

Sierra Club Oral History Project

SIERRA CLUB REMINISCENCES III  
1910s-1970s

Lewis F. Clark	Perdurable and Peripatetic Sierran: Club Officer and Outings Leader, 1928-1984
Jules M. Eichorn	Mountaineering and Music: Ansel Adams, Norman Clyde, and Pioneering Sierra Club Climbing
Nina Eloesser	Tales of High Trips in the Twenties
H. Stewart Kimball	New Routes for Sierra Club Outings, 1930s-1970s
Joseph LeConte	Recalling LeConte Family Pack Trips and the Early Sierra Club, 1912-1926

Interviews Conducted by

Marshall Kuhn  
John Schagen  
Ann Lage  
Robin Brooks  
Anne Van Tyne

1975-1984

Sierra Club History Committee  
1985



## PREFACE

### The Oral History Program of the Sierra Club

In fall 1969 and spring 1970 a self-appointed committee of Sierra Clubbers met several times to consider two vexing and related problems. The rapid membership growth of the club and its involvement in environmental issues on a national scale left neither time nor resources to document the club's internal and external history. Club records were stored in a number of locations and were inaccessible for research. Further, we were failing to take advantage of the relatively new techniques of oral history by which the reminiscences of club leaders and members of long standing could be preserved.

The ad hoc committee's recommendation that a standing History Committee be established was approved by the Sierra Club Board of Directors in May 1970. That September the board designated The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley as the official depository of the club's archives. The large collection of records, photographs and other memorabilia known as the "Sierra Club Papers" is thus permanently protected, and the Bancroft is preparing a catalog of these holdings which will be invaluable to students of the conservation movement.

The History Committee then focused its energies on how to develop a significant oral history program. A six-page questionnaire was mailed to members who had joined the club prior to 1931. More than half responded, enabling the committee to identify numerous older members as likely prospects for oral interviews. (Some had hiked with John Muir!) Other interviewees were selected from the ranks of club leadership over the past six decades.

Those committee members who volunteered as interviewers were trained in this discipline by Willa Baum, head of the Bancroft's Regional Oral History Office and a nationally recognized authority in this field. Further interviews have been completed in cooperation with university oral history classes at California State University, Fullerton; Columbia University, New York; and the University of California, Berkeley. Extensive interviews with major club leaders are most often conducted on a professional basis through the Regional Oral History Office.

Copies of the Sierra Club oral interviews are placed at The Bancroft Library, at UCLA, and at the club's Colby Library, and may be purchased for the actual cost of photocopying, binding, and shipping by club regional offices, chapters, and groups, as well as by other libraries and institutions.

Our heartfelt gratitude for their help in making the Sierra Club Oral History Project a success goes to each interviewee and interviewer; to everyone who has written an introduction to an oral history; to the Sierra Club Board of Directors for its recognition of the long-term importance of this effort; to the Trustees of the Sierra Club Foundation for generously providing the necessary funding; to club and foundation staff, especially Michael McCloskey, Denny Wilcher, Colburn Wilbur, and Nicholas Clinch; to Willa Baum and Susan Schrepfer of the Regional Oral History Office; and last but far from least, to the members of the History Committee, and particularly to Ann Lage, who has coordinated the oral history effort since September 1974.

You are cordially invited to read and enjoy any or all of the oral histories in the Sierra Club series. By so doing you will learn much of the club's history which is available nowhere else, and of the fascinating careers and accomplishments of many outstanding club leaders and members.

Marshall H. Kuhn  
Chairman, History Committee  
1970 - 1978

San Francisco  
May 1, 1977  
(revised May 1979, A.L.)

#### PREFACE--1980s

Inspired by the vision of its founder and first chairman, Marshall Kuhn, the Sierra Club History Committee continued to expand its oral history program following his death in 1978. With the assistance of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, awarded in July 1980, the Sierra Club has contracted with the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library to conduct twelve to sixteen major interviews of Sierra Club activists and other environmental leaders of the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, the volunteer interview program has been assisted with funds for training interviewers and transcribing and editing volunteer-conducted interviews, also focusing on the past two decades.

With these efforts, the committee intends to document the programs, strategies, and ideals of the national Sierra Club, as well as the club grass-roots, in all its variety--from education to litigation to legislative lobbying, from energy policy to urban issues to wilderness preservation, from California to the Carolinas to New York.

Together with the written archives in The Bancroft Library, the oral history program of the 1980s will provide a valuable record of the Sierra Club during a period of vastly broadening environmental goals, radically changing strategies of environmental action, and major growth in size and influence on American politics and society.

Special thanks for the project's later phase are due to Susan Schrepfer, codirector of the Sierra Club Documentation Project; Ray Lage, cochair of the History Committee; the Sierra Club Board and staff; members of the project advisory board and the History Committee; and most importantly, the interviewees and interviewers for their unfailing cooperation.

Ann Lage  
Cochair, History Committee  
Codirector, Sierra Club  
Documentation Project

Oakland, California  
April 1981

SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

March 1985

Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library

- David R. Brower, Environmental Activist, Publicist, and Prophet, 1980  
Brock Evans, Environmental Campaigner: From the Northwest Forests to the Halls of Congress, 1985  
J. William Futrell, "Love for the Land and Justice for Its People": Sierra Club National and Southern Leader, 1968-1982, 1984  
Patrick D. Goldsworthy, Protecting the North Cascades, 1985  
Alexander Hildebrand, Sierra Club Leader and Critic: Perspective on Club Growth, Scope, and Tactics, 1950s-1970s, 1982  
Richard M. Leonard, Mountaineer, Lawyer, Environmentalist, 1976  
Martin Litton, Sierra Club Director and Uncompromising Preservationist, 1950s-1970s, 1982  
Norman B. Livermore, Jr., Man in the Middle: High Sierra Packer, Timberman, Conservationist, California Resources Secretary, 1983  
Michael McCloskey, Sierra Club Executive Director: The Evolving Club and the Environmental Movement, 1961-1981, 1983  
Raymond J. Sherwin, Conservationist, Judge, and Sierra Club President, 1960s-1970s, 1982  
William E. Siri, Reflections on The Sierra Club, the Environment, and Mountaineering, 1950s-1970s, 1979  
David Sive, Pioneering Environmental Lawyer, Atlantic Chapter Leader, 1961-1982, 1984  
Theodore A. Snyder, Jr., Southeast Conservation Leader and Sierra Club President, 1960s-1970s, 1982  
Wallace Stegner, The Artist as Environmental Advocate, 1983  
W. Lloyd Tupling, Sierra Club Washington Representative, 1967-1973, 1985  
Edgar Wayburn, Sierra Club Statesman and Leader of the Parks and Wilderness Movement: Gaining Protection for Alaska, the Redwoods, and Golden Gate Parklands, 1985
- In Process: Phillip S. Berry, Claire Dedrick, Pauline Dyer,  
John Zierold

Sierra Club History Committee

- John Amodio, Lobbyist for Redwood National Park Expansion, 1984  
Elizabeth Marston Bade, Recollections of William F. Bade and the Early Sierra Club, 1976  
Philip S. Bernays, Founding the Southern California Chapter, 1975  
Harold C. Bradley, Furthering the Sierra Club Tradition, 1975  
Cicely M. Christy, Contributions to the Sierra Club and the San Francisco Bay Chapter, 1938-1970s, 1982  
Lewis Clark, Perdurable and Peripatetic Sierran: Club Officer and Outings Leader, 1928-1984, 1984  
Nathan C. Clark, Sierra Club Leader, Outdoorsman, and Engineer, 1977

Harold E. Crowe, Sierra Club Physician, Baron, and President, 1975  
 Glen Dawson, Pioneer Rock Climber and Ski Mountaineer, 1975  
 Jules M. Eichorn, Mountaineering and Music: Ansel Adams, Norman Clyde, and Pioneering Sierra Club Climbing, 1985  
 Nina Eloesser, Tales of High Trips in the Twenties, 1985  
 Nora Evans, Sixty Years with the Sierra Club, 1976  
 Francis Farquhar, Sierra Club Mountaineer and Editor, 1974  
 Marjory Bridge Farquhar, Pioneer Woman Rock Climber and Sierra Club Director, 1977  
 Alfred Forsyth, The Sierra Club in New York and New Mexico, 1965-1978, 1981  
 Wanda B. Goody, A Hiker's View of the Early Sierra Club, 1982  
 C. Nelson Hackett, Lasting Impressions of the Early Sierra Club, 1975  
 Joel Hildebrand, Sierra Club Leader and Ski Mountaineer, 1974  
 Ethel Rose Taylor Horsfall, On the Trail with the Sierra Club, 1920s-1960s, 1982  
 Kathleen Goddard Jones, Defender of California's Nipomo Dunes, Steadfast Sierra Club Volunteer, 1984  
 H. Stewart Kimball, New Routes for Sierra Club Outings, 1930s-1970s, 1985  
 Helen LeConte, Reminiscences of LeConte Family Outings, the Sierra Club, and Ansel Adams, 1977  
 Joseph LeConte, Recalling LeConte Family Pack Trips and the Early Sierra Club, 1912-1926, 1985  
 A. Starker Leopold, Wildlife Biologist, 1984  
 Grant McConnell, Conservation and Politics in the North Cascades, 1983  
 John and Ruth Mendenhall, Forty Years of Sierra Club Mountaineering Leadership, 1938-1978, 1979  
 Susan Miller, Staff Support for Sierra Club Growth and Organization, 1964-1977, 1984  
 Stewart M. Ogilvy, Sierra Club Expansion and Evolution: The Atlantic Chapter, 1957-1969, 1982  
 Harriet T. Parsons, A Half-Century of Sierra Club Involvement, 1981  
 Ruth E. Prager, Remembering the High Trips, 1976  
 Bestor Robinson, Thoughts on Conservation and the Sierra Club, 1974  
 Gordon Robinson, Forestry Consultant to the Sierra Club, 1979  
 James E. Rother, The Sierra Club in the Early 1900s, 1974  
 Tom Turner, A Perspective on David Brower and the Sierra Club, 1968-1969, 1982  
 Anne Van Tyne, Sierra Club Stalwart: Conservationist, Hiker, Chapter and Council Leader, 1981

In Process: George Alderson, Ruth Bradley, Robert Braun, Clyde S. Brooks, Estelle Brown, Hasse Bunnelle, Frank Duveneck, Joseph Fontaine, Robin Ives, Keith Lummis, George Marshall, James Moorman, Sigurd Olson

California State University, Fullerton--Southern Sierrans Project

Thomas Amneus, New Directions for the Angeles Chapter, 1977  
 Robert Bear, Desert Conservation and Exploration with the Sierra Club, 1946-1978, 1980  
 Irene Charnock, Portrait of a Sierra Club Volunteer, 1977

J. Gordon Chelew, Reflections of an Angeles Chapter Member, 1921-1975, 1976  
Arthur B. Johnson, Climbing and Conservation in the Sierra Club's Southern California Chapter, 1930-1960s, 1980  
Olivia R. Johnson, High Trip Reminiscences, 1904-1945, 1977  
E. Stanley Jones, Sierra Club Officer and Angeles Chapter Leader, 1931-1975, 1976  
Marion Jones, Reminiscences of the Southern California Sierra Club, 1927-1975, 1976  
Robert R. Marshall, Angeles Chapter Leader and Wilderness Spokesman, 1960s, 1977  
Dorothy Leavitt Pepper, High Trip High Jinks, 1976  
Roscoe and Wilma Poland, Desert Conservation: Voices from the Sierra Club's San Diego Chapter, 1980  
Richard Searle, Grassroots Sierra Club Leader, 1976

University of California, Berkeley--The Sierra Club and the Urban Environment

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER INNER CITY OUTINGS:

Patrick Colgan, "Just One of the Kids Myself," 1980  
Jordan Hall, Trial and Error: the Early Years, 1980  
Duff LaBoyteaux, Towards a National Sierra Club Program, 1980  
Marlene Sarnat, Laying the Foundations for ICO, 1980  
George Zuni, From the Inner City Out, 1980

SIERRA CLUB OUTREACH TO WOMEN:

Helen Burke, Women's Issues in the Environmental Movement, 1980

LABOR AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, 1960s-1970s:

David Jenkins, Environmental Controversies and the Labor Movement in the Bay Area, 1981  
Amy Meyer, Preserving Bay Area Parklands, 1981  
Anthony L. Ramos, A Labor Leader Concerned with the Environment, 1981  
Dwight C. Steele, Environmentalist and Labor Ally, 1981

SERIES PREFACE -- SIERRA CLUB REMINISCENCES

Sierra Club Reminiscences is a series of Sierra Club oral history interviews with club leaders and longtime members whose activities in the club span the past eighty years. It includes the interviews with seven men who served the club as president during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. It preserves the recollections of mountaineers and rock climbers in the Sierra Nevada and beyond, and it records the tales of early mountain outings as far back as 1909.

All of these interviews make apparent the roots of the Sierra Club in first-hand, often pioneering, experiences in the mountains of California. In addition, they demonstrate how an abiding love for these mountains led many of these individuals to engage in national campaigns to preserve park and wilderness areas. Thus, they validate the Sierra Club motto, "to explore, enjoy, and preserve." At the same time, this series sets the stage for interviews of the following generations of Club leaders who rose to prominence in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

Ann Lage, Cochair  
Sierra Club History Committee



Sierra Club Oral History Project

Lewis F. Clark

PERDURABLE AND PERIPATETIC SIERRAN:  
CLUB OFFICER AND OUTINGS LEADER,  
1928-1984

With an Introduction by  
Richard M. Leonard

An Interview Conducted by  
Marshall Kuhn  
1975-1977

Sierra Club History Committee  
1984

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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## INTRODUCTION

Lewis Frothingham Clark, born October 29, 1900, is by far the most consistent and devoted leader of the Sierra Club in its first ninety years. Except for Bob Price, "Little Joe" LeConte, and Will Colby, who were all elected from 1892 to 1900, Lewis Clark and Ansel Adams faithfully devoted more years to the deliberations of the board of directors than any other of the more than one hundred directors elected since then. Ansel served for thirty-seven years, from 1934 to 1971. Although Ansel was offered the responsibility of the presidency and service on the executive committee, he felt that the very widespread influence of his creative educational and informative photographs and books could accomplish more good for the environment in the long-run than he could contribute through administration.

Lewis Clark, on the other hand, served on the board of directors for thirty-six years, from 1933 to 1969, and for twenty-eight years on the executive committee, being selected to serve continuously for that period in every office of the Sierra Club. His valuable advice during that long period was recognized upon his retirement from the board in 1969 by unanimous election as honorary vice-president, an office he still holds in 1984, with continuing attendance at directors' meetings, to carry on more than a half-century of exceptional service to the Sierra Club.

The oral history that follows is a fascinating record of that generous lengthy work to carry on what John Muir had started so long ago in effectively protecting our natural environment.

Richard M. Leonard  
Honorary President  
Sierra Club  
Past President, 1953-1955

31 January 1984  
Berkeley, California



## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Lewis Clark's record of service to the Sierra Club is remarkable for its length, consistency, and variety. Joining the club in 1928 after a Sierra outing with congenial club members, Lewis soon was active in San Francisco Bay Chapter activities, in organizing club winter sports, and in building the Clair Tappaan ski lodge. The high esteem in which he was held by club elders and members resulted in his nomination and election to the board of directors in 1933, at the comparatively youthful age of thirty-two.

Lewis served on the board for the next thirty-six years, holding the offices of fifth officer, treasurer, secretary, vice-president, or president for twenty-eight of those years. After his retirement from the board in 1969, he continued to serve the club in many capacities, including trustee of the Sierra Club Foundation, chairman of the national judges of elections committee, history committee member, and leader of international outings. In 1974, Lewis received one of the club's highest honors, the Walter A. Starr Award, in recognition of his extraordinary service.

To record Lewis's rich recollections of his Sierra Club experiences, Marshall Kuhn, first chairman of the history committee, began a series of six oral history interviews with Lewis in November 1975. Covered here are Lewis's remembrances of his life in the San Francisco Bay Area from 1904 and his early mountain outings with the Sierra Club. These interviews are especially valuable for Lewis's recollections of early club leaders--he has known personally all but four of the Sierra Club's presidents. Since he also has remained in touch with the club leadership through the time of the interview, he gives here a valuable long-range view of trends in club politics and organization.

Since 1966, Lewis has been a leader in the club's international outings program, and an inveterate traveler on his own as well. His chronicle of trips to the mountains of Japan, Spain, New Zealand, Yugoslavia, and France include perceptive comments on Americans abroad, and on the purposes and the leadership problems of the club's international outings program.

Marshall Kuhn's interviews with Lewis concluded in September 1977, shortly before Marshall's death in 1978. Lewis's busy travel schedule and his many volunteer commitments postponed the completion of the editing and processing of the interview transcript. The transcript now has been carefully edited, with Lewis adding elaborative comments and rewriting some portions for clarity. An additional interview with Lewis, focusing on the Clair Tappaan ski lodge, is still in process.

Ann Lage, Cochair  
Sierra Club History Committee  
Interview Editor

Oakland, California  
April 3, 1984





## I FAMILY, YOUTH, AND EDUCATION IN THE BAY AREA, 1904-1924

[Interview 1: November 22, 1975]##

Early Impressions of Nature in Marin County

Kuhn: This is the first in a series of oral interviews of Lewis Clark, past president of the Sierra Club, in Mr. Clark's home at 1349 Bay Street in Alameda, California, on November 22, 1975. The interviewer is Marshall Kuhn, chairman of the club's history committee.

Clark: My father was born in Arlington, Massachusetts, where his family had lived for several generations, and my mother was born in nearby Cambridge. My father's birthday was February 8, 1870, and my mother's was December 31, 1869. Mother oftentimes said that if she had been born a few hours later she'd have been a year younger.

I was born October 29, 1900, in Boston General Hospital, although my parents were living in Cambridge. My father was very strongly decided to get away from the long tradition of the family establishment in eastern Massachusetts. He had studied civil engineering, and he decided to come to California, where he thought life would be better. So he came to San Francisco alone to explore the possibilities. Within a matter of months, he sent for his wife and small child. So I had my fourth birthday on the train.

I believe that train travel across the continent made a very early impression upon me. I can't remember individual incidents of what happened on the train, but I think that my love of train travel perhaps was influenced by that experience.

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 131.

Clark: We lived in Mill Valley, on the second story of a house just across the road beside a stream on the far side of which was the railroad. Steam trains used to run between Sausalito beside San Francisco Bay and the center of Mill Valley, then as now a sort of cul de sac at the foot of Mount Tamalpais.

The most scary thing I can remember was the earthquake, April 18, 1906. I don't know how long it lasted, but it was a very terrifying thing to me. We were all shaken up; then my father tried to reassure me and mother that we would all be safe.

The family continued to live in the house. But the chimney was cracked so we had to do our cooking out in the backyard for a while until they decided we could cook in the house again.

Mother was carrying my brother, but I didn't know it then. He was born on July 9, 1906, in San Rafael, where Mother was waiting in a home hospital for the birth. Then she returned to our home in Mill Valley.

Later the family moved to another house in the same large block but on the north side facing the mountain. I don't know whether this move was an outcome of the earthquake. I remember looking up one morning at our splendid view of the mountain and seeing the great massive mountain almost down to the town covered with gleaming snow. I've wondered since whether this early impression influenced my later absorption in mountaineering and skiing. My father became city engineer of Mill Valley. Being by training a civil engineer, he did quite a bit of surveying of lots here and there in addition to his duties as city engineer. He also got the job to lay out the railroad from the Double Bow Knot down to Muir Woods. He designed and engineered that extension of the famous mountain railroad. Trains operated on the extension for several years, but later they were discontinued, and the ties and rails were removed.\*

In more recent years I've hiked down the trail that follows the old railroad bed and realized with special interest that this was the location that my father chose.

I guess my first experience with being on Mount Tamalpais was when my father and mother walked up the trail to the top of the mountain and Dad carried me piggyback on his shoulders. I had an early indoctrination in hiking in Marin County.

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\*Lewis's father was William Lewis Clark, known professionally as W. Lewis Clark. His mother was Mary French Cheney Clark.

Family Home in Alameda, 1908

Clark: By 1908 my father had decided to move out of Mill Valley. He designed a house, similar to a New England four-square house but with his own modifications. He subscribed for several years to the House Beautiful magazine. I used to like to pore over these magazines. He bought this lot where we are now in Alameda and soon contracted for building the house. We moved in the later part of 1908. There were two huge oak trees in the backyard, on one of which my father put up a rope swing. Both of those trees have long gone and been replaced by others grown from acorns.

Unfortunately, some of his savings were invested in a San Francisco bank which failed. Abe Ruef, a prominent San Francisco politician, had something to do with the bank. I've always been under the impression he was a consummate crook.

As a result of the bank failure, my father lost a lot of his savings so he couldn't finish the house. The exterior part of the house was completed and some of the rooms. One of these was the kitchen where we are now sitting. This vertical tongue and groove siding was part of the original building, as was the pine tongue and groove floor. Of course it's been done over--the cracks filled and the whole thing repainted. The original floor has been sanded down, cracks filled and the wood, which is very hard, now has been lacquered. The chamber upstairs is a bedroom which was finished off and occupied by the family. The rest of the house was unfinished with two-by-four studs uncovered, and diagonal underfloor boards. This constituted a fascinating room where I amused myself by playing with blocks of two-by-fours and four-by-fours. I had a lot of fun just building things. Dad didn't need to buy building blocks at the store; I just played with what was available here.

At Christmas time we would cut some branches from the backyard somewhere and decorate the living room, quite a rustic affair.

Father built the big fireplace while we were living here. Mother would read to him about the travels of the Lewis and Clark expedition and other library books. She also soaked the bricks in a pail of water. He would take out the wet bricks and lay them into the fireplace with mortar he mixed. (If you lay dry bricks in a wall, they absorb the moisture out of the mortar, and you don't get a lasting solid bond.) Dad bought a lot of clinker bricks and used them to face the fireplace. He and Mother conferred on the esthetic design. In those days clinkers were cheaper than perfect bricks. Now they cost a premium.

Kuhn: Where did you first go to school?

Clark: In Mill Valley. When we moved to Alameda, I transferred to the old Mastick School, just a block from home. Many years ago the old three-story building was replaced by the present one-story Mastick School on the same site. The name memorialized George D. Mastick, an important citizen of the city in the earlier days.

Incidentally, when I had to qualify for my social security certificate, there was a problem in getting written documentation for my birthday, although the family had no doubt about it. When I wrote back to Boston in the sixties to get a record of my birth certificate, something had happened to the records in Boston, and they couldn't find the exact document.

So I established the date from family records and also from the fact that the school records here in Alameda showed that I had first entered the school system in Mill Valley. The data were sufficient to establish my birthdate for social security records.

Father pursued his surveying and engineering work when we first lived in Alameda. Then in 1912 he got an appointment as the first division engineer for southern California under the newly established California Highway Commission. The state had passed a twelve million dollar bond issue (which they thought was a lot of money in those days) to build a state highway, which had as a primary purpose connecting all county seats with a modern system of concrete highways. Father moved his family to Los Angeles, where we rented a two-story house on West Thirty-first Street close to Main Street. By this time my widowed maternal grandmother had moved across the country from Cambridge to Los Angeles and married Thomas J. Lyford, a man she had met in Massachusetts.

Grandma Lyford had first lived on two-block long Clay Street above Hill Street in Los Angeles for several years. I used to travel by train from San Francisco to Los Angeles to visit Grandma. Usually I went in the company of Harry Coffin, a friend of the family who often traveled. One year Mother and my brother and I spent part of the summer with Grandma. When the family moved to Los Angeles in 1912 Grandma and her husband came to live with us on West Thirty-first Street. Mr. Lyford passed away while we lived there. During the four years we lived in Los Angeles, I went to school at Thirtieth Street Intermediate School, which was only a block and a half away.

Clark: Since then, on a visit to Los Angeles, I tried in vain to find the house we lived in. While we lived in the Thirty-first Street home, my brother and I had two horned toads. We loved these grotesque little creatures and named them John Muir and Joseph LeConte. I don't know why we chose the names, but I guess the names of John Muir and Joseph LeConte were significant in my boyhood.

Father, A Sierra Club Member, 1905

Kuhn: Was your father a member of the Sierra Club?

Clark: That's rather interesting. Yes, he was for a few years. While we were living in Mill Valley, about 1905, perhaps, he joined the Sierra Club. He went on some hikes with other club members in Marin County. Maybe I went along too. I may have met John Muir, although I have no recollection of him. After the earthquake and a baby in the family and his financial reverses, my father gave up his club membership. For about twenty years our family had no connection with the Sierra Club until 1928 when I became a member.

Father was tall and slender, about six feet, very strong and very active. He always liked the out-of-doors.

Kuhn: Was your brother Nathan your only sibling?

Clark: Yes. Only the two of us.

Kuhn: When did your family return to Alameda from Los Angeles?

Clark: In 1915. My father was transferred from his job with the state in Los Angeles up to San Francisco, as division engineer of Division IV. Our family moved back to our house in Alameda, which had been unoccupied while we were in the south. By this time Father could afford a contractor to finish up the house interior, plastering, paneling, etc.

I entered Alameda High School and graduated in 1918. Then came the devastating flu epidemic. Many people died. I was very sick for a while, but managed to recover okay.

Then I went to the University of California in Berkeley. I studied electrical engineering, a department under the supervision of Clarence Cory, Dean of Mechanical Engineering. I graduated in 1922, receiving my B.S. diploma in the Greek Theatre in June.

Kuhn: When you were in Los Angeles as a boy, did you perceive any difference between that community and Mill Valley and Alameda?

Clark: One difference that I recall was that in Los Angeles the air was much clearer than it was later. I observed a kind of a high haze in the air above Los Angeles. Although the sun was shining brightly, the sky was not as deep blue and the shadows were not as sharp as they were around the Bay Area at that time. In the Bay Area we had no smog at all, and there were a great many days in the San Francisco area when the sky was very blue and the air was very clear.

Kuhn: Did you ever live out in the country?

Clark: No, I've always been an urbanite. From Boston to Cambridge to Mill Valley to Alameda to Los Angeles and back to Alameda. I've spent all my life, except for travels, as a city dweller. Probably that's one of the reasons why I've liked the out-of-doors so much, and later on as opportunity afforded, went into the mountains as a young man. I realized that there was more to life than living in a city.

When I first lived in Mill Valley, for example, there were a number of houses in the block, but most of the block was vacant. Right behind our house was a low fence and beyond it a great field where cows were pastured. I used to watch the milking of the cows. In fact, I think I was permitted to try it myself at times.

Kuhn: Right back of town?

Clark: Right back of our house.

#### The Bay Area "Urban Scene," 1910s

Kuhn: You were living in cities, but nonetheless you chose small-sized cities, Mill Valley and Alameda, as compared with big cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Clark: I didn't choose them, my parents chose them.

Kuhn: That's true; it's an urban setting, but not a great metropolitan setting.

Clark: But always living in an individual house, not in an apartment. Temporarily I've dwelled in apartments, but my home was always an individual house. I think that that's why I'm reluctant to leave this house now. My life style is adjusted to an individual home.

When we first came to Alameda there was only one house in the entire block across the street. That house on Sherman Street was occupied by the Neal family, residents here since the 1890s. It has since been removed. All the other houses in the block were built after we came. Across Bay Street the lot was fenced and horses grazed. In my youth I was certainly used to seeing animals, cows, chickens, horses, and in the fields, rodents, small snakes and of course many birds.

Kuhn: What sort of things did you do in high school as far as either preferences in studies or hobbies or sports?

Clark: I always got along well in classes. I wasn't a brilliant student, but I generally got A's and B's, rarely a C. I did not go in for sports. My father was not a sportsman, and I just didn't tend that way. I played some baseball, but I wasn't on any sports teams.

However, I did a great deal of hiking in the Oakland hills, often by myself and sometimes with a companion. In 1916 I joined the Boy Scouts, which were just starting in Alameda. One of the organizers was Dr. William Barkley Stephens. His two sons and I were, along with other boys, charter members of Troop 3. We met in the basement of Dr. Stephen's home, one block south on Bay Street. He lived to be ninety, plus or minus a little bit.

Dr. Stephens, the elder, was a very distinguished man and the leading eye doctor in Alameda. He first came from the East (Kentucky or Tennessee, I think) to San Francisco, where he established his medical office. Then he moved to his fine home. Later both his sons followed their father's profession and practiced in Alameda. Our leading eye doctor is Dr. Barclay Stephens, the second son.

It was in his basement that we had our first Boy Scout meeting. When I joined the scouts I was already sixteen, but I thought, "This is something I'd be interested in." And I was. I became a patrol leader and, in due course, senior patrol leader, assistant scoutmaster, acting scoutmaster, and field scout commissioner.

Kihn: Was your brother a Scout?

Clark: No. Nate never cared for scouting. When I first joined he was too young. Later I tried in vain to get him interested. He was particularly interested in doing mechanical and electrical things with his hands.

Later while in high school he built a "shop" behind our garage. It had an elaborate system of switches, circuits, and lights. It's not surprising, knowing his early inclinations along these lines, that he finally became manager of the Electrical Research Department of Lockheed in Burbank.

Kuhn: What other notable people lived in Alameda that you remember?

Clark: Well, first comes to mind, Dr. William Tappan Lum from New England. I stress the spelling because later on I met Clair Tappaan, who spelled it with two a's, in the second syllable. That is Dutch, I believe.

When I knew him, William Tappan Lum lived in a mansion on the corner of Bay Street and San Antonio Avenue, next to Dr. Stephens. Dr. Lum was a practitioner, and our family went to him for medical advice. However, our family was pretty healthy. We didn't have much need of a doctor. Dr. Lum's sons, Donald and Paul, were my contemporaries in high school, although they were in classes ahead of me, as I remember it.

My family didn't have a private auto in those days, but of course Dr. Lum had one. He had his office down on Park Street. At noon he would drive from his office on Park Street past the high school on Central Avenue. The Lum boys and a lot of other kids, including me, would jump on Dr. Lum's car until we were hanging onto the running boards. As many as twenty boys would thus get a ride toward home for lunch. By the time we got down to Bay Street most of them had dropped off. Frequently I'd get a ride back to high school because we all got out together. In the mornings and after school I walked between home and high school.

One of my favorite individual sports was to walk along the south shore. There was no development then, only a long shelving tideland beach. At high tide the bay waters came right up to the bulkheads which protected the shore homes. Some of the walls were stone or concrete, some were wood. For me it was fun to try to work my way along the tops of the walls or along the narrow edges outside the fences all the way from the south end of Oak Street west to Bay Street. Some of the passages were quite challenging.

Perhaps that's why I took to rock climbing later because I had gained some skill hanging onto narrow ledges.



Kuhn: Alameda is pretty flat. I was wondering if you traveled by bicycle.

Clark: Yes, I had a bicycle. I went to school by bicycle part of the time, although a good deal of the time I walked. I also went on trips into the hills on my bicycle.

Kuhn: Did your father commute by ferry boat?

Clark: Yes, indeed, during the period he worked for the state in San Francisco. Later his state work was out of Sacramento, and he lived in the capital city, coming home to see the family periodically.

During our first sojourn in Alameda, steam trains used to go by within a house-lot of our home. The south side loop train went on Encinal Avenue and then other trains came up from the Alameda mole along Central Avenue past Bay Street, then took Encinal Avenue at Sherman Street. The north side loop trains ran on Lincoln Avenue, originally called Railroad Avenue.

Incidentally, Railroad Avenue was where the first transcontinental trains came to San Francisco Bay. They ran from Fruitvale across the marshland to the peninsula of Alameda to the terminal on the wooden Mole. From there ferry boats took passengers and freight to San Francisco. Later the Oakland mole was built, and the transcontinental trains terminated there. Through the marshlands at the northeast end of Alameda a ship channel was cut connecting San Antonio estuary with San Leandro Bay and thus making an island of the city of Alameda. What had been beach and bay south of Alameda was later filled to create the land on which the Naval Air Station of Alameda is now located.

Kuhn: Did you yourself go to San Francisco very often?

Clark: No. I do remember one thing quite definitely, though. After the earthquake, Father went to San Francisco from Mill Valley, and I tagged along beside him, clinging to his hand. There seemed to be a lot of things that were very difficult to get over, board walks, destruction blocks. Besides the buildings damaged by the quake and the resulting fires, many buildings were demolished to make way for reconstruction.

Kuhn: You're speaking, of course, of the damage in San Francisco. Was there much earthquake damage in Mill Valley?

Clark: Not much, no. Almost all the buildings in Mill Valley were wooden one- and two-story structures, and they withstood the quake. Some chimneys were damaged, and they had to be checked over and in some cases restored. But, so far as I knew, there were no fires in Mill Valley as a result of the quake.

However, on my trips to San Francisco I had to cope with those irregular sidewalks, go past those cavernous holes where buildings had been.

Kuhn: Did that bother you?

Clark: Yes. As a five-year-old, I found it scary and difficult.

Kuhn: Did you ever visit Golden Gate Park?

Clark: Yes. Our family used to go to Golden Gate Park many times because we loved the out-of-doors. We would walk through the park from where we get off a train in San Francisco at the edge of the park. Then we would walk through the park all the way to the ocean and back again. We'd listen to the band concerts in the same court where the concerts are still given.

Kuhn: Lew, how about those long summer vacations while you were in high school?

Clark: Well, scout camp occupied part of several summers. The first scout camp for Alameda was near the Mirabel mine on the north side of Mount St. Helena. Edward Albert, a school principal in Alameda, was scoutmaster of Troop 2, and he was also the camp director, a tall white-haired man with whom most boys felt a rapport. Later I was a leader at Camp Stephens, set up near Pinecrest on the shore of Strawberry Lake. I was a leader. Then I liked to go on hikes around the Bay Area.

Kuhn: You mentioned going on some auto trips, yet your family had no car. How was that?

Clark: When my family moved to Los Angeles in 1912 the state provided my father with a car as part of his job. I do remember helping him grease the Cadillac, working in the tent in the backyard. We didn't build a garage, but father thought he ought to keep it covered so he put up a tent. I held the light while Father greased the car, going carefully over every grease nipple with a hand-operated grease gun. He was very conscientious about that. He never used the car for family travel. Later on when we came to

Clark: Alameda my father bought a Chrysler--the first Chrysler sold in Oakland and the third in the Bay Area. As an engineer, he always studied the specifications of things. He decided that the early 1924 Chrysler was the car of the future. We had it in the family for well over ten years and logged more than 150,000 miles. After Father quit driving I continued to drive it.

Kuhn: How often did you go to Oakland?

Clark: As a boy my family used to go to Oakland on the streetcar every Saturday to the Free Market to buy supplies. I always hated it. I was obliged to go along, but it was crowded. I wasn't buying anything. A lot of children go into a market and get restless and unhappy that they have to tag along. I didn't like the Free Market, but my family had to live economically.

Kuhn: Was this like a farmers' market?

Clark: Yes, exactly. It was about at Sixth and Washington for many years. Besides the Free Market we did other shopping in Oakland. Capwell's for household things. Simon's Hardware for tools. At one period Mother and I went quite regularly on Saturdays to the T & D theater to see movies. Quite different from the kind they later seemed to specialize in.

Kuhn: In Alameda you lived fairly close to the water and there were public baths along the south shore. Did you go swimming or wading or clamming?

Clark: I was afraid of the water, at first. It was quite a long time before I ventured to go swimming--alone, as my father didn't swim. Lots of the Alameda kids used to go swimming, but I was apprehensive. One time, I went down along to the foot of St. Charles Street just to try it out so I wouldn't be made fun of by the kids who saw I couldn't swim very well. I waded gingerly into the shallow water, then was embarrassed to realize I was still wearing my wool cap. In those days we wore bathing suits with a top. I felt so stupid that I had forgotten to take my cap off. As I splashed around I saw it floating. A little incident, though not forgotten. I went a few times to Neptune Beach after it was established. I cannot remember patronizing Cottage Baths, which was a popular development west of Neptune Beach.

One time earlier, while I was wandering along the beach, I came upon a bunch of boys, all older than I, who were cutting up "stingrees." They had caught quite a number of the flat fish in the shallow water. I watched, fascinated but repelled, as they would cut up the fish just for the hell of it. I didn't participate in the dissection.

Kuhn: Did you have any pets of your own?

Clark: Only one. When we lived in Los Angeles, Nate and I each had a pet horned toad as I mentioned earlier. Unfortunately they got lost after a couple of years.

Kuhn: One of my childhood memories was going in an old Model T Ford from San Francisco by ferry boat to Alameda and driving to San Leandro to buy a box of cherries. It was all open country. Quite a change from the way it is built up now.

Clark: One amusing incident about using the ferries has always stuck in my mind. At the time I'm talking about the steam trains had been replaced by the electric trains. The big red cars that later were so famous on the Pacific Electric runs in southern California were originally operated by the Southern Pacific in the East Bay cities from Berkeley, Oakland, and Alameda to connect with ferries which steamed between the Alameda and Oakland Moles to the Ferry Building in San Francisco.

Well, the particular incident began when Father took the Alameda train to the ferry, while Mother was supposed to follow and bring me along. There was a mix up somewhere. Mother and I caught the next train at Morton Station and we got off at the ferry pier. Father was supposed to meet us before we went on the boat. He wasn't there. We waited. Everyone else got on the boat, and it departed but no Father. Where was he? Mother concluded that he'd gone to San Francisco. The next boat was about twenty to thirty minutes later. She took the boat to San Francisco with me. We got over there, and Father wasn't there. We decided maybe he'd gone back to Alameda. We crisscrossed the bay several times. Several hours went by before we finally met.

Many years later I went through this same kind of a misunderstanding when long-time friends, Phil Faulconer and Charlotte Mauk, and I were taking a ferry from the Washington mainland to the San Juan Islands. I had gotten out of our car to take pictures and then boarded the ferry, believing that Phil and Charlotte rode onto the ferry also, although I somehow missed seeing them. Well, we wasted hours trying to get together, which we did at last.

University Education, Berkeley and MIT

Kuhn: Tell me about your life at Berkeley?

Clark: I went to college in Berkeley for four years, but I lived continuously here in Alameda. I commuted by streetcar. I had no automobile and from a time standpoint, if no other, it was too far for biking.

Kuhn: How did you choose electrical engineering?

Clark: I'm not sure. [pause] Although my father was a very competent civil engineer, I was inclined, while in high school toward electrical engineering. I thought about all the things that electricity could do, and I realized it would be an important source of energy in the future, so I decided I wanted to pursue electrical engineering.

Kuhn: Did you have any outside interests while you were at Berkeley?

Clark: No, except the Scouts. I mentioned to you earlier that I was closely devoted to scouting. I stayed with the Boy Scouts all the time that I was in high school and into the college years.

I liked the out-of-doors activities in the Scouts. I didn't particularly care for sports like football, baseball and so on. I played a little baseball, but I never was very good at it and I decided to pursue these other things.

I think, Marshall, as I look back upon it, I always must have had an inclination to be an "organization man" and I worked through the organization where I had some status as a Scout leader from the days that I was first in the Scouts, until today. I've always been associated with the management of the organization with which I affiliated myself.

Kuhn: Scouting was so different then because now they start at the age of eleven, instead of twelve, and the cubs start even younger.

Clark: Scouting and my increasingly demanding college studies kept me busy. In 1922 my father offered me an opportunity to go to MIT for a while, and I was glad to accept it. So in the fall of 1922 I went back to Boston, enrolled as a graduate student at MIT and found lodging in Cambridge.

Kuhn: Did you go there directly from Berkeley?

Clark: Father offered to subsidize my postgraduate study at MIT. He had wanted to go to MIT as a boy, but he didn't have enough money. He graduated from Tufts College, then located in Somerville [Massachusetts]. He got a good education there, but he was ambitious for his first-born to go to MIT, if possible.

I had been working at various jobs, and I had gotten some money together. So in the fall of '22 (after my June graduation in Berkeley) I went to Boston by trains to study electrical engineering at MIT.

Kuhn: Did you have any relatives still living in that vicinity?

Clark: Yes. Quite a number. I didn't live with my relatives, however. After all, I was only twenty-one, and I was determined to be on my own if possible.

I found lodging west of Cambridgeport, about a mile from MIT. Of course, I walked back and forth to school. Then after several months I moved to the Cambridge YMCA, which was right at Cambridgeport, an important shopping center on Massachusetts Avenue.

That's where I really learned to swim. At Cal, I took physical ed classes at the Berkeley Y under university auspices. I learned to swim well enough to meet the proficiency requirements to progress to my junior year. I continued my swimming at the Strawberry Canyon Pool on the campus and got to like it.

When I lived at the Y in Cambridge, I did a lot of swimming. I went to a life saving summer camp and became a swimming instructor at the YMCA, getting paid for my time and effort.

Kuhn: How long did you stay at MIT?

Clark: I was there for four years, all together, but unfortunately I did not graduate. After a year of graduate study I got an appointment as an instructor in the electrical engineering department under Professor Dr. Frederick A. Laws. Although I continued my research studies, I found much of my time absorbed in reading and correcting lab class reports. It has been a matter of deep personal regret that I didn't manage to arrange my affairs to get the master's degree I was seeking. There were family reasons, though. My father had been let out of his state job through a political shakeup. He had become ill. I thought I had better come back to California, although MIT offered to keep me on as an instructor. I can see clearly now that if I had stayed for another year I probably would have gotten my degree--and I would have been better off in the long run. Also my father would have liked that much better, but somehow I couldn't see it at the time.

Cross-Country by Car, 1924

Kuhn: While you were at MIT did you come back to California to visit?

Clark: Yes, and that leads to another interesting chapter in my exploring of our country.

During my second year at MIT, I used to go to dinner at the small public dining room at the YWCA, near the Cambridgeport YMCA where I lived. A lot of students, and other men and women, patronized this little dining room. We bought a meal ticket good for about a month of dinners. At the table I usually sat at there was a very interesting group of fellows. They were from all over the country. I met another chap from California, and one evening he said to me, "How would you like to drive out to California next summer?" I was thinking of going back home for a visit so I said, "Sure. Maybe I would. Sounds kind of interesting." We started to dicker. He wanted me to drive his car, without him, to northern California. I began to look around for some other MIT friends that might want to go to California with me. After a while the deal with the first chap fell through.

However, I had discovered some friends that were still interested. Malcolm Finley was one of them. I had met him when we were spectators at a swim meet when the MIT team was competing. He was a senior at MIT, and his brother, Wendell, was going to college in Ohio. The Finleys were from Santa Ana, California. Mr. Finley, senior, put up the money for us to buy a new 1924 Model T Ford. We found another MIT student, Parker Sharp, who was enthused about our proposed trip. He was the son of a wealthy Texas oil magnate, who said he'd be glad to share expenses on the way, but he didn't participate in the investment in the car. The rest of us were not exactly poor, but we certainly were not rich.

In June I took the train from Boston to Monmouth, Ohio, and met Wendell and his brother Malcolm. After a couple of days of getting organized, the Finleys and I began the long drive westward across the plains. It was great fun to be on our own, although the Finley family had provided our five-passenger touring car Model T.

In Denver we visited my Aunt Lizzie, my mother's sister, and her husband, Dr. Duren J. H. Ward--a very learned scholar from New England. He had several degrees from European universities, but they lived in very modest circumstances. Dr. Ward was a brilliant man, ahead of his time.

Clark: Soon we drove to Estes Park in the mountains. The little Model T had a planetary transmission and three foot pedals with gas and spark controls on the steering column. We aimed to drive up to Milner Pass, around twelve thousand feet. We had to keep one foot on the low gear pedal all the way we were climbing. We took turns driving, but it was my turn to drive quite a bit of the way up, and I had to brace one foot against the other because one foot got tired pushing on this pedal continuously.

We did get to the top of the pass, eventually. We had quite a thrill eating our watermelon in the sharp mountain air with snow banks all around.

On our way to Yellowstone Park we picked up Parker Sharp, by appointment. He had come this far by train from Texas, thus avoiding the tedious slow drive across the plains. In the park were many people but the "crowds" in those days were much fewer than they were in the sixties when I visited Yellowstone under far different circumstances. We slept on the ground in sleeping bags enwrapped in a heavy waterproof cover. We aimed to make the park road loop but we had to use the low gear of the car so much, what with the steep grades and all our baggage, that when we got to the Geyser Basin at Old Faithful we had to spend a couple of extra days getting a new band installed in the transmission.

One of the side trips we made was into the Lamar Valley, in the northeast corner of the park. There I saw my first wild antelope. Bounding over the fields they outraced our Ford.

Another interesting side trip was driving to the top of Mount Washburn. The road was steep and winding and on several pitches. Since we were getting up kind of high we all got out except Malcolm, the driver, and pushed the car, then ran to catch up as it lurched ahead. Eventually we got to the top. In the meantime, a tour bus came along. With its powerful big engine there was no need to push although the driver had it grinding along in low gear quite often. A lady, one of those portly tourists, who was sitting in the front seat, remarked to somebody else when they got up, "Oh, we had to work so hard to get up to the top of this mountain, you know." All she had to do was to sit in the car, and here we'd been jumping in and out of our car and pushing it to make it. Somehow or other I got a lasting impression of these tourists who felt sorry for themselves, when they hadn't really worked at all.

We continued northward to Glacier National Park. My friends and I visited several of the east side valleys and hiked over the pass to the Granite Park Chalet to spend one night. We noticed



Clark: that the log chalet had heavy shutters at the windows armed with big spikes. "Protection from bears," they told us. "It's not a good idea to camp out, around here," Several hikers who were sleeping on the ground were mauled to death by a bear or two. There was a great deal of furor about the bears killing tourists in the national parks. But way back in 1924 they had a bear problem, and we were warned about not sleeping out and we didn't.

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Next day we all hiked along the Garden Wall trail and decided to go to the Sun Chalet beside Lake Mary. Next day would be a long eighteen miles back to the Many Glacier Hotel campground where we'd left our car. So we signed up for an escorted horseback trip. This was partly for Malcolm's sake because he had a permanent limp--the result of a polio attack many years earlier.

Our horseback party rode up to another pass for a picnic lunch, then down to Many Glacier Hotel. It was my first experience riding a horse for any length of time. We had at least ten miles of narrow trails where the horse had been trained to walk on the outside edge of the trail so that he wouldn't brush the rider against the wall on the inside. I could look over the horse's belly, and see nothing but space below us. A very thrilling ride for me.

Next day we were all kind of stiff from the riding. So we decided to loosen up by hiking up to Iceberg Lake which was seven miles up and seven miles back. By the time we returned, we had gotten over all our soreness.

On another summer trip between my terms at MIT, I had a fascinating adventure with a couple of different MIT students. Killian Van Renseller Lansingh, son of a wealthy New York family, proposed to me that we buy a Chevrolet and be the first ones to drive clear across Canada from Halifax to Victoria entirely on Canadian territory.

I mention some of these things because I think they have some bearing upon my interest in the out-of-doors. Evidently I was fairly strong for going ahead.

We got back to Alameda. I'd returned from MIT. I worked on several little jobs for a while and finally got a job at the phone company in San Francisco in December, 1926, I think it was. I stayed with the telephone company as a traffic assistant and later on became an engineer. My final title upon leaving the company when I retired in 1965 was staff engineer.

## II MOUNTAIN OUTINGS WITH THE SIERRA CLUB, 1928-1930s

### The Stuart Ward Party in Kings Canyon, 1928

Clark: In the meantime, where does the Sierra Club come in? [laughing] By 1928 my brother had graduated from the University of California. He had a friend by the name of Ed Kimbard who said he was going on a trip with Stuart Ward. They were going to have a party down in the Sierras, and it sounded very interesting. A lot of Sierra Club people came. The Sierra Club outing that year went to Canada, I think. So Ed came back and induced my brother to go along with him, and Nate induced me to go along. Nate and I went on the Ward party.

My brother and I went over to the Oakland pier and got on the train. We didn't know any member of this party, nobody. I'd never hiked in the Sierras on an organized trip like that. I'd been to Yosemite a couple of times with small Scout groups and so on. We woke up in the morning down near Visalia somewhere and began to meet the people. A lot of them, in fact almost all of them, were Sierra Club members. I was not, and Nathan wasn't.

We found it a very congenial group. One of the leaders at that time in the group was Frank Lewis, who later lived with his wife, Agnes, in San Jose. Another member who was on the Ward party was John Mazza. He'd been quite active in the club. Of course, he was older than I. Another was Alka Pasco. He was a Christian Science practitioner. He had a bamboo staff, a very nicely selected staff about five feet high, that he carried around with him. Later on he told me how I could get one. I felt this was a good thing to have when you're walking in the mountains. That's another story. F. E. Crofts was on that trip. He was a high school teacher in San Francisco, again, quite a bit older than I. Harriet Parsons and Helen LeConte were both on the Ward party also.

Kuhn: Is this Stuart Richardson Ward who later became executive secretary of the Commonwealth Club?

Clark: He was then connected with the Commonwealth Club. I don't know what his title was. He had just gotten married the year before and taken a honeymoon trip in the mountains. He thought this was such a good idea, and he was quite an organization man anyway, that he organized this group of people the following year, 1928, to go on the Ward party.

Kuhn: I had a high school principal at Lowell named Francis Crofts.

Clark: That might have been the one. It was F. E. Crofts.

Kuhn: You say he was quite a bit older.

Clark: He was at least ten years older than I, because I was in my mid-twenties. I thought of him as being an older man. He was a very delightful person on a trail. He knew a lot about the out-of-doors, quite an intellectual man. I sort of took to him.

Kuhn: Where did you go on this trip?

Clark: We went to Visalia on the train and then to buses and went to Lodgepole, I guess. Then we hiked down into the Kings River Canyon. I'm not just sure of the exact route. After we hiked down into Kings Canyon we went up to a little meadow at the head of Kings Canyon on the west side, I've forgotten the name.

One of the men on this trip was Bob Lipman, and Steven Wycoff was a youngster. Later on Bob Lipman became treasurer of the Sierra Club. We were camped at Sphinx Creek. Lipman was going to lead a party to climb Mount Brewer. They invited me and Nate to go along. We were just youngsters, and we were all kind of active. So we set out early in the morning, just barely dawn, had some oatmeal mush and cocoa (I didn't drink coffee in those days). We had some lunch with us, and we went up Sphinx Creek and approached Mount Brewer and climbed it from the north side. This was the first real mountain climbing that I had done with Sierra Club people. I had climbed Mount Rainier back in 1924 when I had been with the Finleys. I didn't tell you much about that, but anyway I had climbed Mount Rainier. I later climbed Mount Shasta with the Sierra Club.

Anyway we climbed Mount Brewer and then we went down the east side, back down to the Kings River. By this time the rest of the group moved on, up the canyon to the Hutchinson Meadows.

Kuhn: How many were in the total party?

Clark: There must have been about sixty or so, all told.

I remember we had that long climb. It's really one of the steepest climbs in the whole Kings Canyon. From the Roaring River-- I guess that was where we came down from the climb of Brewer (you can't come down all the way, you have to detour around a bit)-- we came down into the Kings Canyon and then we went up into Hutchinson Meadows where the group was camped.

I remember I insisted on going into the stream there and taking a bath because we were hot and sweaty. Some people said, "Come on. You're late now, get some supper." I said I was going to get my bath in first, and I did. [laughing] Then I had supper.

Kanawyer's, by the way, was in Kings Canyon. Do you know the Kanawyer Cabin at the head of the main Kings Canyon valley?

Kuhn: I've heard the name.

Clark: Kanawyer operated the log cabin there. I remember when we first came through there we stopped in and bought a bottle of coke or something.

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Clark: We went from the Kings Canyon up over Glen Pass into the Mirror Lakes area. There was quite a bit of snow on the north side of Glen Pass. One of the horses got trapped in the snow, and the packer had to shoot the horse. This was the first time I'd encountered anything like that. It was quite an experience to find that the horse had to be shot. The party did go on across because most of us were hiking. We crossed the snow bank and went on down to Mirror Lakes and camped there. We climbed Finn Dome.

Part of the party was going to stay for three weeks. My brother and I had to get back so we left the party and hiked out down the Kings Canyon, past Kanawyer's, in the general direction of Lodgepole and eventually came out.

That was the first experience that I had had with Sierra Club people, although I knew that my father had belonged to the Sierra Club way back earlier when I was a small boy.

"Little Joe" LeConte, a Sierra Club Sponsor

Clark: One of the questions you have here is, "Why did I join the Sierra Club?" I think it was because I liked the people that I found there. That's one of the reasons why Clair Tappaan joined the Sierra Club. He was in the Kings Canyon, met Colby's party and thought they were a pretty nice bunch of people, and thought he'd like to join up with them. My reasons were similar, you might say. But I had been active in the Boy Scouts for a long time, and I thought I'd be interested in something more adult than the Scouts.

