a fine arts museum--someone buys a \$1 1/2 million picture. If they hadn't done it, the city wouldn't do it. But this was just a drawing board thing.

It's one of the things I used to entertain myself with as I drove around, planning all these types of things built around vacations, or writing something in my mind, humorous, such as an auxiliary, not for the zoo or a library, but for the city dump, with its own docent program, UN affiliation, etc. Gift shop.

Dorfman: Is there anything further that you think that we should know, that you would like to have us know?

Kuhn: Oh, you know more about me than I do. Probably too much. No, I don't know, because--I know this has been in some ways a limited interview, in certain areas in which you and Magnes were interested. I wasn't quite sure how the focus was determined, so I just more or less responded, rather than giving you my whole life story. But I think you've got a good enough cross-section to really--I consider that you have done a conscientious job.

Dorfman: Your contributions have been remarkable, and we're certainly indebted to you. We'll come back to additions later on.

Kuhn: All right, fine.

[end tape 16, side B]

Marshall Kuhn

Marshall Kuhn's life was a blue print for humanitarianism.

His activities at the Jewish Welfare Federation, Temple Emanu-El, the Jewish Center, the Cub Scouts, Irwin Memorial Blood Bank and the Sierra Club were reflections of his ceaseless energy and his spirit. No doubt we have left many of Marshall Kuhn's activities off the list but they are all worthy causes that Marshall himself never forgot.

Although the award recently given him, "Environmentalist of the Year," appropriately described his contributions in that important area of all peoples' lives, it was the individual help, counsel, and warmth that Marshall Kuhn donated to the Jewish Community which will be long remembered here. Marshall's legacy of good will could rarely be equalled. His philanthropy went far beyond dollars.

During the last weeks of a painful illness, Marshall introduced Herman Graebe to the Jewish community, a man who had rescued thousands of Jews from the Nazis during World War II. "He's an exceptional man," Marshall would say to people of Graebe, "one of the greatest humanitarians I've ever known."

Without reservation, those words can be applied to Marshall Kuhn.

Kuhn Mourned

Marshall H. Kuhn, a prominent and often honored local Jewish and community leader, died Thursday, May 18 at Mt. Zion Hospital. Born in San Francisco in 1916, he lived most of his life in the Richmond District. Mr. Kuhn was a graduate of Lowell High School in 1933 and the University of California, Berkeley in 1941.

In his business and professional life, he served as a sales executive for Blue Shield of California, manager of Donor Recruitment for the Irwin Memorial Blood Bank, executive director of the San Francisco Jewish Community

(See KUHN Page 20)

Community Mourns Marshall Kuhn...

(Continued From Page One)

Center and, in recent years, as director of the Jewish Endowment Fund of the Jewish Welfare Federation. In addition, he had volunteered for a variety of philanthropic organizations over a period of 40 years.

In both his professional and volunteer activities, Mr. Kuhn dedicated himself above all as a teacher. He was a religious school instructor and principal at Temple Emanu-El and Peninsula Temple Beth El, an accomplished speaker and raconteur in his professional capacity, an historian on the San Francisco Bay Area, and the founding Cub Master of Pack 17.

Mr. Kuhn's energy and enthusiasm were contagious as an advisor. Thus, he acted as the catalyst that sparked many projects from idea to completion. Gifted with an astute mind and remarkable memory, Mr. Kuhn was the authority called upon to assess information for visionary social planning. He became a mentor to many whom he taught and to those with whom he worked.

Although illness had recently forced him to restrict activity to his home, Mr. Kuhn continued to share his expertise, never curtailing the volume of his work or the scope of his interests. These included efforts to alleviate the distress of Jews overseas, to



Marshall Kuhn

provide aid to Israel, and to help American Jewry survive and flourish spiritually.

Mr. Kuhn was an ardent conservationist and athlete. He was marshall of the Kuhn Track Club and organizer of a project to protect the archives of the Sierra Club. He helped bring into being the John Muir Nature Trail in Golden Gate Park, as well as the Bearskin Meadow Camp for diabetic children. He initiated the reprint of John Muir's "Stickeen," to which he wrote the preface.

Recent tributes to Mr. Kuhn

include recognition as "Environmentalist of the Year" by the John Muir National Historic Society and a special achievement award as founding Chairman of the Sierra Club History Committee. Earlier this year, Temple Emanu-El of San Francisco acknowledged his service with a special achievement award.

At the time of his death, Mr. Kuhn was editing his own memoirs, under the sponsorship of the Judah Magnes Museum and the American Jewish Congress. These will be included in the San Francisco Jewish Community Leaders Series by the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

He is survived by his wife, Caroline, and his three children, Alyson, Bruce and Nancy.

Memorial services were held at Temple Emanu-El under the direction of Sinai Memorial Chapel. Contributions may be made to the Muscular Dystrophy Association, 278 Post St., S.F. 94108, or to the U.S. Committee Sports for Israel, Inc.-- Tennis, 3561 Addison St., San Diego, 92106.

Receives Award

NEW YORK—The Hon. Simcha Dinitz, Israel's Ambassador to the United States, received the Scopus Award from the American Friends of the Hebrew University.

San Francisco Examiner,
Saturday, May 20, 1978

Marshall H. Kuhn

Marshall H. Kuhn, an executive and prominent member of the San Francisco Jewish community, died Thursday at Mt. Zion Hospital after a long illness. He was 62.