I called up the Sierra Club office and talked with Virginia Ferguson. I said that I'd been on the Ward party and was interested in joining the club. "What do I have to do?" You had to get two sponsors in those days. "Do you know Francis Farquhar?" I didn't know Francis Farquhar too well. He was the editor of the [Sierra Club] Bulletin. I said, "I know Joseph LeConte. He was one of my professors at the University of California."

To go back just a little bit about Joe LeConte, I took a course in engineering mechanics from him when I was a sophomore. Little Joe was very particular about people being there on time. I had to come all the way from Alameda. Sometimes it was kind of a struggle to get there on time. The streetcar would leave me off down by Sather Gate, and I'd have to run across the campus and over to the engineering building (the classes were held in the Hearst Mining Building, I think), but I managed to get there on time. One time one boy came in late about fifteen minutes. LeConte was so upset by this man coming in late that he said, "Gentlemen, I can't go on if you can't be here on time," and he picked up his papers and left. That was the end of the class. That was one incident about Joe LeConte. After that people got there on time or didn't come at all. They used to take roll in those days. If you didn't come, you'd get docked with an absence.

Kuhn: When you say you took the streetcar, did it go over a bridge from here?

Clark: Yes. That was before the tube. We went over the Webster Street Bridge. There's no bridge there now.

Kuhn: If there was ship traffic would that bridge go up?

Clark: No, it swung. It was a turning bridge. There were two bridges across the estuary near Webster Street. One was for the streetcars and vehicular traffic, and the other was for the railroad. Later

Clark: on they took the railroad bridge out and it was discontinued all together. The only railroad bridge which is still in existence is up near Fruitvale Avenue. The Webster Street Bridge was later replaced by the Posey Tube, which got very, very crowded because it was only one lane in each direction. Eventually they put in the other tube approximately parallel to it so that now you have southbound traffic in the western tube and eastbound traffic in the eastern tube.

Kuhn: Was the Cal crew rowing in the estuary in those days?

Clark: Yes. I wasn't on the crew, but they used to be down there.

One other thing about LeConte. He had a long twenty inch slide rule. You may have heard this story.

Kuhn: No.

Clark: This happened actually when I was in class there. He was multiplying some numbers out, something to do with hydraulics, the head and the flow and so on and so forth. He would write a figure on the board, set it on the slide rule, multiply it out and put another figure on the board. It came to two (he set two on the slide rule) times three (he set three). He read this slide rule pretty close and said, "It's 5.998. We'll call it six." [laughter] Then he realized that he'd been so absorbed in the mechanics of the thing. He made a joke of it.

[Interview 2: December 6, 1975]##

Clark: Joseph LeConte became one of my sponsors for Sierra Club membership. Virginia Ferguson had suggested Francis Farquhar as the second. I called Francis up and explained who I was and that I was interested in becoming a member of the club. He signed my application too.

Later on I got acquainted with [William E.] Colby by going on one of the outings. When I became a life member of the club he was the secretary who signed my life member card. Later on I was secretary and signed the life member cards for quite a number of people.

Along about the fall of 1928 is when I joined the Sierra Club. They were doing quite a lot of things that I thought were interesting. The three things that particularly appealed to me at that time were the local walks, the trips around the bay; secondly

Clark: would be the high trips in the summer; and the third thing that really tied the thing together and was the clincher as far as I was concerned was the fact that it was working towards what we now call the preservation of the natural environment.

At that time the magic word was "conservation." It's still a good word, but a lot of the people who want to do exactly what the Sierra Club doesn't want to do feel that they are disciples of conservation also. It's sort of an ambivalent word.

In 1929 I went on the high trip. At that time I only had two weeks vacation from the company so I had to select to go on half of the four-week high trip. I went for four years on the high trips, the summers of '29 to '32.

#### Colby's Outings Management: a 1929 Incident

Clark: Colby was the manager of the outing. I got acquainted with him and came to admire him very much. Through my reading of the Sierra Club literature, magazine, and other ways, I came to be a great admirer of Colby, both for the way he ran the outings, and also for his principles and his idealism.

I am inclined to subscribe to the view which Ansel Adams expressed to me some years later. He thought that, as far as the club was concerned, in carrying on the momentum of the club in the early years, Colby was certainly as important a factor as John Muir (whom I never knew and never met).

There's a little anecdote about Colby's management of the affairs of the outing. In 1929 or 1930 I decided to join the Sierra Club, which was going to be at Red's Meadow on the eastern side of the Sierra. In order to get there one would have to drive around quite a long way or you could hike across through Yosemite Park. I thought it would be interesting to hike across from Yosemite Valley, up over Isberg Pass, down around south of Iron Mountain, and join the club. I asked Virginia Ferguson if she knew of anyone else who might be interested, and she said, "Why don't you put up a little notice here, and if anyone calls in I'll tell him to get in touch with you." It turned out that I got calls from Bob [Robert L.] Lipman, who later became treasurer of the club for a while (he died since then), and Dr. Hans Leschke, who at that

Clark: time was director of the San Francisco Municipal Courts. He had been in that job for a long time, and he continued in that for quite a number of years after that. He was from Germany or Switzerland.

Kuhn: I believe Germany.

Clark: Hans Leschke thought it would be interesting to go on this trip. He had a young son, Helmut, who was known as Dutch. Dutch was working in the commissary of the Sierra Club at that time. There were a couple of other people, a tall, rather slender, man by the name of George (I think), and a friend of Dr. Leschke's by the name of Carl. I'm not sure now whether he was Scandinavian or German, but he had a very teutonic attitude toward things. In the first place he was quite a large and powerful man, and he carried a tremendously big knapsack and wore nail boots, tricouni nails. As soon as he got into the party I had the feeling right away that he was going to tell us how the trip was going to be run, and he would make the decision on it.

It happened that I was the youngest member of the party, but I was also the organizer of it. I was determined to continue to be the leader of it. We started out from Yosemite Valley and hiked up to Merced Lake. It had been part of the plan of the trip that we would go light, so we decided to buy meals and buy a bunkbed at the Merced Lake hikers' camp. In fact, we didn't have any overnight sleeping equipment at all, no sleeping bags or anything like that. We had arranged somehow or other to ship those around so they would be at the Sierra Club camp on the east side of the Sierra when we arrived there.

Carl came into the dining room and in a rather teutonic, demanding way wanted to have some hot water for his tea. He wouldn't buy anything. He wouldn't even spend a nickel on anything. The rest of us bought the meals, and we figured he was running on our say-so. Then he slept out somewhere, and we paid for our bunks. In those days it was a very modest sum, something like a dollar or a dollar and a half a night.

Then after breakfast we started out toward Isberg Pass. We'd studied the topo map. Carl didn't know any more about the country than I did, but I had hiked in Yosemite somewhat before. I suggested that it would be a good idea for us all to try to meet at the pass.

That day the party got pretty well disorganized. Carl went ahead of us. I was walking along with George and Hans and the others. He went dashing up ahead somewhere, and we never saw him



Clark: again for several days. It turned out later that he'd got up a side canyon, along a creek. His nail boots had slipped on the granite, and he fell and sprained his ankle so he had to limp along.

Kuhn: Do you remember what month this was?

Clark: This was in June. Dr. Leschke was slower than I was in those days, and George and Bob and I hiked along together. Then somehow we got separated so finally only George and I crossed the pass late in the afternoon, maybe seven o'clock in the evening.

We had wondered where all the other people were. We'd stopped many times to call and halloo and so on, but nobody showed up. So finally George and I went down on the south side of Isberg Pass to a little bench where we found there was some firewood, and we could build a fire on a big flat slab of granite, and we could look down on the canyon below. We spent the night backing up against the rock and keeping ourselves warm with a tarp. We took turns keeping the fire going and calling down the canyon hoping to find somebody. (This experience of letting the party get separated was a very strong factor in many of my subsequent trips in which I insisted upon the importance, where I had the authority, of keeping the party together while we were traveling in unknown country.)

Next morning, Dr. Leschke showed up. He heard our call, and he responded and came over the pass. He had lost the others, too, I don't know where. He didn't know where Carl was. Leschke came down into the camp, and he was in kind of a bad shape for the moment because he'd lost his glasses and had to cross some snow and all this white, glistening granite. His eyes were quite painful because of almost a snow-blindness condition--not quite snow-blindness, but he was suffering that way.

The three of us had breakfast. We didn't know where the others were, but we came to the conclusion they were probably ahead of us. We started down the trail. We got to a certain point, and I realized by cutting off to the left and dropping down into the canyon of the north fork of the San Joaquin, we could save ourselves quite a lot of miles. We conferred and decided that we would make this detour.

We left the trail. It was open country, you could go almost anywhere. We descended over a series of steepish slopes, ledges, and so on, down to the San Joaquin. On the way down we met Bob Lipman, who had gotten separated from us and spent the night

Clark: bivouacking alone. So now we were four. We searched up and down the river for half a mile or so and found a big log across the river. We crossed over and then, on the basis of our topo map, we headed in a certain direction. Pretty soon we found the regular forest trail around the south side of Iron Mountain.

Nobody seemed to know where Carl was. We were worried. On the other hand we knew that we had to continue on to meet the club. If there was any rescue to be done, it would have to be done on an organized basis. The best thing for us to have done was to continue on, join the club, and report what had happened, which we did.

We joined the club. Our baggage was there. Colby took things very calmly. He didn't criticize me or any of the others for what we had done. He listened to what happened, and he said, "Perhaps Carl will show up later." Sure enough, he did show up.

That night the club was moving. One of the reasons why we had to press on was that we knew that they were going to move on from where they were up to Lake Ediza.

Carl joined us later. He was a self-reliant fellow, even with this painful ankle. He had gotten down to the point where the trail divided and decided to stay on the trail so he had to go quite a number of miles further, way down further downstream on the San Joaquin and then come back again. By the time he'd gotten to where the club was supposed to be we'd moved on a day's travels. He finally joined up with us, and he was just full of bitter criticism of me as a leader. He went to Colby full of criticism of why I was such a bad person as to abandon him, when he had actually departed from us. He wanted to have me thrown out of the outing because he thought that I had been so much in error in various ways.

My view was that he was entirely in error because he'd done a number of things which indicated that he didn't want to follow the suggestions or advice that I gave. And so Colby had to decide whether he would throw me out of the outing or pay attention to this Carl. I told him my side of the story, and he said, "Fine, thank you, and I think that everything will work out all right." And he told Carl, in effect, that he had no case. As you know, Colby was a lawyer.

The tail end of the story is that in the course of the high trip we decided to climb Mount Banner. From that point we went around to the north side and went up the little glacier between Banner and Ritter and up to the saddle. From there you went up over the

Clark: talus and the rocks to the top of Banner. I was not the leader; I joined a group of people going up that way. We got to the top and had our knapsack lunch up there.

As we were starting down Carl called from somewhere. He had tried to go a different way, all by himself. Instead of going with the group, he decided he would go on his own. (This is to me a very good example of the difficulties you get into when you insist upon going alone.) He got hung up on a cliff somewhere, and he was having difficulty about getting down. Instead of going to the saddle, he had wanted to go down a different way, and he found himself hung up on the top of these cliffs. As we were going down the glacier he was up there above. The only thing he could do was to go back up and come down again by the saddle. He got back safely. But to me it was a very interesting example of his pitting his judgment against the, you might say, concerted knowledge of the club, and it shows you what a fool he was.

I recited this incident because the factors that I mentioned to you were something that I long remembered in leading later Sierra Club trips.

#### Rescues, Losses, and Leadership on the Outings

Kihn: You could have lost somebody, probably.

Clark: Yes, we could. It was a fact that for some thirty or forty years the Sierra Club had very, very few fatalities. They had a few, but they were very, very few in number. I suppose this was a matter of exposure. Of course, in later years we haven't lost a lot of people, but we've had more fatalities because there have been more people going on trips, more trips, not as many on each trip, but more people altogether in the mountains. The public attitude toward things has to some extent changed, I think. There're more and more people who want to do their own thing, rather than complying with the establishment's recommendations.

Kuhn: A lot of these independent souls feel accomplished enough to go up in the mountains by themselves. They don't need this type of leadership.

Clark: There have always been people like that, I'm sure. Ever since we've been human beings there have always been some independent people who wanted to do things their own way. But as far as the club is

Clark: concerned, in the earlier days during Colby's regime as manager I think there was a greater tendency to do the things that the management recommended. High trips always had little groups going off to explore, but they went as a group, not solo. It was considered not a thing to do to go off by yourself.

Kuhn: On my first high trip a woman got lost. It later developed that she had wanted to get lost to attract attention to herself.

Clark: It could very well be.

Kuhn: She spent the whole night out. Nobody really got flustered because they figured that she was going to show up the next morning, which she did. She had caused everybody else a lot of concern and inconvenience, and she was sort of in the dog house.

Clark: I've participated in one way or another in a number of so-called rescues in the course of the many years that I went on the high trips, from 1929 on through for almost ten years, not every year, but quite often and even into the forties. It was the 1947 high trip that my brother and his wife were on.

I don't know whether it's appropriate to try to go into some of these things or not.

Kuhn: I think if you have any unusual experiences about the high trips we would like to hear them.

Clark: Well, in responding to what you said about this woman getting lost, I remember a time when the club was hiking from Tuolumne Meadows over to Benson Lake. Was that the one that you were on?

Kuhn: No. That was the Whitney trip in Sequoia.

Clark: As you know, the usual routine on a high trip (in those days we had over a hundred people in the party; of course it's much smaller now) is that there are always the ones eager to get started just as soon after breakfast as possible. They are thoroughly organized, and the moment they've had their last cup of coffee, they've swung their knapsacks on their backs, and they're on the trail. Then there are always others who have to go back and pack up their bags, talk with their friends, and get their fishing gear in order or whatever it is. So people will be spread out along the trail.

I used to hear people say the Sierra Club was terrible because they just went lock-step down the trail, one after the other. This is not true. Certainly the whole party never went that way, or

Clark: practically never went that way. Sometimes there would be a half a dozen people who were congenial and going together, and it was more convenient for them to follow in file rather than to try to walk abreast on a trail, naturally. But the so-called lock-step idea is the invention of somebody who didn't know what they were talking about, in my opinion.

Anyway, in the course of the day, this woman became lost. People who knew who she was said, "Where is she?" Nobody seemed to know. Along toward the end of the day we wondered where Norman Clyde was. (I may not be remembering this exactly as it happened because it was quite a number of years ago, but this is essentially it.) We got into camp, and the woman was missing, and Norman Clyde was missing. Nobody seemed to know where either of them were. We didn't think Norman was the kind of a guy that would go off all alone with a woman just for her sociability's sake.

The next day she showed up. You might say, "Wasn't the management worried about this person?" I told you before that Colby's attitude from his many years of experience was that usually the lost person showed up. They could have gotten lost and come to grief, but usually they showed up. In this particular instance, this woman and Norman Clyde showed up the next morning.

We later learned that she had lost her bearings and gotten away from the trail somewhere, and Norman had seen some figure. He'd gone off to catch a fish or climb something or other, and he found this person there. She was pretty tired by the time he'd found her, and she didn't feel that she could push on into camp. So he spent the night building a little fire and keeping her company. He was on a rescue mission, you might say.

Kuhn: The only thing is that nobody in camp knew that.

Clark: We didn't know it at the time, no.

On the other side of fatalities, many years later when I was on the executive committee of the board, the Sierra Club had a trip in the northern Cascades. There was a fellow by the name of Fred, who always liked to go off alone. He was a liquor salesman, a member of the club, an energetic, smallish man.

Previous to this trip, I was about to say, I had been on another trip with the Sierra Club. Phil Berry was a young fellow. He led us up a mountain above the camp. It was quite a steep mountain. There was no trail. We had to climb up through a gully.

Clark: We went in on a trail that went part way to a lake, and then from then on we climbed this peak and got back to this trail. On the way down we were resting for a minute and Fred said, "I'll go on down, and you'll catch up with me." I said, "Fred, you don't go alone." I was much older than Phil. Phil had guided us to the top of the mountain, but I was one of the senior members of the party so I told Fred that he must stay with us. He didn't want to, and I was quite firm with him, insisting that he must stay with the party until we got back down this trail.

We didn't get back to camp until dusk, almost dark. On the trail there were many roots crossing the trail so that it would have been very easy for a person to stumble on one of these roots and get into difficulty. Fred did stay with the party and get back. I made quite a point of the fact as we were approaching camp that we must come into together. My experience is that it's important when we have an organized group that we come back in together all safe and sound. And we did.

I recite that experience because on this other time when Fred was hiking with the club up in the North Cascades, he disappeared. Later in the day they didn't know where he was.

While the executive committee was having a meeting at Charlotte Mauk's home one day, we got a telephone call from Washington State wanting authority to spend some money to ship dogs up from California somewhere up to hunt for Fred, because he'd disappeared.

The management of the outing had worried about it; they'd sent people up and down the trail; they'd scouted all the way along to try and find some possible place where he might be. They never did find him. We authorized the dogs to go up and hunt for him, and they never found him either. The man has never been heard from since.

Kuhn: Did he probably die of exposure in a remote canyon?

Clark: There was a lot of theorizing about what had happened. We figured that if he had stayed on the trail and just fallen off the trail, he certainly would have been found. There was one theory that was advanced and never disproved (of course you can't prove these things one way or another) that he wanted to get lost, he deliberately disappeared and went off somewhere else because he was trying to escape from his life as it was.

Clark: There were other incidences of fatalities on trips, but I don't think this is the time to tell about those. But this gives the double contrast there. I think that the Sierra Club, over the many years in all of their outings (and as you know, in recent years I've been a leader of foreign trips in Europe), has acted very responsibly.

You realize of course, that with the many trips that we have today and the many leaders involved, one of the most difficult management problems of the outing committee is to maintain a program of leadership training, to make sure that the leaders understand what their obligations are, their responsibilities, and also how they can best conduct the party so that the members of the trip will enjoy the trip.

After all, I think that Colby and Stew Kimball and Jerry South and Dick Leonard--all chairmen of the outing committee--I believe they all felt that the importance of the outing committee down through the many years has been to offer the club members more than just a pleasant vacation. They were giving the members an opportunity to get into the mountains to understand the natural environment better so that they would be better crusaders in protecting the natural environment from the encroachments of the exploiters.

Kuhn: They've showed a great expression of confidence in people by training them to be group leaders. I think this is a marvelous skill.

Clark: You're right absolutely. From my first experiences on the outings, when I was on that trip with Carl, Colby's attitude toward me was one of trust. I'd been a Scout leader from early days, but was just a young sprout. I felt a responsibility for doing the right thing and a responsibility to the party. Colby apparently trusted me.

You said just a moment ago that the outing management system has been to trust the leaders. I believe that's true. In fact, if you don't trust them, you can't make the ball go.

Kuhn: The outings department told me a couple of months ago that there are five thousand people who go on the outings and that the average size group is eighteen. The maximum is twenty-seven. There is no group that goes anywhere in the world that has more than twenty-seven members. This is such a fantastic change from the old system.

Clark: Your point is absolutely valid that we've evolved a different system of outings. We're covering a great deal more country. We're exposing our members to conditions in other parts of the world, which is good, but we do it in smaller batches.

Outings and Conservation: Complementary Concerns

Kuhn: How did you get involved in other aspects of the club program?

Clark: We've spent quite a bit of time on some of the high trips, maybe enough, unless some special anecdote seems to arise.

I was active in those days, liked to go hiking and that sort of thing. I would go over in Marin County and hike over the Dipsea Trail on a Saturday afternoon (all by myself because I didn't know anyone else to go with). I did some hiking with the Scouts and went on local walks with the Sierra Club.

Since I went on quite a number of local walks, soon I found myself asked to be chairman of the local walks committee. In those days the chairman of the local walks committee had to (with the cooperation of some other people, but then as now, usually the chairman did most of the work) put together a program for the Bay Chapter, a hike every weekend on Sunday, and sometimes overnight trips Saturdays and Sundays. Occasionally there were other events planned, but no one knew as many events as there are today. I did my stuff as chairman of the local walks committee for several years, I've forgotten now how many, two maybe. We had to scurry around and decide where the trips were going to be, and then find leaders to lead the trip, and then work with the leaders and the people that you had to contact to make sure that it was possible to go in the places you wanted to go, the transportation, permission to travel, and so on. It was quite a lot of work.

Then, maybe because I was active, I got elected to the executive committee of the Bay Chapter, and they made me chairman. I served, I guess, a couple of years as chairman of the San Francisco Bay Chapter [1932] in the days when things were much less complicated than they are today, of course. I don't remember how many club members there were in the Bay Chapter in that time, that was back in the thirties. I suppose seven or eight thousand.\*

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\*In December, 1931, total club membership was 2026. In December, 1938, San Francisco Bay Chapter members totaled 1743; total club membership was 3482.



Clark: I served as chairman of the chapter and about that time I used to go to board meetings. The Los Angeles Chapter had been organized by this time. The Southern California Chapter was the name of it at that time (Phil Bernays has told you a lot about that).\* The chairman of the San Francisco Bay Chapter and the chairman of the Southern California Chapter were invited to come to the board meeting, presumably at their own expense. The board meetings in those days would convene on a Saturday morning and go on until about one o'clock in the afternoon. Then they would go to lunch at the restaurant around the corner in San Francisco--one of those French or Italian restaurants. And that was the end of the meeting.

I don't know how it happened that I got nominated. The nominating committee in those days was a committee that the same people served on for a number of years. The club was not into as much internal controversy in those days as it is today. It was more of a California outfit.

I believed, and I still believe, that the management of the club, that is the board of directors, had concerned themselves for many years before my exposure to it and all during the time that I served on the board, which turned out to be over twenty-five years, with the conservation problems. They had to deal with local problems within the chapters sometimes, but for the most part they were concerned with working with the United States Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the other government agencies and the state parks. Later on Colby became the first chairman of the California State Park Commission.

My point is that during all these days the board of directors of the club devoted their time to what we might call conservation problems. I've heard it said that in the early days the club was just a hiking outfit, that they used to be a social club, and that it wasn't until more recent years that they began to concern themselves so much with conservation. I would say that's hogwash.

From the very beginning, the first organization of the Sierra Club to support the work of John Muir, the directors were concerned with getting together a group of people who would help John Muir's ideas about preventing the overgrazing in the parks, creating a national park in Yosemite, and things that we might put under the category of conservation problems. As far as I'm concerned, all my exposure to the Sierra Club has indicated that the directors have always been concerned about those things.

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\*Founding the Southern California Chapter, a Sierra Club History Committee interview with Philip S. Bernays, 1975, Richard Searle, interviewer.

Clark: It's true that the local chapters were organized to supplement the work of the club. Originally I think it was to get people to get out into the out-of-doors, into the mountains and the hills and see the country for themselves. They would enjoy themselves doing it. There had to be some inducement to get people to put themselves out, expend big energy and time and money for a trip. If they weren't having a good time while they were doing it naturally they wouldn't do it. Social enjoyment of the outings has been a necessary, complementary purpose of the club during all these times. But I don't agree with people who say that it was primarily for that purpose. I'd say that people who make that statement just don't know what they're talking about.

Kuhn: I think they may mean that many people who joined the club for the outings then became interested in the other facets. You, yourself, say that you were attracted by the outings program.

Clark: I will agree with you. Many of my own personal friends joined the club because of its activities program--skiing, high trips, outings, and so on. I don't deny that at all. I entirely agree with you. That's their personal motivation for joining, but it is very difficult to separate out (because we don't know the individuals well enough), to say that that was their only motivation.

Around the San Francisco Bay Area, for instance, we had the California Alpine Club, the Sierra Club, the Contra Costa Hills Club, which were the three leading organizations back in the thirties. Then there were other organizations, too. Of course the Tamalpais Conservation Club is trying to protect Mount Tamalpais. They had trail days, but they didn't have regular outings so much. So a person who wanted to be in the out-of-doors could join either the Sierra Club, the Alpine Club, or the Hills Club. It was up to them. They might join one or the other because some of their friends were in it, or because they happened to admire one of the leaders--like Harold French, for instance, who was a leader of the Contra Costa Hills Club, and he may have been one of the finest. I never happened to know him personally, but he was a very fine man, a very energetic man, and did a lot to get the club going.

But I believe that with many people among my friends, as was with me, there was another element there that felt that the club was not only giving us an opportunity to enjoy ourselves on an outing, but that it stood for something bigger than ourselves. Collectively it was a more important organization than just a social club. I felt that to be associated with something that was bigger than my sphere of influence was worthwhile for me.

Clark: I believe that that was true. I could for instance cite the Burnley brothers, Dick Burnley and Larry Burnley. I first met them up at Clair Tappaan Lodge as skiers. They joined for the skiing. They liked the lodge up there. In the course of time I made many trips with Dick Burnley, many, many ski touring trips and summer hiking trips. I haven't seen him more recently. He moved to New York. He's still a skier, I guess. His brother still is living in the Bay Area, Larry. I would make the statement (you could only refute it by consulting Dick Burnley, himself) that this element of associating himself with an organization that was doing more than just offering pleasant sociability was a factor in his joining the Sierra Club over joining some other organization. That's my point, and I've given you a couple of specific illustrations of it.

Kuhn: Lew, I'd like you to consider this. In the early days of the outings, the club had approximately six hundred members in 1901. About two hundred of them went on the outings. Now we have 150,000 members and five thousand go on the outings, so that a tremendous number of people don't go on the outings. A much smaller percentage do go informally. I think this may account for a good deal of the fact that our retention of membership is very, very low. There is a huge turnover. When we get on to this phase of the interview, I'd like you to deal with that.

Clark: I would like to respond just a little bit to your statement. Like many statistics, and you've presented it very clearly, it presents a rather drastic contrast. One-third of the members back in 1901, you said, went on the high trips. And now we have five thousand out of 150,000. But that five thousand is the number of people who go on the national outings, which of course are much more expanded in scope with many, many more trips. It used to be one trip, one high trip, and now we have 275 outings. As you know I'm supposed to lead one of the trips in the Central Pyrenees, Spain, next summer. But the trips are much smaller. You mentioned that. The objective is about fifteen and a maximum of twenty-five, and they don't go over twenty-five except for some extraordinary reason where they don't want to cancel the trip and maybe the leader agrees to take two more.

The distribution of people amongst trips is very different than it used to be. But besides all of that five thousand (I'll accept your figure on that) there are thousands of club members, I don't know how many, who go on chapter outings.

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Clark: Each of the chapters has many different kinds of outings. They have hiking trips, bicycle trips, overnight trips from one night to a week. In fact, one of the problems now is just how long can a chapter outing last and not be in conflict with a national outing. We won't get into that except to say that it is a problem, the matter of duration. My point is that your five thousand is misleading.

Kuhn: I'll accept that.

Election to the Board of Directors, 1933

Kuhn: You were just telling me about being nominated for the board.

Clark: Yes. I did get elected to the board.

Kuhn: This was in what year?

Clark: I've forgotten now. The Sierra Club Handbook will tell you. I haven't had time to research it, but it's all there. I think it was about 1932-'33, not much later than that.\* I've even forgotten who was president at that time. I think maybe it was Duncan McDuffie because he served as president for several years. And Walter [A.] Starr was the president for a while at that time.

Kuhn: Of course, you were familiar with the way the board worked by having attended these meetings.

Clark: Exactly. They only had about two meetings a year, a fall meeting and a spring meeting. Then later on they added another.

I was familiar with what was going on. I felt, when I was elected to the board, that my role as a director was to understand the problems that came before us and also to represent my point of view where I'd been active in the chapter. However, I did not feel that I was the chapter representative.

Kuhn: Were you still chair of the chapter?

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\*Lewis Clark served on the Sierra Club Board of Directors, 1933-1969. ed.

Clark: No. I think it was more or less one following right after the other. I became a member of the board right after I served as chairman of the chapter. There was not very much interval in between there.

I continued to serve on the board for a number of years. At that time, I guess, in the early days, you had to be elected every year. It was the policy of the nominating committee to always try to find some new names. As far as I can remember they always had more names of directors-to-be-elected than there were directors. But pretty much it was recycling the same directors.

Kuhn: But there was no limitation on the number of consecutive terms.

Clark: No, there was no limitation. In retrospect, I would think that many people felt that if the directors were carrying on the club the way they felt it should be, and they knew more about it because they had their hand in on it, there was no particular reason for changing.

Kuhn: Now were your twenty-five years of service consecutive?

Clark: Except for a period of about three or four years when I was in the Navy during World War II.

Kuhn: What was your progression through committee chairmanships, officerships, and so on?

Clark: I've always been a sort of an organization man as I've told you before. I kind of like to work with people and if I saw some problem coming up or some need or other I'd try to get together with some other people to organize to go after the problem.

#### The Winter Sports Committee, 1933

Clark: For instance, in 1933, there was considerable interest in skiing. Bestor Robinson (he's a little older than I am, you know) had been doing some skiing for several years before I took it up at all. By that time I had been on a couple of ski trips, about once or twice a year. Bestor came to the board of directors and proposed that they organize a winter sports committee.

Clark: Bestor thought that the time had come when the Sierra Club should be exploring the mountains in the wintertime as well as the summer and that there should be a series of winter shelters, or huts, up and down the Sierra to facilitate this, just as the Appalachian Mountain Club had in the Appalachians and has been done quite extensively in Europe. I don't know whether Bestor had been to Europe or not. About that time Bestor said he was going to join the Ski Club of Great Britain as a corresponding member. You could send them some money and you got a badge. It was a very interesting trifoil badge. So I became a member of the Ski Club of Great Britain by correspondence.

The board of directors were convinced that Bestor had a good idea so we appointed a winter sports committee with Bestor as chairman. Another member was W.A. Patterson, whose name and family was linked with southern Alameda County land, and he was a farmer down there. He was affluent enough so he had traveled to Europe and skied in Europe quite a bit. He was a member of the Ski Club of Great Britain.

Herbert Breed was the senior member of Bestor's law firm, Breed, Burpee, and Robinson. Then Horace Breed was his nephew, I guess. Horace Breed and Bestor had gone on many ski trips together before I came into the picture. Then there was Otis Marsden from Berkeley, who, I believe, is still alive. I don't think he's doing any skiing nowadays. He turned to the river and became very active. He was going to write a book about the Colorado River. He may have published it by this time, but it was in the writing stage for many years. There were several other names which I've forgotten now.

That was the winter sports committee as it was back in those days.\* But you see, these things evolved because an individual or one or two individuals saw the need for a new activity, or attention to a new activity, and because they had the energy and the vision to push the thing. Almost none of these things get done by a committee being appointed to study the matter unless there is some one individual who has the drive and the orientation to move it in a certain direction.

Kuhn: This is one of the great things about the club, that the board is not opposed to initiative.

Clark: That's right.

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\*Interview with Lewis Clark on Sierra Club skiing activities and Clair Tappaan Lodge, in progress.

Kuhn: It's very difficult to understand. When I first got involved with the oral history of the club, I was amazed that I was able to go and do what I wanted to do without anybody saying, "Whoa." That's not the way most organizations run.

Clark: I think you're right, Marshall, that the club has had a very liberal policy of blessing some groups that wanted to innovate some new thing so long as it was more or less in harmony with the club's basic objectives. They didn't try to have everything run from Mills Tower.

Kuhn: But, Lew, can you think of any cases where somebody was running with something and then all of a sudden, later, the board woke up to what was going on and was rather appalled to find out that things were being done in the name of the Sierra Club, or maybe the person had, in their view, gone a little too far?

Clark: Yes, I can, specifically.

Kuhn: Do you want to elaborate on that?

Clark: This is one of these things that involves people who are active in the club and other affairs, and I think that maybe I ought not to mention any names at this time.

Juhn: Why don't we do that at a later time? Let's stop the interview now.

Clark: Okay.

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III CHRONICLE OF A SIERRA CLUB "ORGANIZATION MAN": DIRECTOR,  
PRESIDENT, JUDGE OF ELECTIONS

[Interview 3: May 22, 1976]##

Reflections on the Feud with Dave Brower

Kuhn: After a hiatus of these several months, let's go back to the last item on our prior interview in which we talked about the fact that the club has had some volunteers who at various times may have exceeded their authority. You said you had some of these in mind. Can you think of any of them specifically at this time?

Clark: So much time has elapsed since our last interview that I can't recollect what I had specifically in mind at that time. I'm sure that there have been some cases, but they're not very frequent as far as I recollect.

Kuhn: Would you like to talk about any member of the staff who may have exceeded his authority?

Clark: That's a different subject. [laughing]

Kuhn: I hope that somewhere in our interview we do get into that.

Clark: Yes. I think you know as well as I do that the outstanding case of the member of the staff who exceeded his authority was my good friend David Brower.

Kuhn: Right.

Clark: I was on the executive committee which chose Dave as our executive director. I remained on the board of directors all the time that he was executive director of the Sierra Club, although I wasn't on the executive committee all the time, but most of the time. I knew quite a lot of what was going on, although not everything.



Clark: When Dave was first hired he was on a part-time basis. He was supposed to put in, maybe, half or three-quarters of his time for us. Then he had other projects he was working on. Later it was quite evident that he was putting 100 percent of his time into the Sierra Club. That was agreeable to everybody. We tried to adjust his salary accordingly. It was adjusted upward over the period of time in accordance with the scale of things and his effectiveness.

The time came when he seemed to acquire a sort of proprietary feeling about the Sierra Club. I think he relished the fact that some people called him "Mr. Sierra Club." However, some of us felt that there were other people in the organization and the leadership of the club who were also important, and we either discounted that tendency in our minds or actually refuted it, although we didn't refute it directly to Dave.

Thus, as Brower acquired more power and more of a feeling of being at the top of the leadership, the time came when he wanted to spend more money for new projects, especially new Exhibit Format books. At first he would always outline the complete project, and how he planned to finance it. We on the board felt he was keeping us well informed about his plans. But after a while he apparently seemed to feel that it was taking too much of his time to brief the board on things. He felt so confident that he was right that he would go ahead and do things and commit the board to expenses without the approval of the board. This led to several strong sessions between some of the directors and Dave in which they told him specifically that he must not do this. They forbade him to do certain things without their approval. But he felt pretty confident of his authority, his leadership, and so he went ahead and often ignored the board.

Some of the members on the board came to a realization, especially those of us who were close enough to what was going on. Although we had a tremendous admiration for Dave--his idealism, his charisma, and his effectiveness--we feared he would bankrupt the club if we didn't call a halt somewhere.

That led to the feud, as it has sometimes been called. Dave appeared to feel (although I don't know what his motivations were) that the way to overcome this obstacle on the part of certain members of the board was to elect some people who were in favor of his methods.

We had that big confrontation in the club annual election of 1969: on Brower's side the ABC (Aggressive Brower-type conservation) versus the CMC (Concerned Members for Conservation).

Clark: A lot of people became polarized who really didn't like that feeling. Electioneering went on all the way across the country, from California to New York. Members mailed in their ballots in record numbers-- forty-three thousand or so, almost two-thirds of our total membership. That is the only time so far as I know that the members have responded in an election with such a high percentage of people voting. Normally about one-third of the members vote in an annual election. Brower's side was defeated.

During the height of the campaign in the heat of the election some curious things were said. Although Brower was a staff member, he wanted to get elected to the board so that he could be permanent president. Frequent predictions were heard: "If the Brower side doesn't win, the club will lose half its membership."

But one year after Brower resigned club membership substantially increased. Now it has more than doubled, and it continues to grow. The disappearance of Brower from the scene did not hurt the club membership very much. Some people may have resigned, but others came in.

Some of the things that he had started have continued and expanded, particularly that of being much more belligerent and outspoken and doing some lobbying (which lost the club its tax deductibility). I think most everyone believes, now, that a lot of good things have evolved since then. So Brower was right in his objectives.

I believed then, I believe now, that he would have bankrupted the club if we hadn't gotten rid of him.

Kuhn: Let me ask you a few things. How long had you known Brower before he became director in 1941?

Clark: Probably six years or so.

Kuhn: Did you hike or climb with him?

Clark: Yes. We went on ski mountaineering trips together, and I knew him through rock climbing activities, also.

Kuhn: Was there anything in his personality that could have led you or anybody else who knew him to predict that he would have this kind of a complex once he became executive director?

Clark: No, none of us were aware of that then. We knew that he was a strong idealistic conservationist. He had worked for Yosemite Park and Curry Company and the University of California Press in Berkeley. One day Dick Leonard said to me, "I think we can get Dave as our executive secretary," or whatever they decided to call him at first. (Executive director was a modification of his original title.) But he was really the first salaried management person. Virginia Ferguson was the first salaried person that worked for the club for many years. Dave was the second one to come along, but he was in the management capacity rather than an office person.

Kuhn: As the situation deteriorated, got more tense, how were the personal relations between him and you and others who had known him a long time? Was it very difficult?

Clark: Yes, it was very difficult because all of us had known Dave as personal friends. We'd camped with him, we knew of his activities as leader. He used to lead the high trips. That's another story. We'll get into that, perhaps. There was a confrontation there, too.

We all knew him personally, and we admired him and had a very friendly feeling toward him. For this reason I think that the then board of directors were reluctant to blow the whistle on his financial overcommitments of the club. We should have blown the whistle earlier. We kept feeling, "He is a very valuable person to the club. He's a good spokesman." We didn't want to stop his good work. So we thought, "Perhaps we can reform him."

Kuhn: And you warned him.

Clark: Yes, indeed--in open sessions and in private sessions.

Kuhn: Has the club ever had what you might call a personnel committee where one or several people have the function of acting sort of as a sounding board with the executive where they take him aside and give him a little fatherly advice from time to time?

Clark: At one time we had a personnel adviser, Boynton Kaiser, but although he knew Dave personally he was never charged with the responsibility of counseling Dave. It seems to me Mr. Kaiser's duties were superseded before the Brower situation became critical. Primarily the executive committee of five people served as a personnel committee.

Clark: For instance, when we thought there was an opportunity to get Dave to work for us, we had to search our souls and decide if we could at that time afford an employee of his calibre. We decided that we could afford it up to a point. That's why we hired him at less than 100 percent time. He wanted the job, and we wanted him so he came on that basis.

Later the membership increased, which primarily was the reason why we were able to go into more things. The Exhibit Format book program never paid for itself. It was always being subsidized by the club, so far as I can remember. Dave kept thinking that it would pay for itself, but then he had expanded the ideas of how it was going to be done.

There's no question but what he pioneered a course. In the early days there were no organizations putting out the kind of beautiful books on nature and that sort of thing that he did. But a lot of other people saw this format as a good thing and commercial publishers began to go into it. Time-Life Magazine has put out all kinds of books. You can debate on whether the quality of the printing and color reproduction is as good as the Sierra Club books were. I don't think it's quite as good, but it's pretty good. I've got a lot of those Time-Life books. And other organizations went in for it. It became a big thing in the printing industry to put out these coffee table books. To some extent the competition diminished the market for the club. Perhaps there was a shrinking overall market, but certainly the Sierra Club didn't enjoy quite as much of a dominance of the market as it had originally.

Nevertheless, Dave wanted to go on doing these things because he felt it was so necessary to reach people to save the environment. This was the way he knew best how to do it so naturally he wanted to do it that way. Dave's great strength while he was executive director was carrying the message of the club through the Exhibit Format books. There were some other things, too; newspaper advertising and so on. He exhorted people and tried to get them emotionally involved to the point that they would react and do something.

As a replacement for Dave (there were a couple of steps in there), we got Michael McCloskey, a young attorney who had a great respect for the approach from the legal side. Mike had distinguished himself as the Northwest conservation representative. After he became executive director, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund was organized, which was another armament of the club.

Clark: As you know, during McCloskey's regime the club has done a great deal in the way of bringing suits against government officers and agencies at various levels to try to get them to do what the law says they should do. A great many of our suits have pursued the contention that the chief of the Forest Service or the secretary of the Interior has not done what the law prescribes he shall do. Under this legal approach we've been able to force the government to abide more closely by the law.

That's a different approach and the club has been quite successful that way. I would say that that's one of the main things that we do that has taken the place of the publication thing. We still have a publications committee, and we put out books that will involve people in the problems of pollution; sound, water, air, solid waste, and so on. But as far as books are concerned we do it through pocket books and not through the Exhibit Format type.

Kuhn: Tell me about Dave as a high trip leader.

Clark: At the time that I'm going to tell you about he was the executive director, but he liked to go in the mountains, and he had a talent for influencing people. He had a great repertoire of songs. He used to take his accordion along, give performances at the campfire and entertain people and inspire them. He was quite successful as a trip leader in emotionally appealing to the members on the trip.

After he'd done it for two weeks he felt that he ought to do it for a little while longer. This led to the point where he felt that he was almost indispensable as a high trip leader. He was spending six or eight weeks of his time in the mountains leading the high trips and in the meantime no management staff person was keeping the store in San Francisco.

Finally the executive committee faced a decision. Alex Hildebrand was presiding over a meeting of the committee at Einar Nilsson's home in Berkeley. We resolved that we were going to have to tell Dave that he could have vacation leave for, say, two weeks, but after that he was going to have to get back on the job in San Francisco. We wouldn't allow him to be paid as a high trip leader and also as an executive director for more than whatever the period was. We didn't cut it off absolutely, but there was a limit. We decided to call a halt.

Alex went up the hill to Dave's house, and the rest of us sat around and talked about things, but we recessed our meeting. Finally after about an hour and a half Alex came back down to Einar's place. We said, "How did you make out?" Alex said simply, "I told him." What he told him was--and this was the first time

Clark: the executive committee had really mustered their determination to tell Dave what he could and couldn't do. And we all had such a high admiration for Dave, you see, that no one wanted to spank him on the wrist, and we didn't want to paddle him, and we just thought he had so many good ideas that we didn't want to stand in his way. But we had to tell him that this couldn't go on, and Alex told him.

This sort of taught us a lesson that with some of these other eccentricities and excesses that Dave had we had to bear down. We had been reluctant to do that because we were all personal friends of his and we had such great admiration for him.

Later evidence indicated that Dave thought he saw the advice coming, but he wasn't going to change his tactics until it had been made official. Somewhere along the line through the chain of some wives in the situation, the word came to us later, "We knew this was bound to happen." So the decision was anticipated. Dave conformed and really changed his course. He did spend more time in the office.

One of the problems we had with Dave, also, is that in his enthusiasm for generating these ideas about the books, especially when he got involved in far afield affairs in Africa and Europe, he spent so much time traveling that again the administration of the club office in San Francisco suffered. It was hard to get him to do necessary, mundane things.

He was a very hard worker, but he didn't always make himself perfectly clear as to what was to be done. People have said that nobody except Dave can write so clearly and evocatively. That's true. He has the talent to do that when he sets his mind to it. But many a time when he would appear at the board meetings with a project which, while not exactly incoherent, was certainly not organized clearly enough for us to really know what he was driving it. He'd tell us about the project, and we'd say, "Dave, what do you mean by this? How are you going to do this and that?" More palaver would follow. Finally we'd try to sift out what the meaning was.

Kuhn: Was there any note of condescension, as if the board might not really understand what he was outlining?

Clark: I do think he came to believe that we didn't understand what he was trying to do and that we weren't really sympathetic to what he was trying to do.

Clark: The record will show, if you go into it, that I was one of the members of the executive committee who voted generally on the side of his projects, one book after another. I had a great admiration for him, and I oftentimes voted for a project when somebody else would be questioning it more. But I finally realized--as Dick Leonard and Ansel Adams, also great admirers of Dave came to realize--that things couldn't go on as they were headed.

Kuhn: It seems that the wounds have healed. Dave's an honorary vice-president.

Clark: Yes, time has a healing quality.

Kuhn: Do you have any personal relationship with him?

Clark: I don't see him very much. I'm busy enough on my own affairs, and he's often off somewhere. I have very little occasion to see him. Once in a while when I do see him we greet each other cordially like old friends. There's no bitterness or antagonism.

I think that he's better off being the big frog in a puddle that's somewhat smaller than the Sierra Club. Friends of the Earth has made its own name under his leadership. It's not as large as the Sierra Club and doesn't have as big a budget, but it's serving a useful purpose. He has the satisfaction of feeling that he's the president and the head of it. He was always very ambitious in that regard.

Kuhn: A fascinating educational experience for the leadership of the club.

Clark: I guess the club is going to survive all the difficulties and cope with the things we have to, after these experiences.

Kuhn: I knew Dave only very, very casually, but I've obviously worked for six years close to Mike McCloskey, and I would be sure that they have a different style.

Clark: On that particular point, difference in styles, here is an anecdote. The board was meeting in the Parsons Memorial Lodge at Tuolumne Meadows, in an afternoon-evening session in the mid-1960s. Dave made a very eloquent plea for his particular side of a question affecting the Northwest (I don't remember what the issue was). Mike McCloskey at that time was the Pacific Northwest representative, nominally for the FWDC [Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs], but in large measure representing the Sierra Club as the largest supporter of the federation.

Clark: Mike came down from Washington to this meeting in Yosemite to report on this project. He gave his interpretation of the project. It was very factual, not anywhere near as eloquent, but I thought it made more sense. I remember telling one of my fellow directors at the time, "The time may come when Mike will take over from Dave." That was several years before the event happened. That's a little anecdote.

Kuhn: The whole history of what we call the Brower affair is made up of anecdotes, of different ways of looking at it, all fascinating. Did you know Cedric Wright?

Clark: Yes, indeed.

Kuhn: I'll tell you why I asked. Ansel Adams has sent us a huge carton of personal papers of Cedric Wright, which he feels the history committee should examine and recommend as to the disposition. I hope at that time that you will participate because I was on the high trip in '49 where Cedric was the official photographer, and I didn't know him any other way.

Clark: My first high trip was 1929. Cedric Wright was one of the leading photographers. Ansel Adams was, of course, the official photographer.

In those days we used to have a lot of photographers, the official ones who, I guess, got their expenses paid, and a lot of others like Mr. Herbert Rankin and May Dornin. May Dornin had just a simple box camera, but always participated in the album show in the fall when there would be a dozen or so albums from the high trip on exhibit at the offices of the club in the Mills Tower building. We always expected that Ansel would have a very fine, professional album in black and white (no color in those days). Cedric Wright was sort of second to Ansel, but he would have many fine pictures. May Dornin would generally have some action pictures. She had an exceptionally good eye for what made an interesting, good picture. Her pictures were quite outstanding, especially in view of the simplicity of her equipment.

Kuhn: Could you go in and order prints made at your expense?

Clark: Yes. Every print was numbered, and you made up an order list.

Kuhn: Then, as I understand, Ansel dropped out of that after many years.

Clark: Yes. He got more into the professional business of putting out exhibit books, and he published several of them.



Clark: Cedric did take very good pictures. Some people thought his prints were comparable to Ansel's although I think Ansel's had superior technical quality. Cedric, like every other artist, had his individual slant on what he sees and what he wants to memorialize in the form of a picture. Cedric often showed a personal, humorous element in his pictures, which distinguished them from Ansel's. I don't mean to say Ansel's were lacking in that completely, but Cedric was more expressive in that regard.

Kuhn: Was there any problem that arose out of the fact that Ansel was putting up Sierra Club books with his photographs at the same time he was a member of the board of directors?

Clark: I guess the question was raised from time to time, but no one felt that there was any conflict. It never became an issue as far as I can remember.

#### Choosing the Club President, 1951 and 1976

Kuhn: Lew, let's continue along your own organizational history in the club, the things you do, and did. Why don't you tell us of the events leading up to your becoming the president of the club.

Clark: I suppose it's a fairly long trail, if you wanted to go into every step of the way. Very briefly, to outline it anyway, I was always somewhat of an activist, I realize.

Shortly after I became a member of the club I went into the club office and asked Virginia Ferguson about the Shasta [Alpine] Lodge. I kept asking so many questions about it, and how it happened to be there, and so on and so forth, that eventually they asked me if I would serve as chairman of the lodge committee. Whoever had been chairman had gotten out of it.

Then I became chairman of the local walks of the chapter-- part of the trail, we might say. Again as an activist I was elected as chairman of the chapter, and as such I attended some of the board meetings.

I'd also participated on a number of high trips fairly actively, from 1929 and into the thirties. So I came to know many of the people who might be considered the top leadership of the club. They were the ones that went on the high trips.

Clark: The nominating committee put my name up and I got elected to the board. I served on the board for over thirty-five years. People like Duncan McDuffie, Walter Huber and Walter Starr had been president while I was a director. Then while Francis Farquhar was president for his second time around, I was attending a board meeting at his home in Berkeley. Francis drew me aside and asked if I would consent to serve as president.

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Clark: I said to him, "I couldn't possibly follow your footsteps. I don't have the prestigious connections that you do and the experience in the club. It would be very nice to be president, but I don't think that I could do that." Francis said several reassuring things, but one of the things I remember was, "Every person has to do it in his own style. You don't do it the way I do, I wouldn't do it your way. But we have confidence that you could be president, and we'd like to have you serve." I said, "Okay, I'll do my best."

In those days, Marshall, there were the "king makers." There was no special committee; there was no special conference as we have today in the pre-organization meeting private caucuses. The leadership of the club, the five officers on the executive committee, would get together and discuss who they thought the officers should be for the next year. Often several other directors participated--were sounded out.

As a result of this informal conferring, when it came time for the election there was usually no great contest. Most of the other directors agreed, although some of them may have raised private objections. Most seemed to feel that the work of running the club should be entrusted to the experienced persons who had demonstrated some measure of capability and willingness to do the chores as well as some of the responsibilities.

By contrast, the time has come now where, with the same number of directors, fifteen, but with the men and women from different parts of the country, the directors realize the need for indoctrination. They hold a preliminary private caucus just before the organization meeting in May when officers are elected by the board. This year, for example, they caucused at West Point Inn, on Mount Tamalpais. All the directors who were coming to the board meeting got to San Francisco early enough to attend the private session in the inn. They spent at least one whole day, and perhaps an evening before, in informal discussion going over the various club problems, including who the officers would be. Attendance was strictly by invitation. I've never attended one of these meetings, but I know how they work.

Clark: As a result of this caucus for 1976 there were various ideas about who should be president. I'm told informally that it took them quite a number of hours of debate to finally settle upon a slate. The next day at the formal organization meeting it had all been predetermined who was going to make the nomination and who was going to second it. So all went through like a very smoothly oiled machine, but only because it had been arranged that way. In the early days, the same mechanism in simpler form had to function.

Anyway, I did get to be president. Part of my stipulation was that I would be president if Dick Leonard would be secretary. Even in those days Dick Leonard was more thoroughly organized than I've ever been, younger, and very articulate. I felt that if he could be secretary (he had his offices in San Francisco and was better equipped than I was to take care of some things that had to be done) I could function as president.

And I did. I managed to hold the meetings together and to deal with numerous problems that came up between meetings, and we proceeded on our course. I was reelected by the board and so served for two years.

Going back for a moment, John Muir, you know, was president from the time of the organization of the club until he died in 1914. The then directors felt that they should establish a new custom that no one should serve for more than two years at the most. It takes a while for a person to get the feeling of things. So with possibly a couple of exceptions (I think Ed Wayburn served for three years [1961-1964]) in general no president has served for more than two terms in a row. It is the custom and tradition now. Any board of directors would have the right to depart from the custom for sufficient reason, but no one has seen sufficient reason to do it.

Kuhn: At the time you were elected president, were you an officer?

Clark: I was vice-president.

Kuhn: The reason I ask is: was there any other tradition like entering a line where you start as treasurer and become secretary and the one who is vice-president is then president?

Clark: I suppose there were certain lines of tradition. Those lines are somewhat like the paths through Tuolumne Meadows used to be. Most of the people follow one path, but there's always a divergent path that can be followed if you want to. However there were other

Clark: considerations in electing officers. For example, some persons served as secretary before they became president, some afterward and some never became president. The same as for treasurers and vice-presidents. There was not a recognized formal pattern.

After I finished my presidency I served a couple of times as vice-president, also as secretary and as treasurer.

Kuhn: In other words, there was no expectation on your part that merely because you were vice-president you would necessarily succeed to the presidency.

Clark: "No expectation" is a strong statement. I probably secretly had in mind that even though I didn't consider myself qualified, maybe they'd ask me to serve, and I would. There was no hard and fast tradition that it was automatic.

Kuhn: What I'm seeking for is your recollection, not just of your own experience, but of others who might have become a vice-president and had anticipated later becoming president, but didn't become president.

Clark: Yes. I think there were a number of instances. I wish I could find time to document the thing to show on the record, but I do have the very firm belief that there were a number of cases where people served as vice-president and did not succeed to the presidency.

Kuhn: There's always an argument in organizational circles that if a person is not ever going to be nominated for president you should never give him a position where he is a vice-president, because [laughing] that's one way of losing friends.

Clark: Yes, I know that's a saying, but I disagree with that idea. I do know that a few years ago, long after I served my presidency, this question came up. I made a point of talking with some of the directors and saying that it is not inevitable and it is not necessarily a custom that in the Sierra Club the vice-president must be elected to the presidency. This was in regard to a person who I hoped wouldn't get elected to the presidency. As it turned out he did not, but I'm sure my preference had nothing to do with the outcome.

Kuhn: Lew, at the conclusion of your second term as president did you participate in this procedure of helping to select your successor?

Clark: Yes, I did. I remember calling up Dr. Harold [E.] Crowe, who was then vice-president. I said, "Harold, some of us here have been talking about it, and we think that you should be the next president. Would you be willing to take it on?" He said, "Yes, I would."

Kuhn: Did the amount of time required for your presidential duties give you any difficulty as far as your professional work was concerned?

Clark: Yes, I think it did. It's very hard to measure. In retrospect I've thought, "What if this and that and the other thing had happened?", and then because they didn't happen you can't say what might have happened.

I've oftentimes felt that I did not advance as far or as fast in my profession as I would have if I'd spent more time on it instead of spending as much time on the Sierra Club. Now I don't regret having spent the time on the club, but the thought has occurred to me that it did interfere.

During my period of time, back in '48 and '49, the administration of the club was a great deal simpler than it is today. I'm well aware of that. In those days it was not felt that the president would be compensated in any way. It was a strictly volunteer job.

In more recent years, in several instances, the president has been quietly, but definitely, allowed a compensation for serving as president in lieu of the money that he would otherwise have made in the course of his regular work.

Kuhn: I remember Phil Berry at the time he was elected president was doing legal work for the club, so the club was a client. But I don't know if this applied to anyone else.

Clark: I believe that some compensation was paid by the club to president Kent Gill. After all, he's not wealthy. He's a family man and very capable, but as a high school teacher in Davis he had to earn his living.

He went to his supervising authority, and said, "They want me to become president of the club. It will take a certain amount of time. Are you willing to have me take this time?" They agreed that it was proper that he should, but he would have to forego a certain amount of income from it. The club decided to make up the difference between what he would have gotten. That's my understanding of it. These were discussed in executive session. I don't think it's down anywhere in the public records.

Clark: The point is that the job has become so large that few persons, other than Avery Brundage or somebody like that, could afford to be president of the Sierra Club if he wasn't compensated to some extent, although he's not professionally paid for the job.

Kuhn: No one, certainly, is going to become wealthy being president of the Sierra Club.

Clark: In some other organizations like the National Audubon Society and the National Parks and Conservation Association (it used to be the National Parks Association then they added "Conservation"), the presidency seems to be a career job. Anthony Wayne Smith is the legal counsel and president of the NP&CA.

Elvis Starr is the president of the National Audubon Society. Although I'm a member of the National Audubon Society, I don't know anything about the top management. However it's my understanding that he is paid a salary as a professional president.

Kuhn: Then, in a situation like that, presumably the top volunteer would be named chairman of the board or some such title.

Clark: The Sierra Club leaders have discussed that idea. They've never seen fit to adopt that, but it could be.

#### Club Presidency, 1949-1951

[The following questions were added during the editing process:

Editor: Lewis, can you describe your duties as Sierra Club president, 1949-1951? What kind of work did you take on?

Clark: I presided at meetings of the board and the executive committee. Usually the executive committee met on dates between board meetings, but sometimes closely after the board meeting.

Usually I presented the issue summarizing key points, and monitored the discussion to see that every director had a chance to speak and rebut, if necessary. I tried to curb some persons who tried to monopolize the discussion.

I participated at numerous meetings of a few key directors with staff persons of the United States Forest Service and the National Park Service, principally in San Francisco.

Clark: I originated some letters as president and collaborated with Dick Leonard in some correspondence because he was secretary of the club.

Editor: During your presidency, the main conservation issues seemed to be the San Jacinto tramway, Grand Teton National Park, and the beginnings of the Dinosaur campaign. What role might you have taken in dealing with these issues? Who else took primary roles?

Clark: I presided over numerous meetings, as indicated above. I did not (like some presidents as early as Muir, Colby, and Huber) go to Washington to lobby for club views.

Primary roles were played by secretary Dick Leonard; Edgar Wayburn representing the conservation committee. Harold C. Bradley was a prime mover in convincing the board to get involved in the Dinosaur matter.

On the San Jacinto tramway issue Nathan Clark made comprehensive engineering studies and attended hearings in southern California to oppose the building of the tramway.

Editor: Was the presidency a major commitment of time? Did you feel that a professional staff might soon be necessary?

Clark: My employer, Pacific Telephone, expected the major commitment of my time. But they knew I was club president and showed a friendly attitude. The presidency took a lot of my "spare" time. I did foresee the coming need for a professional staff. While I was vice-president following the presidency, the executive committee, at the urging of secretary Leonard, hired David Brower as executive director, at first on a part-time basis.]

Kuhn: Then after you were president you did become an officer again in various capacities.

Clark: I was elected on the board and I continued to serve as the executive committee secretary. As a matter of fact, I served as secretary for seven years, which could no longer happen now because the maximum that a director can serve in any one spell is six years. They're changing things around more. I did continue to serve on the executive committee for quite a long time after I was president.

Kuhn: All these descriptions you tell me about behind-the-scenes activities I refer to as the "constructive uses of non-democracy."

Clark: [laughing] That's an interesting phrase, isn't it?

It's my personal belief that this is the way human beings act, and that it's extremely fundamental in an organization of people that it works this way. Other organizations that I've been connected with would confirm that you're correct.

Kuhn: I think there's a limit to democracy. It's all right to have the club elect the directors, but the directors have to live with each other, and it's completely appropriate that they elect their own officers.

Clark: I firmly believe that's true.

The directors come to know in the course of their public and executive meetings the attitudes of the fellow directors, how they express themselves, the initiative they take.

#### The Mechanics of a Sierra Club Election

Kuhn: I would like you, at some point, to discuss your years as chairman of the elections committee because you've delighted our history committee with your previews of these results.

Clark: We could go into that now if you want.

Before that famous election when there were the Brower (ABC) slate and the Concerned Members for Conservation (CMC), I never had anything to do with the elections committee. I just figured it was being handled properly, and I was involved in too many other things to get further involved.

But that year I was not on the board and Randal F. Dickey, Jr. was chairman of the national judges of elections. He asked me to serve as a judge. The ballots were then being counted in his legal office in Alameda. Up to that time the ballots had been counted in the San Francisco club office in the Mills Tower.

There was much feeling generated by that election and much concern expressed that some of the staff people in San Francisco might be in a position to influence the election. Because they were right on hand there was a suspicion that they might put in a few extra ballots here and there. Rightly or wrongly some people thought this could happen, so that Randal Dickey decided to move the ballot handling completely out of the club office and put it into his office. I was one of the judges.



Clark: As has happened before in my career I showed a particular interest in how things were being run, asked questions, volunteered to help out in this and that way. The next year Randal told the president that he didn't want the job anymore, but he would recommend me as chairman. I was asked to serve.

Kuhn: At the time of this ABC-CMC election were the ballots tabulated by computer?

Clark: Yes, but not to the same extent that they are now. We had a system which was much more cumbersome than our present system. In order to determine if a ballot was valid, that is, came from a member that was entitled to vote, we had to have the ballot enclosed in an inside envelope and outside envelope. The inside sealed envelope was not supposed to be identified in any way with the member. The ballot was an IBM card which was put in this blue envelope. Then the member was supposed to put the blue envelope in another colored envelope, sign his name and address on the outside in the upper left-hand corner. The rules were that if it wasn't signed, and it wasn't legible, we wouldn't count the ballot.

The process required a lot of people; the regular nine judges of elections plus alternates, who were really additional. We had about thirty people helping out at one time or another. Randal had some of his friends and various club members, including Charlotte Mauk, a former director. Dan Lutten, one of the judges, was a strong pro-Brower person. He was ostensibly there to see that the "other side" didn't mess up things.

We did have membership record printouts from the club, many books of them, although the total membership was about half of what it is today. Every tenth envelope was taken out and segregated, just as they came. We borrowed the Sierra Club letter opener to open both the outside and the inside envelopes. The inside envelopes were all stacked away to be fed into the computer. Persons were assigned to pick out every tenth outside envelope and put them in a stack. Other persons checked the name and address on the envelope with the printouts.

We had problems because of illegible names. Other problems involved the mailing out of the ballots: did some people get two ballots? and so on. I don't need to go into that more now.

Kuhn: You wouldn't actually verify signatures, you just cross-checked names.

Clark: Yes, just names. But they were supposed to sign it. We had no way of knowing if that was their valid signature or not. Some of them signed it in such a way that you couldn't read it.

It was a big hassle. I'm sure Randal realized that something had to be done to improve it, but he didn't want anything more to do with it.

One of the judges then was Darrell Southwell from San Mateo. Later when I took over the job I chose Darrell to be my principal assistant, and he has served as such since then despite his professional work which involves computer technology, and his large responsibilities as chairman of the club's Clair Tappaan Lodge committee.

In connection with that 1969 election: after all the ballots had been extracted from the blue envelopes, they were packed into footlockers. Then Dan and I took the ballots in his truck to Palo Alto where the computer company was located. The sentiment of the judge seemed to be that he wanted to be sure that I didn't pull any shenanigans, and I was to watch him likewise. Dan Luten and I were and are good friends. I think we were honest people.

Anyway, we took them down to this computer place in Palo Alto and stashed the boxes on the floor in one of the corridors. We wondered, "What's to prevent--?" It wasn't very secure, except that it was inside their building. They had other projects, and they didn't get around to counting the ballots for a week. Then they were a little slow in giving Randal the results.

Everyone was pressing him. "What's the result? When are you going to get the answer? Give us some idea of how it's going to be." He was very firm about not giving out any information. He insisted that officers of the club get the official information first.

When I took over as chairman I got together with Darrell. I knew that he had had some experience with computer outfits. We talked quite a lot about how we could improve the thing. For one thing, we didn't want to go to this Palo Alto outfit. (That's not the one that does the bulk of the club's computer work now.) We didn't feel that their service had been satisfactory.

There was a computer outfit in San Francisco by the name of Continental Data Service, CDS. One of their programmers was a member of the Sierra Club, Bob McKnight. Darrell Southwell and Bob and I conferred together with some others. Bob McKnight decided to invent a new system for checking that would eliminate the sampling.

Clark: He devised a system of an eight-digit number which would be a unique number. That is, every ballot would be prepunched with a number that would be different from any other number. But it's selected in accordance with a program so that when we come to read the ballots the computer is instructed what an acceptable number is. The printed ballots are punched, not in numerical sequence, but with a pattern of numbers so the computer can determine if the ballot that it's reading falls within the acceptable series of numbers. With eight digits we can get a practically inexhaustible field of numbers. That's the system we've been using ever since. I think it's a very good system. So far as I know, no other organization uses it.

We installed the system at Continental Data Services in San Francisco. Their management was very favorably inclined to the Sierra Club. They had Sierra Club pictures mounted on the walls of their building. They were very cooperative.

The computer did the checking, and all we had to do was to feed the stuff in. We still had to open up the one return envelope, but there was no need of a person's name to appear on the envelope.

Darrell and I decided that one of the things we'd strive for would be to get the results of the election counted and the officers informed before midnight on the Saturday of the election. We did that the first year. Maybe the second year there were some complications, having to rerun part of the ballot, so the notification came on Sunday.

We have managed to give the results of the election to the officers at least by Sunday up until this year. In 1976, there was a bobble in the club office in providing address labels for members in Alaska. It was a clerical error on the part of the staff people who supplied the zip code information to the contractor who mailed out the ballots. When we discovered that the people in Alaska hadn't received their ballots we scurried around and sent them some ballots with a special note saying, "Sorry for the delay, but because of this we will give you a week more to get the ballots in from Alaska."

So this year we had one report on the tenth of April, but we couldn't publish the results until the seventeenth. Actually, there were only 105 ballots that came in between the tenth and the seventeenth. That's a pretty small number, but we added those to the results. They did not affect the final result. I don't think that will happen again, but every year some unexpected thing comes up.

Kuhn: In that first election in which you were involved, the ABC-CMC election, what was the relative vote?

Clark: I can't remember the exact vote, but it was outstanding--Dave was running for the board and he came in number six, with five to be elected. The margin was quite decisive--a couple of thousand difference.

Kuhn: Something like that always brings the voters out.

Clark: Yes. That brought them out proportionately more.

This year the percentage of response, that is all those who sent in ballots compared with those that we sent out, was something like 29.7 percent. That is the order of magnitude of what the elections have usually been in the Sierra Club, around 30 percent.

Kuhn: This year the directors' election wouldn't have been anything spectacular, but you had a dues increase item on the ballot.

Clark: I thought that would increase it, and it did. The percentage response was slightly up.

Kuhn: What other issues would have been on there? Was Diablo Canyon?

Clark: The Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant siting was a ballot issue one time.

Kuhn: This issues business is fascinating. Your election reports ought really to be on file over at Bancroft.

Clark: Since I've been chairman, there've been very careful reports. Randal Dickey's report as chairman was two paragraphs. He said, "I certify that the following people have been elected to the board." That's all there was to it.

During my chairmanship we've analyzed a lot of the other factors involved in the election, such as procedural steps, statistical reports on percentages of response, typical comments sent in with ballots, etc. Some of this is based on more detailed statistics provided by our computer program. The program is owned by the Sierra Club.

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## IV A LEADER IN THE INTERNATIONAL OUTINGS PROGRAM

[Interview 4: June 5, 1976]

Genesis of the Foreign Outings

Kuhn: Good morning. We are sitting in the kitchen of Lewis Clark's home in Alameda on Saturday morning, June 5, 1976, for our fourth session. This morning, Lew, we're going to talk about how you got involved in the overseas travel program with the Sierra Club. Was it always as a leader, or did you first start as a participant only?

Clark: I started as a participant. In 1966 the club had pioneered its first trip to New Zealand. Al Schmitz was the leader and his assistant was Al Coombs.

I'd known Al Schmitz for quite a number of years. I'd been on trips he led in the Washington Cascades. (Incidentally we all referred to him as Al. Later on he became active in Mountain Travel, Inc.--organized by Leo LeBon, Al Steck and Barry Bishop--Schmitz became known to his friends as Alla.) So we were old friends. At that time I was on the board of directors of the Sierra Club. Since this was the first time the club had gone out of the country, and we would be meeting a number of government officials and other leaders, Al felt that I could help if I would be a spokesman for the club and also assist him where he was busy with other duties. So I acted as a spokesman.

I spoke with some newspaper people and, later on at the end of the trip when Al had to go the hospital to take care of a minor injury that he'd had, I was on a TV interview in Christchurch. I was in effect a de facto assistant leader, although I was a paying guest like all the other people.

Clark: Of course, you understand that I had been participating in many other club high trips, knapsack and river float trips and been active in leading ski trips.

We returned to California in February. Later while talking with Al he said, "I can't go on this trip to Europe. Would you like to take my place?" This was the first trip that the Sierra Club had to Europe, in the summer of 1966. It was organized by Dr. Stewart Kimball, then chairman of the outing committee. He had pioneered in a number of things and that was one of them: getting the club to go outside of the North American continent.

Kuhn: Lew, let me ask you this. Was this not just to provide a broader experience, but was this in keeping with policy to lessen the impact on the Sierra by having a wider diversity of trips?

Clark: I think Dr. Kimball should be the one to speak for himself on what his motivations were.

Kuhn: We're going to interview him.

Clark: Ostensibly, I believe that Dr. Kimball felt at that time, and he still does, that one of the justifications for the Sierra Club outings (reflecting back on Colby's ideas in the very beginning) is that people will understand and defend best the areas that they know. He had another way of phrasing it, but that's the essence as I see it. I would say that Dr. Kimball felt it would be worthwhile for the Sierra Club to venture forth on a trip to Europe to better understand the natural environmental problems of other countries.

He sold it to the board. They had to give their approval. So he was the leader. He and Max Knight, a longtime friend, went over in advance and lined up plans. Kimball had selected as group leaders persons who had been active leaders in assisting domestic outings in the United States and also some people from the countries the groups were going in.

The outing as a whole visited Switzerland, Austria and Italy. As I remember it the charter flight carried about 180 persons in a Boeing 707. About a dozen groups varied in size from ten to twenty persons. This required a strong corps of leaders.

Kuhn: When you say you had groups, was this for the chapters in the United States, or when you were over in Europe, they broke up into groups to go to the different places?

Clark: The grouping wasn't related to chapters at all.

Kuhn: So these were groups that went on their own for a while.

Clark: No, no. These people signed up to go on the first Sierra Club outing to Europe, to visit these countries. As a mechanism for dividing up the people that made reservations and paid their money they had some option as to certain sections.

For example, the charter flight was for approximately six weeks. Some people selected the six-week outing itinerary, others the four-week trip, some people two weeks. As it was a charter flight, if they elected to go for two weeks on the Sierra Club trip they then had four weeks more that they could use on their own in visiting other parts of Europe. The group that took the six weeks itinerary spent their whole time under club auspices, and they had very little time to do other traveling in Europe.

Kuhn: Now, if you had 180 people--that's considerably larger in numbers than the kind of trips we have now.

Clark: Certainly. I don't remember whether it was exactly 180 persons or exactly a dozen groups. There may have been fifteen groups. The point is that Dr. Kimball, who organizes things very meticulously, had the idea of filling the plane with a number of small groups averaging fifteen or so, each of which would move according to carefully prearranged itineraries so as to reduce the impact on the hut facilities and the trails. One of the group leaders was Al Schmitz.

Dr. Kimball had always felt that the people who led groups for the Sierra Club outings should have had some previous experience as club leaders. Lot of people would like to go along as a leader and get their expenses paid. It's a very popular activity. But Kimball feels that they must know the Sierra Club approach and the background of Sierra Club outings and the background of the Sierra Club itself as a conservation force. He tried to pick leaders who he believed had those qualifications.

#### Leading the 1966 Club Trip to Europe

Clark: I hadn't been really active in leading high trips. I'd been on a good many of them, and I'd led other kinds of trips. Al Schmitz suggested to Dr. Kimball that I take his place. Al had some personal reasons for feeling that he couldn't go that summer, although he'd been chosen.

Clark: I spoke to Dr. Kimball about this. I said, "What are the chances? I'd like to take it on if you think that I could do it." He said, "Well, there's another fellow, Tom, who has had quite a lot of experience in domestic trips in the High Sierra and so on. He really has preference over you, but I'm not sure whether he can take it or not. I'll let you know."

Eventually he called and said, "Tom said to me that he also couldn't go at this time." So I was given the responsibility for leading a group.

Larry Williams, who had become quite active in the club and who has since died in an accident, was a group leader. Larry and I started out from Zurich together, but we sort of looped around, in some places crossing this way back and forth. It was a two-week trip, and there were about twenty people in each group.

The flight was to Zurich. Then we went by chartered buses into several parts of Switzerland. Our particular group was going to start in the west of the Engadine area and move in general eastward. Was it Gstaad or someplace like that?

We went by bus to this small Swiss village town where we stayed overnight in prearranged accommodations. Then we hiked up over the mountains, eastward to a point from which we took another bus down to the railroad station. That was our trip in Switzerland.

We also moved by train into Austria, near Innsbruck. Accommodations had been arranged for us through Dr. Kimball and his assistant scouting people. We went into the Zillertaler area of Austria, which is south of the Inn River up near the Italian border.

Larry's group reversed the direction and we all met one day enroute. That's how I got started in the foreign trip outings. There was already talk and plans for another trip in Europe the following year. Since the '66 trip was oversubscribed, it appeared that a trip including France and Switzerland might fill up. My friends Leo LeBon and Bob Golden, each of whom was active in planning foreign trips, were talking about a trip in the French Alps.

After the '66 trip was over I arranged to fly to Nice, take a train and a bus and meet Leo and Bob in a small French town in southern France. Leo had a new Mercedes at his disposal, and we were going to scout out the possibilities of a trip for '67.



Clark: We visited three areas, not completely, because we were somewhat pressed for time and ended in Paris. Leo and Bob departed in a few days and I left soon after.

I was designated to be an assistant to Bob Golden in this '67 trip. Not enough people signed up to make the trip on a basis of a charter flight. When the time came to put up several thousand dollars to the airline and the outing department didn't have the money because not enough people had signed up, the trip was cancelled. Insofar as I know, it was the first time that the Sierra Club had had to cancel a national outing with so many people involved. But they were learning, you see. After that, it was decided for logistics reasons and also for other reasons such as impact on the environment to keep the number of people drastically fewer than it had been before.

Our charter flight to Europe in '66 was almost in the tradition of the early high trips when Colby would lead two hundred people into the Sierra. Let the maximum number of people go, within the logistic capabilities. Spread the gospel. Now, as you know, as a result of the philosophy of minimizing impact, the national outings limit themselves to an average of fifteen with a maximum of thirty on certain trips. This holds true for both domestic and foreign trips. In case as many as thirty sign-ups are allowed there may be two subgroups.

For 1968, Leo LeBon and I had talked a lot about a different kind of trip. Leo's idea was to take a small group of people in self-drive buses.

Coincidentally, Dr. Kimball had come to the conclusion that the outing committee should not plan to arrange for the people to meet somewhere in the United States at a point of embarkation with the Sierra Club responsible for overseas transportation. The club would be responsible for leading groups of people in the foreign country from a point of departure in that country. It would be up to the members of the party to get themselves to the starting point in the foreign country. That's been the general policy ever since. Do you have any question about that?

France, Yugoslavia, Japan, Africa, Spain

- Kuhn: Yes, a question price-wise. The cost between getting from here to the starting point in another country on your own would seem to be considerably higher than if there were some group or charter arrangement.
- Clark: There's a good deal more flexibility if individuals have to take the initiative and make their own arrangements. When we had a trip to the French Alps in 1968, it started from Paris, where people assembled. After one night in prearranged hotel accommodations, we all flew to Geneva. We went by chartered VW buses doing our own driving through several areas. We spent a week at a pension in Chamonix, France, making several hikes. Thence via the Mont Blanc tunnel into Italy and back over the Col de la Petit St. Bernard into France again where we spent a week hiking in Le parc National de la Vanoise, France's largest national park. We drove over several cols in France to St. Martin de Vesubie. More hiking was done in the mountains above, bordering against Italy. Our final portion of driving took us south to Nice, east and north into Italy's Val d'Costa, thence through the St. Bernard tunnel, into Switzerland and back to Geneva, where the trip ended. The self-drive plan saved considerable cost over a chauffeured bus. Evidently most of the distance traveled was by bus, but the majority of our time was spent on our hikes.

This was an innovation in the club's European trip style. The format was Leo's idea. I led two trips, in tandem, comprising eighteen persons in each group. It was a success financially and environmentally, I think, for all participants.

Dr. Kimball has always been interested in pioneering new trip ideas. He prefers developing plans to new places to doing the same thing over again. He had formulated a trip to Yugoslavia for 1971. I happened to meet him at a private group of Sierra Club people at Berkeley at which he was telling about his plans. I volunteered to be one of the leaders if he needed somebody.

Kimball had originally planned for four groups, but not enough people signed up so finally after numerous ins and outs two groups were organized. I happened to be one of the leaders. My group started in Ljubljana, hiked in the Julian Alps. Some of our party climbed Triglav, the country's highest mountain. I was glad to be among them. After touring along the Dalmation Coast we rode up into the Durmitor Alps east of Titograd and made a five-day hiking expedition involving camping in tents provided locally.

Clark: Dr. Kimball's group started in Titograd and followed an itinerary in reverse.

In 1972 I was not involved in a Sierra Club trip. I decided to accept the hospitality of Dr. Yasuo Sasa of Japan to stay at his home in Sapporo during the winter Olympics in February. He extended the invitation so Frank Shoemaker could accompany me. Frank, a former chairman of the Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee, has been continuously active in the ski patrol programs. After the Olympics on the island of Hokkaidō, Frank and I did skiing and sightseeing on Hokkaidō Island. I mention this because my travels in Japan in 1972 and earlier in 1970 stemmed from conversations I had with Dr. Kimball in the fall of 1969 following his return from leading the Sierra Club's first and highly successful trip to Japan. Dr. Kimball put me in touch with Dr. Sasa, who had been of great help along with Mr. Sekiguchi and Mr. Horikawa of Tokyo in facilitating the club trip. Thanks to those Japanese gentleman I spent two and a half months exploring Japan in 1970 from one end to the other.

Later in 1970 I participated in the first overseas trip of the California Academy of Sciences, which was a charter flight to Rome with an extra extension to Kenya and Tanzania in Africa for those who subscribed. This trip also was on my own. It was an interesting experience in seeing how trips are run, and gaining much knowledge of the natural environments of these countries.

Now back to France. Ivan de Tarnowsky, a longtime club member and habitual hiker, had a sister in Gap, France. On personal visits to her, she said to Ivan, "Why don't you bring the Sierra Club over here into this Queyras area?" Although Ivan has led local club walks, he had not been an outing leader on the national schedule. Since we were acquainted he solicited my assistance and know-how to organize a trip to this part of the French Alps, an area east of Grenoble.

In 1973 Ivan and I went to the Queyras to scout the trip. He has a great talent for organizing information about local conditions, and he knows a lot of people, has lots of contacts. Between his efforts and the efforts of his sister, who is a director of the French bank, Credit Agricole, in Gap, we met many influential people.

Le Queyras is a mountainous basin lying against the frontier between France and Italy. At that part, the axis of the frontier trends generally north and south. The Queyras, however, is sort of an enclave that projects somewhat into Italy. It contains the headwaters of the Guil River.

Clark: Through my experience with the national outing program and my acquaintanceship with Dr. Kimball and Ivan's talents and his French connection, we teamed up as leaders and got approval to put on a trip for 1974.

It was a very successful trip. Besides the travel in the Queyras we had a full day meeting in Paris sponsored by the Ministry of Protection of the Environment and attended by several governmental and civilian conservation agencies and organizations. Two years later the club is getting beneficial fallout from these contacts.

Through Ivan I made the acquaintance of a club member of Spanish birth who lives in San Francisco. Senorita Aurora Dorado wanted very much to participate in leading a Sierra Club trip to the mountains of Spain. But she didn't know to whom to go to in the outing committee. Working with some travel agencies she had made much progress toward setting up a tour in certain parts of Spain, and she aspired to be the leader. But those plans fell through.

In pursuing correspondence with key people in Spain, she received a letter from a Spanish mountain guide Senor Francesc Sabat. He described the beauties and possibilities of a trip in the Pyrenees. I decided this would be an interesting thing to do and in line with the club outing program as I understood it. So Aurora and I got together and planned. We outlined the trip in considerable detail, got approval of the foreign trips subcommittee (now chaired by Dr. Kimball) to scout the trip in 1975. [For three weeks during June and July of 1976 we had a successful club outing in the Pirenees Central de España. We have obtained approval for a similar trip in the summer of 1978--L.C., 1977]

Codes of Behavior: Avoiding the "Ugly American" Syndrome

Kuhn: Lew, I want to ask you a question on these trips. Inasmuch as the group includes people of various backgrounds, ages, capabilities, Sierra Club experience, maybe the first trip abroad for some of them, while many of them may have been there at other times, how do you reconcile the variations in the makeup of the group and keep them all happy?

Clark: That's one of the problems. You're quite right: the participants on my trips range widely in age. It has happened, however, that we've always had a few youngish children, either almost pre-teenage or at least teenagers, on up to people who have retired and are past sixty--a mix of people of diverse experience. I think that is one

Clark: of the things that makes a Sierra Club trip, either foreign or domestic so interesting. People meet others who have some common interests (they wouldn't be club members if they didn't), but also they have a great variety of backgrounds and attitudes towards things. I enjoy meeting other people on this basis.

I should say at this point that there's another concern underlying all of the Sierra Club and especially the foreign outings which we're talking about. When we take a group of people to a foreign country on a Sierra Club outing it is my view, and I believe it's Dr. Kimball's view also, that we're going there as observers to find out about some of the ecological and environmental problems in this foreign country, to observe how these people are coping with their problems, and to exchange views, perhaps, tell them how to handle our problems. But it is a cardinal rule as far as I'm concerned, that we carefully avoid telling the people in the host country how they should conduct their affairs. We're guests in their country. We don't try to go over there and proselyte them and rambunctiously say to them "Why don't you do this or that?" I think that's a no-no.

Kuhn: Anybody ever violate it?

Clark: Not on any of my trips--at least in any outstanding way. There have been a few minor infractions, perhaps. As you know individuals express themselves, especially some American travelers.

Kuhn: You're Americans besides being Sierra Clubbers. I think that's an image of being "handsome" rather than "ugly Americans."

Clark: I'd like to think so. My experiences in Austria, Switzerland, France, Yugoslavia, and Spain include cordial and really genuinely friendly relations with the people who we were dealing with. Of course we were in contact with people who'd helped us to accomplish our mission. On the other hand, you can't travel around the world that much without encountering a few people who are obnoxious. You don't like them, you don't like the way they react.

Personal Aspects: Trip Members and Leaders

Kuhn: That's what I'm looking for. A few little incidents?

Clark: You really don't have to look outside of California to find that.

Kuhn: I'm just wondering if you ever had anybody who was so out of line with the rest of the group that (a) you either wish they hadn't come or (b) you asked them to go home or continue on their own.

Clark: Well, it's not all peaches and cream. Some individuals because of their personalities or because of their background (maybe these factors are related) or because of their temporary physical condition (they may be tired, they may have had a minor accident and they're hurting someplace or other) such persons may present a psychological problem to the leader. My experience is that one of the principal duties of a Sierra Club leader in a foreign country is to keep the various members of the party reasonably happy and living together for the short period of time that we are thrown together.

We draw people from all over. For example, consider our Spain trip this summer. The twenty-five guests come from nine different states, including Hawaii, California, Minnesota, Texas, Georgia, and ranging in age from eleven to past sixty-five. In a group like that, many of whom have never known each other before, it seems to be inevitable that there will be some personality problems. The leader must try to understand this and to get along with each person, dealing with them as individuals, and help them to solve their individual problems, at the same time trying to keep everything happy and on schedule and in a reasonably harmonious manner. It's a real psychological challenge.

Kuhn: I've taken two groups to Israel in the last two years and their makeup was considerably more homogeneous than the Sierra Club trips which you have led. Nonetheless you find people who don't want to be near other people, and it really requires a great deal of diplomatic skill. I think it's a very, very important thing.

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Kuhn: I was pointing out, Lew, that when you had your little get-together for trip members from northern California just before your Spain trip, you had around 40 percent of the group, so you really don't know what all the participants look like until you get to Barcelona.

Clark: That's right. In general, it's the rule rather than the exception that the people who go on a trip like this do not know all the members. They may only know one or two before they find themselves at the rendezvous.

This has been my experience over a period of forty years of going on trips with the Sierra Club and with other groups in California and other parts of the U.S. and other parts of the world. That makes these trips extraordinarily interesting.

Kuhn: You and I have talked about the number of weird and unbalanced people there are in the world, but there seem to be a tremendous number of people who are all right. I imagine that at some point in any trip, once the people have gotten to know the others a little bit and also adjust to the circumstances, being in a foreign country and maybe at considerable altitude, there's a point where you think, "They've made it. They've acclimated themselves, everybody talks to everybody else." They start to sing a little bit together, and you're a relaxed and happy family.

Clark: Yes. That's very true. It's one of the compensations that makes life easier for the leader. Let me mention another thing that happens. For example, we miss a connection or something happens so that we're buying time and have to cut out doing some planned thing because of logistics problems, then there are people who get very upset. It is helpful to the leader when some other member of the party, who has been a quiet person, a man or woman who has just gone along, doing everything expected, but not making himself or herself conspicuous, comes to the leader and says, "I understand what your problem is, and you can count on me to do anything necessary so that the party will go ahead." Such unsolicited events have happened to me several times; it is a most welcome thing for the leader.

Kuhn: Well, they're all capable people in some way. Being able to utilize them, I think, is a great thing.

Do you find any evidence that after the trip is over any substantial number of the participants still keep in touch with each other by correspondence or reunions?

Clark: Not as much as I'd hope. It often happens that people do have a reunion. In fact there's generally a feeling of wanting to get together. "Let's get together and look at our pictures, or get together anyway." This has happened a number of times. It usually isn't possible to get everybody; often they are scattered and have their own problems of getting there. We've had quite a number of very pleasant reunions, but once that has happened then people get involved again in their various different activities, and it seldom happens that you meet more than once. It might happen that you've made acquaintances with certain people, and you might go on meeting with them as friends thereafter, even though you didn't know them before.

Kuhn: Do you get any personal background information from each participant before you go?

Clark: Yes. Each trip leader is expected to make up his own questionnaire. I have here a questionnaire which was sent out to the people on our group, and I'll just outline some of the things that we asked for.

"This is a questionnaire for the Sierra Club outing to Spain in 1976. The leaders will appreciate your answering the following questions," and so forth. Name and address and phone. We bracket ages: less than 25, 25 to 50, 50 and over. Most people will check one of those three places. Some of them don't. "How often do you hike: once a week, once a month, or other?" "Highest elevation hiked to by trail: 5,000, 8,000, 10,000 and over." "Do you intend to get into shape by hiking for a number of weekends before the trip?" Most people say yes. They don't all say yes.

Kuhn: Even the ones who say yes, do they do it?

Clark: I suppose so. I don't press them on this. Their statements range up from a minimum. One request was, "Please give a brief resume of your recent hiking experience." One man only says a High-Light trip with Royal Smith in July, 1975; a knapsack trip with Jim Waters in July, 1975.

Here's another one from one of the young ladies on our Spain trip responding to "Do you intend to get into shape?" She says, "I'll be walking all over Europe. I hope to take as many hiking trips as possible. In the last five years I have graduated from the Northwest Outward Bound School in Oregon. I have climbed with the Swiss Mountain Club on two separate occasions, have completed the advanced technical course, spent five summers hiking and backpacking in the Rocky Mountain National Park." And so forth. Well, that's on the rich experience side, although she's quite young.

Here for example is a middle-aged lady who says, "Yes, I work out in a gym three nights a week, go on local hikes, go on foreign trips in Venezuela. I belong to the Hundred Peaks Group, the Sierra Club Peaks Group, the Desert Peaks Group, and formerly the Rock Climbing Group."

You get different responses from people, but it's quite helpful. It's as helpful to the individuals as it is to the leader because when they're put to asking themselves questions of this nature, they can try to figure out really whether this trip is for them or not. This happens to be our screening. Various trips are more rigorous in their screening, some of them quite a bit more rigorous.



- Clark: I've only had to turn down one person who applied for our trip, on the basis of what she said about her hiking. She said, "I'm not much of a hiker," and various other details that led me to tell her that I thought she'd hardly find it worthwhile to go on our trip because she wouldn't be able to enjoy the trip.
- Kuhn: Have you ever had anyone who, regardless of the answers they gave to your questions, really found it difficult if not impossible to keep up with the group physically?
- Clark: Yes, we did have. On our second trip in the French Alps in 1968 one of the younger members, in her early or mid-twenties, was quite active and eager to do the things, but when we actually got out on the hikes she just kind of pooped out. We had to make allowance for that in the later conduct of the trip. We just had to recognize that she couldn't take it as well as the average of the other people. We hadn't anticipated this from any questionnaires. So this is one of the things we have to cope with.
- Kuhn: How do the people get along with different kinds of foreign foods?
- Clark: Of course there're always some people who have their preferences and are also very vocal about expressing them. However, in my experience, most of the people take it in stride.

I remember in our French Alps trip we had a school teacher from the Middle West who had traveled on many trips with the Sierra Club and with other groups. She was what you call an experienced traveler, a very energetic, smallish person who carried a whole lot of camera gear slung around on straps. One of her peculiarities was that she had to have her tea on every occasion. When traveling in a foreign country for breakfast, we generally have a continental breakfast with coffee, a croissant or a roll and butter and jam. In some places you have a more elaborate breakfast. But she always made an issue of always getting her tea for breakfast, even when it made quite a nuisance. At other times when we'd be having a relaxation break with coffee or wine, she had to have her tea. She made a nuisance of herself.

I was privately somewhat irked by this, but I tried not to show it. I tried to understand what her peculiarities were. I'd kid her along and try to overlook the special problems she created as much as possible, because I figure that the job of the leader is to be a person the other people can turn to if they're in difficulties or trouble. The leader will listen to their problems, try to help them solve their problems. He or she will not necessarily be able to solve their problems himself or herself, but he will do his best to help them.

Kuhn: I think with your personality, Lew, that you're happier as a leader than you would be as just a mere participant.

Clark: Looking over a period of forty years or so of going on trips with other people, that's probably true, although I've been on quite a number of trips where I went along just as a paying guest. But something happens, in Norway or New Zealand or Africa, and I see something needs to be done. I speak quietly to the leader and say, "Can I help you about this?" or, "How would it be if we did this?" or, "Would you like to have me help out on something or other." In other words, I stick my neck out and volunteer an idea. The next thing I know I'm given a responsibility. This is human nature.

Kuhn: It's also Lewis Clark's nature. I think it's beautiful.

What foreign countries do you have your eye on next?

Clark: I'm not sure about that. I'd like to go to Central America and South America. I'd like to go back to Alaska, as we were talking about earlier. I'd like to go back to Japan. I'd like to see more of almost all the countries that I've been in. You can't exhaust the possibilities.

For many years I thought Spain was the last place I wanted to go. Not that I didn't want to go there, but it was the last place I'd go to. Now I've spent some time there, and I'm planning to spend most of the summer that I have available there. It opened up my eyes to a lot of interesting things there that I didn't realize were there.

Kuhn: There're three areas that I'd like to ask you about. First is Africa, second is Asia, and the third is behind the Iron Curtain.

Clark: I suppose my attitude toward "behind the Iron Curtain" would be, perhaps, as my attitude was toward Spain; it was the last place I wanted to go but I hope to get there someday.

I have been in the Orient, as you know, Japan and Taiwan, and a quick tour through the Philippines and Thailand. I'd certainly like to go back and see some more of that country.

I would not rule out visiting behind the Iron Curtain. Of course I was in Yugoslavia, but that's a shuttered curtain. It's a communist country, but it's the most westernized of the communist countries.

Clark: Having to live on a budget (I'm not so well off that I can afford to go anywhere that I'd like to go), even health permitting, I have to adjust my circumstances to my financial resources, as most people do of course. Where I go will depend partly upon what the circumstances are. But, God willing, so long as I have my health, I intend to keep seeing as much as possible of the world.

Kuhn: I would say, "Lewis Clark. Have Sierra Club cup, will travel."

Clark: [laughing] I think I may have mentioned before, Marshall, that when my parents were building this house way back when I was a small boy playing around with wooden blocks on the floor (the blocks were construction blocks, not bought at a store) my parents read the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Father was building the fireplace, and Mother read the story to him.

I've often wondered whether somewhere in my subconscious I got an idea that I wanted to go exploring and traveling, to be willing to put myself out both mentally and physically to face up to a challenge where I'm not sure what is coming up. When we do the routine things, we are confident about doing it. It can be quite comfortable but not much of a challenge. Maybe it's a chore.

Kuhn: Yes, but you have had to hedge against it, Lew, hedge against the unexpected by making these preliminary investigations in the year prior to the club trip.

Clark: That's mandatory as far as the Sierra Club outing program is concerned.

Kuhn: What would you say of Stevenson's little couplet, "There's nothing in the world so blue, that's quite worth the traveling to." In other words this is his way of stating that anticipation frequently is greater than realization.

Clark: When I was a boy here in Alameda, Maurice Maeterlinck's newly translated The Blue Bird was read to me and my boyfriends. Although I can't remember the details, I've not forgotten the message: you can travel all over the world, and you find that the thing that you most wanted was right where you started.

Kuhn: That's the message in the Vision of Sir Launfal by James Russell Lowell. The Holy Grail is in your own backyard if you want to help other people.

Clark: But until you've seen the rest of the world you may be provincially limited by your scope that you don't appreciate what you have at home.

Kuhn: Lew, on the regular Sierra Club High Trips, as they were, they used to have a sort of gala party the night before the trip ended with vaudeville skits put on by the so-called freshmen, etc. Do you have any kind of a fun night before the overseas trip terminates, people putting on little satires and poems?

Clark: The desire for a concluding gala seems to be part of human nature. Experiences vary widely in what may happen. For example, in 1968 when we had those two trips in the French Alps in tandem (one group followed by another), we went essentially on the same itinerary. But there were variations imposed by conditions that arose plus a certain amount of voluntary varying of the itinerary. On these trips we had three VW buses with people driving in country where they hadn't been before. I could tell them where they're supposed to be that night, but there was no guarantee they'd all follow the same route.

Anyway, getting to this party thing; in Geneva, one of the groups had a gala beef fondue. We agreed on a place and had a wonderful get-together. By that time we knew each other, it was a pleasant well-served meal, and an interesting experience for everyone--a gemütlichkeit occasion.

For the second group--I suggested that perhaps we could do something like this, but it just didn't come off. People had other things they wanted to do at the last moment; we couldn't agree upon a place or a thing to do; some people were going to leave early. Some of us did get together and dined in a restaurant. It was a pleasant occasion, but it wasn't like the first time. Some of these things are very much dependent upon the chemistry of the group and the circumstances of where you are.

Kuhn: Each group has a personality all its own besides the personalities of those in the group.

Clark: Absolutely true.

Kuhn: Once you get the perfect group, it's all downhill from then on. It would be tough to duplicate it.

Clark: Yes. For example, on the French Alps trip in the Queyras, as the trip approached its end there were several people that were very anxious to leave it a day or so early. They wanted to get down to

Clark: Italy or over to Germany or back to London. They had their own personal plans and when they felt that they had gotten essentially all that they'd paid for on our trip, they said, "We're going to leave a day early; we rented a car. When the time comes, we're doing to get off here at the railroad station, and you're going on to the airport." They scatter. Out of the twenty or almost thirty people that we had on that trip, there were about ten or twelve who ended up in Paris together. We had plans for this ahead of time. Several of us were in the same hotel so we did several things together for a couple of days afterward. But, as I said, it depends upon the circumstances and the people.

Kuhn: By scouting a year ahead and making your plans you will make perhaps the probability, but not the certainty, that everything has been ironed out. Have you ever returned to the foreign country and found out that things weren't quite what you expected them to be?

Clark: Always, I would say. Never in my experience, can you guarantee that everything's been ironed out. There're always going to be some unexpected problems. No matter how carefully you plan and how reliable your agents and representative are, something's going to come up, either that you forgot to count on, or that you couldn't have anticipated; some new circumstances arise. The leader has to have a combination of flexibility and determination.

Kuhn: You like a challenge.

Clark: Yes.

Kuhn: How about your relationship with your co-leaders?

Clark: That can be a problem too. When two people are going to work together on a trip, they each have their own approach to things. Each one may be affected temporarily by physical circumstances.

I told you about New Zealand when I was sort of a de facto assistant to Al Schmitz. Al Schmitz had an accident that put a gash in his leg, and he had to go to the hospital. He could be taken care of, but in the meantime he asked me if I would go to the television station and represent him. Then the regular assistant leader, who I'd gotten along with fine up to that time, thought that I should do it a little differently or at a different time. We had a bit of adjusting to do, but it worked out all right eventually.

Clark: In the case of the Queyras trip, Ivan and I worked together very well. I made it a special point to get along with him. But in a couple of incidents that came up he and I perceived the situation momentarily in disturbingly different lights. Therefore, it took some forbearance on my part to adjust myself to his perceptions of his problem. I'm glad to say that by refraining from saying some of the things I was tempted to say that we're very good friends still. I attribute that partly to the fact that I made this conscious effort to get along with him at that particular time. I could say that this has happened on other occasions, too.

Kuhn: You're probably the most experienced leader of any overseas trips by now.

Clark: No! No! Perhaps you don't realize how many Sierra Club trips there've been in the last five years all over the world. Many of the club leaders have had more extensive experience, have been on more trips, or with more people involved than I have.

Kuhn: Al Schmitz--I see his name all the time.

Clark: Al Schmitz, of course, has gradually worked into being a leader for Mountain Travel. He started as a leader for the Sierra Club, and then he retired from his professional work with the Southern Pacific Company. He's done a great deal more traveling than I have. He's a very experienced leader.

Tony Look, for example, has been leading quite a number of trips to Japan. He is not only a leader, but the area supervisor of the club trips to Japan. He has been working hard over the last six years to build an understanding between the conservation people in Japan and the Sierra Club. You mentioned earlier that some Sierra Club members feel that all Sierra Clubbers should boycott all Japanese-made goods. I explained that I don't agree with that viewpoint. I think it's a provincial attitude, although there's something to be said for it. As a result of some lively discussions at more than one meeting of the board of directors about this, Tony has been designated as the conservation chairman for the outing committee. He's quite articulate, he understands the problems, and is able to express them well--and he has contacts. He is trying to point out why the Sierra Club can make a positive contribution to protection of the whales, rather than just standing off and throwing rocks at the people and calling them names and saying, "You stupid oafs, we're not going to do any business with you." I think that's a childish attitude to take.

The World's Common Environmental Problems

- Kuhn: Lew, you've mentioned that when you're in a foreign country you don't try to give the citizens of that country the idea that you know more than they do about solving their problems, but on the other hand, have you seen any solutions to problems which you've brought back and which may have been proposed or even adopted here?
- Clark: It's pretty hard to bring back anything in this twentieth century that somebody hasn't thought of before. It may not have been implemented, perhaps for political reasons. This applies particularly to protecting the land from exploitation and protecting the natural environment. European countries and Japan have congested populations, and they are struggling with the conflicts engendered by industrialization and urbanization.

It's really pretty difficult to find a practice in a foreign country that somebody hasn't thought of here before. We're all human beings and we have to face very similar vital problems of living and getting along. These problems are not unique to the United States. They're common to the whole humanity in the world whatever continent you're on, except Antarctica perhaps. [laughter]

It's pretty hard to find something new. I think, to try to answer your question, what we can do is to observe and talk about and maybe try to articulate some of the emphases and perceptions that these people in these foreign countries have with regard to their problems. It's always helpful for us to realize that the people in Spain, for example, are faced with similar kinds of problems to what we have in California; getting along with over-hunting, overgrazing, air pollution, and water pollution. We know we have problems here. We know they have. But when we go over and see what their problems are we find that it gives us some strength to realize that here are some people trying to cope with the same kind of problems we have.

One thing I'd like to bring out to you, though. I observed this primarily on my private trip to Japan, not as a member of the Sierra Club, but I've talked with many Sierra Club people, and I think that their observations are pretty coincident with mine. The Japanese people, and perhaps the Chinese--I can't say because I haven't been there--have had to cope with many of the same problems we do in their daily living and so on, but they have evolved a different way of doing it, which is equally efficient to ours.

Clark: When I came back from my private trip to Japan in 1970 (I had traveled quite extensively from one end of the country to the other) I was very much impressed with the fact that the Japanese have certain ways of doing things that are just the opposite of what we would do, and yet it's quite efficient. They're used to it, they like it, and it works just as well, just as effectively.

Taken an obvious thing that everyone can understand. They read their newspapers from right to left. Most of the characters are written from top to bottom. Now, as a result of the western influence, they're writing some of their characters horizontally instead of vertically, because that's the way the rest of the world does. Some of their signs in Tokyo read from left to right instead of right to left.

In other words, they're adapting themselves to different ways of doing things, but to me it is a mark of extreme provincialism for an American traveler or Sierra Club person to go to some other country and say, "These people don't do things the way I do. I much prefer my way of doing things. Why don't they do it my way?"

#### Challenging the Stereotypes of the American Tourist

Kuhn: Let me ask you this. You're going to a foreign country with a group. Now presumably the people you're going to run into have certain fixed ideas about American stereotypes.

Clark: I'm sure they do.

Kuhn: Americans are lazy, sedentary, drive the car down to the corner grocery, and so on. Yet here's an environmental group of hikers. What changes have you seen in the attitudes of the people, in their perceptions of you as Americans, not just as Sierra Clubbers?

Clark: It's a very complex answer. I couldn't give you a neatly wrapped up answer to that.

Let me cite a couple of instances.

Kuhn: That's what I'd like.

Clark: When we went to New Zealand in 1966 it was the first Sierra Club group here, and it was the first group of Americans, as a sizeable group other than just a handful of three or four people, who wanted



Clark: to spend as much time hiking as we appeared to want to do. They wanted to show us their tourist sites, and we insisted upon wanting to walk over the Milford Track and go up onto Mount Cook and hike here and there.

Al Schmitz told me that he had quite a difficult time getting them to understand what we wanted to do because they thought they knew what Americans wanted to do, and we weren't performing according to their conceptions.

On some parts of our trip we had food provided in simple commissary with our own cook. Sometimes, however, we ate in restaurants or hotels. It was difficult for Al to get the local suppliers to give us what he, as an experienced outings leader, knew he wanted. They misread our instructions because they didn't understand them, or they just disregarded them and gave us what they thought we should have.

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## V RECOLLECTIONS OF SIERRA CLUB PRESIDENTS, 1915-1961

[Interview 5: September 10, 1977]##

LeConte and Colby

Kuhn: This is Marshall Kuhn speaking from my home in San Francisco, on Saturday, September 10, 1977. Lewis Clark and I are resuming his interview, which has been interrupted for a number of months, during which he was co-leader of a Sierra Club trip to Scotland.

Today Lewis will commence talking about his recollections of Sierra Club presidents. Lewis was the nineteenth president of the club, and he has known all of the presidents before him, except Muir and three others. So, now I will turn it over to Lewis.

Clark: Thank you, Marshall. I didn't realize that when I came into the club in 1928 and ended up as president in 1949, that I would have this kind of a record, because up to that time John Muir had been president for quite a long time, you know, from the founding of the club in 1892 up to 1914. And thereafter the directors decided that no one could fill John Muir's shoes, so they established the custom, which became a tradition, that no president would serve more than two years in a row (with a couple of exceptions), although there was no limitation then on the number of times a person could serve as a director.

So, I'll go down the line of the people that I knew and try to say something about them.

The four presidents I didn't know were Muir, William F. Badè, Robert M. Price, and Aurelia Harwood. Miss Harwood was the only woman president we've had. She was from southern California, and I didn't know the people down there very well. She was president in '27 and '28, and I didn't join the Sierra Club until 1928.

Clark: A little sidelight, however, about Muir. My father joined the Sierra Club while we were living in Mill Valley, and I was a small boy. I still have the silver emblem badge which he got as a club member. And I'm sure that I heard my mother and father talk about John Muir. They were very much interested in out-of-doors things, as we've discussed before.

We'll get to some comments about Badè and Price a little later.

The second president of the club was Joseph N. LeConte [1915-1917]. I didn't know him when he was president, but he was one of my sponsors in the Sierra Club, and I had taken engineering mechanics from him at the University of California. "Little Joe," as we used to call him, but not to his face, was a very precise man. I believe I told you some anecdotes about him in an earlier interview.

As you know, LeConte as a young man was outstanding in his contributions to mapping of the High Sierra. Theodore Solomons was a contemporary and is responsible for some fascinating Sierra place names. LeConte spent several years with a mule and a plane table going up and down what we now call the John Muir Trail; of course, it didn't exist then as such. And he created the first reliable maps of the High Sierra, which were published in the Sierra Club Bulletin.

Later on, the U.S. Geological Survey developed the idea of printing topographic maps in color with contour lines. [Josiah D.] Whitney [Chief Geologist of the California Geological Survey, 1860-1874], of course, had done mapping also. Later Mount Whitney was named for him. But the government had not published maps that were available for people who wanted to visit the Sierra, and LeConte's maps were the first available ones.

When I became active in the Sierra Club, in 1928 and thereafter, I went on quite a number of local walks. Soon I found myself chairman of the local walks committee of the chapter, and that led to becoming chairman of the chapter. The chapter chairman was invited to the meetings of the board of directors, and I began to get acquainted with the directors that way. Of course, I already knew Professor LeConte.

He bore out the impressions that I had from the beginning; of being always courteous and a meticulous clear thinker. Probably that's why he lasted so long in the Sierra Club.

Clark: My last visit with Professor LeConte was after he had retired to Carmel. I went down a couple of times with some friends to call on him in Carmel.

William E. Colby was the third president [1917-1919], and I met him on the 1929 high trip. I was tremendously impressed. As you know, he was a tall man with a strong personality. Colby had been the outings leader from the beginning so he knew all the ropes. He was the one that persuaded John Muir to let him take a group of people into the High Sierra in 1901.

Colby spoke quite slowly but thought quickly. I told one of my friends near the end of the 1929 outing that I thought he was a man with an iron hand in a velvet glove. He was very firm about what should be done, and could be done, and could not be done, but he had such a rapport with the members of the outing--of course, he knew a great many of them and they knew him--that he didn't have to throw his weight around. Everyone recognized his authority.