Born in San Francisco, he was a graduate of Lowell High School and the University of California at Berkeley, a historian, environmentalist, athlete, scholar and teacher as well as an official of many business and cultural organizations.

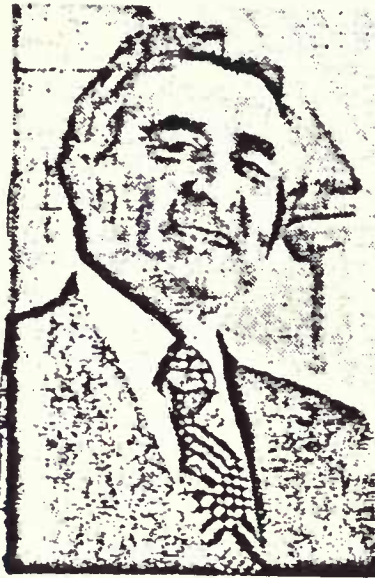
In recent years Mr. Kuhn was director of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund of the Jewish Welfare Federation.

Earlier he served as executive director of the San Francisco Jewish Community Center, as an official of the Irwin Memorial Blood Bank and as sales executive of Blue Shield of California.

One of his awards was Environmentalist of the Year, presented by the John Muir Historic Society. He was also the founding chairman of the Sierra Club's history committee.

Mr. Kuhn is survived by his wife Caroline and three children Alyson, Bruce and Nancy.

A memorial service will be held next Wednesday at 4 p.m. at Temple Emanu-El. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.



MARSHALL H. KUHN
Jewish leader, activist

Marshall H. Kuhn

Marshall H. Kuhn, a longtime Jewish leader, spirited citizen and conservation activist, is dead at 61.

A rabbi who was closely connected with him said: "He was a man whose good works literally touched thousands of lives."

A native San Franciscan, Mr. Kuhn died Thursday at Mount Zion Hospital after a long illness.

From 1973 he was director of the local Jewish Welfare Federation's endowment fund. For many years before that, he was director of Northern California sales for Blue Shield.

But much of his time and energy were devoted to service ranging from the Cub Scouts to the Camp Fire Girls to the Irwin Memorial Blood Bank to Temple Emanu-El, which recently honored him for outstanding contributions.

San Francisco Chronicle,
Saturday, May 20, 1978

A 1941 graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, Mr. Kuhn was also an ardent conservationist. He helped bring about the John Muir Nature Trail in Golden Gate Park and was a recipient of the "Environmentalist of the Year" award by the John Muir National Historic Society. He was a longtime member of the Sierra Club.

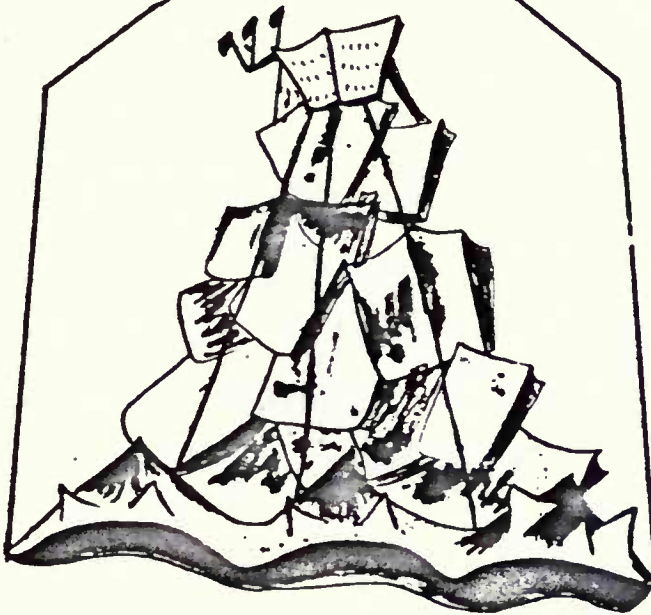
He was a former executive director of the San Francisco Community Center and once was a co-chairman of the Jewish Welfare Federation's annual fund-raising drive.

Surviving are his wife, Caroline; two daughters, Alyson and Nancy, and a son, Bruce, all of San Francisco.

Services were yesterday.

Volume XLV no. 6
June 1, 1978

PENINSULA TEMPLE BETH EL



BULLETIN

MARSHALL H. KUHN

OF BLESSED MEMORY

He came to Peninsula Temple Beth El on temporary "loan" for a year from Congregation Emanu-El of San Francisco and stayed to bless us for eighteen years as the Principal of our Religious School. He passed away on May 18, 1978. He came to this life in 1916 and blessed an entire community throughout those years.

Every significant human betterment endeavor in the Jewish and general communities to which he turned his attention received a full measure of his boundless energy, profound devotion and abundant generosity.

He loved his family. He loved us, his fellow Jews and fellow human beings. He was our loyal friend, our hard-working co-worker.

He took life and its problems seriously, laughed when we laughed, wept when we wept, and helped make even the most trying times courageous opportunities. To this a generation of Religious School students will attest, as will all those who served on community boards and committees with him.

For me, personally, he brought the blessing of inspiration that magnified the beauty of many happy days with our young people and their dear ones.

S.E.R.

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