Besides knowing how to get along with people, Colby's great contribution was acting as secretary for almost half a century [1900-1917, 1919-1946, the gap was while he was president]. The club was organized in 1892, and there were five secretaries in before Colby. He also served as leader and chairman of the outing committee for a very long time. He was the first chairman of the California State Park Commission. There is no doubt about his being a very outstanding citizen.

After Colby left the board [in 1949], I called on him several times at his home in Berkeley and later when he moved to Big Sur below Carmel. I saw him many times in the course of the years, and I felt I had a very good relationship with him. I thought that he was, as Ansel Adams has said, almost as large a figure in the Sierra Club as Muir himself.

William F. Badè, the fourth president [1919-1922], was a director for almost thirty years, but I didn't know him personally although I met him several times. But I did get acquainted with Badè's son, Bill.

Kuhn: He lives in Berkeley now.

Clark: Yes. He was the leader of a club knapsack trip to Glacier National Park, on which I was just another hiker. I was very much interested in meeting him. I don't know what his intellectual specialty was, but he was a good planner and a very good trip leader. We made the first recorded descent of Kintla Peak in the northern part of the park. It was a long day--twenty-seven hours--and after we got back to camp all we could do was to eat and sleep.

Judge Clair Tappaan and Walter Huber

Clark: I did know Clair Tappaan, the fifth president [1922-1924]. As you know, Clair Tappaan met the Sierra Club people in Kings Canyon while Colby was leading the club's first trip there. Tappaan was camping separately and went over to see what this Sierra Club was all about. He liked them so well that he joined. It was not long before Tappaan was helping Colby on the outings. "Tap" took care of the logistics--the packers and the commissary arrangements--because that was a big job in itself. And Colby took care of the overall planning and the leading in the field, the climbs, and the route finding.

I first met Judge Tappaan at a high trip campfire in Tuolumne Meadows, but I got to know him as a director at board meetings in the Mills Tower. And by the time I came along, he was a very much respected elder statesman of the club. I was always interested in the fact that he made sense when he was talking; he made his points clearly. But I did not know him otherwise, just seeing him in the board meetings. I remember an incident in that connection.

Clair Tappaan liked to smoke cigars. Well, Albert Bender, the art collector and patron and a friend of several of the directors, had presented to the club a beautiful bronze oriental bowl, about twenty-four inches across. It was customary to put flowers in it and have it on the table when we had a board meeting. One day Clair Tappaan was looking for an ashtray, and the bowl on that particular day hadn't been filled with flowers, so he used it as an ashtray. He didn't mind putting things to good use.

Judge Tappaan was a great fisherman, and as you know he used to tell all kinds of stories about the weird animals that inhabited the Sierra. Especially when things went wrong, he would soothe and entertain the people by these stories. In the meantime, maybe the packers had found the missing bags or sugar and come into camp.

One of the presidents I did not know personally was Robert M. Price [1924-1925], although I was in his presence in a special way. He was an attorney from Reno and a friend of Colby's. He was a director for three separate periods beginning in 1892 and ending in 1938. For many years he was the only out-of-state director that we had. That's quite different from nowadays, you know, when it seems to be the policy to have directors from as many different states as we can accommodate with fifteen directors and fifty states.

Clark: Anyway, when Robert Price died he was cremated and his ashes put in a bronze box. Colby and others thought it would be appropriate to inter this box up in Tuolumne Meadows. I'm sure that Price had helped in the building of the Parsons Lodge. That was named for Edward Taylor Parsons, you know, who was the third member of the outing committee for many years.

So, one day in September, just before World War II, we had a special pilgrimage from the Parsons Lodge over to a ledge on a granite dome. The story goes that after the work parties on the Parsons Lodge had done their stint for the day, they walked over to Dehydrates Dome because by this time they were quite dehydrated, and they took along some libations with them to take care of their dehydration. From the ledge they saluted the sunset.

So, it was on that ledge, but several decades after the building of the Parsons Lodge, that we had the ceremony. I have a slide of William Colby, Oliver Kehrlein, Bestor Robinson, Phil Bernays, and others. After some appropriate remarks the bronze box was placed in a crevice in the rocks. So, that's where Robert M. Price is.

Kuhn: Let's come to Walter Huber.

Clark: He was the seventh president [1925-1927] and served for two years as most of them did. He was a very distinguished civil engineer. He served on several presidential commissions, and he was a president of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

I had met Walter Huber after his presidency, but while he was still a director. Some of his greatest contributions to the course of the Sierra Club occurred before I came on the scene, however. One particular thing that could be mentioned concerns his Rainbow Falls. Early in his career he had been working in Washington, perhaps at the Bureau of Reclamation or one of the other bureaus there in a fairly high-level position. There was a proposal to dam up Rainbow Falls on the east side of the Banner-Ritter range for a power development.

Huber knew that the conservationists didn't want that. And somehow he was able to get to the president and suggest that rather than having a power development this was a very beautiful landscape feature and ought to be preserved. He got the president to issue an edict under presidential prerogatives to create a small national monument there. I don't know who else had an input to this thing, but Walter told me he thought that if it hadn't been for his influence probably we would not have had Devil's Postpile National Monument, which includes Rainbow Falls near Reds Meadow.

Clark: Walter Huber was also treasurer for about four years. When I became chairman of the club lodge committee, I had discussions with him about the lodge budgets.

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Clark: Walter Huber was an excellent photographer and was on a number of high trips that I was on in the thirties. Many of Walter's photographs were published in the Bulletins. His characteristic logo on his pictures was to have his wife [Daisy Mae Huber] with her white hat on in the foreground. It was a very small foreground element and didn't dominate the picture, but if you looked carefully you could often find Mrs. Huber there, looking at the scene.

Huber told me about the Union Square case. That block-sized square in San Francisco was being dug up for a garage. They had started the excavation, and when the war came along, the constructors had a problem. As you remember, there was an embargo on use of steel. The city was quite concerned that if they didn't reinforce the sides of the excavation the surrounding streets might collapse.

Well, Walter Huber was consulted and he was successful in persuading the government to allocate enough steel to make a retaining wall around the foundations.

McDuffie, Bernays, Farquhar, and Dawson

Clark: The next president that I knew was Duncan McDuffie [1928-1931 and 1943-1946]. As you know, McDuffie was much interested in the out-of-doors and the aesthetics of living. He founded the McDuffie Realty Company, which continues to exist. He had a beautiful home in Berkeley. I joined the Sierra Club while he was president for the first time.

I remember how calm and discreet he was as he presided at meetings. Sometimes a question would come up, and they would ask, "Well, Duncan, what do you think of this?" And he always had a carefully thought out and well-delivered commentary. He was also president of the Save-the-Redwoods League at one time.

Knowing McDuffie, I finally was invited to one of his spring garden parties. These had been going on for quite a while. In those days I was considered one of the younger members of the board and apparently got along well with people, so I attended this party.

Clark: McDuffie's house was below Roble Road, a narrow street on a hillside in Berkeley, south of the Claremont Hotel. If you rolled by in the front, you would merely see a simple artistic wall and just a part of the tiled roof of the house, because it was below the road. You wouldn't realize how much was down there. But when you'd get an opportunity to see it, there was quite a large house, of Spanish style with a beautiful bayview window and an elaborate garden. He had an Italian gardener who'd been with him for a long time. I remember the beautiful white rhododendrons, with a clove aroma.

Kuhn: The next president was Phil Bernays [1931-1933].

Clark: Yes, I met him on several of the high trips. Phil Bernays was one of the founders of the Southern California Chapter, which was later renamed the Angeles Chapter, and he has indicated in his biography\* how that came about. I always got along very well with Phil. Later, after he moved from Los Angeles to Laguna Hills at Leisure World, I made a point of visiting him whenever I was in that part of the country.

He was always an entertaining speaker. He had a remarkable memory about the earlier days of the Sierra Club and, of course, he had many friends in southern California. So, I was sorry when he passed away. How old was he?

Kuhn: In his nineties. He was the oldest member in number of years in the club at that time.

Clark: Yes. Phil was one of the original directors of the Sierra Club Foundation. May I talk a little now about the foundation?

Kuhn: Please do.

Clark: The Sierra Club Foundation was, I believe, a brainchild of Dick Leonard's. He proposed that the current and all past presidents of the Sierra Club would comprise the board of directors of the new foundation with each one contributing some money to the nest egg. Thus, Phil Bernays became a member of the new board. That policy has changed now, but it was in effect for quite a number of years.

Phil used to like to talk with me about what the Sierra Club Foundation was doing because the time came when he couldn't come to the foundation board meetings. (And I might say that the

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\*Philip S. Bernays, Founding the Southern California Chapter, Sierra Club Oral History interview, 1975.



Clark: foundation board changed their structure to call themselves trustees instead of directors.) Phil was always considered a distinguished and honorable member emeritus of the board of trustees of the Sierra Club Foundation, although he hadn't participated in the meetings for a number of years before he retired to Laguna Hills.

Kuhn: Now we come to Francis P. Farquhar, a longtime director, who was president for two separate periods [1933-1935, 1948-1949].

Clark: As I told you earlier, Francis Farquhar was one of my sponsors in the Sierra Club. He was a certified public accountant and had edited the Harvard Crimson. He was a man of great scholarship and maturity of judgment.

His folks were from down east, i.e. Maine. This is hardly the time to get too deep into his story. He has told it himself. Amongst other things he was an authority on California place names. His "Place Names of the High Sierra," was published in the Sierra Club Bulletin. He had edited a number of outstanding books and was considered one of the deans of American mountaineering, because of his knowledge of mountaineering generally and especially the High Sierra.

He told me an interesting anecdote that happened before I knew him. The time came when it was proposed that Francis Farquhar and several other Sierra Club leaders should become members of the American Alpine Club. This prestigious organization was formed by a group of mountain-loving people, with headquarters in New York City; and they had done most of their mountaineering in Europe or in Canada. They didn't know much about the High Sierra.

So, Francis Farquhar made his application, and it came back with a courteous note acknowledging his list of accomplishments and suggesting that perhaps it would be more appropriate for him to get a little more mountaineering experience before he joined the American Alpine Club. Well, the A.A.C. got over its stuffiness after a while, and they admitted him. He became a vice-president, and he edited the A.A.C. journal for a while. Now the A.A.C. has several sections in the western United States. I am a member of the Sierra Nevada section.

So, Francis Farquhar was outstanding as a mountaineer; he made a number of first ascents in the High Sierra.

Clark: During his long service in the Sierra Club he sometimes could be a little bit autocratic, perhaps because as an accountant he liked to have things just right. And if people came along who didn't appreciate the fine points that he was familiar with, he could be quite direct with them.

Kuhn: His clash with Colby on the accounting of the thirty-six years of stewardship with the outings committee, as related in Leonard's interview, is a classic.

Clark: Yes, as chairman of the club lodges committee, I had a few run-ins with him.

Kuhn: Farquhar was followed by Ernest Dawson [1935-1937].

Clark: I got acquainted with him on several high trips. He was a short modest man, yet he was quite strong in his opinions about things. His three children had out-of-doors names: Glen, Muir, and Fern. Fern Dawson grew up and married George Shochat, a handsome young fellow from southern California, who was on the high trips.

Glen, the older brother, was a very slim, ardent, active mountaineer, an extremely intelligent fellow, but one who didn't like to waste words. I knew him because of our mutual interest in mountaineering. If you asked him a question about some peak he would give a brief answer and stop right then without going on talking, as some people do. So, it took a while for me to get well acquainted with Glen. However I didn't have an opportunity to be as active as Glen was. Glen was a club director for about fifteen years. One of Glen's close climbing companions was Jules Eichorn, who later was a director of the club also.

Ernest Dawson established a bookstore in Los Angeles, operating it for many years. Later Glen and brother Muir carried on the business.

Joel Hildebrand, Francis Tappaan, and Walter Starr

Clark: Next came Joel H. Hildebrand as president [1937-1940]. Joel was my chemistry professor at UC Berkeley.

Kuhn: Mine too.

Clark: But it was through our mutual enthusiasm for skiing that I really got to know Dr. Hildebrand. He had helped found the Sierra Ski Club, which had a lodge at Norden near where we later built the Clair Tappaan Lodge, and his children--Louise, Alex, Milton, and Roger--were all skiers. We frequently skied together in the Norden region.

I remember one of the first ski trips I led for the Sierra Club was to a Boy Scout Lodge on the shore of Lake Kilbourn, a few miles west of Soda Springs. Milton was about fourteen, and he attached himself to me, as one of the leaders. He was always volunteering, "Is there anything I can do to help out?" I got along fine with Milton; he was a very responsible adjutant. Milton was the one that started the burro trips for the Sierra Club, because his family had been using burros in the mountains even before he became active in the Sierra Club.

So, I knew Milton for many years, principally as a skier on tours in the Donner Summit area and also Mount Lassen and Mount Shasta. He became a professor of zoology at UC, Davis, and he is regarded as one of their outstanding professors.

Joel served altogether about ten years on the board. He spent a great deal of effort toward the creation of the Kings Canyon National Park. I think that is detailed elsewhere in the oral history project.

Kuhn: We have an interview of him.\*

Clark: Several years after being president, Joel Hildebrand was elected as an honorary vice-president and served as such for twenty-two years. Ultimately he became disenchanted with Dave Brower and resigned as a club officer. Joel's son, Alex, later became club president, and we'll come to that later.

Kuhn: Could I add this anecdote? When I was at Cal, Dr. Hildebrand was a great swimmer. He swam about half a mile a day. I ran into him at the Faculty Club a few years ago and recalled that to him and said, "What is the secret of your health and longevity? Here you are in your nineties." He said, "Three things: One, I have a great heredity. All my parents and grandparents lived a long time. Two, I have a loving wife who takes care of me. And three, I never take an elevator." [laughter]

Clark: Well, he must have been lucky to be able to have an office on the campus where he didn't need to walk up very many stairs!

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\*Joel Hildebrand, Sierra Club Leader and Ski Mountaineer (1974).

Kuhn: Probably so.

Clark: Following Joel Hildebrand, Francis D. Tappaan became president after serving as vice-president several years [president, 1940-1941; vice-president, 1937-1940]. He was the son of Clair Tappaan. After Colby gave up being the manager of the outings in the field, Francis took over for a few years. When Colby resigned as chairman of the outing committee, Richard M. Leonard was appointed as chairman and led the 1937 outing.

At the time that I was going on the high trips and William E. Colby was still the leader, Francis was just a young fellow in the commissary. He grew up in the Sierra Club and the outings, and he knew all the people. He got elected to the board [1932-1943] and seemed to be a responsible person, so he was elected as president [1940-1941]. I guess he did an adequate job as president, but he annoyed some of the directors by failing to come to a board meeting which was being held in Los Angeles for his convenience. Instead he went to some kind of a football celebration, because he was an outstanding football player at the University of Southern California.

Kuhn: Actually, he was one of the greatest ends that not only U.S.C. ever had, but he's mentioned as an all-time all-American.

Clark: Yes. Well, not being a football player, I couldn't remember that fact.

Anyway, soon after Francis Tappaan served as president, he chose not to run again for the board. He was an attorney, as his father was. He became an assistant to one of the congressmen in Washington, and then I believe he got into law activities in Hawaii for a while. He has since died, according to my brother in Los Angeles.

So, Francis dropped out of the picture as far as the Sierra Club was concerned. But there were two things that I might mention about him. First of all, I'm told that he always wanted to be known as Tappaan [with accent on the first syllable]. Of course, Clair Tappaan always was called Tappaan [with the accent on the last syllable]. It was a Dutch name, I believe. "Young Tap" felt, I guess, that Tappaan was a little too fancy for his football fans, so he just called himself Tappaan.

Another anecdote about Young Tap: Being in charge of the commissary at that period, he had to see that all the camp was closed on a moving day; commissary gear tied up and made ready for the packers. So he and his young commissary friends had to be the last ones to leave camp, and they had to get to the next site as

Clark: early as possible to set up camp. As you know, a lot of the Sierra Club people, especially the middle-aged ones, would saunter along the trail; they'd have tea parties and go off and study the flowers or climb a peak or take pictures or have a swim.

But Tap and his crew always walked very fast over the trail, without stopping. I thought in those days I was a fairly fast hiker. As I was hiking along north of Tuolumne Meadows somewhere, I could hear the pounding of feet behind. Here came Francis and his friends--about four of them. They passed right by me and disappeared in the distance; I couldn't possibly keep up with them.

The next president was Walter A. Starr [1941-1943]. He was a longtime resident of California, and he knew little Joe LeConte.

Kuhn: After Walter Starr died, his family published a memorial to him consisting of his autobiographical notes when he left Cal about a year before graduation and went to the Alaskan gold rush. It's a lovely book, and it's in the Sierra Club library, of course, and I have a copy.

Clark: I knew that he had been to Alaska, but I knew him because he was a member of the board of directors of the Sierra Club, although he was in the lumber business. He was the president of the Soundview Pulp Company of Washington state. By the time I knew him he had always been very generous to the Sierra Club and always tried to keep the directors on a balanced point of view about conservation versus forestry. I think he was a real conservationist.

I did get invited to visit the Starr Ranch on Mission Peak several times as a member of the board. It was a lovely spot and had been in the family for a hundred years or more.

Kuhn: Where is that located, Lew?

Clark: Well, you go east from Milpitas; and it's quite a long drive up through those grassy hills. His wife, Carmen, told me how she loved those golden hills.

Kuhn: So it's southern Alameda County.

Clark: Yes, on the eastern slopes of Mission Peak. It overlooks Calaveras Reservoir, but it's a long way above it. The ranch, as I saw it, was beautifully landscaped, but I doubt if there were many trees there until the ranch was established.

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Kuhn: Did you know Walter Starr, Jr.?"

Clark: "Pete" Starr? Yes. He was the son in whose name Starr's Guide was published. I met him a few times in the Sierra Club office. He was a very energetic hiker and climber, and he had the idea of making notes on the distance and the time it took to go on various trails and decided to publish a guidebook to the High Sierra. Something like that was not available at the time.

As a young attorney who wanted to get into the mountains as much as possible, he had considerable difficulty finding somebody to go with, to keep up with him and go where he wanted to go. So, he usually made his trips alone, although he was aware of the fact, as he mentioned to me, that it probably would be safer if he had somebody to go with. His death was partly related to that fact of his hiking alone.

Pete was climbing on the Minarets. Apparently as he reached up to a mantelpiece rock to pull himself up, the rock came out, and he fell. When he failed to return as expected, the family had a hunch just about where in the mountains he might be. The famous Sierra mountaineer, Norman Clyde, with Jules Eichorn and Glen Dawson, whom we've mentioned, and some others, went to the Minarets to find him. They searched for quite a while and finally Norman Clyde found the body and relayed the sad news to the family. They expressed the wish he might be buried there on the mountain rather than trying to bring the body back, and so that's what happened.

Kuhn: What can you tell us about Starr's Guide?

Clark: Well, the father decided to carry out the work his son had set out to accomplish, and so he saw to it that the book was published; and he commissioned a map of the High Sierra, which is a part of Starr's Guide. It covered all the various trails that Pete had wanted to describe. For years Walter Starr, Sr., subsidized the publishing of this book because he felt that it was something that the public ought to have easily accessible, and he wanted it sold at a price that would make it available for wide distribution. No profit was made on it. Later on, after Walter Starr had passed on, the Sierra Club Foundation took over the publishing of the Starr's Guide.

Kuhn: It's an invaluable tool.

Clark: There are quite a number of new guides now. Everybody wants to get in on the act these days, but I think that Starr's Guide is certainly the oldest and probably one of the best.

Well, Duncan McDuffie became president again in 1943-1946, during World War II, and he was reelected for another set of three years.

Bestor Robinson and Harold Crowe

Clark: After the war, in 1946, Bestor Robinson became president [1946-1948]. Bestor had been a member of the board for quite a long time, since 1935, two years after I came on the board.

Bestor's own story is part of this oral history [Bestor Robinson, Thoughts on Conservation and the Sierra Club, 1974], so I only need to tell a bit about my associations with him as a person. When we were starting the skiing idea in the Sierra Club in the early thirties, Bestor had already skied with his friends--brother-in-law Horace Breed, Otis Marston, Oliver Kehrlein, and several others. Bestor thought the club should have a winter sports committee to promote snow skiing. So he appeared before the board and talked them into the idea and naturally they appointed him as chairman. He was physically strong and very dynamic.

He was a prime mover in the building of the Clair Tappaan Lodge at Norden. He led several friends in building the Peter Grubb Ski Hut in the meadow below the south side of Castle Peak--a memorial to Peter Grubb, a young skier who died on a summer trip in Italy. Bestor also planned the series of ski huts along the Sierra crest north and south of Donner Pass, with special route signs so they could be followed in the winter. He was a prime mover in the building of the Jack Benson Ski Hut on the north slope of Mount Anderson and was very active in the building of the Josephine Bradley Hut above what is now Alpine Meadows.

Bestor had impressed the Forest Service with his understanding of their problems, and one of his contributions to the club was to work as a liaison between the board and the Forest Service. Now, as you know, the Sierra Club directors in the beginning had an excellent rapport with the Forest Service. But since then they have been at odds and evens. For many years they've both worked on the same side of trying to protect the forests, but there have been

Clark: times when the Sierra Club felt that the Forest Service was leaning too much in favor of lumbering, and cutting up the forests so as to be sure they couldn't be declared as wilderness areas. Bestor tried to get the Forest Service to understand our viewpoint and to get us to understand theirs.

One of Bestor's outstanding qualities, I think, was that as an attorney he had a high regard for his responsibilities to represent his client, and so if he was hired to carry out a suit or protect a client, he always did everything possible in the client's interest. However, he sometimes recognized that he might lose a case. Now, I mention this because sometimes when the Sierra Club directors had decided to appoint Bestor to represent them on an issue, some of the directors would say, "Well, I don't see how Bestor can really represent our viewpoint. He's too much in favor of development." On the other hand, others said, "No, if Bestor knows the Sierra Club viewpoint, he will represent it even if he doesn't totally agree with it."

Here's another anecdote about Bestor: When we were building the Clair Tappaan Lodge, he was recognized as the construction boss. He had many ideas about how to build things. He lived, you know, on a hillside in Oakland. Although he had had his house built, he had added quite a number of appurtenances, a garden house, a waterfall and so forth. He loved to figure out ways of moving big rocks around and pouring concrete and cutting down trees. As I said, he was a very dynamic person.

One day we had talked about how we were going to frame in the washroom in the back of the fireplace. I was a very close associate with him on the building, and I directed some things, and he did others. Well, he wanted to get started so he said, "I'll frame this thing in," (with two-by-fours) leaving me to turn to other jobs. When I came to look at it, it wasn't the way I thought we'd agreed on so I said, "Bestor, I thought you were going to put this stud over here and leave a space there." And he said, "If you don't like it, tear it out and do it yourself!"

Well, we weren't going to tear it out. But he disregarded my interpretation because he probably decided that it would be better his way.

As you know, Bestor's sons, Ned and Merritt, became quite active in the Sierra Club for a while. Ned led ski trips and became chairman of the Sierra Club Council. He ran for the board, but didn't elected, and being such an activist he seemed to have decided to



Clark: follow his legal profession and his family affairs and other organizations to which he could devote his energy. So, although he's still a member, he doesn't take an active part in the Sierra Club affairs now.

Merritt Robinson was active as a young club skier, but soon turned to his adult work and family.

Bestor is not as active physically as he used to be although he likes to read a lot and keep up with what's going on, according to what Ned tells me.

Before we leave Bestor perhaps I should recall the Mount Lyell winter climb. Bestor thought that Mount Lyell, the highest in Yosemite Park, had never been climbed in the winter, and he wanted to try it. He invited me and several others to form a party. The first year we got our skis, food, and gear together and started out from Yosemite Valley in mid-March. In Little Yosemite Valley, we encountered a blinding snowstorm. It was impossible to go on.

The next year, with some changes in the party, we got up as far as Florence Lake. We set up a tent camp on the frozen lake. Next morning we skied over the ridge above the Lyell Glacier, but soon we encountered a very high wind. The snow was not falling from the sky but clouds of swirling snow were whipped up from the surface, and it was almost impossible to stand even braced with our ski poles. So, we retreated.

The third year with other changes in the crew we went up the same route, but we were able to get over onto the Lyell glacier and cache our skis near the bergschrund. We then climbed the steep rocks using ropes and ice axes and managed to get onto the crest. Now the wind was hitting the south face of the mountain, going up and bouncing right over the top. So, we were in almost a dead calm. We took off our ski boots and our shirts and basked in the sunshine.

Kuhn: Do you remember the year?

Clark: Yes, March 1936. [See Sierra Club Bulletin, April 1938, p. 41.] That was the first recorded ascent of Mount Lyell in winter. Bestor took movies and part of them were shown at my brother's program in San Francisco on early ski climbs.

After Bestor, Francis Farquhar became president again, 1948-1949.

Kuhn: Can I ask you a question, Lew?

Clark: Yes.

Kuhn: You mentioned Duncan McDuffie and Farquhar having served two terms as presidents.

Clark: Yes. Each did, with separations of several years between each of their services.

Kuhn: In either case, was there any change in their approach or style? I ask it because for a president to come back, generally it means that there's nobody else that could have taken the job or was willing to at that point. You have to bring someone out of retirement, as it were.

Clark: Well, Duncan McDuffie was president first in '28 or '31, and then again in '43 to '46. That was during the war years, and many of the younger leaders were off. The directors must have felt that he was an experienced man who would probably do as he'd done before, and carry out his duties well.

As far as I remember neither McDuffie nor Farquhar had a different approach on the second time around. Each person has his own way of doing things. And the directors carefully looked at the ones who they thought could do the job. There were some candidate directors about whom the others were unsure, perhaps. But the board had to make a choice. It wasn't automatic. The fact that a person like Farquhar had served before was not considered a reason per se why he shouldn't serve again if the circumstances at the time seemed to call for it.

Kuhn: You know, Lew, I was present at the board meeting in September, 1970, at Clair Tappaan Lodge, when Leonard, with Adams, introduced a motion to limit the number of consecutive three-year terms for directors to two, and I thought at that time it was remarkable that several directors had served over thirty years on the board. But as we go into this, I see that there are numerous directors over the years who were on the board for three decades or more.

Clark: Yes.

Kuhn: It's a very interesting situation. It shows a continuity of interest.

Clark: I think so. Anyway, Francis Farquhar was president again from 1948 to 1949. As we approached another club year he asked me if I would serve as president next. So, I was elected president. I couldn't have done it without the close support of Dick Leonard as secretary.

Clark: Following me, came Harold Crowe. We have a biography of him, don't we?

Kuhn: We do. [Harold E. Crowe, Sierra Club Physician, Baron, and President, 1975].

Clark: And he has his own story to tell, but I might add something. I had met Dr. Crowe first on the high trips. As you know, he, like Clair Tappaan, had a penchant for telling entertaining and fanciful stories around the campfire. I think "Margie" was Dr. Crowe's particular character. He had many stories about Margie's experiences. He was a very sociable person as well as a competent surgeon. He was at one time president of the American Society of Orthopedic Surgeons.

Harold and his wife Anne lived in Los Angeles. He was a member of the Southern California (now Angeles) Chapter and probably participated to some extent, but his participation in the club as I know it was more on annual outings, and later, of course, on the board of directors for a number of years.

As you know since there were more directors from northern California than southern California, some of the members in the south seemed to have a somewhat defensive complex that they weren't as fully represented as they should be.

Anyway, since I was a northerner, the directors seemed to feel, "Now, we ought to have somebody from the south; who can we get?" And all the directors knew Dr. Crowe as club vice-president, a very popular person, certainly devoted to conservation, and they felt that he was competent to handle the job. So it fell to my lot to ask Harold if he would serve as president.

Harold replied, "I'd be glad to," and the directors elected him. I might interpolate here about the selection of officers. I suppose that in the early days after Muir the senior directors would get together and talk informally. But I feel sure there was always a pre-discussion--the selection just didn't come spontaneously from the board meeting. And there may have been strong debates about the matter because there were sometimes differences of opinion about the conservation policies of the club. More recently it's been customary for the directors in executive session to discuss the future officers so that in the formal board meeting the proposing of candidates and their election usually goes through like a well-oiled clock.

Kuhn: Lew, we have an oral interview with Harold Crowe, and this incident doesn't appear in there. The night before this year's annual meeting, we had a history committee meeting (as you remember, at Mrs. Farquhar's), and there was a lady from southern California [Olivia Rolfe Johnson], whose interview we had completed, and she had come up for the meeting, as had the Crowes.

Clark: Yes.

Kuhn: I drove them back to San Francisco from the Farquhars', and she had told me that Dr. Crowe on a number of high trips had many times saved the lives of people who were suffering from too high altitude or had been injured in accidents, and yet none of these incidents were mentioned in his oral interview.

Clark: Yes.

Kuhn: So, I asked him about this. He said, "Well, it's true, but I didn't think it was particularly newsworthy. After all, I was a doctor, as well as an orthopedic surgeon, and many of these were cases of people who required to be taken down to a lower elevation."

Clark: Yes. I'm sure that was so, although I did not know myself of any cases involving Dr. Crowe.

Kuhn: But he did a lot of this in the middle of the night and largely by himself, and I think it's a noteworthy addition to shed light on the character of this man.

Clark: Yes. He was more than a technician; he was a very human person devoted to the preservation of life, which is one of the basic purposes of medicine. Well, I'm glad to be able to contribute even a small facet.

Kuhn: You're contributing plenty.

Richard Leonard, Alex Hildebrand, Harold Bradley, Nathan Clark

Clark: Harold Crowe served for two years, and by this time a young man had emerged who had been very active in many Sierra Club matters for quite a number of years, and so we elected Richard M. Leonard as president [1953-1955]. Leonard had joined the board in 1938.

Kuhn: He'd become chairman of the outings committee two years before.

Clark: Well, you know Dick's story, and it's very complete, with the two-volume oral history [Richard M. Leonard, Mountaineer, Lawyer, Environmentalist, 1976], so I don't need to go into much of that, but I want to say that Dick is a longtime personal friend, and an incisive and very intelligent person. Besides being president of the Sierra Club, the Sierra Club Foundation and the Save-the-Redwoods League, now he is the Honorary President of the Sierra Club.

I got acquainted with Dick particularly when the rock climbing got started. As you know, Bob Underhill [Robert L.M. Underhill], the guru of rock climbing, came out from Massachusetts to the Sierra at the invitation of Francis Farquhar. Francis also invited me, Bestor Robinson, Glen Dawson, Jules Eichorn, Norman Clyde, Neill Wilson and several others to meet Underhill on a climbing expedition in August 1931. Some of us met at Tuolumne Meadows after the high trip, and others joined us later. We drove along the east side of the Sierra, set up a camp at Fourth Lake, just below the east face of the North Palisade. We climbed the east face of the North Palisade from the big notch, and climbed on some other peaks, too, but weather interfered on some of them. It rained very hard at times in our camp. However, we did climb and name Thunderbolt Peak, a 14,000 foot point along the crest north of the North Palisade. The real summit was a schmoo-shaped rock.

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Kuhn: Why schmoo?

Clark: You will undoubtedly remember some cartoon characters; they were pear shaped little creatures with happy faces. Well, to feel that we were really on top we had to shinney up this rock which was just barely big enough for one person. One by one we got up there and signed our names on a scrap of paper which we put in a little bouillon cube box. Storm clouds were blowing up fast, and Norman said, "Come on, let's get out of here." So, we closed the box and started along the ridge, which narrowed toward the south. We were on that arete, trying to get down as fast as we could to a safer place. We were carrying ice axes, which were sizzling and crackling; and our hair was crackling, too. When the thunderbolt hit with a blinding flash and terrible clap, we all thought we were dead, but obviously we were still alive. We were lucky not to have been hit, and later we discovered where the bolt hit the rock behind us. We continued along the arete and found shelter behind a

Clark: flake of rock. About half an hour later the storm had passed and we returned to the "schmoo" rock to finish signing our register. The little box was welded shut and had to be pried open with a knife. [See Sierra Club Bulletin, 1932, p. 124.]

That trip was the start of modern rock climbing in the Sierra Club. We were using the techniques which Underhill demonstrated to us. Beside the natural standing belay, we learned about the sitting belay. It was a much more rigorous form of belaying than was then currently being used in Europe. According to Bob the guides in Europe were just taught to stand there on a ledge and pay out the rope to the climber, but really, if the climber fell, it wasn't much security. Underhill had developed the idea of the sitting belay, where you would brace your feet--and there was a technique to it, such as how to anchor your belay and how to feed out the rope. We were using manila rope, you know, at that time rather than nylon.

Well, when we got back from the Palisades climbs Dick Leonard got hold of me and wanted to find out more about it. As a consequence he organized the Cragmont Climbing Club. We used to climb on Cragmont Rock and Indian Rock in Berkeley. Besides being a member of that climbing club, I happened to be chairman of the San Francisco Bay Chapter.

So, soon after the Cragmont Climbing Club got started, Dick thought it would be better if we formed a rock climbing section in the Sierra Club, rather than having it just a private climbing club. Most all the C.C.C. members were also members of the Sierra Club. And so it came to pass that through Dick's and my working together, we formed the rock climbing section of the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club. Later on there were other rock climbing sections started in other parts of the club.

Here's another insight about Dick. One of his major projects when I first met him was making a record of all the mapped peaks of the High Sierra. He very meticulously went over all of the topo maps and listed the altitudes of each peak. He was not so much concerned about bestowing names upon unnamed points, rather it was making a complete atlas of all the peaks that showed. He located elevations that had neither a bench mark or name attached.

I was interested in that too. I would drive up from my home in Alameda to Dick's house in north Berkeley, and we'd spend many evening hours going over these records.

Kuhn: Lew, I want to ask you another question. I want to get your reaction about something. Many of these people whom you speak of were actually in early middle life and took up some of these highly specialized physical activities. I'm not referring just to hiking along the trail; I'm talking about rock climbing and skiing, showing that they must have had some kind of athletic youth, because generally if a person becomes athletic he does so from a very early age. I think it's amazing that some of these people succeeded so much, even up to Nora Evans, who took up water skiing at sixty-five.

Clark: [laughter] Well, I was not in athletics as a team member. As a boy, I played baseball in school but never football. I hiked a lot. And I was quite active in the Boy Scouts for some twenty years as a scout and as a leader. I liked the hiking and the climbing and scrambling around, as young people do, but I didn't do it because I'd been an athlete. Fortunately, I always had a good physique, good enough to do that sort of thing.

I don't know whether Dick Leonard was ever in organized athletics or not. Some people were, like Francis Tappaan. Among others, there were those who just liked the out-of-doors, and since they were healthy human beings they were able to do these things that required coordination and perseverance and a certain amount of skill, as you learn by experience. I don't think myself that there's a necessary correlation between team athletics in school and how a person pursues that later in life; some do and some don't.

Kuhn: Who's your next president, Lew? That's assuming you've finished with Dick.

Clark: I think we've talked enough now about him.

Following Dick Leonard as president comes Alex Hildebrand. He was Joel's eldest son. He had been elected to the board in 1948 and had been an articulate director for a number of years when he became president [1955-1957].

Alex was a chemical engineer and an administrator with Standard Oil. He spent a number of years in Bahrain, on the Persian Gulf.

As you know, the Hildebrand family--Joel and Emily and their three children--had been going into the Sierra on their own family burro trips for many years, even before the family got active in the Sierra Club. Alex, as long as I'd known him, was very keen on hiking and skiing. When he came back to pursue his professional

Clark: work in California, he was able to get into these outdoor avocations again. He and I and others went on knapsack trips in the summer and on a number of winter trips. I remember skiing at Sun Valley, Idaho, with Alex (probably before World War II).

Well, as directors, we all thought that Alex had outstanding qualities of administration and executive ability, so we asked him to be president. He served two terms doing very well the duties expected of him. As president he tried to ride herd on the executive director's expansionist tendencies.

Before we leave Alex, I might mention an anecdote. On a high Sierra knapsack trip with him, including four or five others, I noticed he had an unusual immunity: mosquitoes didn't bite him, or at least they didn't bother him. Most of us were quite bothered by the mosquitoes in the morning, and Alex said, "I don't see what you fellows are making such a fuss about. They don't bite me." Well, I don't know whether he had a special brand of Vitamin B complex or whatever it was that the mosquitoes didn't like, but we thought he was a lucky person! [laughter]

Kuhn: Absolutely.

Clark: After Alex Hildebrand, we chose Harold Bradley as president. Now, I'm sure Harold had been a member of the Sierra Club for a very long time. He had been a professor of medicine--

Kuhn: Actually biochemistry.

Clark: I think he was an M.D. Or was he a Ph.D.?

Kuhn: Ph.D.

Clark: Ph.D. Anyway, in medicine. His father, Cornelius Bradley, who was a founding member of the Sierra Club, built the Berkeley home which the Bradley family lived in until very recently. But during the time that Harold was teaching and bringing up his family in Wisconsin, I presume the house was rented. Later when Harold became an emeritus professor he came back to California and got very much interested in Sierra Club affairs and conservation matters, particularly in the threats to Echo Park in the Dinosaur National Monument. He was among the first people in the Sierra Club to realize what the proposed Echo Park dam could do besides impounding water. He was a brilliant man with an outstanding personality, but he had a gentleness and a courtesy, a lack of harshness, that some people might envy.



Clark: In the twenty-five years or so that I knew him I never heard him get mad, with a tone in his voice that indicated that he was irritated by someone or something. However, he did get concerned, and he could be quite eloquent at times and very persuasive.

Kuhn: He must have been along in years at the time he became president.

Clark: Yes. By the time he became active on the board, he wore a hearing aid. He'd probably worn one for quite a while. Sometimes that can be a handicap. I guess if you don't want to hear, you can turn it off, and if you do want to hear, you have to pay attention.

We asked Harold if he would serve as president. He was reluctant to do so. He felt that he was too old, that some younger person should have the job. By this time he had been chairman of the conservation committee for a number of years. We only had one [conservation committee] in those days for the whole club, and it had been meeting in his home on Durant Avenue in Berkeley. So, Harold was known to us, and we felt that he could carry the banner for us as president, and he did.

Some of the directors were a little afraid that because of his gentleness Dave would ride roughshod over him, that he wouldn't be able to keep the executive director under control. He did have a problem that way, but he understood Dave's good qualities and his deficiencies, and so Harold managed to get through his term and get along with Dave. He approved many of the things Dave did, but not everything.

When Harold died his second wife, Ruth, decided to move. The house was too big. Now she lives in north Oakland. She has helped us out on the club national election committee for a number of years.

Kuhn: Now we come to the next president, Nathan Clark.

Clark: Yes. As usual, there was a question about who was going to be president next, and quite a number of names were tossed about. I remember that we were all meeting in Ansel Adams's home on 24th Avenue in San Francisco. He had a small studio home next door to his father's house. Ansel and Virginia hosted many diverse groups of friends and the club directors had a number of meetings there.

At that particular session we had been trying to talk Ansel into becoming president; some were quite enthusiastic about it. They felt that there was nobody more devoted and more knowledgeable in the Sierra. But, of course, Ansel was very busy with his artistic

Clark: work, his photography and so on, and some people wondered if he would be able to pay attention to the details of administration. He could pay exquisite attention to details in a photographic print, but were administrative details the kind that he would want to give his attention to?

After much discussion, Ansel was asked if he would serve, and he declined. Ansel or Dave suggested Nathan for president. It was practically unanimous that if he would do it we would be glad to elect him. So Dave called Nathan in Los Angeles and said, "We've been talking this thing over," and asked him if he would serve. As you know Nate, and as I do, and it's in his record, he didn't want to be a prominent figure in the organization. Some people aspire to this sort of position, but Nate didn't want it. However, he was talked into it, and he said he would do his stint.

Nate told me later that he felt then and all the time he was president, that it was a great handicap for somebody as far away as Los Angeles to be president, because most of the important affairs were going on in San Francisco. Now there's a different perspective on that point. Since then we've had presidents from Georgia, New Mexico, and other places out of California. Home location is not an important factor now so long as it's in the United States because we operate differently than we did.

We have a competent staff to take care of the day-to-day operation; we use the telephone a lot, and quite often the presidents do come to San Francisco for a special session. So, some of the more recent presidents have handled the presidency well even if they were far removed from San Francisco. But George Marshall and Alex Hildebrand (in his term he was living in southern California) and my brother did feel that it was a handicap to be so far away from the headquarters.

Nathan served his two years as president, and his story is on the record. You know I wrote the preface to his oral history [Nathan Clark, Sierra Club Leader, Outdoorsman, and Engineer, 1977].

I would like to add that my brother and I are very close. He's had a different point of view on things and done different things, but we've shared discussions and experiences--hiking, skiing, knapsacking, and camping, and foreign travel. He's a frequent visitor in my house, and I often go to Los Angeles to see him and his family. So, we get along very well together. Sometimes brothers do not get along, and I'm very lucky that I have one that I get along with.

Kuhn: Well, were you ever at opposite sides with him on Sierra Club matters while he was president?

Clark: Oh, on nothing major. There were some things in which he didn't size up things the way I did, and I knew him well enough to know that I probably couldn't talk him out of his viewpoint, although I had another one. So on those matters I'd just indicate my difference of opinion and I wouldn't try to argue with him because I knew it was useless.

## VI THE PRESIDENTS AND PROBLEMS OF THE 1960s AND 1970s

[Interview 6: September 24, 1977]##

Edgar Wayburn

Clark: Following Nathan Clark, Edgar Wayburn became president [1961-1964, 1967-1969]. Wayburn had been very active in Sierra Club affairs in the local chapter. And he was very active in national conservation issues. He was elected to the board in 1957 and became president ten years later.

Ed stands out among all the directors we've had for his long-term concern about conservation matters. He can remember many of the people and the places that have been involved. Sometimes he would talk at considerable length, dropping names of places and people to the point where I couldn't follow it all. Anyway, he goes down in Sierra Club history as one of the outstanding presidents. He served on the board continuously until the rules were changed and directors could not serve more than two terms without an intervening lapse, so Ed was off the board for a while.

Kuhn: He was the first one affected by that.

Clark: Yes. Incidentally, my brother and I were the first ones affected by the regulation of the Sierra Club Foundation that their trustees have a two-term limit. They didn't originally, and when this came into effect both of us by happenstance, by drawing straws, got rotated off the board of the foundation as trustees.

Talking about Ed Wayburn again, he got put on the ballot by petition and got elected for a third term as a director. Some people don't want to come back for another period like that. They get involved in other things, but they may not want to get involved again in the administration of the club. But Ed was quite willing

Clark: to get back again, and it's probably been a good thing, especially this last year when the club has been involved with budgetary problems and could perhaps benefit by some fatherly counsel. Some of the ideas that get presented, you know, need to be tempered in the light of experience, and Ed can do that.

Kuhn: He's devoted, I know. If I called him at his office on Sierra Club business, I'd get right through, which is very unusual for a physician.

Clark: Well, apparently he can afford to give quite a bit of time from his professional work to the Sierra Club.

Kuhn: His wife has an equal interest with him in conservation matters.

Clark: Yes. And besides her devotion to the cause she is a very capable writer. I understand she was in public relations work before her marriage.

Kuhn: Wayburn was president 1961-1964 and again in 1967 when he chaired the seventy-fifth anniversary party. He was also president, apparently, when Brower was dismissed.

Clark: Yes. Maybe I might comment a little about that.

Kuhn: Yes.

Clark: Ed always had a great admiration for Dave, even as I did, and Dick Leonard, and Ansel and others: we all admired Dave. That was one of the reasons why it was difficult for us to blow the whistle on some of his projects as he got more ambitious. I think if you could take a poll of the board as it existed then, Ed was viewed as being on Dave's side.

However, as president he had to cope with the problems that Dave posed to the board, which was essentially that Dave had many great ideas about what the club should do, and he would make commitments beyond what we expected. He would get what he thought was permission from the board, but the board was not unanimous in seeing it that way. The board had not only written statements, but they had pictures in their minds of what the obligations of the club were, what the priorities were, what we could give our attention to, what we could give our money to. And Dave's commitments seemed poised to upset the financial apple cart.

Clark: Ed tried to work closely with Dave. Of course, the president and executive director should work closely together in running the club. And I remember hearing Ed saying several times that it's just impossible to work with Dave.

So, at one of our executive sessions, it seemed we were going to have to curb Dave's program. But Dave decided that even though he was executive director, he would run for the board and when elected, he would become president. That seemed to be the next step. Then his problems would be over, because he would be able to carry out all these projects he had. I don't know where he was going to get the money. Well, his side lost in the club election, as you know. Not too long after that Dave resigned as executive director, and then we heard he was organizing Friends of the Earth. That's not quite as large as the Sierra Club has become, but Dave and FOE are doing admirable work in the field of nature preservation.

Dr. Wayburn has always impressed me as having two outstanding qualities. First of all, he is a dyed-in-the-wool conservationist. And secondly he seemed to be quite ready to play a leading role in the field, so he was quite willing to take on the presidency, as compared with some other persons who, as I have said, were reluctant.

As he served as president, we came to learn about one of his stances: Ed liked to play his cards close to his vest, as they say. I use this phrase because it has been used by others a number of times. He appeared to believe that to save his time and save confusion, he would only tell us what he felt we needed to know, and some of the other things he knew were going on he wouldn't disclose because it wasn't necessary for us to know.

Now, this caused anguish to some of his Sierra Club colleagues. We'd complain, "Well, Ed knew about this thing, but he didn't tell us." You can rationalize as to why it was so. Perhaps just his temperament. And it has its advantages, certainly. If you're a member of the CIA, for example, that's a very good quality to have, but if you're heading up a conservation organization like the Sierra Club or the Sierra Club Foundation, where adequate communication is rather essential to carrying on the activity, this tautness in communication sometimes becomes a problem.

I have a great admiration for Ed, and I don't think I should say any more about this. As I've said before, Ed has served as a director longer than most others, and he's served longer as president.

Will Siri and George Marshall

Clark: After Wayburn's first period as president, there was a man coming along who I had first met in the American Alpine Club. He was a rock climber, mountaineer, and always an eager and capable advocate of the activities in which he was interested, and that was Will [William E.] Siri. Will had administrative qualities which we recognized, and that's one of the reasons we asked him after six years on the board to serve as president [1964-1966]. He has also been president of Save San Francisco Bay Association for quite a number of years.

Will loves to speak. Sometimes we thought, "Will he ever get through explaining this thing?" We'd have some particular problem, and he would talk about it in very reasoned, rational, plausible terms, and then we thought, "Well, that pretty well covers the ground." But he went on and explained the whole thing in other words, apparently with the hope that the longer he talked, the more he convinced us, yet the facts speak for themselves. However, he has served well in the conservation field, and there were a number of times during our debates when we thought, "Let's get Siri on the stand. He'll talk long enough to let the rest of us collect our thoughts on the matter." There were times, especially during the Diablo Canyon battle that we on the board were glad to have Will up there talking. He did a very good job as president.

Kuhn: How about George Marshall?

Clark: We have several Marshalls beside you. There was a young electronics engineer, by the name of Robert Marshall from southern California who was very active in the club affairs for a number of years, and then circumstances changed and he felt that he could better expend his energy and thought on other things. He may still be a member, but he's not as active as he was.

There was another Robert Marshall, you know, who was the brother of George Marshall. That Robert Marshall was extremely prominent in his work with the Forest Service; in fact he has been called the father of the wilderness concept in the Forest Service. It's my understanding that the Marshall family was affluent, and it wasn't necessary for Robert Marshall really to beat himself practically to death working for the Forest Service. He could have made a living in some other way. But he was very dedicated--and strong of physique and mind. So he played a prominent role in the creation of the wilderness concept in the Forest Service; and the Robert Marshall Wilderness Area is named for him.

Kuhn: Lew, there is a third brother, James, who is an attorney in New York.

Clark: Yes. I did not know Robert personally, but I met James at a meeting of the Wilderness Society at Jackson Hole.

Kuhn: Their father, Louis Marshall, was one of the really great leaders of American Jewry. He was a very famous attorney.

Clark: Yes.

Kuhn: But among his other interests, Louis was a member of the State Board of Forestry in New York, and this I think came out in his son Robert.

Now, there's another Robert Marshall who was in Washington, D.C., and who was more or less the father in concept of the Central Valley Project, and his daughter lives in Carmel, and we hope to interview her. So, we're talking about three Robert Marshalls.

Clark: It's a distinguished name.

Kuhn: Correct.

Clark: Well, George Marshall had lived in New York City for many years and had a family. His son, Roger, by the way, later became chairman of the New England Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Kuhn: George's wife is a distinguished horticulturist.

Clark: Oh, yes. Very much so.

Well, George Marshall had been very active in the Wilderness Society--and I think he was president one time and secretary and editor. Then he decided to move to California, so he bought a beautiful home in the Bel Air district of Los Angeles and took up his interests in southern California.

Now, I believe he calls himself an economist, so professionally he is an economic analyst or something like that. But he was able to devote a good deal of his time and energy to wilderness preservation and such causes. So we persuaded him to accept nomination as a director. The club elected him to the board. In due course, following Will Siri's presidency, George Marshall was chosen as president. He expressed the same difficulty (I've mentioned before) of trying to run the Sierra Club as president from Los Angeles.



Clark: During the time when Brower was executive director, George was uncomfortable trying to keep track of affairs. He couldn't come into the club office often and find out what Brower was doing, and he told me he felt that his term as president was frustrating.

Lots of letters went back and forth in which he tried to get a grip on things, and he found it difficult to do so, not because of any lack of perception on his part but because of the remoteness from the center of activity.

Kuhn: There's one school of thought, Lew, that says that if a president or an organization has to find out what's going on on a day-to-day basis, something's wrong with the organization.

Clark: Well, I can understand that.

Kuhn: But in the case of the Sierra Club it was a necessity.

Clark: Well, with the staff set-up that we had, it was a distinct disadvantage to the president not to know what the executive director was doing.

A thing comes to mind that I hesitate to mention, but it's history. George Marshall, as you know, tended to stutter a little, especially when he's nervous, and so sometimes he would start to speak about a subject and it would seem forever before he would get out the words. It was a physical thing and not mental, but the result was that he often talked for quite a while to try to make sure that he'd expressed himself as he meant to. It was said, although I didn't hear it that Dave Brower would sometime decline to talk with Marshall on the long distance phone because he thought it would waste too much time.

So, one of the burdens that George Marshall had to carry was because of this speech situation. I think George felt Dave would deliberately keep him uninformed about things.

Kuhn: Incredible!

Clark: George Marshall and his wife have moved to England, and we don't see much of him anymore.

There are personality problems when you get into an organization as complex as the Sierra Club. Of course, personality qualities are important in the functioning of any organization; it seems to be true in industry, as well as in the Sierra Club, and it's certainly true in other conservation groups. The National Parks and Conservation Association has had its internal struggles. On the

Clark: surface it seems to be doing an excellent job of conservation, and fortunately whatever problems they have had internally they keep to themselves. And, as you know, the Wilderness Society has had to change executive directors because of--well, I would say it was because of personality qualities.

Kuhn: Edgar Wayburn became president again in 1967. That was the year of the seventy-fifth anniversary, because I know he chaired the dinner.

Clark: Yes. And right at the moment I've forgotten who was the next president. Do you remember?

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Phil Berry and Ray Sherwin

Kuhn: I know that Phillip Berry was president the year that I became chairman of the History Committee [1969-1971]. And then Ray Sherwin, then Larry Moss, Kent Gill, Brant Calkin, and Bill Futrell. Now, have I missed anybody?

Clark: I guess not. Well, I have worked with all of these people, some more closely than others. I got acquainted with Phil Berry first, when he was just a young law student and was participating in the leadership of one of the Sierra Club outings in Washington state. Maybe I commented in a previous story about how he climbed McGregor peak and carried a little dog in his knapsack. Sometimes when we were resting, you know, the dog would run around in the woods, then Phil would put this little puppy into his knapsack, and it was intriguing to see his little dog's face peering out of the knapsack.

Kuhn: That's amazing.

Clark: Phil Berry was one of Dave Brower's bright young men; Brower recognized Phil as an up-and-coming conservationist with talent; a strong-minded guy who didn't hesitate to speak out for his principles. He was elected to the board and in due course chosen as president, and I think that Phil carried out that mission very well. I seem to remember that one of the things he did was to lead a demonstration against Standard Oil when we were in Mills Tower.

Kuhn: No, that's not quite true. He was the demonstration. He picketed Standard Oil by himself.

Clark: Okay.

Kuhn: Now, I was in Dick Leonard's office, and Dick looked down in the street and said, "That's not the way to do it." He said, "I know a hundred executives from Standard Oil who are loyal members of the Sierra Club, and they have children and grandchildren for whom they wish to save the natural scene, and that is not the way to do it." So, there was the difference of philosophy and style.

Clark: Well, anyway, Phil was prominent in carrying out his concepts of how to do the presidency. When he was elected to his second term on the board he had one of the largest votes ever had for a director. Of course, he's still on the board after having gone off and come back again.

Before he became a director, Phil had turned his attention to forestry matters, and he was an advisor and consultant on legal matters, especially affecting the forest practices.

As I told you before I had been on a couple of trips with Phil. Besides the one in Washington, I remember one, in particular, in the Sierra Nevada. Dave Brower had been talking with Justice William O. Douglas in Washington, D.C., about some of the justice's numerous trips to Washington state. Well, Dave convinced Justice Douglas that he ought to see some of the central High Sierra where there were plans to put a road across a wilderness area. Justice Douglas agreed to come out on a trip in the High Sierra which Dave Brower organized so the justice could see for himself what would be involved in the road that would bisect this major Sierra wilderness area.

Dave invited me to join the party because Dave and I were working very harmoniously together on many things. The group met the packers at June Lake on the east side of the Sierra. We climbed up a trail from the lake and joined the John Muir Trail. We had tents and a small commissary. Phil Berry and one of Dave Brower's sons--Kenneth--were in the commissary.

In the course of that special outing, which lasted about a week, I got to know Berry quite well. We hiked along the trail together several times.

Douglas, who hailed from Oregon, besides being a famous jurist, was, as you know, a great outdoors person, and he regaled us with many interesting stories at campfires. In 1961 Justice Douglas was nominated and elected to the board of directors. He attended a number of board meetings, but his duties in Washington came first, of course. Before his term as director ended, he resigned to avoid a conflict of interest in certain pending cases before the court.

Clark: I don't know how much good our trip did as far as keeping the road out of the High Sierra. Although the road has been built over Minaret Summit it hasn't been linked up across the wilderness area.

Kuhn: Not yet!

Clark: That's right--not yet.

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Another well-remembered president was Raymond J. Sherwin, judge of the Superior Court in Solano County. He lived in Vallejo before his retirement, when he and his wife moved to San Francisco. I had met Judge Sherwin when he was on the board. I had visited in his home in Vallejo, and we had hiked in the Sierra and skied together, staying at his house in Old Mammoth.

As a professional jurist, he was quite an eloquent spokesman for whatever causes he was interested in, and also he had talent as an administrator, a necessity as a presiding judge. So, we elected him as president [1971-1973] following Phil Berry. He was always interested in international affairs and at one time was international vice-president of the club.

Moss, Gill, Calkin and Futrell

Kuhn: Larry Moss.

Clark: Oh, yes. Laurence I. Moss, from southern California, was president [1973-1974].

Kuhn: That's right.

Clark: Before we get to him there was another Larry Moss from the Sierra Club who became very active in California state politics and administration in Sacramento. He was never on the board of directors.

Kuhn: Larry Moss, the club president, chaired the annual meeting at the Claremont Hotel (Oakland) in 1974.

Clark: That's right.

Kuhn: And I think he held the job for one year only, because he was working in Washington, D.C., which was even farther than Los Angeles, although he was originally from Los Angeles.

Clark: Yes. And, as you know, Larry Moss had been one of Dave Brower's strongest supporters. But after he got elected to the board, I think he began to realize some of Dave's problems. Although Larry was philosophically very strong for Dave, he realized there were some things that wouldn't go.

He became very much interested in the energy business. He had several different jobs in Washington in the federal administration. So, I think he did have some difficulty about keeping track of what was going on in San Francisco while he was president. I never heard him say that he did. On the other hand, I knew some of the staff people in San Francisco, particularly one of the ladies who was serving as a sort of a private secretary to the president in San Francisco, and my perception is that Larry had some problems about keeping track of what was going on in the office even after Dave left, simply because of the physical separation.

Didn't you say, Marshall, that if a man has to keep track of the day-to-day operations, he shouldn't be president?

Kuhn: No.

Clark: What did you say?

Kuhn: I said if a president has to keep track of day-to-day operations of an organization, something may be the matter with the organization. In other words, the executive director should be taking care of everyday things and keeping the president informed. The president shouldn't have to seek out this stuff.

Clark: Okay. I'll buy that.

Well, there were some people who wondered what would happen to the club when Larry I. Moss became president, but he seemed to have a pretty clear head on what the priorities of the club were at that time, as determined by the board, and he seemed to pursue them with due diligence. So, I would say he made a good contribution to the club.

Kuhn: Do you have any comments about Kent Gill?

Clark: Certainly, A very good friend, and I believe he was the next president. I had known Gill when he was an officer of the Mother Lode Chapter. He was chairman, I believe, at one time. He asked me to come to Davis to give a slide show about the Sierra Club in the mountains, which I did.

Clark: Kent Gill was very perceptive and a graciously articulate member of the board. He can say things in a way that seems discreet, at the same time quite forceful. Perhaps this articulateness led to the fact that he became mayor of Davis for a period. He was, as you know, a high school teacher in Davis. He found it somewhat of a burden to carry on the presidency because of the time he had to be away from his school. And I think it was during his period that the executive committee of the Sierra Club, in executive session, decided to make a modest compensation to the president of the club to help offset the loss of income which he might be having as a result of not being able to give full time to his professional work. I think that applied to Kent Gill and maybe to some others, although I don't know to what extent.

There was a sentiment in the club lasting over a dozen years of more, that the club ought to have a permanent paid president; that the job was becoming too demanding of time and that was the way to go. As you know, that was the way followed by the National Parks and Conservation Society. Anthony Wayne Smith is their paid top executive and president. I believe that was true with the National Audubon Society, for a while anyway. I belong to the Audubon Society, but I don't follow its internal politics.

Kuhn: So, then the top volunteer would be what, the chairman of the board?

Clark: That's conceivable. Yes, that was definitely one of the possibilities in the picture.

Well, anyway, the point I'm trying to come to is that Kent Gill served an apprenticeship in the Sierra Club going on ski trips, outing trips, was active in the chapter affairs, and finally got elected to the Sierra Club Council and became its chairman because of his articulateness and judgment. Through this exposure he became well enough known to be elected to the board, and he served as president for two terms. I felt that he was one of our outstanding presidents [1974-1976].

Well, we come to Brant Calkin, who was, as you know, a compromise candidate for president. I do not mean in any way to demean his talents as an individual or his devotion to conservation. He had been a representative of the Sierra Club Foundation, in New Mexico, particularly looking after the Frontera Del Norte activities of the foundation, and he has quite a long record as a conservation activist doing things; in other words, just not proclaiming noble thoughts, but actually organizing things to assist the conservation work in the Southwest, in Arizona and New Mexico.

Clark: Anyway, Brant was on the club ballot a couple of times, and he finally got elected as a director. There were some tuggings and pullings going on within the board as to who should be president, and someone said, "Well, let's elect Brant Calkin." Perhaps that was somewhat of a surprise. I think that Brant had it in him to serve as a good president. He had a very informal manner, as perhaps you remember, compared, for instance, with Judge Sherwin. Ray's lifestyle anyway was more formal, being a superior court judge. And Brant Calkin was one of the more informal presiding officers.

But I'm sure he knew quite well what was going on, because professionally he'd been keeping track of conservation work, and I think he made a good president [1976-1977].

Kuhn: Do you have any comments about Bill Futrell, who is president now?

Clark: Futrell is a very strong character. He has an entirely different style than some of the previous lawyers we've had. You couldn't compare him with Colby, Leonard, Sherwin, Robinson, or Berry, all of whom were distinguished members of the law fraternity.

Kuhn: I think that Futrell is a professor of law now.

Clark: Yes. Environmental law, I believe.

Prior to his election to the board, he had been very active in club affairs in his state. He is energetic, perceptive and eloquent. I don't mean to say that he makes long harangues or speeches. His conversations tend to be quite down-to-business. He doesn't waste words, and when he perceives a certain thing as the issue, he'll say whatever has to be said about that and not say any more. He doesn't feel it's necessary to go over and over a thing, because he's said what he wanted to say and said it clearly and that's that.

I've attended quite a number of the meetings where he presided. Futrell's style of presiding appealed to me as direct and businesslike. He doesn't like to waste time on nonessentials. He ran quite a taut ship. Nobody I know would question his devotion to the cause of conservation or his intelligent perceptions as to what are the essential things to focus on. For all that, he can relax pleasantly when the situation calls for that.

Four Pro-Brower Directors and a Changing Board

Kuhn: Now, Lew, we've gone through all the presidents, but there was reference to a number of presidents who were pro-Brower. Now, we know that there also were some directors who were very pro-Brower and two of them come to mind. I'd like your evaluation of them along with any other pro-Brower directors: Fred Eissler and Martin Litton.

Clark: And Pat Goldsworthy and Eliot Porter.

Kuhn: Let's take them in turn.

Clark: These four directors who served at one time or another were each in the Brower camp. When Brower spoke, they responded. Now, all of these people are honorable, intelligent men with a very large devotion to the cause of conservation. So, my comments are not intended to denigrate them. But as functioning directors of the Sierra Club I think they were sometimes obstacles to our achieving what we were trying to do. Each was an individual, quite different from the others.

Martin Litton, you know, has a gut feeling for very strongly expressing himself, in polite language. He doesn't swear and cuss, he uses discreet language. But he is brutal in his attacks on his fellow directors. He was one of the first that I remember to attack me and Dick Leonard and some of the others in regard to the Mineral King controversy when we were having a debate about it. Well, it's all right to debate things, but Martin said some untrue things about some of the other directors, which I felt he shouldn't do as a director.

Now I should probably go back to the time I first met Martin Litton and developed a real friendship for him. On the first Dinosaur National Monument trip of the club in the fifties, we had six or seven presidents of the Sierra Club on the trip. Martin Litton was along, and at the close of the club trip he invited me and a couple of my friends to go down through the canyon of Lodore in the National Monument on a float trip.

So, I accepted. The two people with me were Lester Rukema and Norah Straley. Les was a professor of electrical engineering whom I had known for many years--a very energetic and strong individual with a long career at the University of California in Berkeley. He liked the out-of-doors very much and he was on the club trip. Norah Straley, also on the club trip, was not involved in club politics although she believed in the cause. She was a great adventurer: foldboating, snow skiing, mountain climbing and flying her own plane.



Clark: Martin asked Don Hatch to guide us. Don's father, Bus, was the boating outfitter for the club's trip. Well, Don told Martin, "I'd be glad to guide you down but not in this boat of yours. I don't think that it's suitable. It's too small." And he said, "If you want to go down in my boat, I'll be glad to do it."

So Martin and my friends, and I went in Don's boat, floated, rowed and paddled down through the canyon of Lodore. At the worst place we had to portage around a long wild falls. And there was a little incident I remember particularly. We took all our gear out of the boat above the falls and carried the boat through the bulrushes and over the rocks and set it in the water below the falls. Then we put everything back in the boat and floated down the river a quarter of a mile to where a big sandbar jutted out. There we decided to rest; having had enough work for the morning.

As we beached the boat, I looked at my watch, it wasn't on my wrist. I knew I'd had it above the portage. Well, we had quite a discussion about what to do. Finally some of us worked our way back along the north shore of the river. In one place we had to use a rope to keep from being washed under the rocks. We went back to the place where we'd been carrying the boat, and I thought maybe that's where the watch had been rubbed off my wrist because of manipulating the heavy boat. We looked around carefully and were just about ready to give up when I happened to look down in the grass next to a big rock and there was something shining. It was the stem of the watch. The watch was working perfectly. (Unfortunately, I later lost it on a river trip in Arizona.)

From this trip and other times I thought Martin was a very interesting person. He was certainly devoted to many aspects of the conservation of nature. He was a strong guy physically and had a powerful voice and pursued his objectives forcefully.

Kuhn: What was his business or profession, Lew?

Clark: I believe he was a writer. He had been at one time travel editor for Sunset magazine and had worked for the Los Angeles Times before that. I suppose that's one reason why he could express himself so eloquently. But when he was later elected to the board, I felt he was hard to get along with. He made some allegations that were just not true; he attributed motivations to some of the other directors that were invalid and unfair.

Martin had a characteristic insistence on talking. Some question would come up, and he'd say, "Mr. President, may I have a minute to talk about this?" The president, Ray Sherwin, I believe,

- Clark: was sometimes reluctant because he knew what we were in store for. But Martin would get his chance to speak, and he wouldn't stop at the end of one minute; the president would tap the gavel, but Martin would go on. He could go on for half an hour saying pretty much the same sort of thing over and over again. He used different phraseology, but he was one of those people who felt that if he just talked long enough and loud enough he would convince the opposition.
- Kuhn: Now, Lew, if he would make a statement, an allegation against another board member, would that board member ever try to counter that argument?
- Clark: Yes. Sometimes I would, or Dick Leonard, or someone else would have to say, "That isn't true." But he'd go on anyway. He was very abrasive. I felt that his habit was a handicap to the board functioning. You get all these people from many parts of the country talking on a subject; we've had a thorough exposition, everybody has had a chance to express themselves, and we've taken a vote but Martin wasn't content with that. He wanted to make another speech, and I felt that this was a horrible waste of time.
- Kuhn: It's counter-productive because you can't succeed unless people get along with you.
- Clark: Yes, it's counter-productive. And yet there are those who think that he's a marvelous spokesman for the cause of conservation; he is an eloquent spokesman; there's no question about that.

Now to go on with your question about pro-Brower directors. Alongside Litton as a director was Larry Moss. But I've given you my views of him in my discussion of presidents. I don't think I need say more.

There was another pro-Brower director, Fred Eissler. He was a very devoted conservationist, and he expended his energy in the cause. He and his wife had served as custodians of Tuolumne Meadows Lodge for several seasons. He was a high school teacher from Santa Barbara.

He understood what Dave was striving for, but I thought that one of Fred's shortcomings was that he didn't know when he was licked. Now, some people say that's good. If you're going to win something, you don't give up too soon. And I think perhaps that that was Fred's motivation. But it became another time waster.

Kuhn: Are you saying he would waste the time of the board?

##

Clark: Yes. On more than one occasion Fred would talk loudly and emphatically, sort of following the lead of Martin Litton. Then we'd take a vote, and the outcome was not the way Fred had been arguing. But like Martin he would want to go on and make more speeches on the subject. The decision had been reached. But Fred just didn't understand enough to not waste the time of the majority of the directors. I think that a board that has to function on a national basis is better off to have members who can perceive more quickly how the wind is blowing and what the decisions are.

Kuhn: Was Fred Eissler an officer of the board?

Clark: Yes, he was secretary for a couple of years although he was not a president. He wrote up the minutes in good form. He was energetic on whatever he was interested in. He was particularly concerned in southern California with keeping the motor vehicles out of the wilderness areas, and I would say more power to him. He could carry on the fight and meet all kinds of people. But as a functioning member of the board, he was a hurdle at times.

There was another pro-Brower director who I felt was flawed for the same reason--he kept on talking. Sometimes he didn't seem to understand how the issue was going. I'm talking reluctantly about Pat Goldsworthy. He has been president of the Northern Cascades Conservation Council for many years; he's suffered personal bereavement in his family, and he is a very fine man, conscientious and considerate, who has probably done more for conservation than I ever have done.

Kuhn: He was the leader on the 1949 High Trip that I went on.

Clark: Yes. Well, my perceptions are directed to Pat as a functioning member of the board of directors. He seemed to be concentrating so hard on what he wanted to say and how he was going to express himself, that he didn't realize the flow of discussion and argument going around.

He did make his contribution. I don't remember how many years he served. Certainly he wanted to help the club as much as possible. However, he too often made it difficult to get a discussion settled. Now, everybody wants to be heard. During my presidency it was my intention--and I think most other presidents agreed--to try to make

Clark: sure that every person who has a legitimate point to bring up is given the time to do it and even rebuttal time, but the time comes when you have to move on.

Now, the other person you asked about was Eliot Porter. Nathan Clark says in his oral history that Porter was a dentist.

Kuhn: A physician.

Clark: Well, a physician. Anyway, he was a medical person, by virtue of his training.

Apart from that he was an outstanding photographer. He had a rare perception for composition and the subtleties of color; he was a master of his camera. He expended a great deal of effort in traveling around the world, going through the wild areas and setting up his camera under adverse conditions, waiting for the light to be right. He has a national reputation. Dave Brower had published several of his books in the Exhibit Format series.

But he seemed to have difficulty in coping with some of the discussions on the board. When he felt that the general line or thrust of the board's discussion or decision was going against his side, he appeared to get quite uptight, so much so that he could hardly express himself because of his nervous tension.

So, there were times when I felt that Eliot Porter despite our admiration for his great talents hampered the progress of our directors' meetings.

Kuhn: Lew, you would classify all these men as being more or less pro-Brower?

Clark: They all were strongly pro-Brower.

Kuhn: That must have made the board meetings not entirely a lot of fun.

Clark: Well, in the early days when I attended the board meetings, you know, with people like Walter Huber and Duncan McDuffie and Will Colby and Little Joe LeConte and so on, I was just amazed at how these people understood each other and the courteous way in which they discussed all different kinds of issues, no name-calling, but they really explored all the facets of the problem. I thought it was a rare experiences to be associated with such people. And even most of the time that I served on the board, I felt that meetings were a pleasure to attend. To be sure, they required concentration. You felt physically tired after a meeting when you'd been concentrating so hard, trying to hear and to understand; but everybody was of good temper and trying to do the right thing.

Clark: But then when this other crew that I've described came along and used obstructionist tactics, I felt that--and along with some of my colleagues--it was no longer fun to attend the board meetings; it was an unpleasant hassle.

Well, that's changed. All these people have gone. Other people have come along. And I think that the board meetings--and I attend many of them, you know--are interesting and stimulating events.

Kuhn: In the earlier days when many directors served over twenty or thirty years on the board consecutively, personal relationships must have been extremely strong as compared to now when a person is limited to six years. They can't possibly know each other as intimately as in the prior days when they had so many years of continued association.

Clark: I'd like to comment on that. This is an advantage and a disadvantage as far as the functioning of the club is concerned. There was a time when we felt that a slow turnover of directors provided an opportunity for each one to appraise the others. They understood the points of view that the other directors had, and because of that it saved a good deal of talk. We always had to talk about the issues, of course, but sometimes it wasn't necessary for every person to be given multiple opportunities to explain himself or herself because we understood that person's point of view; it did save quite a bit on discussion, I think. In the earlier days of the club, even by the time I came along, the directors' meetings would last all one morning and maybe part of the afternoon, and that was it. Now, you see, the directors have to come together and have preliminary meetings and executive conference; they meet Saturday morning, and then the Council meets Saturday afternoon, and then the directors come back for a Saturday evening meeting perhaps and another meeting Sunday morning. With directors and other representatives from all over the country transportation is such that they try to wind up the meetings in the middle of Sunday afternoon.

Kuhn: We're a lot bigger now.

Clark: Of course, there are a lot more subjects to talk about. The scope of the club's concerns is vastly greater. And there are more internal questions, what with our greater memberships, together with the inevitable budget matters.

Clark: There was a distinguished member of the board and the executive committee, August Frugé, who played a significant role at the time of the Brower affair. He had a difficult position. He was a longtime personal friend of Dave. They both had worked at the University of California Press in Berkeley. Frugé was also chairman of the Sierra Club's Publications Committee. As such, he had to work with Dave because that was the medium through which Dave felt the Sierra Club could most visibly express itself-- through its publications, particularly the Exhibit Format books which Dave had designed and promoted.

Kuhn: Did you know Frugé?

Clark: Yes, we enjoyed a cordial friendship.

But Frugé saw some of the problems the executive director had. August was pretty much on the side of the CMC, that is "Concerned Members for Conservation," because he thought that if we followed the course that Dave was setting, the club would be headed for bankruptcy.

Memories of Ansel Adams and Charlotte Mauk

Clark: You raised the questions and I've been very free in giving my views on these.

Kuhn: Well, that's what makes oral history.

Can you think of any other board members, as opposed to officers, outstanding in any way?

Clark: Well, I've known a lot more of the directors than we've mentioned-- fine, interesting people and friends whose associations have enriched my life. However, two people come to mind. Both were longtime members of the board who made rich contributions in their individual ways, and I think they will go down as outstanding Sierra Club leaders.

First of all, I would mention Ansel Adams. I met him first in 1928. That year the Sierra Club high trip went to Canada. I wasn't a member of the club to begin with, and I went on the Stuart Ward party in the Kings Canyon country. Almost all members of that party were Sierra Clubbers. I was so impressed that I joined

Clark: the club in the fall, as I've already told you. There was a high trip reunion in Muir Woods. Then it was still possible to camp in Muir Woods. At a campfire one of the characters that came center stage was a tall lanky guy with a big hat, and even before he said anything or did anything, there was lots of applause. I thought, "Well, what's all the applause for? He hasn't done anything yet." And that was my introduction to Ansel Adams.

They all knew him as a very entertaining person, a brilliant and humorous guy at the campfire. They all knew also that he was a fine photographer.

In due course I came to know Ansel a lot better. Through our shared experiences in high trips and our service together on the board of directors. I knew both Ansel and Virginia and count them among my best friends. A little story may shed some light on our developing friendship. I guess it was in the mid-thirties. Ansel invited several friends, including me, to take part in an entertainment at the Ahwahnee Hotel on New Year's Eve. Ansel invented and produced the show. I was costumed as Father Time and next to me sat Virginia Adams as Mother Earth. To celebrate her birthday we had a routine to go through. I announced the various events--songs, dances and skits that Ansel had arranged. The events were interspersed between the dinner courses served in the big dining room. It was a lot of fun. Next year someone else did my part and later it became stylized; they didn't have a person up there, only an image.

In connection with this event, I stayed at the Adams's home in Yosemite, at the bank of the Best Studio. Harry Best, who for many years painted landscapes and people, had a portrait studio. His daughter, Virginia, was wooed by Ansel and they got married. After Harry Best died, the studio came into the Adams family, and Ansel and Virginia operated it for many years through various regimes, dealing with the government, which is not easy. Now it's known as the Adams Gallery. But it's the same place, and it's one of the few independent concessions there.

Kuhn: It's very attractive.

Clark: Well, I don't need to tell you, Marshall, that I have the highest admiration for Ansel as a photographer. He specialized in black and white photography. He was a member of California F-64 group; which meant that they believed in making very sharp images on the print, as contrasted with the fuzzy, dreamy kind. Ansel, with Edward Weston and Imogen Cunningham and others, were very prominent in the photographic field here in the Bay Area.

Clark: Ansel was also an extremely devoted conservationist, and because of his aesthetic talents he could visualize things, whereas some of the rest of us would not see them so clearly. He had a great deal more imagination and visualizing capacity, so he was the one that introduced, designed, and produced the exhibit at LeConte Lodge--"This Is the American Earth."

They were black and white pictures about the beauties of the Sierra Nevada. The directors put up the money to have it mounted, and Ansel contributed not only the prints but much of his talent in arranging them. From that exhibit the first Exhibit Format book evolved. Dave Brower initiated that, to put into print the titles and the pictures from the exhibit.

So, Ansel, as I saw him during the many years he served on the board [1934-1971], stood out as one of the apostles of pure conservationism, without compromise with the bureaucracies. And yet he was a pragmatist as well as an idealist. He was an official photographer for the Yosemite Park and Curry Company and did a lot of work for the National Park Service in other parks besides Yosemite. He knew the concessionaires in the park, being one of them, and he was aware of the need for cooperation with the powers that be in order to get things done.

Kuhn: He and I had a conversation when we first talked about doing an oral history for him. Part of his career had been covered in the book by Nancy Newhall [The Eloquent Light, Sierra Club, 1963].

Clark: Yes, I knew Nancy Newhall, too.

Kuhn: And then for health reasons and things happening in her own family she couldn't do the second part. Ansel told me he felt that his role on the Sierra Club board was that of a generalist; he didn't have any specific scientific credentials. He wasn't a physicist, he wasn't a chemist, he wasn't a botanist; he was just a generalist, you know, as far as conservation was concerned.

Clark: I think that's true. And Ansel, of course, had a great deal of admiration for Dave. He recognized Dave's talents and his devotion.

Kuhn: However, they are sort of miles apart now, or at least--

Clark: Well, I'll put it in my own words. I think Ansel became disillusioned, to some degree with Dave's methods, but not with his ideals. And he finally realized just as keenly as Dick Leonard and some of the others of us did that it would be impossible for the club to go on with Dave pursuing the course he was on.



Kuhn: Ansel thought Dave was quite a spendthrift.

Clark: I would say he was irresponsible about financial commitments of the club.

Kuhn: Ansel spent a lot of time telling me that Dave had taken not only himself but his whole book staff to the international book fair in Germany, flying first class, and Ansel considered that excessive.

Clark: Well, now, there was a time when Virginia Adams was elected to the board [1932-1934]. Of course, I knew Virginia when we used to be on those Greek tragedy plays that Ansel wrote for the high trip. Incidentally, when my brother gave his program on the presidents and directors of the Sierra Club several years ago at the San Francisco dinner, he had some pictures from the Adamses. I've visited them several times in Yosemite and been their guest in Carmel.

The other person I wanted to talk about was Charlotte Mauk. Charlotte knew me most of all the time that I was in the Sierra Club, although it was several years before I became aware of her presence on the high trips. I think the first high trip that I was on, 1929, she was on also. She noticed me and Nate, but she was just one of many girls on the trip, and I didn't particularly notice her.

In due course, however, we seemed to discover many interests in common: a devotion to the cause of conservation, beautiful pictures, classical music, and outings. I think we had a deep platonic friendship, and I was very much grieved when she passed away as a result of the consequences of leukemia.

Kuhn: The tragedy was that it happened so soon after she retired from work.

Clark: Yes.

Kuhn: She really didn't have a chance to enjoy her retirement.

Clark: Yes, she was cut short. We were having a meeting of the Sierra Club Foundation at the Thorne estate near Woodside. I had phoned Charlotte to tell her Nate and I would be coming to see her in the hospital where she was getting a new treatment for her leukemia.

In the meantime, something happened very suddenly, probably a thrombosis. Her brother, Robert, told me she said to him, "I wish you'd leave me." And she turned away. And that was the end.

Kuhn: She was a member of the history committee from the very beginning.

Clark: Yes. Charlotte and I had been on many outings and ski trips together. She used to come up to the Clair Tappaan Lodge. In 1941 Charlotte and I joined others on a ski trip into Little Lakes Valley below the Bear Creek Spire. Bestor Robinson organized the trip to test out equipment for the mountain troops.

Charlotte greatly admired Dave Brower. At one time she worked as an assistant in the Sierra Club office, thanks to Dave. Later she got a job with the Radiation Laboratory in Berkeley doing editorial work. (Now it's called the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory.) She served as secretary of the Sierra Club for several periods. She had been secretary of the Regional Parks Association. She did secretarial work for the Point Reyes Bird Observatory. So, she had a real talent for putting words together effectively. One time at her home in Berkeley she showed me her six dictionaries, little ones and big ones. She really loved the English language.

When she had to retire from the Sierra Club board because of the rotation system, she was elected as a trustee of the Sierra Club Foundation, a position she had when she passed away.

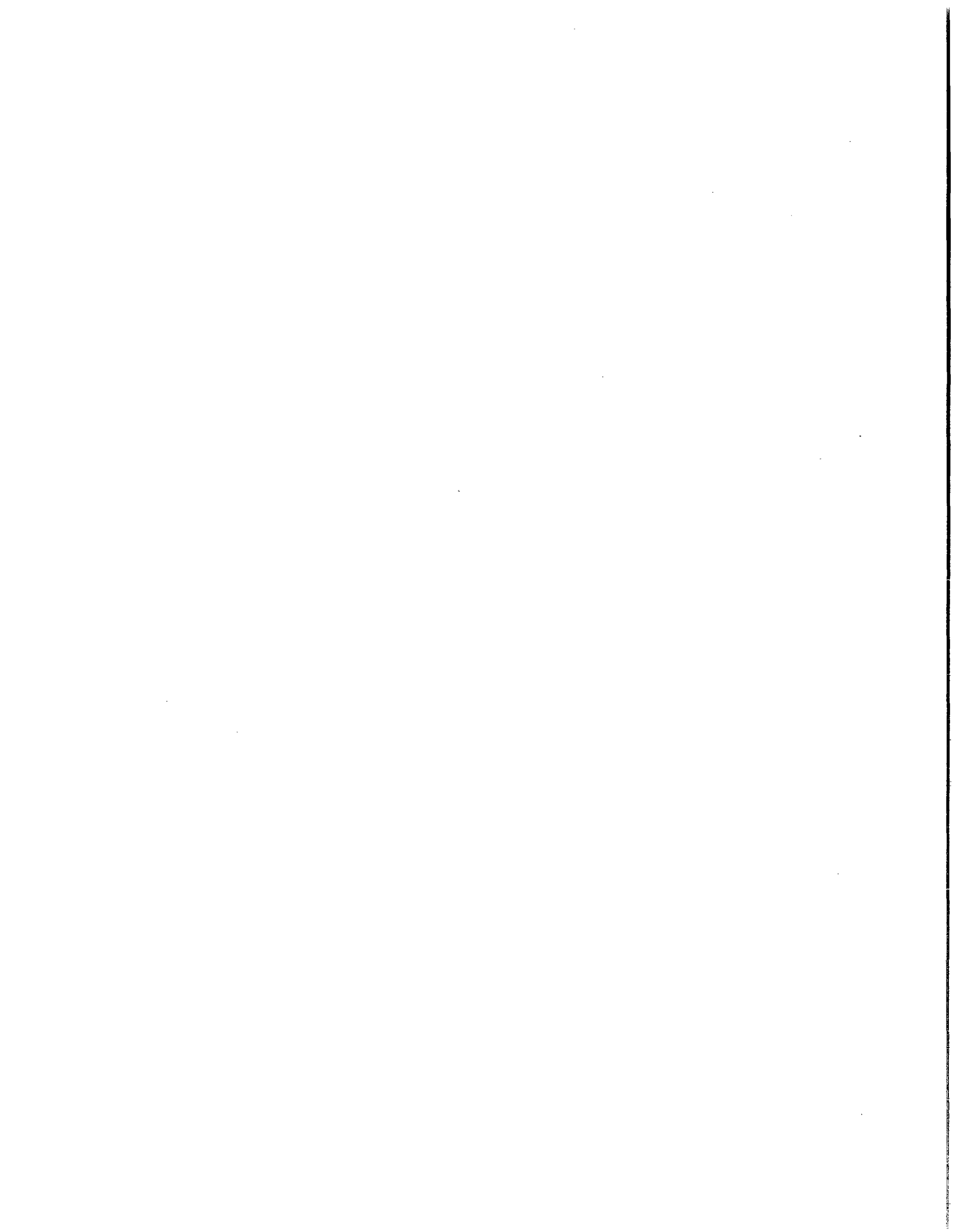
Kuhn: After you've had a chance to review the six interviews we've had, we'll leave a final wrap-up session on the things you haven't covered.

Clark: All right. I'll look forward to that.

[Unfortunately, Marshall Kuhn passed away from "A.L.S.," Lou Gehrig's disease, and so this is the end of the interview.]

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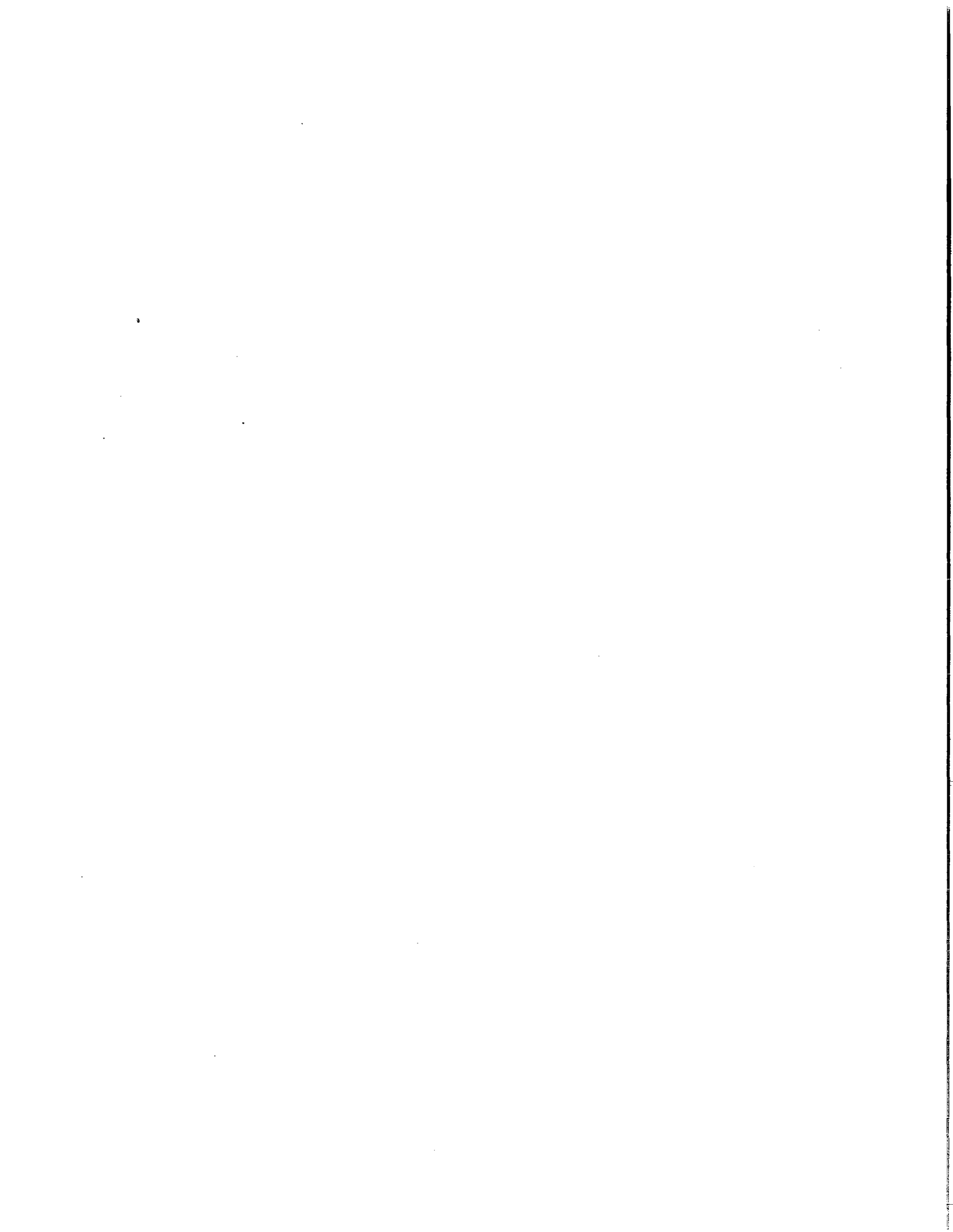


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Jules M. Eichorn

MOUNTAINEERING AND MUSIC:  
ANSEL ADAMS, NORMAN CLYDE, AND  
PIONEERING SIERRA CLUB CLIMBING

With an Introduction by  
Smoke Blanchard

An Interview Conducted by  
John Schagen  
in 1982

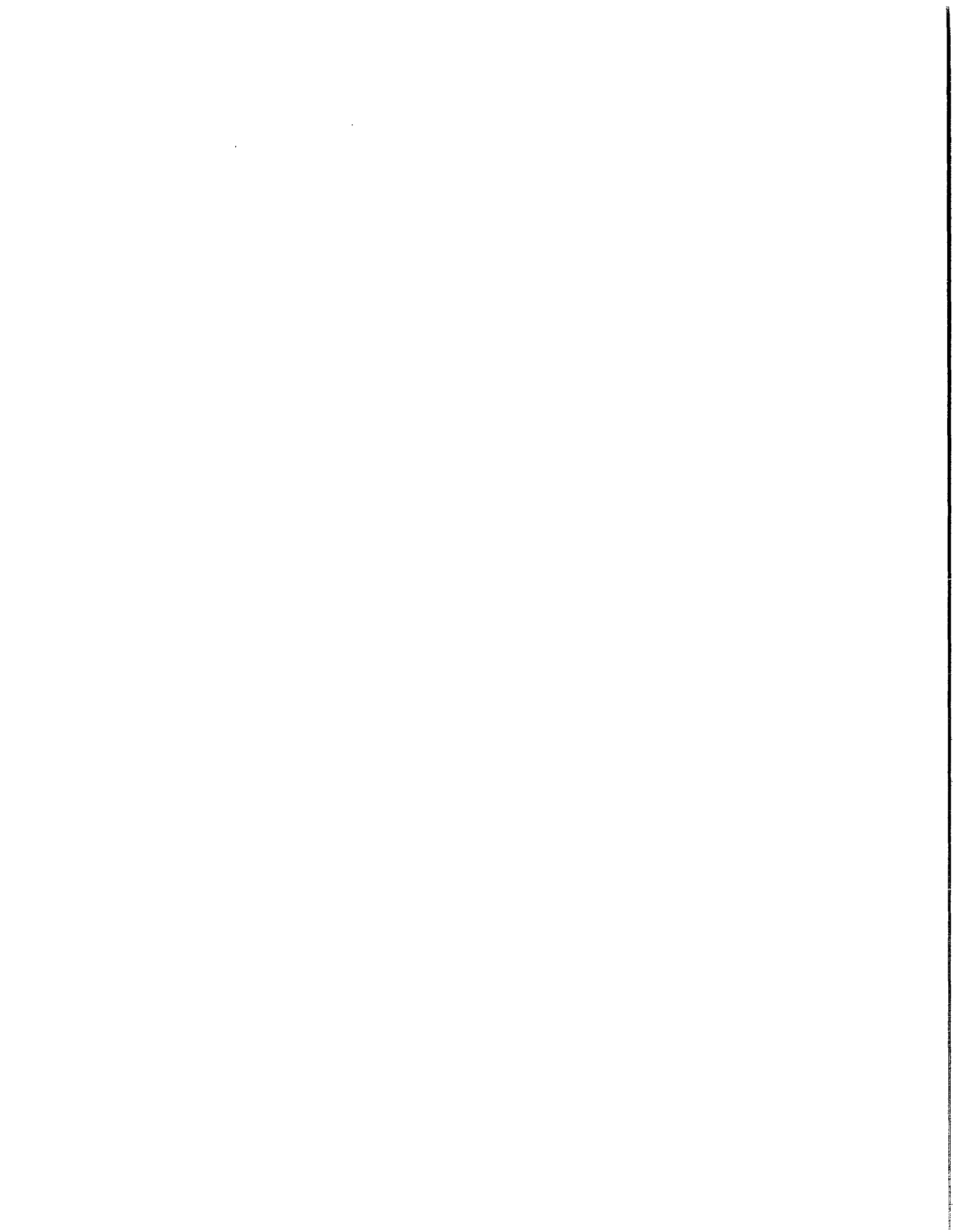
Sierra Club History Committee  
1985

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## INTRODUCTION

It seems I've known Jules Eichorn all my life. No doubt the Sierra Club is responsible for that. Their annual bulletins in the Portland Library Reference Room were required reading for depression era kids crazed by climbing. Not long after Jules's first ascent of the East Face of Mount Whitney, we well-informed library patrons were able to lead the gossip in snow-buried cabins on Mount Hood.

Something to do with timidity or stupidity kept me isolated in the outback of Government Camp, Oregon, or Bishop, California. I heard more tales of Jules from another loner, Norman Clyde, but unlike him, I never came out of my shell long enough to join club trips. So a couple of decades went by without actually meeting the famous man.

In those days the climbing community was still rather small and Jules had even heard of me. When I returned from my first Alaskan expedition, my wife reported the following conversation with Jules which took place as she helped Norman and Jules with their car shuttle.

"Where's Smoke?"

"He's climbing in Alaska."

"Why didn't he take me with him?"

Probably I was too backward to initiate such a collaboration, but, emboldened by this overture, I phoned Jules immediately to invite him on my next subarctic sampling. There followed adventures in Alaska, scrambles in the Sierra and even ambling around Everest.

When I think back over my many years' association with Jules Eichorn three pictures flash on my memory screen.

There's Jules crouched in the doorway of a Logan tent stirring a vast stew with his super dexterous left hand, juggling three of his eighteen vials of spices, reaching with his right hand to latch the tent door against the snow drift, grabbing a pot with his other hand so some fumble foot wouldn't upset it, giving the primus a couple of quick pumps with one of his other free hands. If that's too many hands for absolute accuracy I'm reciting impressions from memory. Like many southpaws Jules is ambidextrous. Underline the dextrous. If he hadn't been a musician I could imagine him a champion professional baseball shortstop. In fact I can easily imagine Jules fiddling Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee" and fielding a ball at the same time. He'd tag the runner at second and fling the ball to first for two outs.

My next picture has to do with a slight defect in my friend's long list of qualities. He is a slow acclimatizer. This means his usual sparkling wit is often not so champagne-like near twenty thousand feet. At reasonable altitude his humor is delicious. This scene is of Jules performing at sea level. We are on a small ship in Prince William Sound watching porpoises and killer whales enroute to observe a calving glacier. These excitements came only at intervals during a day-long cruise so I bet the dozen passengers retain in their memories, as I do, Jules's performance as a comic. Jules teamed with fellow expeditionary Nort Benner (we'd just come down from Logan), and the two of them kept us laughing for eight hours. My mental picture is backed up (but not well) by an out-of-focus slide of Jules and Nort laughing on the rolling bow of the tugboat.

The final picture, and the one which flashes with the greatest brilliance on my brain's memorandum board, is also connected with Nort Benner. Nort used to give parties in his big old mansion with guest lists of unusual and distinctive people. (I sneaked in the back door.) I can see Jules lighting up these VIPs as he made his entrance with his own peculiarly high-voltaged personality.

Dressed in his trademark sport jacket with his latest polished stone bolo tie and flower in the button hole, his wide grin in bushy white beard could easily electrify a row of rooms. His multiple hands usually bore a bouquet for the hostess and a museum collection for the host. More than a museum. Likely as not he'd have in some of his hands a great cake he'd baked himself. The museum? Mushrooms. Some to go in the pot, some for his mycological lectures. Bugs. (Possibly even a rattlesnake. Jules has always been most catholic in his nature study. One time he juggled seven live rattlesnakes. Took them home. They died in captivity before he could bone up on reptilian nutrition.) A rock. A half dozen arrowheads. A fossil. A pressed flower. A book on birds. A basket of lemons from his own trees.

Jules didn't need all these things as props. His boundless curiosity, his enthusiasm for all things of the wilds, compelled him to bring samples to share.

The lemons remind me of Jules's horticulture interest. When crossing the Big Valley on the way to the Sierra at his customary 80 mph driving speed Jules might sing out:

"Did you see that? What a way to trim a tree. That species must be handled..."

Sharp eye. Deep-dyed interest.

In my recent book is a chapter in which I mention paying obeisance to the Cathedral Spires and marvelling at Jules Eichorn's first ascent of these awe-inspiring spikes. The chapter has been edited but this part is exactly as written in 1937. Jules Eichorn has been my hero and later my friend for the best part of fifty years. If it's not too much to ask, I'd like to request another fifty years to continue our friendly association.

Smoke Blanchard

Tokyo, Japan  
March 1985

## INTERVIEW HISTORY

In the Sierra Club Bulletin of February 1930, Francis P. Farquhar wrote "...in the Sierra...many of the peaks have been climbed so often that there is nothing much new to be said about them; but as time goes on the discovery of new routes is likely to become one of the chief diversions of climbers in the Sierra Nevada, as it has in other mountain regions." In the following year, the Bulletin's Mountaineering Notes contain a record by Glen Dawson of climbing on the 1930 Annual Outing, in which the name of Jules Eichorn is prominent. Included is enough detail to indicate that the discovery of new routes was already well established.

Then in 1931, when Farquhar and Robert L.M. Underhill introduced to the outing modern techniques of climbing with a rope, a new age of western mountaineering dawned. In that year after the outing, during which many climbs were made, Underhill, with Jules, Glen, and Norman Clyde ascended the east face of Mount Whitney.

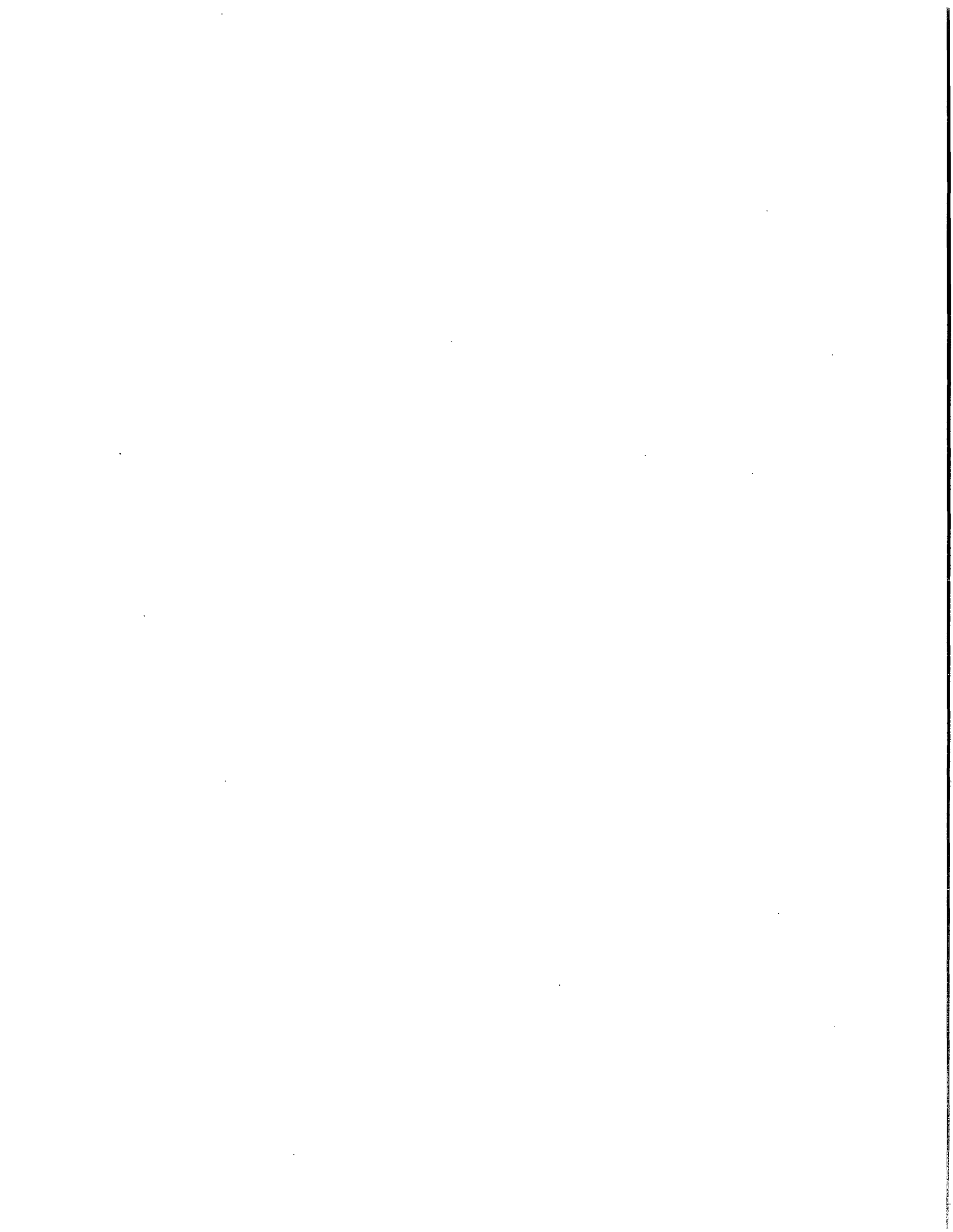
What followed after 1931 were not only new routes climbed by Jules, but first ascents of Sierra peaks which had hitherto been deemed impossible, as well as expeditions to other mountain regions of the world.

This interview was suggested because of the long record of mountaineering accomplishment by Jules. In the more than sixty years of our acquaintanceship, we have done a lot of hiking together. His ability as a mountaineer and a climbing leader has often been noted, and it was thought important to get it on the record.

The interview took place on November 16, 1982. Later, during the editing process, Jules added in written form some recollections from his close friendships with Ansel Adams, Norman Clyde, and Francis Farquhar. Tapes of the interview are in The Bancroft Library.

John Schagen, Interviewer  
Sierra Club History Committee

San Francisco  
February 1984





MOUNTAINEERING AND MUSIC: ANSEL ADAMS, NORMAN CLYDE, AND  
PIONEERING SIERRA CLUB CLIMBING

[Date of Interview: November 16, 1982]

Early Years

Schagen: Jules, where were you born?

Eichorn: San Francisco.

Schagen: The year?

Eichorn: February 7, 1912.

Schagen: You didn't always live in San Francisco. I remember you lived in Mill Valley also. When did you move over there?

Eichorn: We moved over there first in 1918 and stayed for just a short while. Again in 1921, we moved back and stayed in Mill Valley for four years. I graduated from Old Mill Grammar School, as it was called in those days.

Schagen: And then you moved back to San Francisco when you started in at Lick Wilmerding High School.

Eichorn: That's correct.

Schagen: So when you lived over there, you learned, I guess to hike around Tamalpais.

Eichorn: Yes, actually, I guess the formative years were of hiking with my dad and sometimes my sister--my brother was too young. He was born in 1917 and he just wasn't much of a hiker as far as my dad was concerned--just to wander around the mountain and over to the Big Lagoon and to Stinson Beach, places like that--was really a wonderful outdoor experience.

Schagen: Also Warner Canyon.

Eichorn: Well, of course, Warner Canyon was a very special place, near Little Tamalpais because we made ourselves a camp there. That was during our high school years, particularly; we used to go back quite regularly.

Schagen: I remember.

Eichorn: You were part of it.

Schagen: And then there was the archery club in high school which, again, did a lot of hiking over there.

Introduction to the Sierra Club, 1927

Schagen: Were you introduced to the Sierra through music?

Eichorn: Indirectly, yes. You see, when we moved back to San Francisco, my folks knew I was interested in music and were looking around for a music teacher. Our next door neighbor was Mr. Harry Saville, who worked with a gentleman by the name of Charles Adams, secretary of the Merchant's Exchange Building. Saville was the engineer. He said, "Mr. Adams has a son, Ansel, who plays a lot of piano, and maybe he would be interested in teaching Jules." Ansel had never had a pupil, but he was willing to try. I guess I was too, and so it worked out really quite well, a unique arrangement, music and mountains as it turned out.

After I had been studying with Ansel for two years and I was fifteen, he talked my folks into letting me go on my first high trip in 1927, which was probably the greatest single event in my outdoor life because it was such a unique introductory experience.

Schagen: That was your first trip into the Sierra?

Eichorn: Yes, in the big mountains.

Schagen: And there you were Ansel's mule?

Eichorn: Not the first time. Ansel was camp master and I didn't become a mule until the cameras became heavier. This was actually just a trip for me. If I'm not mistaken, I think that the total high trip of four weeks cost eighty dollars. In those days, that was a lot of money, but nowadays it's practically nothing.

But that whetted my appetite. Ansel was so busy finding camps, getting off in the morning, and taking photographs that I don't think I saw Ansel from the time we had breakfast in the morning till campfire--most of all because he was just so active doing the things that were necessary to run the high trip.

Schagen: What did you do?

Eichorn: Actually I had had one heck of a good time. I had a hell of a good time. I can remember seeing what I thought was a small bear that turned out to be a wolverine the second day out in the Giant Forest. And I can remember Judge Clair Tappaan and Cedric Wright with his new collapsible toilet, both enjoying the comfort of a two-holer--

Schagen: Playing a duet, as it were.

Eichorn: --and, as Cedric said, with tongue in cheek, "We're playing a duet on my Straddlevarius"--which I thought was wonderful. And I can remember going over Black Rock Pass, watching Dan Tachet, the high trip chef, holding onto his horse's tail to pull him up the hill. Such events were really quite something.

There were the great Kaweahs, which I am so fond of, and from Little Five Lakes Basin, it is such a magnificent view, a great thing. The only fly in the ointment then was we had a young fellow, who, against Mr. Colby's wishes (Mr. Colby was the head of the trip in those days) tried to climb the Black Kaweah and lost his life because he didn't know enough about climbing and was on the wrong side of the mountain from the proper route.

Schagen: He was the one who was up there with his sister, wasn't he?

Eichorn: Yes, Garth Winslow. That was the first time that I realized what sort of a person Bill Horsfall was on those high trips, because he took care of the body, wrapped it in canvas, and saw that it was packed out and all that.

There were a couple of unique things about that trip. One, I remember having my first fall by stepping on gravel, on smooth glaciated rock, and zipping down between a snow field and the rock; luckily, I got sort of jammed in. Ansel was with me that particular time, very upset to see me disappear and then not disappear too far. And the other thing was to realize when we climbed the main Kaweah and came sliding down the snow bank, you should not get out of control, because one girl did, hurt her neck, and really had problems for quite some time because of her lack of control.

Then, of course, we culminated the trip--well, we didn't culminate it just because we climbed Mount Whitney, but it was an important feeling thing for me to know that in those days that was the highest peak in the United States.

Schagen: Okay, that was 1927. 1928 was the year of the Canadian trip, wasn't it, and then the Stuart Ward trip? Did you go on the Canadian trip?

Eichorn: No, I didn't. My folks thought that Canada was just a little too far. Little did they realize that once you were up in the Sierra in those days, you were just as far away as you would be in Canada. But that was neither here nor there because I didn't participate in that trip.

The Ward trip was unique in that the party was in the Palisade Basin when a huge rockslide came off the west U-notched side and made a cloud of dust that was apparently hanging over the area for several days. I missed that but I heard about it, of course, from Steve Wyckoff who was on that particular trip, and then the next year he was on the Sierra Club high trip as a pot boy. But I didn't participate in any trip in 1928.

In 1929, I went again and that was the year that part of the trip went to the northern part of Yosemite Park, and part of it went south to the Minarets and the Ritter-Banner range.

Schagen: Over Koip Pass and that area?

Eichorn: Yes, that was a great, great trip. I got to know Glen Dawson, and we made arrangements to climb together the following year.

#### Climbing on the High Trips

Schagen: It was in 1930 that you and Glen and John Olmsted did a lot of climbing. It's the first time that you were mentioned in the Sierra Club Bulletin, in the 1931 edition. But you apparently were climbing everything that particular year, everything that you could. Now was that the year that Underhill was out here?

Eichorn: No, Underhill came in 1931. In 1930, let me see, the trip started, I think, from the east side. I know that we ended up going over Bishop Pass because I remember driving out with Ansel. He was supposed to be in Yosemite, knowing that Virginia was going to be giving birth to a child sometime in August. As it turned out, he was two days late for Michael's arrival, but it was quite an interesting, wild ride in his Marmon.

Schagen: At any rate, in 1929, then, you worked up this partnership with Glen, and by 1930 you were really pretty much of a team. I don't remember John Olmsted myself; I never met him but he was apparently the third in your party.

Eichorn: He was the third in the party some of the time. Other times, we had a young fellow by the name of Walter Brem. That was a good, strong foursome. John was particularly good because he was a little older than we were and he used a little better judgment at times. We were very happy that he wore boots which we never wore; we just wore tennis shoes. Tennis shoes on steep glaciers are very awkward, to say the least. I remember coming down off of the Darwin Glacier, and if it hadn't been for John, we would not have gotten down that route. We certainly could not have done that ourselves.

1929 was just climbing odds and ends of things, and as I said, it was a very beautiful time because it was, again, new country and I was tremendously impressed with the Minarets. Bill Horsfall, I believe, was with Glen Dawson and they climbed Clyde Minaret. I just thought that was the most terrific thing! I climbed Ritter that particular day and when we got back to the campfire, we all talked about it.

Anyway, in 1930, we climbed a lot of things, and we were very strong. What we did was really use the high trip as sort of a refueling station. We hardly were ever in camp. All we did was pick up two or three more days' supplies in a knapsack and climb some mountains, and then come back to where the club had moved, and repeat the same thing until, unfortunately, the trip ended.

So that, then, made this sort of a thing. In 1931, we used the same format, and decided where we'd be climbing in relation to where the high trip was going. Underhill came out after that trip was just about finished--at Garnet Lake, I think, or one of the other lakes in the area. I'm not positive, but in any case, Underhill and I decided to climb the east face of Banner.

Schagen: By the way, I should interject here that this is Robert L.M. Underhill who is being mentioned, and he was brought out, I believe, by Francis Farquhar. Am I right?

Eichorn: Yes, it was Francis who arranged for Underhill's coming west.

Schagen: Now, he came from the East somewhere.

Eichorn: Yes, Underhill was an instructor at Harvard at the time. He had been climbing in the Alps and knew some of the new rope techniques which we did not know, and that really was one of the reasons that Francis wanted him to come out, so that we would develop more safe climbing techniques.

So we climbed the east face of Banner, and the next day we were going to have a group of the younger climbers climb and we were going to lead it. As it turned out, Hans Leschke, Junior (Helmut, really), got caught in a rockslide and was badly injured so the climb did not take place.

Eichorn: But when we continued--I say we, being Francis, Glen, and I--we met Norman Clyde, and we all went down to the Palisades together and climbed some of them. One day, when we were climbing a new peak which had not been climbed before, we got into a terrific thunder and lightning storm. We ended up finding out that lightning was something you mustn't play around with.

Schagen: So that was Thunderbolt Peak, right?

Eichorn: Yes, it was finally named Thunderbolt Peak. Francis got it on the place names at USGS [United States Geological Survey]. Very unnerving if you've never had an experience with lightning. Why, it's a great display and lots of noise, and all that, but if you're practically the lightning rod, I might say, well, it's very upsetting. I happened to be the last man off; that's why I feel so strongly about it.

Schagen: What hair you had then was standing up straight, I guess.

Eichorn: Yes, we thought it was very funny when we put our hands up and the sparks were jumping off the ends of our fingers and our hair, and so forth. We realized then that there was so much energy all around that something was not quite right, so we tried to get off, get off the ridge.

Then we went down to Whitney and decided that as a team we'd worked together enough that we could climb the east face of Whitney, if we were lucky enough. And we planned a route and, as it turned out, it was not too difficult except for one or two pitches.

Schagen: Let's see, then you were with Glen. Was Norman there?

Eichorn: Glen, Norman, and Bob Underhill.

#### Norman Clyde, Mountaineer and Man

Eichorn: Norman, I might interject, was probably the most remarkable mountaineer the Sierra Nevada has ever experienced. Knowing him, I'd say that he had complete recall of every handhold and foothold on almost any mountain that we went on--absolutely unbelievable route retention.

Of course, he was such a delightful guy beneath his rough exterior and he just didn't have much truck with anybody who was sort of a--what he called a nature-faker--or that sort of thing.

Schagen: Of course, he was called "the pack that walks like a man."

Eichorn: He certainly was.

Schagen: And of course, his pants were always falling apart, remember?

Eichorn: Yes, his pants were always falling apart because he couldn't go out and buy a pair of pants because he wanted to remain in the mountains. So he had to sew them up himself. People could not understand this; he was living in the mountains. These other people were just visiting the mountains--a big difference.

I've seen Norman under all sorts of conditions and without a doubt, I found him as a mountaineer and stalwart companion absolutely without a rival. He also was a gun enthusiast and an excellent shot.

Schagen: I remember he always used to talk about his "pistola."

Eichorn: I happen to have inherited that.

Schagen: Oh, you have it?

Eichorn: Yes, it's a lovely piece of equipment.

I think some of the stories about Norman are exaggerated. One I remember so well--that he was an excellent photographer, but again, many times he'd go in the mountains for such a long time that he would always think, "Well, I'd better have another two cameras so that if something goes wrong with one, I'll have back-ups." He invariably had what he'd call a throw-in-the-lake camera because it wasn't working properly. He was very intolerant of things that didn't work properly--upset about things that were poorly done whether he was cutting wood or any other activity.

Norman would fish generally with two dry flies and he'd catch two fish at the same time. Really very nice to watch, very beautiful.

Schagen: Now, I remember another thing about him; he was either standing or lying down. He was never sitting.

Eichorn: He was lying on his arm with one hand holding his head up. And I can remember feeding him pancakes in Dusy Basin one time, up to the point where I knew I had enough food to stop him but I really didn't think that was fair, so I'd always ask, "Well, Norman, how about another one?" And he'd say, "Well--all right." Finally we got to the point where he said, "Uh, well--well, uh, well, well, all right."

[Editor: You knew Norman Clyde longer and better than most. Could you add some further comments on him?

Eichorn: It is sometimes difficult for me to believe that Norman Clyde is no longer a part of the Sierra Nevada. He was around for what seemed an eternity and when a man of Clyde's stature departs, a boundless void can be felt by those who knew him intimately.

Our association spanned some forty-plus years. In that time, I got to know the man under a variety of conditions--some pretty wild, but none in which Clyde was not in complete control of whatever that situation was. If it was a difficult route, his "sixth sense" told him what he could or could not do. Once he made the climb, he seemed never to forget the route. Time and again in his later years, we would talk about a climb and his recall of each detail was absolute. He was that way in all that he did. In a sense, he was a perfectionist whether it concerned carrying a pack, chopping wood, or observing the feeding habits of the Sierra Bighorn. Thinking of his pack reminds me of Dave Brower's description of Norman: "The pack that walks like a man."

Norman carried a lot for several reasons. If he was going off for four to six weeks at a time, he expected to use every bit of gear that he packed for every day living and any emergencies, and since he had virtually no funds with which to buy equipment, he was continually picking up cast-off gear and food. This procedure did not lighten his pack any. For fly fishing, he carried at least two different lengths of rods and when fishing was good, he used two flies at once instead of one, for, as he said, "If they are biting, you might as well catch two as one," and he did. His axe was full length so that he could use all his strength (which was considerable) when chopping wood, and his guns, or "pistolas" as he affectionately called them, were the best he could get, for he knew the best was none too good in an emergency. Of books, again only the classics--Schiller, Goethe, Dante, the early Greeks--you name it and Norman had studied it.

I could continue on about Clyde's knowledge and abilities concerning so many things--mountain sheep and other fauna, his botanical knowledge, his selection of a "boudoir," but it really isn't necessary. Suffice it to say that he lived closer to the mountains than any other man I knew. It was as if an osmotic effect were taking place: the mountains breathing life into Norman and he reciprocating. Above all, it was the absolute integrity of the man that seemed to be the key to Clyde's greatness. Whether it was climbing a peak, noting a geological phenomenon or taking a picture--that particular trait stood out. He put it all together. --11/84]



Mountaineering and Music

Schagen: Anyway, we're though with 1931. My first high trip was in 1932. I only went on two weeks, but that first two weeks we started in Giant Forest, and that was the year when you slipped on some lichen on Moro Rock.

Eichorn: I had a very interesting flight through the air for a while; believe me, it was quite surprising.

Schagen: Had you at that time gotten acquainted with Dick Leonard and the Cragmont Climbing Club--or what year was that?

Eichorn: I was trying to remember--about 1932 in the fall, and that became a joining of people interested in rock climbing.

Schagen: Was Dick at that time a Sierra Club member?

Eichorn: No, he wasn't. He started this group called the Cragmont Climbing Club, but it wasn't Sierra Club. He had a few of his friends--Boynton Kaiser, Herb Blanks, and Elliott Sawyer--people he had known basically from Eagle Scout trips which Ansel Hall had organized to research archaeological digs, or whatever was to be done in the National Parks.

Schagen: Hall was chief naturalist, wasn't he?

Eichorn: He was the chief naturalist of Yosemite Park for quite some time. He did these other things on the side and got young people involved in really very, very interesting projects.

I was scheduled to go on the 1934 trip, but the Depression was so bad that we didn't go. Herb and I and Kaiser did some other things. In 1932 that Moro Rock slip slowed me down a little bit because after I landed--I went over the edge of an exfoliation sheeting after tripping on some lichen--it also taught all of us the lesson, particularly me, that you never untie your rope until you're finished with the climb. We untied the rope one rope-length from our cars, and because Dawson had bigger feet and was light, he got across. I had smaller feet and was heavier--I didn't get across. I also had on a new pair of gum-soled shoes which I thought were the greatest thing in the world, but it turned out that they were not. I don't know for sure if that was the problem.

In any case, I had dislocated my elbow and sprained my foot and hurt my knee, and scratched myself up pretty well, and took most of the skin off the ends of my fingers. About three days

Eichorn: later, a Sierra Club packer was going in with the mail and I decided I could ride a horse in with him. Well, riding a horse with a sprained ankle and one hand, when you have never ridden in your life, for more or less a twenty-mile ride--I'm certain I was never so uncomfortable before or since in my life.

Schagen: Now, you had to cross Elizabeth Pass and come down Roaring River, something like that, wasn't it?

Eichorn: It wasn't comfortable at all. But I caught up to the group and was given a horse to ride. I found out that my knee got worse when I rode so I led the horse for a few days. My knee cleared up and everything came out just fine. In a couple of weeks I was climbing with one arm and it didn't seem to bother me.

Schagen: Now, in all this time we've talked about nothing much but high trips. What were you doing the rest of the year?

Eichorn: Well, since the high trips were so important, I felt that those were the ones that really were the Sierra Club to me at that particular time. I was doing other things, of course. I was doing a lot of music.

Schagen: Teaching?

Eichorn: Teaching at the Community Music Center and other branches around San Francisco, Visitacion Valley, and in Chinatown--and other places.

You might say the most important part of my life wasn't really connected with Sierra Club. I just went on trips and led local rock climbs and scheduled trips with Dick Leonard and Marj Farquhar, among others. I was looking at an old schedule we made on a little yellow card, about the size of a postcard. Its title was Cragmont Climbing Club, and then all these places we were going to meet and who was the leader of the climb, et cetera--really quite a far cry from the complicated, long schedules we have nowadays for trips.

Schagen: Oh, yes, I think we were on the local walks committee at one time together, when Lewis Clark was chairman of the committee, weren't we?

Eichorn: Probably, yes.

Schagen: The interesting thing, of course, is that we've been talking about nothing but Sierra Club high trips and climbing, but there is, after all, quite a bit of other time in the year besides that one month.

Eichorn: Oh, yes, certainly.

Schagen: But I know you kept working toward that month every year, just the same as everybody looks forward to a vacation every year. Then in 1933, through climbing experience, you got back into music education with the search for Peter Starr, right?

Eichorn: I started at Cal in the fall of 1933 because of Mr. Starr's saying that he thought this was a wise thing to do and I agreed. At the time I didn't have much money, so I didn't think that attending university would be as possible as my continuing with my musical career. But as it turned out, it was a good thing to do, because I got to graduate from U.C. Berkeley in music, and received my teaching credential, taught public school music and enjoyed that until my retirement in 1973.

Schagen: So you went from music to mountains, and from mountains back to music. And now you mix the two.

Eichorn: They were really quite mixed up together all along. It wasn't one to the other so much as it was a continuing crossing over. Every chance I got, I went to the mountains, whether it was skiing or climbing. You see, I ended up enjoying the skiing as much as I did the mountaineering for a long time.

Schagen: I remember we worked on Clair Tappaan Lodge together.

Eichorn: Yes, in fact, the first Christmas and New Year's, I think in 1935, Herb Blanks and Jack Riegelhuth and I were in charge of the food. Herb was a very good cook and I had some experience because our folks were good cooks and so we were part of that sort of thing. Jack's father was a butcher. It ended up that he could cut up the meat and we could do the cooking. It worked out quite well, an interesting combination there.

We searched for Starr in 1933, of course. It was after the Sierra Club trip, but again it was Francis who asked me if I would help out on the search. Since I didn't have a regular job as such--my music work had not started and I had not gone back to Cal yet--I could do that and did. It was an unfortunate accident that Pete Starr lost his life, for he was a very remarkable person.

Schagen: Incidentally, it was mentioned last week that there's an ice-ax at LeConte Lodge in Yosemite Park, and somebody thought it was Pete Starr's. Do you know?

Eichorn: I'm pretty sure it is, although Pete Starr was not too keen about ice and snow.

Schagen: No, he was a pure rock climber.

Eichorn: Actually, purely a walker, and if he had to rock climb, he'd rock climb. But I think he did have an ax, and I think his father was the one donating it. I remember going there with his father one time and seeing it, being told that it was part of Starr's equipment.

Schagen: I remember Walter Starr, Senior, very fondly. He was a wonderful guy, and he was always very interested in whatever the editorial board of the Sierra Club Bulletin was doing. And if he had anything to share, he'd share it with the editorial board. I know somewhere in my bookcase are his reminiscences of being up in the Yukon and the Klondike. You probably have a copy of it too.

Eichorn: Yes, yes--fascinating, just fascinating.

Schagen: So then after you found Starr, you went back to Cal. When did you graduate?

Eichorn: 1937. I spent an extra year getting extra degrees. It worked out remarkably well, in spite of the fact that I had a lot of distraction, partly commuting to San Francisco was one of them. I finally did live in Berkeley for a while. Then I married, and while that wasn't particularly difficult, it didn't allow me to do much studying. I did not do as well at Cal as I would have liked--part, sometimes, of a beginning understanding of "real" life. Part of the contradiction was the fact that I'd had much practical experience already, where the Cal music department of that time was extremely theoretical. There were eight-measure and sixteen-measure exercises, and there were so many students in that class that the instructors felt they had to grade on miniscule technical matters having little to do with the creative--which, naturally, my having studied with Ansel made more important and still is. Thus, it was difficult.

Now, the choral thing--when I was one of the madrigal singers, and when I was student director of the Cal Glee Club, things like that, why, that was fun, and it was much more leading into real musical activity.

#### Northwest Climbs, Rockies, Ice, Local Climbs

Eichorn: I don't know exactly what happened in 1934 except--oh, I know, I went to the Northwest and climbed Mount Rainer, Mount Shuksan, and then crossed over to the Tetons. I had a mind-boggling experience

Eichorr: there. I had a period in my life where I--my mother had this too--where I could predict what was going to happen before anybody else knew about it. It was pretty disturbing because it was peculiarly strong and also accurate.

I remember the first time. We had a letter of introduction to Fryxell, the ranger-naturalist at Teton National Park. We went to present our credentials and inquire about climbing, et cetera. The associate ranger said Fryxell was away. I said, "Yes, I know, he's out on a search party looking for two men, but they're dead." Well, you can imagine my just saying that, flat out. [snaps fingers]

Earlier, I remember, as Herb Blanks and I were arriving, to see those great mountains rising out of the flat area, such a tremendous thing, I said, "There's something wrong here." He had said, "What are you talking about--?" Well, I didn't know, I had no idea.

Anyway, the unease continued for a good part of that summer. Finally I was able to put it out of my mind, or it left, or whatever. Yet I had the same experience the following year on the Waddington Expedition. I was walking along on the glacier. I was looking for that extra man, and I couldn't understand why I was doing this. It became sort of a joke, until that night when we made the camp at Icefall Point. We saw a marker about half a mile away from camp. After dinner, (the twilights were so long), we just took a walk up there and found this cairn with some skis at the top of it. We searched around and found a little brass cylinder and pulled it out. It said Alex Dalgler, killed on Waddington. It was exactly a year to the day from my earlier experience. You know, I don't know if that means anything except it was sort of with me, troubling me.

My mother had such notions after my dad passed away. She was living in a big house alone. I'd come up from the Peninsula to order music sometimes and I wouldn't have a regular schedule. And the next time I'd come up, I'd give her a call, not having done so on the previous occasion. And she'd say, "How come when you were here at 4 o'clock last Wednesday, you didn't call me?" This was just unbelievable. Any time when she really set her mind to it, she knew when I was supposed to be in town and called. I had no idea I was so close to my mother, or she so close to me.

Schagen: Well, anyway, here we are in the middle of the 1930s--close to the end, and you're back teaching. When did you join the American Alpine Club?

Eichorn: A group of us were asked by Francis Farquhar to be nominated for membership in the American Alpine Club. I think it was 1933. Anyway, Francis being such a generous person got us each an ice-ax from Switzerland--I can't remember the name--

Schagen: It was a Bhend, wasn't it? B-h-e-n-d, something like that.

Eichorn: It was similar to that. Benner or Aschenbrenner.

Schagen: Oh, Peter Aschenbrenner. No, wait a minute, Aschenbrenner's in Austria, he's up above Kufstein.

Eichorn: I'm not positive but I think it was a very nice gesture. I think he did it because he wanted to get Marj an ice-ax. Francis really, being a Sierra Club member and not having climbed much ice and snow mountains--why he got me a ladies' ax or a very light ax and Marj an ax, and well, maybe two others. They were fine for digging hip holes, problems like that. They were too light for any sort of real work. So when I got to know a little more, I got the proper ax--a Simond D, which had been recommended by Rebuffet. I used it much more, properly, as it were.

Basically, we avoided, really, high angle ice climbing for the simple reason that we didn't know anything about it. Even on the Waddington Expedition, where I didn't know very much, I got into doing some of the leading, knowing perfectly well I was a greenhorn, I really was.

So then I got interested in the Sierra Club rock climbing section and did a lot of leading--Mount Tamalpais, you name it. Wherever we went.

Schagen: Cragmont, Indian Rock, Hunter's Hill. Out here at Larsen Hill and Miraloma, and all of those places, sure, all the local places.

Eichorn: Yes, yes. I think some of the nicest climbing was down the coast, the Pacifica area, Devil's Slide, where you can't climb any longer because it attracts too many ignorant and inexperienced people.

#### Cathedral Spires, Cross Country Skiing

Eichorn: And in 1934, we got to where we decided we could climb the Cathedral Spires. First, we had unbelievably poor equipment. We had sixty penny spikes which we tied on rope slings to make safeguards and realized that was impossible. So when we were ready to get some proper hardware from Sporthaus Schuster and started practicing with that, why we finally made the climb.

Schagen: Now the higher spire, that was with Marj Farquhar and I've forgotten who else was in the party.

Eichorn: On the first ascent, it was Bestor Robinson, Dick Leonard and me. But Marj was taking photographs and that's where that film I wanted to bring over tonight is; I'll have to get it from her. The first support party was--I'm not sure whether Francis was in it, and Marj and Helen LeConte, and Doris Leonard. I don't think that Florence Robinson was--she was not that much of a hiker and she had younger children to take care of. She made it to the Valley but she didn't go to the start of the climb. Those were basically the people who were watching us and cheering us on and all that sort of thing. That was one of the nice things about some of those climbs; you could actually lie at the base and watch the climb almost step by step.

One of my memorable skiing experiences was skiing across Tioga Pass. I think it was the winter of 1935. That attempt on Mount Lyell which caused a lot of flak among the peak grabbers resulted in its being climbed the following year. But gee, to go skiing around the Yosemite Valley, Tuolumne Meadows, and of course up toward Lyell.

Camping out in those years wasn't as much fun as it can be now. We didn't have really good sleeping bags--I think we had kapok bags or something like that. I remember I was in a single bag with Stewart Kimball at one time. I was most uncomfortable because every time I wanted to turn, we had to flip over the whole thing. That was really uncomfortable--the things we did, survived, and got away with!

But in the meantime, I remember--I don't know the date of this, maybe much, much later--the Sierra Club moved several times and when they were established at 1050 Mills Tower, the library had to be reorganized. Al Weiler was the head of the library committee and I worked on it. The library had extra copies of Appalachia, and early Sierra Club records dating before the fire and earthquake, so I have some of those copies which I cherish now.

#### Will Colby

Eichorn: I think some of the extras were so wonderful, such as knowing people like Will Colby really very well. He was interested in growing some wine and other grapes. I had a friend who was the discoverer of Jade Beach and found the first jade on the coast

Eichorn: of California, Sam Parelee. He had given me some grape cuttings which were cool weather grapes and when Will heard that I had some, I had to give him some. After his death, in fact, just a few years ago, I went back to the old place and the grape vines are doing great, but there's nobody there to take care of them.

Schagen: Nobody can prune them or anything. Ah, that's too bad.

Eichorn: He enjoyed them tremendously. I can remember going on certain walks with him after he retired from leading the high trips. He was then on the California State Park Commission in charge of acquiring land and related projects. Ansel and a few of us would go to see potential park lands. That was really a wonderful happening.

Colby was not the best mountaineer. He really enjoyed fishing and walking. Somehow or other, he didn't have that sense of how to--I don't know exactly how you say it. Some people can step on a rock and then step on a rock so that it will never roll over, and other people will step on it and it rolls every time.

Schagen: Yes, I know how that is. Sure.

Eichorn: He would never step on a large rock without my wondering, because time and again when we climbed Lyell, he would knock rocks loose. I felt, gee, he should lead from the rear. But a more delightful person, what a wonderful man, just tremendous.

Schagen: I remember one time when Vivian and I were down there in that area, I thought, "Gee, I wonder if we can find where Mr. Colby lives." Sure enough, we found him. He was very hospitable and so forth, and the first thing he asked me was "Which way is north?" I did figure it out; it was not where it looked as though it should be, but it was off that way--and I was right. That was apparently one of his little tricks. Do you know where you are, in other words.

Eichorn: Then I gradually got into--I think it was in 1936 I was mountaineering leader for the Sierra Club high trip and subsequent seasons as well. We went to Colorado that year. One trip which we had there was really delightful. We went up to a little railroad that goes up to the silver--

Schagen: Durango to Silverton?

Eichorn: Yes, we actually started at Durango. That was a new experience for me, because I had never seen sort of big stuff that way easy-going. I enjoyed it very much in a different sort of way.



Activities in the Loma Prieta Chapter and on the Board of Directors

Eichorn: I remained interested in the Sierra Club when I moved to Redwood City, the Loma Prieta Chapter. The Loma Prieta Chapter rock climbing section was a very active one. I enjoyed the local climbs, and then in the summertime we'd go, sometimes for a week at a time, anywhere there happened to be a wonderful place to go.

Going back to the American Alpine Club, I was a member, I think from 1933-37. Then some of us dropped out because we felt so strongly that it was an eastern organization and there was no representation from the West. We felt that there was no point in simply paying dues, being token members. What good was that? I don't know how many dropped out, but I did.

I rejoined in 1947 and been a member ever since. Yet it's a totally different sort of thing. We actually have trips around here and representation, and we do have an input into the activities of the AAC. It's a much different situation from what it used to be.

Schagen: I remember Raffi Bedayn was fairly active in the western branch, or whatever it's called.

Eichorn: Yes, the Sierra Nevada section.

Schagen: He was a very active guy in a great many ways. Seems to me he was a very good instigator.

Eichorn: He certainly was. Raffi was probably one of the most subtle workers, a behind-the-scene sort of person. He accomplished more in a quiet way than almost anybody I knew, in the Sierra Club as well as the AAC. Excellent climber. I enjoyed Raffi tremendously. Of course, he had a cabin up there at Echo Lake. I guess he still has it--we saw one another off and on up there as well.

Then I became interested in the actual workings of the Loma Prieta Chapter. I don't remember when I was chairman of the Loma Prieta Chapter itself. I think it was 1959 or something like that. Then I was on the Sierra Club board for two terms, 1961-1967. Basically, I became a life member in 1933. I thought I'd become a life member earlier but I'm not certain.

Schagen: I remember Lewis Clark got his life membership when it only cost fifty dollars. He figured he got a tremendous bargain, but he certainly put a lot into it besides that. I know I thought I got a bargain when I used part of my army mustering-out pay. I only had to pay a hundred dollars for mine.

Eichorn: Well, I saved some of my teaching money when I was teaching for fifty cents a lesson. And that was my fifty dollars. So that must have been starting, I guess, about 1930. I might very well have been a life member in 1931. It doesn't matter particularly. I know I've been a member of the Sierra Club since 1927.

Schagen: Do you still have your life membership card signed by Colby?

Eichorn: Yes.

Schagen: I know Lewis still has his, and I think he had it encased in plastic. I've got one with Richard Leonard's signature; that's almost as good.

Aside from the chapter work and projects for the main club like being the mountaineering leader on summer outings, what other committees have you been on? Were you ever on the winter sports committee, or the lodge committee, or any of those others? The outing committee?

Eichorn: No, I don't think I was on any of those committees in particular. I guess I was on the winter sport committee but it was quite a while ago and I don't remember exactly. I was connected with all of the people involved so it could very well have been. Bestor, Lewis, and Einar Nilsson--those people were on winter sports. I remember doing some of the tests. In those days, you had different tests for different classes--third class, and a fourth class test--all that. I still have some of those tags, which are fun.

[Editor: How did you happen to become a member of the Sierra Club Board of Directors?

Eichorn: Becoming a member of the Sierra Club Board of Directors happened as a result of a number of previous activities as a club member. I was known as rock climber and mountaineer, a mountain leader with the high trips, and one who had had a good deal to do with the Walter Starr incident.

I also was, at one time, chairman of the Loma Prieta Chapter and was instrumental in separating the Los Padres Chapter from the Loma Prieta Chapter. The result was that I was urged to run for the board and was subsequently elected. I knew many of those on the board intimately, and felt that I could contribute to the growing force for the club.

Editor: You served on the board from 1961-1967 during some turbulent times. What was it like?

Eichorn: The club was growing so fast and the politics on the board was a quality that I was neither prepared for nor inclined to deal with. Dave Brower was really coming into his own and having known him as a rock climber and having been with him on our historic and wonderful Mount Waddington expedition made it difficult for me to make the necessary "hard" decisions when I found myself opposed to his views.

Editor: Do you recall your point of view on the Diablo Canyon controversy?

Eichorn: At the time Diablo Canyon became an issue for the Sierra Club Board, not too much was known about the multiple dangers of nuclear energy plants and where and how they were to be sited. The idea that they had to be put Some Place in the area was generally accepted, but not by Dave Brower. Most of us who had seen the area knew it was a beautiful canyon with great oaks and that the ocean fronting the canyon was beautiful, but it was not monumental in most of our eyes.

When we got down to the nitty-gritty of what should be our stance, the "scientific" members favored the area for a plant, but the "idealists"--Brower, Adams, Wayburn, and others I do not remember, opposed it. The controversy upset me greatly and I anguished accordingly over what was the best attitude to adopt. In the end, I voted in favor of the site, for I felt Dave was too idealistic in his opposition to the nuclear power plant's being built.

Since that time, however, I have changed my viewpoint 180 degrees and continue to oppose any and all nuclear power plant construction/operation.--11/84]

#### National Park Rescue Service

Eichorn: I think that there were a couple of items related to the Sierra Club which I haven't mentioned which might be of interest. One was that with the increase in use of the national parks, there were certain parks that were in need of specialized help. Yosemite was one of those because if anybody got caught on a cliff, most of the time the rescue crew would have to go up, around, and then come down and drop ropes or something like that, whereas with the new mountain climbing techniques, why you could start at the bottom of the Valley and most of the time you can get up almost any place.

Eichorn: So Francis was asked by Lawrence Merriam, who at that time was superintendent of Yosemite National Park, if he would recommend people to do some of the rescue training work. Dick Leonard also was in on that. Anyway, as it happened, I was asked if I would have the time to do that.

I was teaching at that time, teaching in Lindsay, California, so that was just fine. I had the summer free. I was a ninety-day wonder. At the request of the Sierra Club, really Francis Farquhar, I set up the rescue techniques. Not, of course, during regular time. All this sort of stuff had to be done after hours. You can imagine how enthusiastic some of these old timers were when a young whipper snapper told them how to climb steep walls. But it has developed into a very efficient rescue unit now. Excellent people are participating with proper equipment.

Schagen: Each group trains its own successors, then?

Eichorn: I believe so. That's what they plan to do. They have an on-going rescue group.

Schagen: This is only in Yosemite, or did any of the other parks--

Eichorn: This thing went to the other parks as well. McKinley has it, among others. At that time it was started in Yosemite because more people were getting hung up there--cutting a trail and thinking they could get down to the Valley by a shortcut.

Schagen: Besides that, there was the Merriam-Farquhar combination which got things going.

Eichorn: Yes. I remember our first rescue was on a slope where you're on the face of Half Dome. A couple of youngsters had climbed up there and gotten to the point where they suddenly realized that they were in trouble and yelled for help. We got them down. That was, I think, the first time that the rangers realized that with the proper techniques you could do things that they couldn't possibly do.

Schagen: Were you in Yosemite Park at the time or did you go up from Lindsay?

Eichorn: No, as I said, I was a ninety-day wonder. I had instructions; I was actually a ranger.

Schagen: Oh, I see--you were employed there. You had a ninety-day appointment.

Eichorn: Well, actually, during my regular tour of duty, I was "information" up at Happy Isles, or whatever happened to be needed. Sometimes I was even down at Arch Rock, checking people in. That was strange--all this other work was done after hours, or on my day off, or something like that. I did it for two years. By the time two summers had passed, we had a pretty good crew that really climbed both quickly and safely.

Most of the time what happened was there were two or three younger rangers who really enjoyed the training. There's no question about it, it's a young man's sport. People do it in later life to a certain extent, but there's nothing like having the recuperative energy of a youngster. It's so necessary, essential, so many times.

#### Francis Farquhar

Eichorn: In a sense, Francis Farquhar played a large part in my activities in the Sierra Club. It was just a nice, a great relationship, I should say, because later on, when Francis became blind, I'd go over and talk with him, take him for a walk. He was a most delightful gentleman, just marvelous and a great experience. I received the Francis Farquhar Mountaineering Award some time ago, maybe ten, fifteen years ago. It was a great honor to receive it. The Loma Prieta Chapter honored Francis, also--something to commemorate his fifty years of service in the Sierra Club.

[Editor: Could you add to your comments on Francis Farquhar?

Eichorn: Francis Farquhar was a delightful mountain companion who respected the different climbing abilities of those with whom he shared the climbing adventure. For example, one time in ascending the Middle Palisade, he insisted on my leading for he felt I could do it more safely.

Another instance was when he invited Dr. James Conant, who was then president of Harvard University, to come west to climb the North Palisade. Francis could have done the leading, but again, he asked me to lead. And on the first ascent of the east face of Mount Whitney, he took the mountaineer's route instead of partaking in the east face climb, thereby sacrificing a first ascent.

This considered, unselfish attitude was Francis; he loved the mountains and his mountaineering companions and he had great respect for both.--11/84]

Ansel Adams: Mountaineer, Photographer, Music Teacher

[Editor: You knew Ansel Adams for many years, as his mountaineering companion, photography "mule" and piano student. Can you share some recollections of him?

Eichorn: Ansel was not interested in climbing mountains for climbing's sake. He first was aware of the many intricate facets which make up the whole mountain experience, and to create that experience, he was willing and able to ramble around the Sierra with a large sense of sureness--mountaineering savvy, so to say. He seldom led trips as a regular exercise but there were times when he chose to. I remember one in particular--to the top of Mount Whitney in 1927 from Crabtree Meadows--which started off after dinner so that those in the party could see the moon rise from the top. And this was typical of Ansel; to do the special thing was always in his mind so that whatever mountain experience took place became indelibly imprinted in the minds and senses of those sharing the occasion with him.

As a photographer on the high trips, Ansel was relentless. Being camp master as well, he would be off scouting for a new campsite, and not incidentally photographing, until the light went flat. Then later in the day, it was "exploring" for more pictures. Ansel was--even into his last days--a sixteen-hour a day person.

Editor: How do you recall Ansel as a music teacher?

Eichorn: Ansel was a purist. He believed that performing beautifully meant you first must be playing great classical music and you also must have a concept of that beauty before you performed it--and maintain it during the time you perform--in other words, a total concept. He stressed tone; tone, tone and shading, no matter how architecturally severe the music was.

As a result, Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and Scriabin were whom I became acquainted and finally, intimate with, suffering few technical studies to dampen my ardor for performing great classical music. I worked very hard while studying with Ansel since he set such a high standard of excellence for himself. In the four years from age thirteen to seventeen, studying the piano with Ansel was the most important happening in my life. In looking back at a lesson notebook, written in Ansel's special handwriting style, he stressed "tone," "complete technical control," and about developing an "artistic conscience"--plus the ubiquitous "shading."

Eichorn: Ansel was already a giant when I first knew him in 1925. At that time, my folks were looking for a piano teacher for me and, as luck would have it, our next door neighbor, Mr. Harry Saville, worked in the same building with Ansel's father, Charles Adams.

This led to my first meeting with Mr. Adams, as I called him, and hearing his playing of the piano. Thus from thirteen on, I was completely awed by his interpretation of music. It was mind-boggling. This was the beginning of a wonderful relationship that lasted until Ansel's death on April 22, 1984.

His sense of humor was not only boundless, it was endless. I remember so well our sitting down together and "improvising." We did not have any structure or harmonic scheme, but we innately sensed what should, must and did happen. At times, the result was extraordinary and I later realized he had stimulated my creativity so much that, together, we had originated something truly unique, not to mention exciting.

Of course, Ansel had also this uncanny ability to create the mood before he snapped the shutter. This was only one of the factors contributing to his marvelous photography. He knew what he wanted before he ever clicked the shutter.

In 1927, Ansel introduced me to the Sierra Club and the annual High Trip, as it was then called. A glorious month starting at Giant Forest, making a gradual loop back into Giant Forest. Ansel was the "camp master," a duty which entailed his starting out on a moving day at 4:30 a.m. and locating a suitable campsite around eight to twelve miles ahead of the last camp. This had to be done so that the two hundred odd campers (well, not really so odd) plus commissary and about fifteen to twenty packers had a site large enough to accommodate the whole party. Of course, Ansel had a hand in other facets of the trip. He not only photographed in the morning and afternoon light, but he wrote and directed plays written with tongue-in-cheek and oh! so humorous. One of the plays was titled "Trudgin' Women," a most hilarious bit of spoof.

As a mountaineer, Adams was quite capable, very wiry, agile, with great endurance and in his heyday could, and many times did, climb the regular routes on the great Sierra peaks. He generally had a purpose for climbing a peak different from most of us. One incident I remember quite clearly: he announced that when the group reached Crabtree Meadows at the base of Mount Whitney, he would lead all who wished to leave after dinner to climb Mount Whitney. He knew that that night, there was to be a partial moon in the skies, so he hustled us all to the top and--at one point--took his famous "Moon and Day and Keeler's Needles" shot.  
--11/84]

The Sierra Club and Other Conservation Organizations Today

Eichorn: Working on elections has also become a part of Sierra Club activity.

Schagen: Yes, the thing that I kind of deplore now is some of the real hard-sell that we're getting.

Eichorn: Politics costs a tremendous amount of money and the issues that were part of the campaign strategies, as they call them, to my mind are just not the way we should be running candidates for office or confronting issues. Some other approach should be developed.

I have belonged to the Wilderness Society and other groups related to Sierra Club activities. I plan to leave part of my estate to the Sierra Club, and I also feel strongly about the Nature Conservancy and the Wilderness Society because the Nature Conservancy is doing its projects in a different and very effective way, also. It is actually buying land which is a difficult thing to do, but they're accomplishing it. Of course, the Sempervirens group is marvelous. I just think that what Tony Look has done in a fifteen, twenty-year period is unbelievable.

Schagen: It's mostly down the Peninsula, isn't it, the group?

Eichorn: Yes, it is--Big Basin. A tremendous amount of beautiful, beautiful country has been saved from the loggers.

Schagen: Russell Varian was pretty influential in that; how about Dorothy Varian, is she still alive?

Eichorn: She's still quite active, yes. I remember I was very interested in Castle Rock and that was really what got the ball rolling. Before Russ's death, we talked quite a bit about the procuring project and Dick Leonard did the research on the legal aspects. It was a low-key thing, but Russ was very interested in that. As it turned out, it was too bad he passed away before he saw the consummation of it. Dorothy has done a marvelous job; she and the Leonards have worked together very closely. As I said before, Tony Look's leadership in acquiring the land was just marvelous.

Sometimes I think that we are blessed having more people and more members in the Sierra Club. I'm not sure. I don't believe it's a blessing at this stage of the game now. I've lost complete touch with the directors and their meetings, et cetera.



Schagen: Yes, I know. I go to the annual dinner every year, and I see people then I don't see the rest of the year. Now that Harriet Parsons has moved away--she was my neighbor, you know, a block away--whom do I see in the Sierra Club? I get to a committee meeting every now and then and I'm on the history committee, seeing some of those people.

Eichorn: I'm just at the last part of my term on the executive committee of the San Mateo County group of the Sierra Club, a branch of the Loma Prieta Chapter. That's my area and I've been on and off of that committee ever since I've been there, except when I was on the Loma Prieta Chapter staff itself. We've had some really interesting things happening, and we've worked diligently. We had a good core group and at times it's been big enough so that you really can get something done.

For instance, on Proposition "O" in Redwood City: we formed a group that was basically a Sierra Club bunch, and proceeded to harangue the city council to the point where Mobil Oil has to come up now with a new plan on how to develop. And that's a big thing--a difference of 4,300 houses or so and all that such a number implies. Unfortunately, it seems it's always an on-going unequal battle. There's no question about it that while environmentalists are much more respected than they used to be, it's still a tremendous, probably unresolvable, struggle.

Schagen: It's still tough, particularly when there are people strongly entrenched in the national government who believe that everything should be sacrificed to and exploited for business aggrandisement. It's still a fight.

Eichorn: We've reached a new plateau of arrogance, I think, on this subject. Was it New Mexico where a company was going in for exploration drilling? It leased some land but didn't have permission--

Schagen: Yes, they didn't have permission to cross.

Eichorn: That sort of thing really gets to me. Heavens, if we did that as private citizens--pow!

#### Mountain Travel

Schagen: Anyway, that gets us away from the mountains. What about Mountain Travel? I know you were with them for a while.

Eichorn: Well, after my back trouble--

Schagen: When did you have your operation, or operations?

Eichorn: 1977, I guess. Until then I had made quite a number of trips for them. I've led trips to Africa and those trips to Kilimanjaro and Everest base camp a couple of times. I led a spring trip also, which was really very nice except I didn't realize the Nepalese burn off the grass in the springtime, so you can't see the mountains very well after nine o'clock in the morning. This was unfortunate; the flowers were great.

I lead a trip to Kashmir. Anyway, Mountain Travel was an interesting experience. It obviously was a success because basically we had the right attitude, and we planned carefully, completely, and correctly.

Leo Lebon is a very, very capable organizer and businessman. Al Steck is a great guy, he's marvelous, just a person who would enjoy that sort of job, although not as business-oriented as Leo.

The trips were just a great experience because you'd go to different areas and see different parts of the land. Of course, I always wanted to climb Everest. I had an opportunity--I don't know if you ever knew, about 1930-31 when I was nineteen--there was an expedition being organized, and I was asked to go, but then the Depression came along. It was in full swing, and the trip never got off the ground. But at that time I had taken every possible book I could get out of the Sierra Club library concerning these expeditions. I really went through that library quite thoroughly. I read most all the things in the early 1930s; it was 1927 when I first was really interested. Everest has such a drawing because it's such a big thing. Not only that, but the country--have you ever been to Nepal?

Schagen: No, I never have.

Eichorn: You should try to go some time. It's on a very, very remarkable scale. You just can't imagine such big stuff.

Schagen: I've seen slides that are almost unbelievable.

Eichorn: I have a picture that I took from Kalapatar. You know Yosemite Valley here, the floor is 4,000 and Half Dome is 9,000. We were on Kalapatar up at 18,000; Everest was 10,000 feet higher. You know, it just looked like you were looking right across.

We were very fortunate that the weather was good, and we got a chance to get pictures of it on this particular trip. We were walking for fifteen days, averaging ten miles a day, up and down three, four, five thousand feet every day. You begin to realize

Eichorn: what some of these early explorers went through to map this country and see some of it. Really I think of the first Everest expeditions with the wool trousers and all sorts of things that were just really--

Schagen: Not adapted for that kind of weather or country. But then again, you know, the natives up there, from what I've seen of Sherpa porters, don't have an awful lot of adequate equipment either.

Eichorn: They don't. They're getting better. On the first trips that I led, those people would be huddled under the thinnest of blankets, all together to keep the body heat, most of the time barefoot. With the thinnest of clothing. At most shorts, one shirt, and they'd be perspiring, carrying these tremendously heavy loads, and they'd cool off at four o'clock in the afternoon. It's no wonder that five percent of the population had tuberculosis. But gee, take them over a snow pass, and if it wasn't too far, they'd all walk barefoot. They didn't think a thing of it--so surefooted and so strong.

On one expedition, we had a gentleman who slipped on a clay trail and fractured his right ankle. He just slipped, doubled under--I was right behind him, I saw this happen--when he sat down you could just hear this thing go pop. What to do? We were half way to the base camp, his wife was along, and he didn't want to go back. So the doctor, who happened to be a very practical sort of person, taped him up and said, "Well, how about we'll carry him for a couple or three days, until that thing's not so painful." And believe it or not--

Schagen: Make a sort of a walking cast?

Eichorn: Not only that, but the porters carried him on these narrow trails. One good thing was that he was very light, weighed about one hundred thirty pounds. He was carried tump line, a little piece of board for a seat, and he sort of sat behind the fellow that was carrying him, and they'd trade him off. Every half an hour or so, somebody else would take him. No problems, they just had fun laughing about it, thinking it was great fun. It was marvelous. And that gentleman, by the time we got back to Katmandu, was walking. Just amazing, astonishing.

The same doctor, Dr. Norman Benner, attended me when I suddenly collapsed in Alaska where we were climbing Mount Logan. We were camped at 18,000 feet, and I had had a strep infection in February, and this was June, and it hadn't cleared up completely. I didn't know that. So, since the weather had been good we were backpacking twelve hours a day up toward the mountain (again, there are pretty big mountains in Alaska). I

Eichorn: suddenly collapsed and was unconscious for three days--at 18,000 feet! Fortunately, Nort had penicillin and injected me with probably about 100,000 units. On the third day, I awakened with this cold hand on my fanny, wondering what that was all about. A little bit unusual. I was sort of weak, but in the meantime, four of the party had climbed the highest peak of Mount Logan and come down, waiting for me to wake up, if I was going to, which I suddenly did. I had something to eat, put on a fifty pound pack, and walked out. I was really amazed to think that I was unconscious all that time.

#### Retirement and Family

Schagen: What are you doing now? You're still teaching, with the school system?

Eichorn: No, I'm retired from the school system. I have been doing some private teaching which is fun from the point of picking and choosing pupils. And I have time to work in my fruit orchard and vegetable garden, concerts, new friends and old, and of late, have been exploring, first in the Southwest and later in Scandinavia. More travel plans are ahead.

Schagen: What about your kids? Are they Sierra Club people? I remember Julia, who used to go on these clean-up trips--

Eichorn: The twins and Julia were on the first clean-up trip we had in the Shadow Lake area, and Peter is also a Sierra Club member. He's quite interested in fishing and outdoors, used to be an excellent climber, but is now a contractor in Monterey county and building his own home also on forty acres for his wife and small son. Julia was also an excellent climber, but she's not interested any longer. She belongs to the Sierra Club and is so interested that she intends to marry a fellow chapter member where she lives in the Los Angeles area. She is an attorney for the National Labor Relations Board at present, relishing job, new home, garden, hiking and a good life. David, my oldest son, is also very much out-of-doors. He teaches at Berkeley High and also classes in bee-keeping at Contra Costa and Merritt Colleges. He is into everything somehow--a very active sort of person. Trudy, the oldest girl, is a gemologist and lives in Portola Valley, also raising and hybridizing orchids and begonias.

One of the twins, John is building his own home on ten acres in the countryside near Grass Valley, while the other, Ike, is down near El Cajon, on a small farm, San Diego County. His business is heavy crane operations. He's another outdoor guy, as it happens.

Schagen: Every one of them is really an outdoor type. They come by it naturally.

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

Nina Eloesser

TALES OF HIGH TRIPS IN THE TWENTIES

An Interview Conducted By  
Ann Lage  
1984

Sierra Club History Committee  
1985

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

The interview with Nina Eloesser was planned following a program at the Sierra Club's Colby Library, where longtime club members gathered to share reminiscences of the club's prominent early leader, William E. Colby. Mrs. Eloesser delighted this gathering with her vivid recollections of early high trips led by Colby, and plans were made to preserve her memories in an oral history interview.

The interview was conducted in Mrs. Eloesser's home in San Francisco on February 2, 1984. Also present was her daughter, Nina, who for years has been active in club and Bay Chapter affairs.

Mrs. Eloesser, at age ninety-three, displayed a remarkable recall of events and people in her early life, aided by her photo albums and logs of her trips with the club. She tells of her early interest in hiking, developed on walking trips in England, Scotland, and Ireland in the early years of the century. She recalls her work as secretary to Herbert Hoover during his World War I service with the Commission for Relief in Belgium. Her recollections of Sierra Club high trips in the 1920s are similarly choice and revealing, giving humorous and lively anecdotes about leaders, companions, and events on the trail in the Sierra and in Glacier National Park. Her interview is a valuable addition to the history committee's collection of early high trip lore.

Ann Lage  
Interviewer/Cochair  
Sierra Club History Committee

May 20, 1985



## I EARLY LIFE

[Date of Interview: 2 February 1984]##

Calcutta and England

Lage: I want to start with a little bit of background about you--where you were born, when you were born, if you don't mind.

Eloesser: I don't mind at all.

Lage: Do you want to start now and tell me where you were born and when?

Eloesser: I was born at Calcutta, India, in 1890, in the middle of a very hot August. It was so hot that they couldn't put me down in a crib and so my first cradle was one of my father's silk handkerchiefs hung up by the four corners. That was where I slept. I was a tiny baby.

Lage: And what was your family doing in India?

Eloesser: My father was a merchant there. He dealt in hides and skins. Later, when Ford began building his little cars, Indian kid was enormously used. It was used at first for women's high buttoned shoes and long opera gloves. It's a very soft kid. When Ford began building his little cars, all the cars were upholstered in Indian kid. We sent millions of skins from India to America for the upholstering of the first Ford cars.

Lage: Was your father British?

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 30.

Eloesser: Yes.

Lage: And how did you come to this country?

Eloesser: Well, then I came back to England to school. I was at boarding school, and at that time my father died. Mother was not in good health, so I stayed at home.

You asked once why I liked to walk, but in the old days there were no cars and there were also no tour buses. The only thing that we had at all was a thing called the French char-a-banc. We call it a charabanc. It was a sort of a bus with two parallel seats, one on each side, and the coachman up on the box. They would drive about to show you things, but if you came to a tall hill you had to get out and help push. So it wasn't very helpful. That's how they used to take us to school from the railroad train.

Lage: This was in England?

Eloesser: In England. A boarding school. And we always had to get out and push up the Farnham hill.

But if you didn't walk, you didn't see anything because you sat, always, facing each other in these two long benches. If you wanted to see you had to sort of look that way [over your shoulder]. And it was awful.

#### Walking Trips in the British Isles

Eloesser: We would spend holidays up in Scotland at a place called Newtonmore. The next little town is Kingussie. There was quite a sizable "mountain," they called it. We wouldn't think much of it, but it was about six or seven thousand feet up, and it was called Craig Dhu, which meant the "black mountain." I used to walk by myself, because mother couldn't. I walked all over that country.

Balmoral, the Queen's country home, was near there. The people in the boarding house were always quite horrified that I was allowed to walk so much alone. But wherever we were we walked. Later I walked with a cousin. We walked from Fort William, which is the corner where Scotland meets England, all along the south edge of Scotland to a place called Mallaig, where the big herring fishery is.

Daughter: Tell about being stoned up there, Mama.

Eloesser: Oh no, that was in Ireland, darling. That was another time. We didn't walk so much there. We stayed in Ireland one summer. My



Eloesser: sister-in-law--my brother was married then--and we had been walking along to look at an old ruined castle up on the cliff. And while we were going along there it rained. It rained all the time. I had my big black umbrella up, fortunately, because all of a sudden something thumped on the umbrella. It turned out that the people were trying to stone us because we were, they said, American. There was a crazy woman there who had been refused admittance at Ellis Island. So anybody who wasn't Irish was American and got thrown out. I reported that to the police, and they said, "Oh, that's Nora Leidner. She's oot [imitating accent] again?" [laughter] That was all we had from that.

So that was in Ireland. But going back to Scotland, we walked into Mallaig, and we took the little steamer across to Skye. But, you see, always walking. It took us nearly five days to walk from Fort William to Mallaig. And we stayed in a little place just short called Arisaig. We were lodgers of the station master's wife. She liked us very much. In those days if your skirts were nine inches above the ground you had very short skirts. She'd look at our feet, and they would get muddy. And one day she came in. She said, "I've put your 'tackety shoon' [imitating accent] in the oven to get them dry." Tackety: I had cleats in them, you know, for walking.

Well, then the war came along.

Lage: Let me ask you, was that unusual, for young women to walk alone like that?

Eloesser: Yes. It was quite unusual. Mother couldn't keep me back. She kept saying, "I don't know how I got hold of you, because I don't know how you do so many things."

#### Wartime Relief Work with Herbert Hoover

Eloesser: Then the war came along. I worked for Mr. Hoover. He sent me to New York finally.

Lage: How did you get that kind of work?

Eloesser: That job? Before the commission, when war broke out and the Germans invaded Belgium, they told everybody in that end of Europe that the women and children should get out. They let the men out one way, and they sent the women and children out by ship to England. When they arrived they had no one to receive them. They had nowhere to go. And Mr. Hoover and Mr. Rickard and various

Eloesser: wealthy Americans in London opened a big committee called the American Committee in the ballroom of the Savoy Hotel. It was advertised in the papers, because there was no radio then, or very little. They all came streaming in, nearly all American. We found them lodging and ultimately we found their husbands.

My job was to write, because I speak French and German, or did in those days. Because they could only take with them what they could carry, so all the travelling great big wardrobe trunks that you used in those days were floating around Europe without an owner. So I had to write letters in German to the German consul in France, and I had to write them in French to the other places. And finally the luggage arrived, and we got it sorted out.

Then I used to go to the American Embassy and say so-and-so and her two children registered today. They'd look at their list, and a husband quite often was hunting for his wife and child because he didn't know where they were. They had no way of communication. So we got a lot of husbands and wives together that way.

Lage: Then you came to New York through that job?

Eloesser: I was working just purely as a volunteer at the--[Daughter brings in photograph of Herbert Hoover] My word, that's dusty, isn't it. It's awfully faded. That's Mr. Hoover.

Do you see those Ming vases? He and Mrs. Hoover were in Peking at the time of the Peking uprising, and he got hold of a whole lot of Peking stuff that came back.

Well, as I say, I'd been doing this work, and one day I was sitting at my desk and a man came. He said, "Where's Mr. Arnstein?" He was the American I was supposed to be working for. I said, "Well, he's gone to Paris to fetch his mother to get her back to America." And all he said was, "Uh!" He just grunted. He never said anything if he was pleased. If he said, "Thank you very much, that's all," then you were crushed.

We handled 90,000 Americans from the time that war broke out on August 3 until the 22nd of October, which was when the Belgians arrived with their pleas because they had only food for three days. The Germans had taken everything. So they started then what was called later the Commission for Relief in Belgium. It was known all over everywhere as the CRB. So if I say CRB, that's what I mean.

Eloesser: As I was sitting at my desk, the telephone rang, and they said would I go to Mr. Hoover's office at London Wall Building. I gathered up my things and went to the building. They opened a door and said, "This is where you will work." So that's how I got my job. It was very simple. I had never worked in my life.

Lage: Now before this, were you volunteering?

Eloesser: Yes, I was volunteering for a long time after that, too. And then my father's business in India--the two white men who ran it were, of course, reserve officers in the army and were called up--and that left the office in the charge of the head native; and he promptly embezzled everything that he could lay his hands on and ran away. So that left mother and me bankrupt--completely. We had nothing. We had 70 pounds in the bank. That's three hundred and fifty dollars in the bank, and that's all we had.

So I said, well, I'll quit being a volunteer, and tell Mr. Hoover I have to get a job. I went to Mr. Hoover, and I told him the circumstances. He said, "Well, you can be on the same basis as the delegates and get 20 pounds a month." This is what the men that we sent into Belgium to supervise the distribution of the food were paid. I got my 20 pounds a month, and that felt like wealth. Mother and I lived on that for a long time.

I worked there, and after a while Mr. Hoover said, "Can you take shorthand?" I said no. I could type. I'd typed a lot. He said, "Well, go away and learn it." Just like that.

Lage: So he was pretty abrupt in his manner of speaking.

Eloesser: He gave orders. He wasn't cross about it. He said, "Do you think you can learn it?" And I said, "Yes, I think I can." I thought of all the stupid little girls in the outer office who could take shorthand. They were frightened of Mr. Hoover because of his American accent.

So I went to a night school, like your Healds here, for about six weeks. I learned shorthand. Then I stayed with Mr. Hoover as one of his secretaries--he had a man secretary--until he went to Washington as food administrator, when America came into the war in 1917, and his second-in-command, Mr. Poland, took our London office. I stayed with Mr. Poland because I'd been there from the very beginning; I knew more about it than he did.

Lage: Who was Mr. Poland?

Eloesser: William Babcock Poland joined CRB at Mr. Hoover's request and was appointed first director in Brussels. His most urgent task at that time was to negotiate with the German representatives in Belgium as to the reception and distribution of the CRB food, which had begun to arrive through Rotterdam in shipload quantities. The American delegates, who were appointed in London by Herbert Hoover, had also to be educated along these lines. For these young men it required attention to the most minute details. For instance, the metal condensed-milk cans had to be counted and returned to store. The Germans were collecting them, filling them with explosives and using them as ammunition!!

Personal Impressions of Hoover

Lage: How long were you working with Mr. Hoover? What were the dates of that?

Eloesser: Six years, from 1914 to 1920, really.

Lage: Can you tell us any more about what he was like as a person in those days?

Eloesser: I got to be very fond of him. He was very quiet. He never said anything. And as I say, he would give you the most impossible jobs to do; and I always just sat up all night and broke my head to do them.

I wrote a history of lace in Belgium--Brussels rose point pillow lace--in three days. I went to the British Museum for my facts. But if he was pleased he'd say, "Uh." That was all. If he looked at something you had done, and he wasn't very happy with it, he'd say, "Well thank you very much, that will be all." And you felt about that big.

Lage: So you got to know--

Eloesser: I got to know him. I know one day he was dictating. He would put his hands in his pockets and jingle coins. And he was looking out of the window while he was dictating. So I said to him, "Mr. Hoover, if you would talk to me instead of out of the window I could take better notes." And he said of course he could. He came back and sat down. He never said a word of reproach, or anything like that.

Eloesser: I got on very well with him. And then when the Germans were being pushed back into Germany at the end of the war, the poor people who had been in the time of the feeding program behind the German lines were left with the Germans on the other side of them. But their poor little villages were all destroyed. They had no technical advisers to help them. So we had to take over that side of northern France. At one time we were feeding 10 million people. Our ships had safe conduct. They were lighted. All the ships sailed in black darkness because of the submarines. But ours were brilliantly lighted on both sides. They had a great big banner streamed along: Commission for Relief in Belgium. In all the time we only lost one ship, and that was a terrible thing.

We were getting food into Belgium and into northern France as the Germans approached Paris. We had to take in the people behind the Germans.

Lage: You know, there is so much conflicting feeling about Herbert Hoover as a humanitarian.

Eloesser: He was a great humanitaian.

Lage: From that period when you were with him did he express--

Eloesser: He was in the Peace Commission. He was the head of everything, except President Wilson, in the Peace Commission. I was there.

I was shot from London to Paris on two days notice to open an office for the CRB in Paris because it was getting very difficult to communicate from London. I spent nearly a year in Paris through the Peace Commission time. And as the Peace Commission finished, and peace was signed, Mr. Hoover asked, "Will you go to New York and receive the papers you've been working on and catalog them?"

#### To New York and San Francisco

Eloesser: Well, I was delighted to go to New York. But there was a great deal of trouble to get me there. Apparently, America wouldn't receive British people who got a job in America because they didn't want foreigners having a job. So they said, "No visa. You can't come." It took practically an act of Congress to get me into New York that time. When we got to New York, there was another English girl on the boat. We were both set aside by the customs officials and told we'd have to wait until the Traveler's Aid

Eloesser: came and took us ashore because we had nowhere to stay.

I was going to an hotel. So was Biddles. This other girl, Biddles, had been in the medical corps and had been in the front lines. She had all kinds of medals. Both our passports were stamped "Good for Journeys in the War Zone," and so on. Nevertheless, we had to wait for the Traveler's Aid.

The head of the CRB, who was on the ship, went to the customs office, and he had to go a thousand dollar bond on our good behavior in New York. I went straight on to San Francisco where my mother was visiting Mrs. Arthur Eloesser.

My mother's health had declined visibly at that time, owing to the stringency of our English rationing (one pound meat per week per person,; two ounces butter per week per person, one-half pound sugar, and so on). Our doctor wrote some special "need" certificates, but they were not sufficient to help much. So Mother finally consented to accept Mrs. Eloesser's cordial invitation to stay with her in San Francisco. She went by Cunard to New York and was met by Herbert Eloesser, Mrs. Eloesser's son, and he accompanied Mother to San Francisco.

Herbert had travelled with his parents and two sisters, both in England and Europe. He had stayed with us in England in 1913, and he often told me afterwards that he wanted to ask me to marry him then, but he didn't.

Lage: He was a family friend, then.

Eloesser: Yes. When he came to New York on his business trips he always came and picked me up in New York.

Lage: Was he British?

Eloesser: No, American. He was born here. We'd go out together. He was very musical, and we would go to all the concerts and operas and so on. He was very good to me. So after I was tired of being in New York, and the papers didn't come--and I might as well add here that the papers didn't come til after my first baby was born [laughter].

Lage: Your papers?

Eloesser: The papers from the Commission for Relief in Belgium.

Lage: The papers you were supposed to catalog.

Eloesser: And the papers from Paris, and so on.

When they did come, there were 104 cases of papers. They were at Stanford University. At that time they were building what they called the new Hoover Library. I said I couldn't catalog them. How could I? I was married, and when I'd divorced the commission I'd married properly. Anyway, there was a Professor French in charge of the history there. And they made it rather uncomfortable for me. So I went down for a year, three times a week by train and unpacked those papers.

Lage: Were you living here then?

Eloesser: Yes. We've lived in this house for sixty-three years. Sixty-four now.

So I went down by train because there was no other way to go. We didn't have a car. In those days people didn't skip about in cars the way they do now. Of course, I had all the university students I needed who volunteered to help unpack. Because I couldn't have done it. And they were still building the shelves for it. It was quite an uncomfortable business.

I got it all done. Then a man called George Gay, who had been working as a delegate in Belgium through a good deal of the time, wrote a history of the commission, which is upstairs. I was nicely thanked.

At that time Coolidge had come in as president and Mr. Hoover was the minister of food administration, or something, and he wrote me a very nice note to say thank you. We kept in touch all through his life. Whenever he wrote a book he would send me a copy inscribed with "from H.C.H." The next time it said, "With good wishes from Mr. Hoover." Then one time after about the fifth book, I wrote to Mr. Hoover, and I said, "Mr. Hoover, it's growing, but next time perhaps you'll put in your book, "To Miss Franstead, with love from Mr. Hoover."

But by that time he was ninety-something, like that picture; and he died before that book was finished. So I never got his love, but he really was nice. He came here--

Lage: It sounds as if you had an informal relationship with him. You were able to joke with him like this.

Eloesser: Oh, yes. We were awfully good friends. He appreciated your work. He never thanked you for it particularly, but his one compliment was to give you more work to do. That showed that he was pleased with you.

Lage: You say that one time he came here?

Eloesser: He came here at a reception. I was still working in New York. But I had come here to San Francisco to visit. He was there shaking hands, "Glad to see you," shaking hands. And then I came along, and he looked at me. "Oh!" he said, "I'm so glad to see somebody I know," and he shook my hand so warmly, and then everybody said, "Who's that?" [laughter] I had to explain myself.

Daughter: You skipped a very important point. You've got your name carved on the wall in Hoover Tower. Remember that?

Eloesser: Well, yes. Then they built the Hoover Tower. The CRB files are up on the thirteenth floor, I believe. I've never seen them. But there's a marble slab at the entrance to Hoover Tower which gives the names of all the men, and women too, who worked for the Commission for Relief in Belgium and northern France, and my name is amongst them. Nina is very proud of that.

Lage: Tell me, I didn't get your maiden name.

Eloesser: My maiden name was Franstead.



## II THE SIERRA CLUB'S 1920 OUTING

### High Trip Honeymoon in the Sierra

- Lage: Now, what did your husband do? What kind of work was he in?
- Eloesser: At that time his father was president of a firm called Eloesser Heynsman Company which made men's work clothes and overalls. During the war they made a lot of navy clothes--during the Second World War. The overalls were called Can't Bust 'Em. You must have seen those.
- Lage: Oh! I've seen those. They still have them. I don't know if it's the same company.
- Eloesser: Well, they were advertised as such, and they made shirts. They made the white uniforms for the Standard Oil men and that kind of thing. Then my father-in-law died, and my husband became president. He was president until they sold the firm in 1946.
- Lage: In what year were you married?
- Eloesser: We were married in 1920. I arrived here on 12 May and on 10 June we were married. It didn't take long.

I didn't know it at that time, but he had been a member of the Sierra Club. He was on the 1902 trip and then on various others--1916 was the last one. He had talked to Mr. Colby about coming on this trip as his honeymoon but please, please, not to say a word about it. Mrs. Parsons and Mr. Colby were bricks, both of them. They never said a word. There were five honeymoon couples, but only four of them got teased.

Nobody ever said anything until I got off the train in San Francisco at the end of it. Then one of the men, with whom we'd done a lot of climbing, said, "Mrs. Eloesser, would you do me a favor?" He was a high school teacher. I said, "Yes, certainly."

Eloesser: He said, "How long have you been married?" I said, "Three weeks." It was four weeks actually. In those days honeymooners were a sort of butt of everybody. If you sat on a log and held hands they would make remarks about it. We didn't care. We just let them make their remarks. But one or two of them would get pink and sort of shuffle away, and it was stupid.

Lage: I'm looking at some of these old Sierra Club cups.

Eloesser: Those are our old cups.

Lage: These are really the original. This was originally tin?

Eloesser: Those are the original ones, yes. They hold much more than your present cups.

Lage: Now this has been silver-plated too, hasn't it?

Daughter: I don't know if two of them were or just one of them was.

Eloesser: The square bottomed one, darling, that's not an original. Ours were sort of rounded.

Lage: Well, that's the more modern. This one says, "Sierra Club of California."

I got from Mrs. Colby an old cup. It was like this but more battered. It just looked like the devil, it was so battered. Mrs. Colby wasn't sure it was an original cup, now I can see that it was.

Eloesser: I've been on the Yosemite high trip various times. On one occasion the men had put a little something in their knapsacks. Every evening we had what we called jubilee.

##

Lage: Repeat what you were going to say about the cups.

Eloesser: I think we were given the cups when we joined in 1920. Herbert was bound to go on a walk before we were married. He had talked it over with Mr. Colby. And I told you the story at the Sierra meeting about seeing that beautiful snow plant and picking it.

Lage: Tell that again, though.

Eloesser: I had been wandering around looking at the beautiful trees. It was my first time in high mountains like that. And I had never seen redwoods or anything like that. I saw a very lovely red

Eloesser: thing growing almost out of the root of this tree. So I picked it up because I wanted to show it to Herbie, to my husband. I showed it to various people. I had it in my handkerchief in my hand because I realized it was delicate, and I didn't want it to get bruised. One of the women said, "Oo! You shouldn't have picked that." Well, I said there must be a lot more, or something, quite comfortable.

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

Lage: You didn't forget that, I'm sure.

Eloesser: No, I didn't.

#### Leaders, Packers, Food, and Clothing

Eloesser: Mr. Colby was tall and limber. And he took enormous strides, so we used to josh about the Colby miles. We'd say, "Is that seven real miles or seven Colby miles?"

Lage: Was he an approachable person? Did you feel you could be friendly with him?

Eloesser: Oh, yes. After all, there were almost a hundred of us. He didn't have time to be approached very much.

Lage: You mentioned Mrs. Parsons. Was she prominent on the trip?

Eloesser: Mrs. Parsons was a sort of second in command. She kept an eye on the women. She was not the naturalist, Mrs. Parsons. I don't know where she fit in except that she was always there.

Lage: Well, you know her husband had been one of the men who ran the outings.

Eloesser: The southern contingent, the people who signed up in the south of California, were brought up in a group by Judge Clair Tappaan. And he was another member of the directing group. Mr. Colby and Judge Tappaan.

Eloesser: Judge Tappaan was a very amusing person. He invented all sorts of strange animals. He used to talk about the rusty crustis and the gosh-wallopuss. [laughter]

Lage: I've heard that he was very amusing. Now, I've looked at the account of that 1920 outing in the Bulletin. I guess Marion Parsons wrote about it. They talked about the pack train getting there late, and the packers going on strike.

Eloesser: Exactly. You see, it was the first trip after the First World War, and the usual packers weren't working yet. Mr. Colby had to get these packers from a stable, and he also had to find a crew for cooking. He finally ended up with a Pullman crew, a black man who rode a horse, and two others.

The packers came, and the first morning after we had camped-- Mr. Colby always started us horrible early, five o'clock, half past four, he was quite merciless--the packers said they hadn't signed up to get up at no four o'clock in the morning to go and find the stock so that we could get away by five. That wasn't their idea of a good trip, and they'd like to quit. Mr. Colby said, "All right. There's nothing I can do about it if you're going to quit." He paid the men their three days wages.

One of the men said, "We'll go catch up our horses." Mr. Colby said, "Oh, no! We've paid for the horses. The horses are separate. They're ten dollars a day. They're our horses. You can quit if you want but you'll have to walk out."

Well, that settled the packers. They decided to stay.

Lage: They don't like to walk.

Eloesser: No, they don't like to walk. They were not very agreeable. They would be late.

Herbert, my husband, had learned how to throw the diamond hitch over a pack on the 1916 trip so he was always very much in demand when the packing came. And two girls in the trip--Shaeffer their name was, the same thing as the Shaeffer Potatoes--they were horse women. They knew about saddling and holding mules. And I held many mule heads while they packed them. We all pitched in and helped.

Another thing that happened about three nights later was that Mr. Colby got up and really scolded us. He said he had never had a group that was so uncooperative. One brave woman stood up and said, "Mr. Colby, we'd be most happy to help, if you'd only tell us what to do."

Eloesser: He said, "Make your committees. Have a cooking committee, and a waiting committee, and a camp committee to see that the camp's cleaned up, and so on." We did. It worked like a charm. Afterwards he complimented us on the trip--how well it had run.

Lage: It sounds as if it was a difficult trip.

Eloesser: Our Negro cook was a very good cook. Every now and then he would burst forth and make biscuits for breakfast. One morning we found out that, as you were allowed two biscuits, if you took your two biscuits and went and stood at the end of the line, by the time you'd eaten your biscuits you could get pretty close to the next line and get another two biscuits. Colonel Jones--he called himself Colonel Jones--he rode a white horse, there's a picture of him there in the book--he burst into tears. He said, "I've made fourteen-hundred and ninety-two biscuits, but I can't fill them up."

Lage: We've heard a lot about the women's dress from earlier times. How did the women dress in 1920?

Eloesser: All of them were in pants, I think. I can't remember anybody in a skirt.

Lage: So skirts were out by then.

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

Lage: This book that you're showing me is not just pictures, but a whole log of your trip. I know we're not going to get you to put this in the Bancroft Library.

Eloesser: There are two figures standing under the tree, on the second or third page, I think. I wrote underneath it, "At least we started this trip clean."

Lage: When did you write up the log about the trip? Right after you got home?

Eloesser: After we got home. I kept notes on any little scrap of paper I could find at the time--backs of old envelopes and pieces of paper. I had a little notebook, but it wasn't sufficient.

Eloesser: Herbert and I were both very interested in the flowers. We named ninety varieties of flowers during the trip. We chose only those that were actually blooming or had faded, but nothing that was just coming up out of the ground. The flowers were just gorgeous. Sheets and sheets of lupine, you know, up the mountain sides; phlox, great lumps of phlox. It was lovely.

Crossing Muir Pass at Dawn

Lage: You told a nice story at the meeting in the library about crossing Muir Pass. Could you explain that?

Eloesser: We came then to Muir Pass. We camped, I think, at Colby Lake. A very cold lake with little icebergs floating around in it. I took a quick swim in that one because it was the last chance we had for quite a while.

Call that morning was at three-thirty. The moon was still shining. A full moon. If you can imagine being called to get up at three-thirty! This vast sheet of snow approaching us. We struggled up. I don't know how the packers managed because we started pretty promptly.

Lage: Was it dark while you were crossing this?

Eloesser: Well, the moon was shining, and then the dawn came. The snow itself reflects, you know; it's never dark on snow. We struggled up the snow as far as the crest where we could look down onto Wanda and Helen, the two last lakes. Helen was frozen completely, and Wanda had little icebergs in it.

Up there we were treated to an enormous thunderstorm. There was no Muir Hut in those days, it was just the top of a pass. We started down the other side, and I guess about a thousand yards down the side there was a cache of more stuff to go down that they'd put there before.

My husband walked down there with two iron washtubs on his head. We were all given something. I had three large cans of pork and beans; that was seven and half extra pounds in my knapsack. By the time we got to the bottom it felt pretty heavy.

Lage: Did you have any grumblers? Any hikers that were not happy about getting up so early?

Eloesser: Yes. We grumbled all the time. We always told Mr. Colby that it was hardly worthwhile going to bed. But he was quite firm about that. Days that were in camp we were allowed to stay in bed as long as we liked. If we wanted breakfast we had to get up, but otherwise it didn't matter. And if you had a billy-can and a cup of tea it really didn't matter. We carried a billy-can, an old MJB coffee can, a three-pound can with a thong through the top, which I fastened to my belt or Herbie fastened to his belt.

We got down to Little Pete Meadows, which is where we were to camp--nasty camp with very steep slopes up both sides and a little stream at the bottom. We made camp. We chose our camps. There wasn't much choice anywhere. Judge Tappaan had come down ahead. He had got there first. We waited, and we waited. There was no commissary and no mules, and half the party hadn't arrived.

Judge Tappaan made us play games. Do broad jump. He told us stories about his gosh-wallopuss. About nine o'clock we decided it was just too bad. We built a big fire down there, and we put one of the big iron washtubs on the fire, and we opened all the cans we had carried down from the cache--it didn't matter what they were--into the most gorgeous slumgullian you ever saw. But we were starved. We had had breakfast at three-thirty, and just the usual bandana lunch.

We pitched in. We had pork and beans and tomato soup and green pea soup and anything that would open and come out. Fortunately we all had can openers. We sang and danced.

Then finally they began strolling in one at a time. The poor tired people were very glad to see what remained in the washtub.

Lage: What had taken them so long?

Eloesser: The snow. The men had had to unpack the mules. The men had had to go ahead and pound a trail for the mules. But the snow was so deep that it pushed the kayaks right up and lifted the mules up off their feet. So the men were carrying most of the kayaks down one at a time.

We stayed at Little Pete two days because we had to collect ourselves. The Muir trail was of course buried as far as we knew there. I don't know what it was like. From Little Pete's on down to a place called the Devil's Washbowl it was only just dynamited. It hadn't been finished. So the men of the party went ahead and threw the rocks off the trail into the little river below. The women followed and threw as many of the larger stones, so that when the mules came it was very narrow. They carried those big iron cookstoves in, and we pretty nearly lost two mules there. They caught on the inside bank. You had to really take the stove mules by the hand and tell them where to put their feet.

Eloesser: I don't know if you know mules, but they always eat their breakfast ten inches down over the side of the cliff. They really do, don't they Nina?

Daughter: Very often.

Eloesser: If there is something to eat down here, there may be nothing to the bottom, but they'll eat that thing here.

Lage: You seem to have a wonderful memory.

Eloesser: Well, it was my first trip of that kind. And of course when you type a thing, and arrange the pictures, it helps your memory too.

Lage: And then you refresh your mind by looking at them.

Eloesser: That's the Kings River down there. [refers to photograph] It comes to this place called the Washbowl. It makes an absolute right angle turn there. It hits the far wall and boils itself back and then turns and goes on down. Then you come down to a perfectly beautiful place called Grouse Meadows. We spent two or three days there.

Lage: How long a trip was it over all? Was it a month?

Eloesser: It was a month.

Lage: And you took the whole trip.

Eloesser: You had to. There was no arrangement for taking only half the way they did later.

In Grouse Meadow we made a rather comfortable camp, my husband and I. We made two or three rather good climbs from there, out of Little Pete Meadows, while we were waiting for the others. With these two school teachers--a Mr. Crofts, and I've forgotten the other man's name--we climbed a mountain called Langille Peak. That was about ten or eleven thousand feet. That was my first mountain climbing. We had to climb a great snow field there.

We got to the top. All but the last rock. The only way to the top was this way with a chimney. So the men went up. I had to sit on the edge of the trail there waiting for them to come down. That was an awfully long time. I was quite sure they'd killed themselves. Then we went down that snow field. It took us three hours to get up it and twenty minutes to come down it. The men just sat down and slid. I didn't sit down but I did a lot of sliding.



Lage: It sounds as if you and the other women were well equipped to keep up with the men.

Eloesser: Yes, because up in the high mountains (you know that don't you, Ann?) you have to walk very slowly. In fact my husband always led us because if I led I was always striding along like Mr. Colby. I was used to walking with long strides and it took me a long time to learn to walk mountain ways just putting one foot in front of another. But if you do that, you don't ever lose your breath.

Lage: Or your balance.

Eloesser: I went to Machu Picchu some years ago. My companion wouldn't listen to me. She ran about up the stairs. I would walk slowly up. That's at twelve thousand feet, you know. And we stayed at the little hotel there. I demonstrated my mountain walk at Machu Picchu.

#### Campfire Music and Talks

Lage: What about the campfires on that 1920 trip? Can you recall what they were like?

Eloesser: They were wonderful. Of course, there was lots of wood. They always made an enormous one and put rocks around it and then logs if they could find any. We'd sit around it. There was a man who kept bees. He talked about his bees one night. Mr. Colby told us stories about other trips. Somebody had a violin.

Lage: It wasn't Cedric Wright? Was he on the trip?

Eloesser: Cedric Wright.

The people with good cameras and musical instruments were allowed to take their instruments with them. They had an extra mule for that--big cameras and musical instruments. One of the men, a man called Harry Perry, had a beautiful voice. He and Cedric Wright would go off into the distance and play and sing. It was lovely.

Lage: Was there any talk about conservation?

Eloesser: Mr. Colby gave us various talks. He'd gather us around, whoever happened to be near--there is quite a nice group picture in there too, on page 27, I think, I looked through it the other day--

Lage: You do know this well, pages and everything.

Eloesser: Let me see, may I have it? I'll find it because it's a nice group. [turning of pages] He would give us a talk on how the Sierras arose, or he would tell us about the Yosemite Valley and tell us how that formed too. He would have groups. [more rustling of pages] There it is. You see, he'd just sit down on the ground and hold his leg this way. Then we'd all sit around, and he'd tell us what it was about.

Lage: Did he talk about John Muir?

Eloesser: Yes! At one of our campsites, one of the very famous people came and spent the night with us--Stephen Mather.

Mr. Colby spoke at campfire on the purpose and plans of the Sierra Club. He also asked that all the photographers on the trip should please take as many good pictures as possible of this, the Tehipite Dome. We were coming to the Tehipite. It was not very well known, and as yet there were no good pictures of it.

By the time we got down there it was warm. It was only eight thousand feet, and after you've been at twelve and eleven thousand feet, eight thousand feet felt very warm and comfortable. It was all amongst green oak leaves, crumpled leaves. It was a very comfortable place. I washed my hair there. Mr. Altschul wrote and said something about my hair.

When we got home, on account of the packers being so dilatory, we missed a day, and we were almost a day late in our walking. We had to walk sixty-three miles in the last three days to get back to Huntington Lake. We made it. We walked twenty, and twenty-three, and twenty miles. It was a lot of walking.

Going up, when we first arrived, we were told we'd have about four miles to climb. But the lumber companies who were supplying wood for the dam at the end of Huntington Lake had put benches on flat cars. The whole group, there's a lovely picture right on the first page there--This little lumber company engine, like the one on Tamalpais crawled that train all the way up, almost into Huntington, with everybody jumping around on it.

Lage: I think I've seen pictures of that elsewhere.

### III GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, 1924, AND LATER TRIPS

#### Wildlife and Constant Rain in Glacier

Lage: Was the next trip you took the trip to Glacier National Park?

Eloesser: That also was a first. We went up then in a group on a train. It was an overnight trip to Spokane. They had a banquet in Spokane for the Sierra Club. They were quite excited about it. They talked about our adventuring and our exploring. There were no trails in Glacier Park.

Lage: Who put on the banquet?

Eloesser: The Chamber of Commerce. Gracious, we had a police escort and everything. It was very exciting.

We got there, and afterwards we went back to our train. We got then to a place called Beldon, I think it was. Then we did have to carry our things into a place called MacDonald's Hotel. I think so.

We camped there then. This man, MacDonald, was an old hunter, and he invited us to dinner at the hotel. We had had most of our dinner, and we had refreshments. He took us up to his loft. He was a hotel man during the summer and a hunter in the winter. He showed us the pelt of a Kodiak bear that measured fifteen feet long. Imagine fifteen feet of bear! Gorgeous grey soft pelt. He had all kinds of sable furs. Wonderful place--So, then we started off there.

I have to say that in Glacier Park it rained all but two days. We only had a little bad weather on our first Sierra Club trip. It rained part of the day sometimes, all day other times, and nearly always at night.

Lage: Did people have adequate rain gear?

Eloesser: A lot of the men had pup-tents that they complained didn't keep them dry. Towards the end of the trip one of the men arrived at breakfast and said, "I kept dry last night." They said, "What did you do?" He said, "Why, I folded up my pup-tent and slept on it."

##

Eloesser: We always had to build a shelter for our commissary. You see these awful pictures of all of us in our ponchos and shelter up over the stove.

It was an exciting trip because there were a lot of animals and the animals hadn't been frightened by the people yet. I saw one female moose by the side of the road. We saw one male moose with his beautiful antlers--any number of bears. Bears all over the place, big ones and little ones. You had to be awfully careful how you wrapped things up or you'd find a bear in your tent grubbing around.

Lage: Did that happen?

Eloesser: Oh, yes. I came to get a piece of chocolate that I knew was in my knapsack, and I found a little bear sitting there having found the same thing.

Lage: That's grizzly country.

Eloesser: No, a little bit of a black bear cub. I wanted to get my camera.

Herbert and I did meet a grizzly bear. I was leading that time, and I kept saying, "Camera, camera, camera!" [Whispering] But Herb said, "Stand still, stand still." [Whispering] And he wasn't any further away--great big beast like this. [bear noises] Then he looked at us this way and turned around and disappeared into the brush. Before I could get my old camera out of Herb's hands he was just gone. He moved like a shadow. Disappeared. Mostly they were just brown bears and black bears. The black bears are brown when they are young and then turn black later on.

There was one camp that we made where the men had to ride guard all night on horseback to keep the bears away. They had covered our provisions, a big pile of them, with a tarpaulin and put rocks at the side of them, but they rode guard all night on horseback because the bears were coming trying to tear this thing down.

Lage: So that was a new experience. You didn't have that in the Sierras, did you?

Eloesser: We saw one or two bears in the Sierras, yes, but not many. We did see deer several times. What we saw were wombats. Do you know what a wombat is? It's like a big marmot. There were lots of marmots and ground squirrels. They were perfectly tame. They'd come and sit at your feet. It was awfully funny. There was a Mr. and Mrs. Marmot and the baby. I had a slice of tomato on my sandwich that day. I threw the tomato slice over onto the flat place where they were playing. The baby ran over and picked it up and was going to eat it. Mother marmot came along and turned him up and spanked him. It was the funniest thing you ever saw.

Lage: What would you say was the main attraction of hiking for people? Was it the camaraderie, or the outdoors, or learning about nature? Could you say what made it meaningful for you?

Eloesser: As far as I was concerned it was the gorgeous scenery wherever we went--these beautiful trees and the flowers. The flowers were something to dream about. There were so many of them. You know, in England we have bluebells and there are primroses too in the spring. But other than that, our flowers are not so prolific. You'll find some primroses here and you'll find a bluebell there. But never a whole sheet, a whole mountainside of lupine as we used to see them. But we didn't get that at Glacier.

Glacier was very forested with thick rather uninteresting forest. A lot of the trees were very small. There was one place going down towards a lake where the trees were growing so close together that the men had to take their knapsacks and sort of push them between the trees.

Lage: You were going cross-country?

Eloesser: We were making our own way that way. We knew the lake was down there somewhere and we just went--a lot of places there was no trail.

Lage: Had Mr. Colby been there before?

Eloesser: No he hadn't.

Lage: Did he have someone along who was familiar with it?

Eloesser: Well, I suppose he could talk to the people. There were rangers.

Eloesser: It was during prohibition. We got down to Watertown Lake, and the men of the party said if they could find some kind of a boat they were going to row up Watertown because it goes into Canada. Watertown Town is in Canada. So they rowed all the way to Canada to get a drink. When they got there the town was dry. [laughter] So they came home with bear steaks: the only thing they could buy. Have you ever eaten a bear steak?

Lage: No, I haven't.

Eloesser: Well, you might just as well cook your hiking boots' soles.

Glacier was less exciting because we were so wet all the time. I think I said at the party that on the fourth of July, two men, and I've forgotten who they were, but anyway a group of us, went up to Agassiz Glacier, which was a walk. We camped there that night. It was an overnight. I had set out some dried apricots to moisten so that I could cook them at breakfast time. It snowed so hard on the fourth of July up there that it broke our tent pole. The tent fell in on me. Herbert crawled out and shook the snow off, and the apricots were a solid block of ice.

Lage: So it wasn't as welcoming a climate?

Eloesser: Glacier itself was very beautiful. Then we went on to a place called Many Glaciers. There, there is a big hotel. A real one, with grounds and all the facilities. I think every one of us, sometime during that time, got in on a hot bath.

They had an ice cream parlor. We went in to get a drink. There were some young women of our trip who said, "Oh, banana splits!" So Herbert ordered banana splits all around. I looked at mine, and I couldn't eat anything like that. I'm not much of an ice cream eater anyhow. The girl next to me just finished hers. "Oh," she said, "aren't you going to eat that? I'll eat that." So she had two!

#### Atypical Tourists

Eloesser: The Sierra Club gave a review that night. We had a ballet, and we had a chorus, and we told stories, and we had a one-act play. I was in that. It was so successful that they asked us to stay an extra night and do it again the next night. So we did. The day that we lay in camp you'd really have thought we were a zoo. Everybody in that hotel was walking around amongst our sleeping bags and looking. "Oo! Look at these people. They have a this, you know--"

Lage: You were on the hotel grounds?

Eloesser: We were about a mile around the corner of the lake. There was quite a high mountain there called Mount Gould. There were mountain goats up there. We could see them. Two of our women climbed Mount Gould, and coming down they met a goat. He wasn't going to give way. So they stood and stared at the goat. Finally, the goat jumped down off the cliff, like that, onto a rock and then jumped behind them.

There was a big glacier at Many Glaciers. Herbert and I went up. It had crevasses in it, and it had little holes in the ice where the water bubbled up through it. So, there is a picture of me drinking ice water out of the glacier. You had to be careful of those crevasses, because they opened quite suddenly. You didn't want them to open right there and then.

While we were there, a party from the hotel came. One of the women was on horseback. There were several of them on horseback. This stupid woman had high-heeled shoes with just straps to hold them. You know how they make them. She walked on the ice and they melted. She was just practically barefoot, and she had to ride back to the hotel. I took all the adhesive tape in my knapsack and I took the sole of her shoe and I adhesive taped her feet round with the tape so she could put them in the stirrups without skinning herself.

Lage: They were a different type of tourist from the Sierra Club.

Eloesser: Yes, they thought we were a zoo.

So then we finished our trip at Logan Lake, Logan Pass. It snowed all day long. There is the end picture there with Herbert and me covered with snow on the last day.

We had a very nice reception from the Idaho people because that was the first organized party to go through the park. One place where we camped, I know because I've seen it since, they've got roads going right across the place where our tents used to be.

Lage: I wonder how Mr. Colby decided to go there. Do you know?

Eloesser: No, I don't know at all. Maybe they invited him.

Lage: It sounds like quite a memorable trip.

Eloesser: It was. It was a memorable trip, but not nearly as exciting or as interesting because, as I say, there were not many flowers. There was one place at Indian Pass where there were a great many lovely gentians. That was beautiful. That was about halfway in the trip. But that's the only flower we ever saw in profusion.

Oliver Kehrlein's First Base Camp Trip

Lage: Did you go on other Sierra Club trips after this?

Eloesser: No, I've been in the Sierras, but not with the club.

Lage: You didn't go on organized trips?

Eloesser: Well, it wasn't a high trip but I was on Oliver Kehrlein's first base camp. We went up to East Creek, up where Bubb's Creek comes down into East Creek.

We were lucky at that base camp because John Howell, the naturalist from the Academy of Natural Sciences was there. We were lucky also on the first trip because Professor Vern Kellogg, the chief biological something at Washington--it's in the notes there--

Lage: Chief Field Naturalist, Division of Biological Investigation, Department of Agriculture: he was along on the Glacier National Park trip.

Eloesser: Yes, but John Howell was on the Kehrlein trip, and we had a wonderful time because he was a good hiker. He and I and Herbert and young Herb--my son was with us, he was about seventeen--hiked all over the place. The men climbed two unnamed peaks. We named one Colby.

Lage: Did that name stick?

Eloesser: I don't know.

Lage: When would that base camp trip have been?

Eloesser: 1940 or 1941. I must have been '40.

Family Trips in the Sierra

Lage: And then you took trips back to the Sierras without the club. With your family?

Eloesser: I took a trip with some friends of ours who had never been in the mountains. There was a group of six of them, and they asked us to join the trip. There were two other men who had climbed in the mountains a little bit. I think they only asked us for our experience, but it turned out in the end that they were giving the orders, and our experience didn't count at all.



Eloesser: They had planned the trip so that we should cross the Kearsarge Pass and camp at Bubb's Creek--what is the name of that lake, is that East Lake?

Daughter: I think so.

Eloesser: But Kearsarge Pass is twelve thousand and something feet! We got about one-third of the way up, and then they all died of mountain sickness at a little place called Heart Lake. The women took to their beds. They unpacked their beds. The arrangement, of course, had been that the women would share the cooking, and the men were going to collect the wood and do the dirty work, and so on.

Our packer--we had six horses, one for Madge [Moore] to ride-- had horses packed and a mule. He came from Independence, and quite definitely said he was there to run the stock, but he was not going to do the cooking. But he very soon discovered that Madge and Mrs. Vetter would go to bed as soon as they got into camp, and I would do all the cooking.

One day he came over to me, and he said, "Do you know how to make a fish chowder?" He had caught some trout, or Herbert had caught the trout, I think. Then he showed me how to make biscuits in a frying pan. He was awfully nice. He was the one who taught me the toast that I didn't say at camp because I didn't know how they'd take it. He held up his cup, and he said, "Do you know the cowboy toast?" He said, "Round the teeth or through the gums, look out stomach here she comes." [laughter]

He was an interesting man because he had been the head rider at Hagenbeck's Circus in Germany and his wife had been one of the acrobats. They'd married and had two children. They came back here and he ran packs into the Sierras but not too often. They had two children, this cowpuncher and the acrobat, and one became a musician and the other a dentist.

Daughter: Was it Bullfrog Lake and East Vedette Peak?

Eloesser: Bullfrog, that was right, dearie. And it was East Vedette Peak. I knew I didn't get those names right.

Lage: Bullfrog Lake is at the head of Bubb's Creek. You were close there.

Eloesser: Ninie, give me those enlargements. Just the one about the Kearsarge Rocks. This is a lovely picture here of the Kearsarge Peaks as you look up from Independence. They run from eleven to twelve thousand.

Lage: You have some wonderful pictures.

Eloesser: Here we were at the top with Madge's white horse.

Lage: So this is on that same trip.

Eloesser: This is on that private trip. But I've got one that shows those rocks so beautifully.

Well, it ended up then at a place called Sawmill Creek.

Lage: Have you remained a member of the Sierra Club all these years? Are you still a member?

Eloesser: Indeed I am. I'm a life member, but I can't do anything about it anymore. But I look back to my memories in the Sierras with a great deal of pleasure.

Lage: It's made an impact on you, I can tell.

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

Lage: Was it agreeable to you? He hadn't asked you if it was something you wanted to do but it turned out all right.

Eloesser: It turned out beautifully. I was perfectly satisfied to go walking.

#### Local Walks in the Bay Area

Lage: Have you kept up your walking?

Eloesser: I had kept up my walking because I used to go walking with my sons. I've walked all over Muir Woods and up and down the sides of the hills, the Gypsy Trail, and down to Stinson Beach and that kind of walking. That I did chiefly for the sake of the boys. Well, I won't say that because I enjoyed it.

Daughter: You walked from what, Mill Valley to Bolinas in two days or three or something.

Eloesser: Yes, we walked from Mill Valley to Bolinas one night, my husband and I. We got to Bolinas, and in those days a little man in a row boat used to come over and fetch you and take you over to the town. Coming back, my husband developed an awful blister. We finally caught the very last train on the railroad that ran from Eureka to San Francisco.

Lage: When would that have been?

Eloesser: Some time in the thirties, I guess.

Lage: Is there anything else you'd like to add? I think you probably have a lot more stories, but we've gotten a nice flavor of it.

Eloesser: Well, of course, then the war came along and Herbert was in the army. My son Arthur had had a very sad case of infantile encephalitis so he was unable to walk very much, and it was for him that I did the walking. I used to encourage him and drag him up over the rocks and that sort of thing. He loved it. He's a good walker now, and Herb's a good walker. We used to make that walk that goes up behind Phoenix Lake very often. It goes up to Phoenix and then down into Hidden Meadow and goes around and comes out agin by Phoenix Lake. It takes about two or three hours. Otherwise I've led a very quiet life.

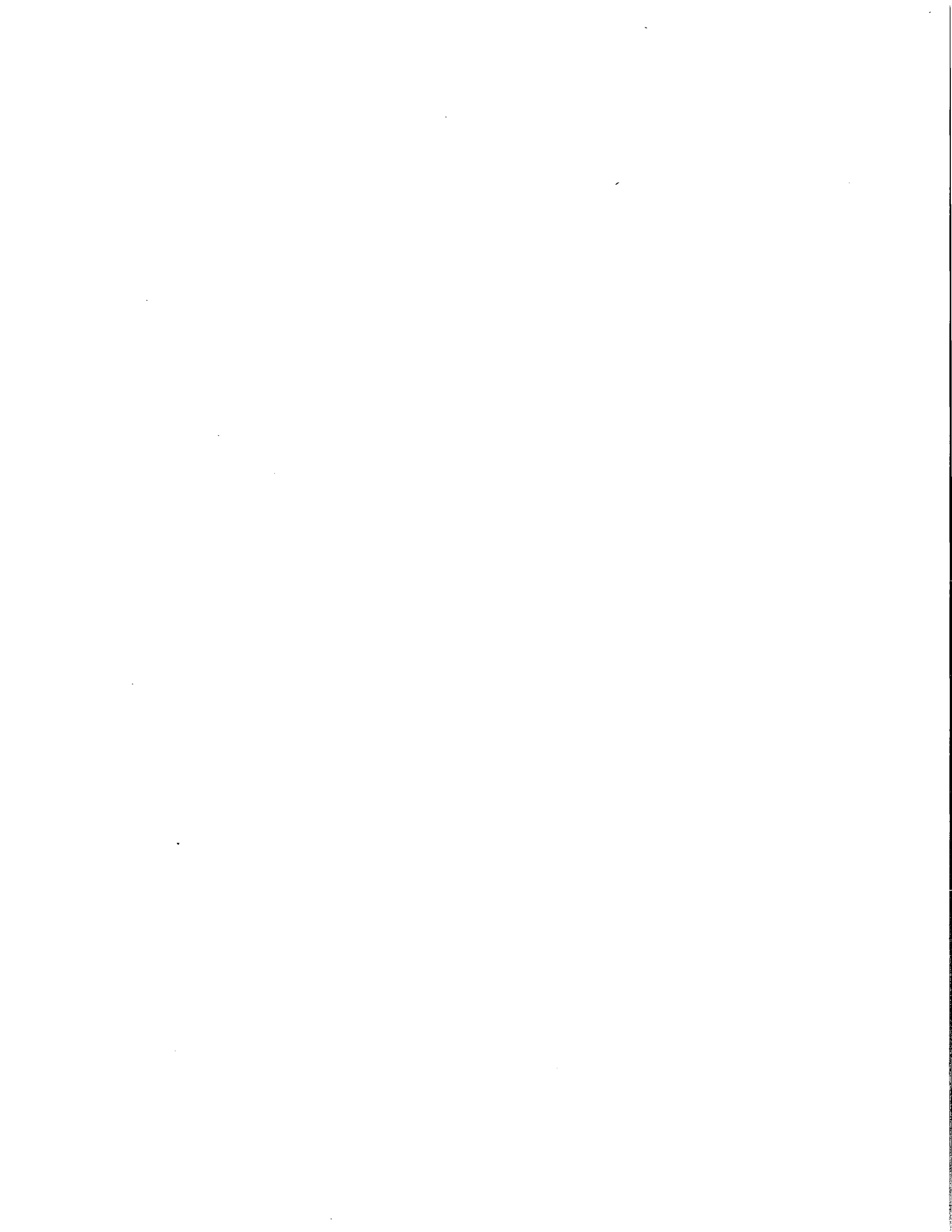
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Sierra Club Oral History Project

H. Stewart Kimball

NEW ROUTES FOR SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS  
1930s-1970s

An Interview Conducted by  
Robin Brooks  
1980

With an Introduction by  
Richard M. Leonard

Sierra Club History Committee  
1985

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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## INTRODUCTION by Richard M. Leonard

More than a hundred years ago John Muir wrote:

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.

Almost a hundred years ago Muir founded the Sierra Club "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 government in preserving the forests and other natural features of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. . ."

Muir believed that those who knew the beauty of the mountain regions by personal experience there would be best able to assist in preserving them. He therefore persuaded young William E. Colby to start the outings program of the Sierra Club. The first high trip was in 1901 in the relatively remote wilderness of Tuolumne Meadows. Colby faithfully carried on for thirty-six years.

In 1937 Herbert Stewart Kimball, just out of medical school, volunteered to serve as the high trip doctor for three weeks of pack trips through Glacier National Park in Montana and then to five of the national parks of Canada. That led quite naturally to his dedication to Muir's political philosophy of "explore and enjoy," by accepting the heavy responsibility of chairman of the outings committee for many years.

His leadership came during a particularly critical period when there arose international recognition and debate as to the danger of "loving to death" natural beauty and wild places. To solve that very real dilemma the outings were diversified as to type, geography, and time of year. Thus, burro trips, knapsacking, base camps, "light" high trips, and foreign travel were all planned, made available, and often led by Dr. Kimball. He was especially generous in scouting and then later leading trips into foreign countries that brought Sierra Club members into areas of interest not open to normal "tourist" travel.

His service to the ideals of the Sierra Club over a half century has, of course, been much broader than the outings. This is rather briefly covered in his oral history, including, as an example, twelve years on the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club from 1949- 1961.

The good that he has accomplished in long-time preservation of natural beauty throughout the world will long live after him.

Richard M. Leonard  
Sierra Club Honorary President

June 7, 1985

INTERVIEW HISTORY

H. Stewart Kimball has been associated with Sierra Club outings for over fifty years. Joining his first outing in 1931, he became the high trip doctor during his second year in medical school in 1936. After World War II, Dick Leonard appointed him to the outing committee. Dr. Kimball chaired the outing committee from 1951 to 1972 and then took charge of the international outings program. As chairman, he pioneered the highlight trips and the foreign trips, both designed in part to reduce the impact of club outings on the Sierra Nevada.

With his half century of service to the outings program, Dr. Kimball has observed many changes in club and outing administration, and in the natural areas the outings visit. His interview is valuable for its perspective on those changes and for his insider's description of key issues surrounding the outings program and its relation to the purposes of the Sierra Club.

Dr. Kimball was interviewed for the Sierra Club History Committee's oral history project on January 14, 1980. Robin Brooks, his interviewer, is a history committee member, professor of history at California State University, San Jose, and leader in the Sierra Club outings program.

Ann Lage, Cochair  
Sierra Club History Committee

May 15, 1985

I THE OUTINGS COMMITTEE - EARLY YEARS  
[Interview 1: January 14, 1980]##

First Association with the Sierra Club

Brooks: Stewart, do you want to begin by talking about when you went on the first outing, when you joined the Sierra Club, and how you got interested in the mountains in the first place?

Kimball: Very well. My parents were always Sierra Nevada-oriented persons having gone to Yosemite in 1907, the year after they were married, and that's a wonderful story in itself--going to Hetch Hetchy before it was dammed. After I got into college, they thought that I should get out of the nest as far as they were concerned. My mother had heard of the Sierra Club high trip through my father's sister, and so she joined me up to go on the high trip of 1931, which was in Yosemite. For four weeks in the summer of 1931 I went on that one and was introduced to the high trip.

In 1932 I received a scholarship award for meritorious studies as a freshman at the University of California at Berkeley, so I used the fifty dollars that I got for that to pay for my 1932 high trip, and that went into the Kings Canyon area, I believe.

In 1932, '34, and '35 another fellow and I--I was in medical school and he was a farmer up near Winters--bought a string of burros and did our burro packing out of the Florence Lake area. In 1936 I applied to Francis Tappaan to be the club doctor on the 1936 high trip. I had then finished my second year in medical school, and, of course, I knew everything about medicine! I shall never forget the look on Francis's face when I arrived at camp and announced to him that I was his doctor [chuckles]. He thought this young fellow was anything but what he expected.

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 28.

Kimball: Anyway, we had a fine trip in '36 and then in 1937 Dick Leonard had taken over the running of the high trip. He had a trip to Glacier in Canada and asked me to go along as doctor. Of course, Dick and I had been friends for some time because I had become active with him in the Cragmont Climbing Club and skiing. He was the prime motivator in the Cragmont Climbing Club. So we went to Glacier Park on our own private train and from there to Canada and back again.

In 1938 Betty and I were married, and I started my internship, so that took me out of all Sierra Club activities as far as summers were concerned.

### Burro Trips

Kimball: In 1939 I joined with Milton Hildebrand in running the second year of burro trips. In '39, '40, and '41, I led burro trips. I shall never forget the end of the trip in '39-- it was in Tuolumne Meadows. We came back after two weeks of being away from the world, and we sat down and listened to a radio and heard about Germany's invasion of Poland and the beginning of World War II.

The last organized trip was in '41 because December, of course, was Pearl Harbor, and then we were immersed in the war. All of us were busy in the service in one way or another, and all of the Sierra Club activities were curtailed because of a lack of leadership, gas rationing and so forth. Oliver Kehrlein and Herbert Breed carried on the base camp for a summer or two.

When we got back in '45 I guess the first resumption of the outing committee was in '46 or '47 (I can't remember now) with Dick Leonard leading the high trip, and with burro trips and base camps. Dick Leonard asked me to join the outing committee as his medical consultant. I believe the group there that was eventually the outing committee was Dick Leonard as chairman, Oliver Kehrlein and Herbert Breed because they led the base camps, and Dave Brower because he was quite active in high trips and all outings and affairs of the Sierra Club--this was long before he became executive director. Bestor Robinson also came in about this time. He had been active in skiing and building the Clair Tappaan Lodge. So several years went by there and with the program growing, the Leonard family, and Dole family, Kimball family led their own private burro trips with their families which were burgeoning during these years. Then eventually, as the children grew older and we didn't do it so much, the family burro trip was incorporated into the Sierra Club burro trips.

### River Trips

Kimball: Knapsack trips had been started. Somewhere in the fifties Dinosaur National Monument had to be saved from inundation. We began running river trips with the Hatch concessionaire back in Vernal, Utah, and that was the beginning of the river trip part of the outing committee. Lou Elliott was the leader of our river trip part. There was a time there when he wondered whether the outing committee should acquire river trip equipment and run our own river trips or work through concessionaires and also a time when the Mount Whitney pack train was faltering, when we wondered whether we should buy out the Mount Whitney pack train and run our own pack trips instead of getting a packer. But the policy was developed that the Sierra Club Outing Committee would not put money into buying equipment but would work through concessionaires, and that policy has been in effect up to this time. But I'm getting ahead of myself as far as my own activities on the outing committee.

In the early fifties or late forties (I can't remember exactly the date), Dick Leonard wanted to bow out of being chairman of the committee. It was not really a formal committee in those days so much as it was just a working group to run the trips. That's the way it started. Then we added on all these other types of trips and brought into the working group the chief sponsor of each trip, such as the burro trip, the knapsack trips, the family burro trips, the base camps and so forth. That just merged into a committee which was called the outing committee.

### Highlight Trips

Kimball: Dick decided to bow out of that, and he asked me to be the chairman of the committee. I accepted in about 1950 or '52, I can't remember which. But I then chaired the outing committee for some twenty or twenty-two years until 1972 when I felt it was time to leave. Things were changing, and they ought to have a new chairman. During that period of time the stress on the Sierra was beginning--too many people--and we felt that there ought to be some ways of bringing people in smaller groups with fewer animals. The high trip in those days ran a minimum of 110 persons, I believe, to as high as 200 or 225 persons in a group. We felt that we ought to do it in smaller groups with fewer animals and possibly with fewer personnel supporting the trip. So I developed a trip which is still called the highlight trip. This was a format in which there was no paid commissary as with the high trip. The people participated in making camp and cooking food and breaking camp. The packers moved every day and worked every day while the people only moved every other day. On the alternate layover day the

Kimball: packer would move the food ahead because that was part of the bulk. In the traditional high trip, all the bulk of food and the people's possessions and the kitchen were all moved together in one block. But with the highlight trip only the kitchen and the people's possessions were moved ahead with the people, while the food was moved ahead on the alternate days. The people spent a day doing what we call layover things, from basking in the sun to climbing peaks. [This reduced the amount of stock required to move camp.]

Brooks: What were the numbers, Stewart, in those early days of highlight trips?

Kimball: We limited it to fifty persons, although on the first highlight trip we had seventy-five persons. Actually, the first highlight trip was not called that but it was called a similar sort of thing, and it was into the San Juan Needle Mountains of Colorado, which I led.

Brooks: So you led the first--

Kimball: Yes, into Colorado. It was so successful that we adopted it as an additional program in the Sierras. Another program that I developed in the early sixties was the idea of funnelling off some of the people from the Sierra. This was a Hawaiian trip which I made in 1962, and then I started the foreign program by taking a group to Chile in 1964. The Chilean trip was seventy-five persons. The Hawaiian trip in '62 was, as I remember it, somewhere about eighty or ninety, and we went to the island of Hawaii for a week's trip during Easter, taking off and leaving from Hilo. Ever since that time there has been a Hawaiian trip.

Brooks: Were these mountain trips or walking trips or were they basically beach camp?

Kimball: No, they were all walking mountain trips--not that we didn't enjoy the beaches in Hawaii. But we also climbed Mauna Kea, and we did as much walking and mountaineering as possible. And I must say that I feel that our trips afforded a foot-scape view of mountains more than any other type or anybody else's kind of trips into these areas.

Brooks: What do you mean by foot-scape?

Kimball: I mean being on your feet looking at the mountains and the wilderness from the trail.

Brooks: When you resigned as outing chairman, then you took chairmanship of the foreign programs, is that right?

Kimball: That's right. That was in 1972.



Brooks: Then you have been the chairman of foreign outings until--

Kimball: December of '79.

Brooks: And you just resigned in December of '79?

Kimball: Yes.

#### Memories of Early Leaders

Brooks: Let's go back to some of the early trips. Are there any individuals that you remember particularly well? Is there anything you'd like to say about the early leaders of the trips--Francis Tappaan, Dick Leonard, Dave Brower, Kehrlein, Breed, or any of the other people? Were there any interesting characters on some of these trips, like a guide perhaps?

Kimball: Of course, when I was a kid in college and went on the '31-'32 trips, led by Francis Tappaan, Will Colby came along on the trips, and he was the revered great man of the Sierra Club outings. I can remember my admiration and kind of holding him as a person too great to talk to and really be a friend with. But that was my problem and not his because he became a very good friend of mine although in of course, a different generation. I remember later that he was still alive when I was outing committee chairman, and we had a very nice relationship. Francis Tappaan was a younger man, the son of Clair Tappaan. He was from southern California in the Angeles Chapter. In those days there were two chapters in the Sierra Club, the San Francisco Bay Chapter and the Angeles Chapter. The high trip was really the one area of activity that molded the Sierra Club into a unit, and it was because of the high trip that people from both chapters mingled and worked together.

## II CLUB POLITICS

### Outings and the Club Board of Directors

Kimball: The mountain outings in those days were the one common denominator of the Sierra Club. That was before they had become as wide-spread and as large a conservation organization, although of course they were doing conservation in a tremendous style in those days--mostly devoted to California, as you know and has been recorded before, in Yosemite, and Kings Canyon Park, et cetera. But it was the high trip and the Sierra Club outings that was the common denominator of all this work. All the board of directors were persons who had had experience and had gotten to know each other on the high trips.

Brooks: Would you think it might be useful to make that some kind of requirement these days, that the members of the board should go at least on one outing?

Kimball: Well, it is the feeling of the outing committee at the present time that this would be very good. I don't know whether we can say that it should be a requisite. We would like to think that it ought to be a requisite and that it might give the board a better understanding of the outings and the function of the outings to the club as a whole. But I think that the Sierra Club has grown beyond being so oriented as an outing organization--which I decry of course, but that's my background--and I think it's quite impractical to ask that the whole board of directors do this. We just know they wouldn't do it. We have asked them to come free of charge on the outings, and very few have done this. I must say that Ted Snyder, our present president, has done this more than anyone else and in fact has been a leader on some of the foreign outings.

Brooks: I also read in the National Geographic, many years ago I guess, of an outing led by Dave Brower in which they talk about a young seventeen-year old climber named Phillip Berry and that Brower had high hopes for him someday as an outings trip leader. Of course, both

Brooks: have been on the board for a number of years.

Kimball: As I say, originally the high trip was the source of all the leaders of the Sierra Club--almost all the leaders of the Sierra Club. If they weren't originally leaders of high trip people, they became high trip people because that was where it was. I can't say back in John Muir's times, although of course John Muir was the one who stimulated Will Colby to start the high trips, and came on them himself. But everything grew out of the high trip originally.

I remember a trip which Dave Brower and I led to Glacier National Park in which Phil Berry was along and just a young man, I guess maybe seventeen at that time. He became active in the high trips and of course also has been on the board of directors as president.

#### Board Member, 1950s

Brooks: Now you served on the board of directors [1949-1951, 1952-1961]. Do you remember how it came about that you were asked to be on the board? Do you think it was largely through your leadership of the outings?

Kimball: Only because of that, and it was felt appropriate that somebody from the outings should represent the outings on the board of directors. So I served, I believe, two or three terms back in the fifties on the board of directors and at one time was asked to run for the presidency. But I determined that and felt that Bradley ought to be. That was one of the best moves I ever made, was to get him to take--

Brooks: Harold Bradley?

Kimball: --Harold Bradley at that time as president.

Brooks: Had he come from the high trips too?

Kimball: Well, he had been on the high trips, and I knew him that way. I just can't rehearse how he happened to become active in the Sierra Club. He was an older man at the time, and I have a feeling that he was at the University of California--having come from some other university as professor--and was a mature man by the time he joined the Sierra Club, not growing up from the ranks like Phil Berry.\*

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\*See Harold C. Bradley, Furthering the Sierra Club Tradition, Sierra Club Oral History Project, 1975.

Brooks: Was there any reason why you left the board of directors?

Kimball: I can't remember whether it was due to the new ideas in which by-laws were changed, that after so many sessions you had to go off the board, or whether I just felt that--[tape interruption].

My wife refreshes my memory as to why I did not run for an additional term on the board of directors. It was because I felt that the Sierra Club was changing its course and becoming more interested in environmental protection than in the proper use of the wilderness. I was very much in touch with the National Park Service people, for instance, who had gone on my trip and who decried Dave Brower's attitude toward the Park Service, in which he was totally against the Park Service in all its actions. I was more in tune with Bestor Robinson's feeling that we should guide the Park Service into the proper use of the wilderness, while Dave felt that we should be the voice of rejection of all use of the wilderness. I could see myself that the board of directors was wrestling with these problems more and more and was not being concerned with the outings. The outings were something that were present in the Sierra Club but were not an interest to the Sierra Club Board of Directors any longer.

#### Club Overhead and Trip Costs

Brooks: Do you think that as a result over the last twenty years the outings program and the board of directors have tended to move somewhat further apart than is good for the club?

Kimball: Well, they have certainly moved very far apart, and it is my rather pessimistic opinion that the only reason that the Sierra Club, as represented by the board of directors, tolerates the outings is because they make money for the club--though I am told by my present peers that my view is jaundiced and incorrect, that the outings are really desired by the Sierra Club. (When I say Sierra Club I mean the board of directors). But I know very definitely of people on the board of directors who are very anti-outings and of the opinion that the Sierra Club should be the epitome of what should be done in the wilderness--in other words, stay out--that we as a club should demonstrate that "stayoutedness" by cancelling our outings. But I have a feeling that I'm a little bit too strong on this at the present time and this is something through which we have passed, and that the club does want us.

Brooks: Did you ever have any problems with Francis Wolcott when he was the head of the Wilderness Committee of the Sierra Club. I know Francis was probably the most outspoken leader of the Sierra Club who said

Brooks: that every Sierra Club person should stay out of the wilderness.

Kimball: Yes, Francis was the thorn in the side of the outing committee. But I was going to say that about the relation of the outing committee to the board of directors, when one gets the amount of money that is requested of the outing committee to raise every year veiled in the idea that this is what it costs the Sierra Club to run the outing committee (which I gravely doubt), one gets to believe that the outing committee is viewed among other things, as a source of income for the Sierra Club.

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Brooks: Do you ever get the feeling or do you have a foreboding that perhaps the board policy is going to simply price the Sierra Club trips out of existence?

Kimball: We very definitely feel that this may be so. In fact, on Friday night--two nights ago--at the outing administration committee meeting we were wrestling with this problem again because although this last year's (1979) number of sign-ups in the activity was on the upswing from the decrease in the past three to five years, it would appear, for one reason or another, that the outing program is diminishing in number of people and in number of trips. But the requests of the budget committee of the Sierra Club have been an increasing amount, so that we have to support it [the outings program] with larger amounts of overhead that we charge the people. In other words, what is happening is that the people that go on the outings are supporting the Sierra Club to a greater extent than the general membership.

There comes a point when, in competition with other organizations and other groups which have certainly burgeoned in the last ten years, the Sierra Club trips are not competitive pricewise. In fact, we were discussing this especially with the river trip program where we buy trips from concessionaires. The concessionaires will give us a ten to fifteen percent break from their fees to run a trip, but our costs are great compared to the ten or fifteen percent differential. So we have to prove that a Sierra Club trip is better than a concessionaire's trip, which is difficult these days because the concessionaires are getting more and more skilled and more and more wilderness conscious and are offering very much the same as the Sierra Club trip.

Brooks: Is this also happening on the foreign trips to some extent, do you think?

Kimball: Yes, indeed. There is a well known foreign trip purveyor in the Bay Area which was started because of his experience with the Sierra Club--my Sierra Club foreign trips--and he got his ideas and his training with us and is now outstripping us in number and doing a very excellent job. The people that run it are all Sierra Club

Kimball: people with the same basic ideas towards mountains as we have, and they're running quite a competition with us.

Brooks: Are you referring to Mountain Travel?

Kimball: Yes.

### Outings and Conservation

Brooks: Stewart, in the last few years has the board of directors or Mike McCloskey's office, the conservation office, or a local chapter asked the Sierra Club to run a national outing in order to focus attention on an area that needs to be protected and conserved?

Kimball: Yes, this has been a request more than just in the last few years. There has been a request from way back, and it's quite a normal request. As I explained previously, the way the river trips got started was Dave Brower's request that we start running trips through Dinosaur. This happened to turn out to be an excellent one, but unfortunately our experience with many of these places that they wanted us to run trips was rather dismal. The fact is that the outings have to make money, so we have to get people to go places chosen by the wilderness people that are often interesting as far as wilderness is concerned but are not interesting as far as outings are concerned. So time and time again we would comply and advertise an outing to some area and get no sign-ups. So in general I would say that the outings have not been successful in taking people into areas that have been of interest ecologically.

Brooks: Has the number of requests for such trips dropped in recent years, do you know?

Kimball: Well, I think they have because of the fact that people weren't responding. It has been explained to them that this is what happens.

Brooks: Is it true of Alaska too, or has that been a happy union of conservation and wilderness experience?

Kimball: That is doing more successfully. I don't know how Gus Benner, who has been in charge of our Alaska area, would feel about it. I'm sure that we don't do as much as the environmentalists would like us to do, but we have responded.

Brooks: I think it was Dave Brower, although I'm not sure where the phrase comes from, but I think he coined the phrase "the old boy network", or was it "companions of the trail"?

Kimball: I don't remember "old boy network", but I can remember "the companions of the trail".

Brooks: Yes, it was in a derogatory sense, or was that so? So you remember the phrase and how it was used?

Kimball: Well, I think that Dave was quite supportive of the outings and that "companions of the trail" really developed a perception of wilderness that was very positive and helpful, and I will say of Dave that he has always been a supporter of outings. In fact, when he left the Sierra Club he wanted to develop an outing organization for his Friends of the Earth.

Brooks: Bob Golden organized to do that.

Kimball: Bob Golden, right.

### III THE OUTINGS COMMITTEE - ORGANIZATION AND CONTROVERSIES

#### Choosing Trip Leaders

Brooks: How did you go about choosing a leader when you developed the foreign program, for instance? How did you decide who should lead it?

Kimball: Well, the foreign outing leadership is an entirely different sort of way because we took already seasoned leaders. I've always regarded the leadership of the foreign group as a kind of a dessert for proven leaders in other parts of the program. But maybe your question should be phrased how did we develop leaders for our domestic trips?

Brooks: Yes.

Kimball: Let's go back to the high trip. I don't know how the leaders that were present when I got there got there themselves, except I knew that they had been participants on previous outings. But the typical way was for a young man (and I must say that originally it was men although women eventually got their place [chuckles]) started out as a pot walloper, which means the messiest, dirtiest job on the high trip--cleaning the pots and pans after the meals. After serving as a pot walloper, why, maybe you were asked to be an assistant cook. Then from assistant cook maybe you got to be cook. Then if you were promising and willing and able, you were asked to be assistant leader or in some other activity on the high trip. From there, why, we picked our leaders for the various parts of the program.

Brooks: Do you feel that there is a carry over between the qualities for leadership needed in the field and the qualities for leadership on the board of directors since most of the people moved from the one to the other in the thirties and the forties?

Kimball: Well, there certainly was. As we stressed before, the Sierra Club is quite a different organization than what it was in the beginning of my days so that what the people demanded of the Sierra Club



Kimball: could not necessarily be found by just being experienced on the high trip. They certainly are essential, primarily, environmentalists now on the board of directors. But I still feel that the wedding of environmentalists with the practical experience of being a mountaineer is good. I still go back to John Muir's attitude that the best way of getting support for conservation is to indoctrinate the people in what there is to conserve by taking them into the mountains and showing them, and showing them the expertise that the Sierra Club has developed through decades of taking people into the mountains. There is no doubt in my mind that the techniques that we have developed of camping are ways which are least injurious to the mountains, and I think it's rather interesting that John Stanley's study of wilderness impact has very few criticisms of our mountaineering technique.

#### Relations with the Park and Forest Services

Brooks: Do you know of any instances where the regulations for the management of wilderness on the part of the National Park Service were adapted from the Sierra Club's policies or when they came to the outing committee for advice? You mentioned that earlier as a policy difference with David Brower.

Kimball: Yes. In Dave Brower's time, the Forest Service and the Park Service were rejected by the Sierra Club. In my early days the Park Service would come to the Sierra Club for advice before they issued some type of directive. That has all changed. Now, I was told by people I was close to in the Park Service that this was due to Dave Brower, and I suppose it could be argued that it was just the development of the Park Service and Forest Service themselves, that they wanted to be more autonomous and free of the Sierra Club. I don't know, but that is a questionable point. I have a feeling that if we had stayed as close to the Park Service as we were before Dave Brower estranged us from it, that we would be a lot better off and that we would bet a lot more cooperation with them than we have now.

Brooks: You're talking now mainly about Dave's tenure as executive director of the club in the fifties and the sixties.

Kimball: Right. Now, I have some very definite feeling about the present regulations of the Park and Forest Services that I think are entirely erroneous. I mean that their way of running it is entirely erroneous.

#### Issue of Group Size

Brooks: Can you give an instance?

Kimball: Well, it's mostly in the matter of group size. It is my feelings that the intent of the agencies that supervise these areas should be to see that they are physically protected. I do not think that it is psychological acceptance of people in the mountains that is the most important. But that seems to be what they're running on because they feel that the most important thing is how people feel in the mountains. My feeling is that the most important thing is how they use the mountains. I am convinced that the way the Sierra Club uses the mountains is the best way that man has devised of using the mountains, now. The alternative is staying out entirely, but I'm talking about use because I believe in the use of the mountains.

But anyway, the Sierra Club, I believe, uses mountains the best way, and I believe that there is less impact on the mountains by a large, well supervised group than by taking the same number of persons and dividing them into smaller groups and spreading them across the mountains.

Brooks: Certainly there are less fires and firewood, for instance.

Kimball: Yes, and a lot of other things too. But anyway, the Park Service says, no. The important thing is how people feel in the mountains and if they are upset by seeing other people, then we should listen to that and reduce the size of the party so people aren't offended. Unfortunately there is some phrase written into the wilderness bill which supports this idea.

Brooks: Also, I think just in terms of numbers that the politics fit in that way. Most parties are two and three and so when you add them up they have a lot more votes than a group of 150 that might go on a high trip. So their experience is what the Park Service depends on to get votes and its appropriations.

Kimball: Yes, that's true. [tape interruption]

Brooks: You mentioned earlier that some of the river trip concessionaires and the foreign trip concessionaires have learned from the Sierra Club in many cases how to run a trip well with a real concern for the wilderness. This seems to me goes back a long way. For a long time the Sierra Club had been pioneering, exploring new places and new ways to go into the wilderness, and then this has been picked up commercially so that perhaps in an unintended way we have opened the wilderness to commercial exploitation and now we are having to compete with our own children. Do you know of any instances of that?

Kimball: Oh, yes that's true, and it's something that we continuously discuss and we also discuss whether the Sierra Club should be in competition with this sort of thing or whether we should just withdraw, that possibly the outings have had their day, that we have demonstrated the best use of the wilderness. We have indoctrinated people into this,

Kimball: and if they are now doing it in the Sierra Club way, what is the point of running any more trips under the Sierra Club banner?

Rewards for Trip Leaders

Brooks: What about the argument that a lot of the older conservationists use, that it's fun?

Kimball: Yes, well, there's no doubt but what the Sierra Club outing program has captured the imagination of hundreds of people in leadership, and they continue to want to run trips for the Sierra Club. They do this in devotion not only to the wilderness but to the fact that they are interested in taking people and in training people and in teaching people about the mountains and how to take care of them. This is a core of people that has a great potential, and to date we haven't stopped the outing program because we believe that we still have a purpose in the world, although I wonder whether sometimes we just continue it out of habit and because we enjoy ourselves.

Brooks: How long has the policy of some remuneration for leaders been going on? I know that on foreign outings the trip leaders don't get paid, but as you said, that's the dessert.

Kimball: The remuneration was from the very beginning. I know that originally Will Colby started the high trip out of his own pocket, and, in fact, when the first outing was started, in order to protect the Sierra Club from any financial losses, it was stated in the bylaws that the outing committee funds would be entirely separate from the Sierra Club and that in no way would outing committee enterprise entail funds of the Sierra Club. So we don't know how much Will Colby made out of the trip and never will, but it always has been a policy that the leader of the trip would make some money and that the people working on the trip were paid a small stipend.

It was defended by the fact that we were in competition with other employers, that these young people who in general were doing it on their vacation, often on vacation as students--but I must say that we really appealed to the middle class, people who were in college or were teachers and had a long summer vacation. We had to compete with other work that they might be doing to gain money to go back to school. Our experience was that we were able to develop a great corps of leaders and workers and in contradistinction to the Mazamas or the Mountaineers in the Pacific Northwest who had a rapid turnover of leaders and no continuity of leadership, that the only difference that we could see between us was that they never paid their leaders. In fact, I don't know whether they even got a free trip. I think they had to pay their portion of the expenses on their

Kimball: trip if they were leaders. We would pay our leaders and possibly that was the reason we developed a continuity.

Brooks: It must be more than that, though, today because at least in the last ten or fifteen years an engineer or doctor or lawyer (and a lot of our leaders are professional people these days) by being paid fifty or a hundred dollars, isn't going to recoup anything like what his salary is. So there must be more. That's really a token payment, I think.

Kimball: It is a token payment, but I think that there is something in even a token payment which wields a person to the organization. I don't know, maybe it's just the fact that it is a token. I'm not sure. But we have been discussing over the last few years, especially because our prices go up, whether we should take away this, and we've been told by our subcommittee chairman who are in charge of all of these problems that it would endanger our leadership pool. So there is something to it.

Brooks: Has thought been given to the idea of taking away compensations, say, for river trip leaders to try to make it more competitive?

Kimball: They don't get it now.

Brooks: They don't get it?

Kimball: No, all they do is get a free trip.

Brooks: So, river trips and foreign trips are both perhaps able to survive because the leaders do it without pay.

Kimball: Yes, and it's also because those two trips are so desired.

#### Outing Committee Finances

Brooks: Let's go back a little bit. One of the other interviews which I've read says that the way Will Colby used to run the high trips is he would go to the office and take some money. At the end of the trip he'd come back and put back the change, what he hadn't spent. Apparently, in the 1930s when Dick Leonard became the treasurer or secretary of the Sierra Club as well as the leader of outings, he asked Will Colby for an itemized account of his expenses. Colby said, "That's it. I've been doing this for forty years out of my pocket or thirty years out of my pocket and I don't know what I spend. I just spend what I have to spend and that's it." And he refused to lead any more trips after that.

Kimball: I hadn't heard that story, so I don't know. All I know is that I understood it is as directed by the bylaws that the outings did not use Sierra Club money.

Brooks: Of course, today they do, or at least they get to give the Sierra Club money.

Kimball: Well, you see, the board of directors saw that the bylaws were changed because--

Brooks: When did this happen?

Kimball: This happened probably in the mid-sixties because the outing committee had built up a fund of seventy-five thousand dollars which was supposed to be separate as a cushion against a bad day. But the funds were invested with the Sierra Club investments, and when it came to our asking for the seventy-five thousand dollars, there wasn't any seventy-five thousand there to give us. The Sierra Club had spent it.

Brooks: As part of David Brower's--

Kimball: Right. So the convenient way was to abolish the business that the Sierra Club funds should be separate and to make them all together. Now, I must say maybe this hasn't anything to do with it, but last month I was up in the Clair Tappaan Lodge at a forty-fifth anniversary of the building of the lodge, and they were wrestling with the fact that the club administration has asked the Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee which has been separate and has own its own funds separately, to co-mingle their funds with the Sierra Club. I warned them what was going to happen [laughs].

#### Growing Bureaucratic Structure

Brooks: One of the things that has happened over the past forty years is the growth I suppose of the structure, you might call it bureaucracy, in the management of trips and the management of the outing committee and the development of an outing department. How did the outings department get started? Is that during your time?

Kimball: Well, no. Virginia Ferguson was the secretary in the office at the time that I joined the club, and she ran the outings secretary-wise with Will Colby and then Francis Tappaan. Then as we got more trips and more sign-ups, we had to have more help, and we got in some volunteers. Then we got more secretaries and then we hired Betty Osborn to be our secretary.

Brooks: When was this?

Kimball: Well, that would be probably in the fifties. I'm not sure of the dates. My memory is failing me about these exact times. With that we built up more and more personnel to handle the work. At the same time the Sierra Club was growing in its conservation programs with the executive director and all that, where before we had no executive director. We had to have secretaries for him and so the whole thing grew and it grew separately. [tape interruption]

Brooks: Outings in the club office are under the control of the administrator of the Sierra Club. So they really have two masters to answer to--the chairman of the outing committee as well as the administrator and executive director of the Sierra Club. So it's one of the difficult times that people have working for us; having to work for two masters you know that there are problems. Betty Osborn ran the office all during your term as outing chairman. Did you have anything to do with choosing her or selecting her? Was she just a secretary who came in?

Kimball: Well, I can't remember.

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Brooks: Another part of the outings committee over the past thirty or forty years has been the development of a bureaucratic structure. As you pointed out, in the early days it was just a bunch of people who came together. It wasn't even an outings committee, it was the people who ran the high trip, and then you brought in other people as other trips developed--the family burro trips, the river trips and so on. How did it move in the direction of a formal structure and do you remember the steps, how we got to a formal outing committee and an outing administrative committee and what do you think about that?

Kimball: Well, you have hit it and given the basis of it. Originally it was one man, Will Colby and then it came on to Dick Leonard. Dick being the type of person he is would develop a working group around him, especially as more types of trips were added and you would get representation. Also, he was a person who just wanted to have more input on things. For example, he put me on in the guise of being his medical consultant, but very little medical consulting was done. [laughs] I think he just wanted to develop a group of compatible people to work with him.

When I took over, I had this structure already formed in which each type of trip was represented by a person whom we called a sub-chairman. Then in addition to that, I would add a person for his particular expertise. I maintained Dick Leonard as assistant chairman because of his experience, and I added Stu Dole as a lawyer because I enjoyed him, and he had things to offer that put him on as legal consultant.

Kimball: So we would develop a committee of peers, of people whom we had met and enjoyed and respected as being leaders of particular types of trips or we would find a reason to have them on the committee, representing a particular expertise that we needed.

In the mid-fifties--Well, I should say that we usually had an outing committee meeting once a year originally.

Brooks: What were the meetings like in the old days.

Kimball: Well, in the old days they would just bring together the committee to talk over policy and to go over the accounts and the budgets and see how they did financially and to get the ideas for the next year. But as things grew and the relationship with the world grew, more things occurred so that at one time we had three outing committee meetings a year. Except for people in the Los Angeles chapter, it was a San Francisco area-based group. The Los Angeles people could come up for meetings, so we had meetings three times a year.

#### The Outing Administration Committee

Kimball: And then there were more things that I as outing committee chairman was called upon to make policy decisions about. I became uncomfortable in making policy decisions as a single person. So we dreamed up the idea of having a group of people meet that I could call on to help me make these decisions.

The idea of an OAC (Outing Administration Committee) was made--and I think it's in the minutes of either '55, '56 or '57, somewhere in there (we can look it up), in which at an outing committee meeting we voted in the idea of an OAC. I think it originally included Bob Braun who was secretary at the time and Dave Brower who was executive director of the Sierra Club and myself.

So we would have meetings or mostly it was telephone communications at the time. It was my policy to bring important actions of the OAC before the next outing committee meeting for review and acceptance, so that it would be voted on if there was a policy decision that changed things. But the outing administration committee has continued and got to be so that we have had monthly meetings with Jerry South as outing committee chairman, he being schooled in the Bank of America and as an administrator and bureaucratic man. He rather developed the OAC as a policy making group and the outing committee meetings were more or less a group to hear what had gone on. More and more, in my opinion, power structure was developed in the OAC and less and less power was in the outing committee.

Brooks: Jerry South succeeded you as chairman?

Kimball: Yes, in 1972. I can see the reason for this. First, the outing committee had grown to a size of thirty or forty people, and it is a pretty well known human experience that discussion and decisions become harder with larger groups. It takes more and more time and unless we had more meetings of the outing committee and devoted more time to discussions, why, somebody else had to do it. So the "somebody else" developed into the OAC. However, I must say that I combatted this thing and there are several decisions that hurt Jerry-- when I passed through outing committee meetings things which we discussed over the heads of the OAC. But I think that we pretty much have reached a balance which I approve of where important things are brought before the outing committee at their semi-annual meetings for discussion and for vote.

Brooks: What about the structure, who chooses the outing committee chairman? You were chosen by Dick Leonard?

Kimball: No, the outing committee chairman is a board of directors appointment. It has become a custom that the outgoing chairman will select for approval of the president, a person. Sometimes--most of the time-- this person is accepted. As a matter of fact, the whole structure of the outing committee has been done in the same way. The outing subchairman will select somebody in his or her group to succeed him who will be accepted by the outing committee chairman. But all of us on the outing committee [taps for emphasis] serves at the discretion of the chairman, and the chairman serves at the discretion of the board of directors.

Brooks: And the outing administrative committee also was chosen by the chairman?

Kimball: Right.

Brooks: There have been two chairmen since you, Jerry South and John Ricker?

Kimball: Right.

Brooks: John Ricker was a member of the board of directors at the time he was chosen to give the board of directors more of an input.

Kimball: Right.

Brooks: Has that made any difference in the relationships between the outings and...

Kimball: I think it has, yes. [pause] Yes, there was a time when there was a low ebb of relationship between the outing committee and the board of



Kimball: directors and also the council, which was developed back in the sixties, I guess, wasn't it? People like John Edgington were very active in going to outing committee meetings and representing and speaking for the position of the outing committee whenever the subject came up so that it has improved due to the volunteer efforts of people like John.

Brooks: I remember around 1975 the council threw off all of the committee people. Is John still a member of the outings committee or is the outing committee still represented on the council?

Kimball: Well, John there again was, I think, chairman because of the highlights or something like that, and then when he resigned from that, why, they made a berth for him under something, I don't remember what. Maybe it was legal assistant or something like that, but he's still a member of the outing committee.

Brooks: Is he still a member of the Sierra Club Council?

Kimball: I don't know.

Brooks: I think not. I think they got rid of all the committees. They just want to represent the chapters, so that would make a separation.

Kimball: Possibly so. [tape interruption]

## IV MEMORIES OF EARLY TRIPS

Climbers, Climbing, and Other Risks

- Brooks: Okay, I think that covers a lot of the structural issues unless there is something else. Were there any particular interesting characters? You mentioned some of the earlier people. What about Herbert Breed, Oliver Kehrlein, Bob Braun, some of the people who are--
- Kimball: Well, there's always--what was his name?--Norman Clyde, the mountaineer. Of course, he was never a member of the outings, but he was the climbing director of the high trips for a long, long time. I can remember him certainly as a character and everybody else remembered him as a character. [laughs] I can remember his tremendously big packs that he carried around that were as big as himself!
- Brooks: They said that he never refused anything. If somebody had an old cast iron stove and they handed it to him, he would just put it in his pack and go on with a hundred pounds.
- Kimball: It could be, yes.
- Brooks: Any other of the early people?• Jules Eichorn?
- Kimball: Jules Eichorn and I were very close friends. We were tent mates there for several high trips.
- Brooks: Did you climb with Jules?
- Kimball: Yes, I climbed with Jules, but I never was a real gung-ho climber like Jules or like many of the others--Dick Leonard, Brower, and Raffi Bedayn, Robinson and so forth. I enjoyed and went along with it. I never developed the techniques.
- Brooks: Were you ever in on any first ascents?

Kimball: Oh, I think there's a first ascent on one of the Brothers in Yosemite Valley that is accredited to me. [laughs] I can hardly remember it myself!

Brooks: Climbing is not as important on our outings today as it was thirty or forty years ago. Is that because the peaks have been climbed or because techniques have become so advanced, or what would you say?

Kimball: Well, climbing originally was the sauntering up a peak during the layover days on a high trip. It was a very important thing to do. Then as it became more technical, pretty soon groups of young people would want to do even more technical things and do it exclusively rather than going on a Sierra Club trip. So that those people who wanted to do more technical climbing gathered to that kind of group instead of the Sierra Club outing. But the outings have always had more or less moderately technical things, not so much the rock engineering that goes on these days, but just roped for safety's sake. That's where it still stands, I think.

Brooks: Did climbing play any important role on the foreign trips?

Kimball: No.

Brooks: Those were too difficult?

Kimball: Yes. We did do peak climbing, but it wasn't a technical sort of thing.

Brooks: Is there any problem with the rising cost of insurance that made the trip leaders less willing to risk any kind of injuries?

Kimball: No, I don't think that the insurance has influenced trip leaders. But the trip leaders are told by insurance companies what they can and can't do, as very well illustrated in a recent trip that I was proposing to Norway, a sailing trip where it was my idea that we would charter yachts and have sailors go over there and sail them themselves. But this was absolutely denied by the insurance company, so that trip had to be cancelled.

Brooks: That also happened, I think, with most water trips outside the United States now.

Kimball: Yes, all water trips except ferry boats were denied our use. But now we have to do it back to where if the ship is under fifty feet and is operated by a concessionaire, we can go on that particular boat.

Brooks: If you got a yacht under fifty feet you could go back to Norway perhaps?

Kimball: But we'd have to have a Norwegian sailor and my concept of a trip was to have a Sierra Club member sail it.

Managing Burros and Packers

Brooks: What about some of the other programs like knapsacking? You weren't involved in the origin of that. How did that come to be developed, do you remember?

Kimball: I don't remember who the first knapsacking--unless it was Bob Braun. But I would have to be refreshed in my memory on that.

Brooks: You were involved with the burro trips.

Kimball: Yes.

Brooks: Do you remember any interesting things about trips with burros? Were there any particular problems? One tends to think of a burro as a particularly recalcitrant animal.

Kimball: [laughs] Yes, that's right. I just remember one trip that had to be abbreviated and I think that was the 1941 trip when we got up to Woods Creek above Paradise on the South Fork of the Kings. We couldn't get across because of high water. As we used to take along a horse--what we call a "hospital horse"--in case of injury, we loaded the horse up with as much food as we could, and we all carried our sleeping bags across the ford there, at Paradise and went on up Woods Creek, Rae Lakes, and Glen Pass loop. But we went up and back and then up Bubbs Creek and back instead. The burros have their limitations for high water.

We were always having problems with burros, especially catching them in the morning, and we developed one of those myths, a "donkey bell-bird". A "donkey bell-bird" rings its bell on the opposite side of the canyon from where the donkeys are. You go chasing after the donkey bells and then the bird flies back to the other side and rings its bell where you came from.

Brooks: [laughs] I see, that's an interesting idea. Today most of the concessionaires are very responsible people. They are good business people, and in many cases they are younger people who choose this as a way of life, and they run cabins and they do other things. But I've heard that twenty or thirty years ago some of the concessionaires were also real characters. Do you remember any of those people?

Kimball: Well, Allie Robinson, who was the owner of the Mount Whitney pack trains and who financially became involved with Norman "Ike" Livermore, was a character who always rode, as all of his packers always rode, but he rode a mule, [laughs] which to some western people, riding mules is really a comedown. But he rode a mule. I can remember him riding into camp on his mule. Mules are supposed to be really very comfortable animals to ride, but most men would hardly be seen dead

Kimball: on a mule.

Brooks: Were any of the concessionaires notoriously unreliable or alcoholic, or anything like that?

Kimball: The Sierran people are very good. That trip that we led to Glacier in which Dave Brower and I were co-leaders ran into trouble. We started off from Many Glacier and went north through the tunnel and up to camp. One pack train came in with some food and pots, but none of the other pack trains arrived. We sat up all night around a pot of soup and the campfire. A few people had beds, and as it turned out, Dave Brower's bed came in [chuckles] so he went to sleep while the rest of us stayed up around the campfire. Finally, in came a few other pack trains, and the Park Service, and they really gave hell to that packer.

What happened is that at the roadhead where they were packing up, there were a few too many bottles and the packers all got so drunk that they couldn't pack their pack trains. [laughs]

#### Medical Emergencies

Brooks: Did that ever happen--for instance, do you remember any other emergencies that you had to deal with on some of the early trips either as a doctor or as a trip leader--like hiking out twenty miles to bring in fuel or food or anything like that?

Kimball: Oh, I can think about that, but the only emergency that I can really remember was the emergency when--I guess that was in 1932--where Dutch Leschky lost his ear. Hans Leschky was the director of the San Francisco chorus and he went on this trip in '32 with his son. Coming down, I think, from Ritter or Banner [peak] they crossed a talus pile and his son slipped and fell into the talus pile and the talus pile slipped and caught Dutch's ear in the grinding. Fortunately he came out with his life but minus his ear.

Brooks: As a doctor did you ever have any medical emergencies on any of the trips that you were on?

Kimball: No, nothing really important. I shipped out a few people, but nothing as important as when Dr. John Blosser, who succeeded me and was three years behind me in medical school, was the trip doctor on a high trip in, I believe, 1940. I wasn't on that trip because I was leading burro trips. But the high trip went over Forester Pass on the second day, and on the third day, two persons developed difficulty breathing and obvious rales in the chest and died. Now we know that it was high altitude pulmonary edema, which was not recognized in those days for what it was and it was thought to be some sort of heart failure.

Brooks: Did you and other Sierra Club doctors (Dr. Blosser and Gus Benner) or the Sierra Club make any important contributions to mountain medicine?

Kimball: No, I don't think so. We have developed various types of first aid kits and recommend this and that. But I don't think that we have developed any physiological studies and contributions to understanding of high altitude medicine.

Brooks: How about the drug manufacturer, Cutter? He has always had a lot to do with the Sierra Club, and Cutter is very famous. Do you remember him?

Kimball: Bob Cutter, yes, I remember him. He was a person who always rode on the high trips. On the high trips the majority of the people would walk, but there may be four or five persons who hired horses and rode. Bob Cutter and his friends rode on the high trip. In fact, the Cutter group often made their own personal trips as well but always a horseback trip. As a contribution to the Sierra Club he developed this list of things that were good to take on a high trip and that has been perpetuated as the Cutter List with changes. In fact, it was due for a change the last three or four years, but I don't think anybody ever did it.

#### The Sierra Club Cup

Brooks: Did you ever come across any interesting stories about the Sierra Club cup?

Kimball: Well, of course, I know all about the Sierra Club cups because they were already in existence when I came on the scene back in '31--the name stamped on the bottom, "Sierra Club of California". But the cup had been manufactured for outings and the Appalachian Mountain Club used the same thing with their name "Appalachian Mountain Club" on the bottom. Then came World War II, and dies that were made to draw the cup were destroyed or lost or something during the war.

After World War II there was no person to develop a cup. We weren't able to get cups anymore, and so we undertook to have the dies made. I think it cost us six thousand dollars. That investment was quite an outlay for the outing committee at that time. We had a local manufacturer make them and we decided on stainless steel as now being an available metal.

Brooks: Before the war what were they made of--do you remember?

Kimball: They were just steel cups, tin plated. But every once in a while we would find them lost in the mountains all rusty, so we decided to go

Kimball: stainless steel. But the stainless steel in those days was not ductile enough to draw deeply enough to make the size cup that was traditional of the prewar cup. So the postwar cups were always less deep and not quite as great as the prewar cup. Now, just in the last few years, stainless steel has been improved so that it is now ductile, and now we have a cup which is being made for us with the traditional depth.

Brooks: The old prewar depth?

Kimball: The prewar depth, that's right.

Brooks: Do you still have your prewar cup?

Kimball: Yes, I still have my prewar cup!

## TAPE GUIDE - Stewart Kimball

Date of Interview: January 14, 1980

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

Joseph LeConte

RECALLING LECONTE FAMILY PACK TRIPS  
AND THE EARLY SIERRA CLUB  
1912-1926

An Interview Conducted by  
Anne Van Tyne  
1984

Sierra Club History Committee  
1985

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Joseph LeConte was interviewed in his Santa Barbara home on November 10, 1983. Anne Van Tyne, a long-time active club member from the Los Padres Chapter, conducted the interview for the History Committee.

Mr. LeConte is the son and grandson of two other Joseph LeContes, both of whom were renowned professors at the University of California and charter members of the Sierra Club. His father, Joseph N. LeConte, is famous as an early explorer and mapmaker of the Sierra. He was club president from 1915 to 1917 and its first honorary president, from 1930 to his death in 1950.

In this interview Joseph LeConte briefly recalls pack trips in the High Sierra taken with his father from 1912 to 1926 and stories from his father of the first club outings and the building of Parsons Memorial Lodge in Tuolumne Meadows. He remembers early leaders of the Sierra Club and the Sierra Ski Club, and he describes family pack trips in 1925 and 1926, which were joined by the young Ansel Adams. The interview is interesting also for descriptions of early camping equipment and food of the 1900s-1920s.

Following the interview, Mr. LeConte generously donated to the Sierra Club the set of nesting camping pots that his father had custom made by Abercrombie and Fitch around 1905 and which he used until 1930.

Helen LeConte, Mr. LeConte's sister, has also been interviewed for the Sierra Club History Project about early family pack trips and her friendship with Ansel Adams.

Ann Lage, Cochair  
Sierra Club History Committee

RECALLING LeConte FAMILY PACK TRIPS AND THE EARLY SIERRA CLUB  
[Interview 1: November 10, 1983]

Three Generations of Joseph LeContes

Van Tyne: Usually we start these interviews by asking people about their family background and how they happened to come to the Sierra Club. With a name like Joseph LeConte it's pretty obvious how you happened to come, but tell us a little bit about your family background.

LeConte: My grandfather came out from the South--Georgia--after the Civil War. He was a professor at the University of South Carolina, and after the war he couldn't get a job in South Carolina because that was the Reconstruction, and then he couldn't get a job even though he had friends up in the North because he was a Rebel. So he and his brother, John, heard of this university starting on the Pacific Coast. They applied for jobs as professors and got them. They came out in 1869 on the new railroad, and my father was born in Oakland in 1870.

My grandfather made his first trip to Yosemite that summer, the summer of 1870, when my father was only four or five months old. That's written up in the Ramblings\* book that everyone is familiar with.

Van Tyne: Yes, that I enjoyed very much!

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\*Joseph LeConte, A Journal of Ramblings through the High Sierra of California [San Francisco: The Sierra Club, 1900, 1930, 1950, 1960].

LeConte: Then, according to my father, when he got to be a teenager, he'd go with his father on little jaunts around through the Sierra. He went to Yosemite when he was eight years old, in 1878. The family rode in a wagon, and it took ten days from Oakland. He also took some other little horse-riding trips around through Lake Tahoe and the area north. So he got really interested in the Sierra, and when he was at the University of California in the Zeta Psi fraternity, he and several other of the fraternity brothers decided to explore some of this area that the U.S. Geological Survey wrote about at the head of the Kings and Kern River, which nobody had really ever explored much at all since the Geological Survey party was there in 1862, '63, or '64, along in there.

So they got together in the summer of 1890, and that's all written up also. My father made a diary of that whole trip,\* where they went through the Kings River Canyon, over Kearsarge Pass, and down to Independence, and then down to Lone Pine--they climbed Mount Whitney from Lone Pine. And then they came back down to Lone Pine and up the Owens Valley to Mono Lake and over to Tuolumne Meadows and back to Yosemite. He really was bugged on the Sierra then; he never could leave it alone. So he went to the mountains, I think, practically every single year after that 1890 trip--except when he was doing some special work, or sick, or in Europe (1914)--he went every single summer till 1930. So of course, my sister and I were with him on every single trip from 1912 to 1926. My mother, of course, was ill much of the time, and she was not able to do any burro packing or mule packing or hiking.

But then in 1916 he thought, Well, we'll take the automobile. So we drove to Yosemite over the Big Oak Flat Road--a very exciting trip for a seven-year-old-kid. It took three days, or two and a half days, from Berkeley to Yosemite. [laughter] The first night we started at five in the morning and we made Priests, a little town on the Big Oak Flat Road, that night. Then the next night we made Crane Flat or some place like that. And then the next day we arrived in the valley..

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\*Joseph N. LeConte, Journal of a Camping Trip Amongst the Highest of the California Sierra, Summer of 1890, a diary in typescript. Copies in the Bancroft Library and at the Sierra Club's Colby Library.



LeConte: And then after that, as I got old enough, my sister and I went on mule packing trips with him, in the Twenties. Beginning in 1922 and from then on, we went with my father and a friend of my sister's, and sometimes Ansel Adams as a young fellow about twenty-five years old then.

So that's about how I got interested in the Sierra. But then when I got married and went to work, I lived in other places, and I just couldn't ever really get back into it.

#### Recollections of Early Sierra Club Leaders

Van Tyne: When you were a little boy you must have met lots of club leaders. Would you have met John Muir?

LeConte: No, he died when I was about five years old. I might have vaguely remembered a man with a beard. But I think that might have been Dr. Grove Karl Gilbert, a geologist with the USGS, who was alive then and came to our house once in a while. I couldn't say I ever saw John Muir.

Van Tyne: I just wondered; it would really be something to be talking to somebody who knew John Muir. I have some names of some other leaders. Did you know Will Colby?

LeConte: Oh, very well; he lived a block from us. Henry and Gilbert and Mrs. Colby. We were all very close friends. I knew him quite well.

Van Tyne: What kind of a person was Will Colby? I'm a little personally interested because I got the Colby Award a year ago.

LeConte: He was a big man, six-foot-four. He didn't talk like Clair Tappaan and other people like that. He was a pretty quiet sort of guy. He was an expert on mining law, and that's what he did. That was his thing. And of course, with him I knew Duncan McDuffie and James Hutchinson, James K. Moffitt. And maybe you have others you can think of.

Van Tyne: Judge Clair Tappaan I have; he's the only one you have not discussed.

LeConte: A real funny man. He would put on a show at the campfire and take different parts of the play. He was really a funny fellow. And his son Francis I knew just very slightly, but I remember him. I imagine he's still available to talk to someplace.  
[He is deceased.--Ed.]

Van Tyne: I didn't even know Judge Tappaan had a son.

LeConte: Francis Tappaan--you can probably find lots of literature on him. He was all-American end at USC in the mid-twenties, along in there. He was the manager of the outings for many years. He was the general manager, and he ran the whole trip.

Van Tyne: Will Colby was the one who started the outings, was he not?

LeConte: Yes. I wasn't even born then [chuckles], but I do remember my father's telling of Colby's idea: "Well, what do we do with a hundred and fifty people after they've had dinner, and they're in camp, and they've finished their day's trip? What will we do with them? There's no entertainment. We can't make speeches about the geology; that's all been done." So, he said, "We'd better bring a phonograph and have some records." So they brought this old crank phonograph and fifty or sixty records. The first day out, the mule with the records fell in the creek, and all the records were warped and made wild sounds. [laughter] I think they threw the thing away. They found plenty to do after dinner--songs, skits, story telling, et cetera.

#### Pack Trips with Ansel Adams, 1925-1926

LeConte: I remember Cedric Wright and Ansel Adams very well. I went on trips with them.

Van Tyne: Tell us about them.

LeConte: Everybody knows about Ansel.

Van Tyne: Well, if you have any sidelights that most of us wouldn't know-- We know Ansel as a leader and as a great photographer, but most of us don't know him as a person.

LeConte: My sister may have said something about Ansel.\*

Van Tyne: That's all right. You're not going to say the same thing she does.

---

\*Helen LeConte, Reminiscences of LeConte Family Outings, the Sierra Club, and Ansel Adams, Sierra Club Oral History Project, 1977.

LeConte: He was a skinny young kid, and up in Yosemite he was the custodian of the LeConte Lodge the first time I ever saw him--about 1916 or something like that, '17 maybe. Then my family was friendly with Ansel and his family, Mr. and Mrs. Adams and Mrs. Adams's sister. They lived in San Francisco, and we'd go to their house back and forth quite often. And of course, at that time photography was just kind of in his mind; he didn't do it at all.

Van Tyne: He was a pianist at that time.

LeConte: He was a pianist, and he played constantly. Every time we went to his house, he'd play and play. And my sister was also a musician, and they would play together. It was pretty good. Then, as I remember, he got into the photography, and he took a couple of remarkable pictures. So that kind of got him started. Everybody praised these pictures as being just something out of this world.

My father suggested a summer trip in 1925. He'd done Yosemite and all that so many times; he said, "Let's go somewhere you've never been." So we organized this trip with three burros. One carried Ansel's equipment. He would only photograph on glass. So we had about fifty or sixty pounds of glass plates, which had to be very carefully packed. It was kind of bulky because of the packing. He could carry his little camera, but all his big cameras had to go on the pack. He couldn't possibly carry all that. So one burro would carry just his bed and my father's air mattress (as he was getting to be a little older by that time--1925 this was). Then the other two burros carried everything else.

We couldn't possibly carry enough food to stay five or six weeks, but we'd have the Benadom packing outfit--Mr. and Mrs. Josh Benadom (she was formerly Mrs. Kanawyer)--who lived right up there in the area--everybody knows them. They'd pack in food--maybe five or six hundred pounds of food--and cache it in the Kings River Canyon or Simpson Meadow or someplace like that. We just hired them to do it. So then we could pick up food from time to time and stay for six or seven weeks without every coming out at all.

Van Tyne: You certainly wouldn't have to worry about other parties getting there first, either.

LeConte: No, we didn't worry about anybody stealing anything, ever. But they were hidden to some extent. Ansel really got into the photography on that trip, I think. Then the next year we went

LeConte: again with another person. There were five of us, I think, the next year, 1926. And then Ansel really went into it. I think he got married somewhere along in there; I don't know exactly when [1928]. But I never went on a trip with him after 1926.

Van Tyne: You took just these two trips with him.

LeConte: Yes, '25 and '26.

Van Tyne: Where did you go in '26? In '25 you were up the Kings River.

LeConte: In '25 we drove to Giant Forest and walked in from there. Then we went (all this is recorded in my father's diaries)--we went over the Granite Pass to Simpson Meadow, and then we came back and went up to Paradise Valley and up to Bubbs Creek and Kearsarge Pass, and came back--I forget exactly, but that could easily be traced. In '26 we did just about the same thing. We climbed Mount Brewer and University Peak and went up to Marion Lake and up in the upper basin of the south fork of Kings and down Woods Creek to Kings Canyon.

My mother died in 1924, so in 1925 on our first trip we took her ashes and packed them up to Marion Lake at the head of Cartridge Creek, which is named after her, and laid them by a rock there with a plaque. Many club members have seen that, probably, if it's still there. I haven't been there in sixty years.

Van Tyne: I don't know. I haven't been to Marion Lake. I have a friend who has; I'm going to ask him. He's been very interested in following your father's footsteps as far as the travels go and also was following where Theodore Solomons had been.

LeConte: Yes. Solomons even preceded him, I guess.

Van Tyne: Yes, he's very early.

LeConte: My father was a small guy, but he sure knew his outdoor camping techniques. There wasn't anybody better with an axe, in cutting with an axe. And he could hike just about as good as anybody until he was over fifty-five.

Van Tyne: He didn't hike much after fifty-five, or he just slowed down some?

LeConte: Oh yes, he hiked till he--well, in 1930 when he was sixty, he went with my stepmother, his second wife, and they went up and did a little walking, but his legs began to give out. They

- LeConte: diagnosed it as a plugging of the arteries from cholesterol, or whatever--arteriosclerosis of the legs. And, of course, that just got worse and worse and worse until he died. They had to take his legs off.
- Van Tyne: For somebody who loved the mountains so much, that must have been very hard to take.
- LeConte: Yes. A younger person can get by with an artificial limb, but when you get to be seventy-five or eighty-- When he had one leg off, he had an artificial leg and a cane, and he did all right. But when the other one had to be amputated, then he just took one look at himself, and he just gave up. He was eighty years old.
- Van Tyne: Well, after all, at eighty you've got a right to be tired, I think.

Hydraulic Engineering and the Construction of  
Parsons Lodge

- Van Tyne: You said you had been around when Parsons Lodge was being built. Would you want to tell us about building Parsons Lodge?
- LeConte: First, I did not witness any of this; I heard it talked about innumerable times. It was built in 1915, I believe, on the Sierra Club property of Soda Springs at the Tuolumne Meadows.
- Van Tyne: Yes, you would be pretty young then.
- LeConte: I was only six and a half. There were so many of my mother's sisters around that my parents could go almost anywhere, and there was always somebody to take care of the children. They left us in Yosemite. Then my father and mother and several friends all packed up mules and went up to Soda Springs, and my father surveyed out the lodge site.

Before that, they had figured that in order to build this lodge--they had the design for it, but the actual construction could be done by club members under the supervision of one or two foremen who knew how to build. But the problem was in getting water to the camp. They'd be feeding two hundred people every day or something like that--and then they had to mix cement and mortar for the floor and in between the rocks. They couldn't be running 150 yards down to the Tuolumne River to get water in buckets.

LeConte: So my father, being a hydraulic engineer, designed a water wheel that could be knocked down and put on mules. It was brought up there and put together, and then they built a raft out of local tamarack logs, launched this thing in the river, and it was held in place by a cable going upstream a hundred yards. And they'd float it in the water with the wheel, six or seven feet in diameter, just touching the water about a foot. The current of the river drove this wheel around, and at the end of the axle were two little pumps that pumped water in a one-inch hose up to a tank built on a high rock above camp. The tank was not metal; it was built out of native logs and lined with a specially designed canvas to hold the water. It held about maybe five hundred gallons of water. And this wheel just pumped the water right up there, and everything was perfect. My father has written all this up in his diaries. Then there are three or four pictures of it taken in 1915, and they're on file at the Bancroft Library. I never did see it.

But the next year, the first time the Tioga Road was ever opened to the public, we drove our car to Tuolumne Meadows. The lodge was all finished, and I saw it then. Of course, the wheel was probably junked. They never saved things like that; I think they just threw it away.

#### The Sierra Ski Club

Van Tyne: What about the Hutchinson Lodge? You said something about that earlier.

LeConte: My father was in a group that he met with practically every Sunday in Berkeley.\* They went for a little walk in the Berkeley Hills and talked politics or anything else they wanted. This idea of skiing was just beginning to take hold. It was done in Switzerland and Norway, and that was it. But a few people had started doing it here, and we knew that the Donner Pass was probably the greatest place in the whole United States at that time. So they decided to all chip in and build a stone building about two miles west of the summit. The little railroad station was Norden. And, of course, that meant we could get there in

---

\*Some I can remember: Jim Moffitt, Jim Hutchinson, my father, Robert Sproul, Eugen Neuhaus, Joel Hildebrand, Gilbert Lewis, John Burd, Walter Kellogg, Fred McGee, Duncan McDuffie, Lincoln Hutchinson, and Bill Williams [J.LeC., July 1984]

LeConte: the winter. Because no highway was open in 1924 or '25; no highway was open anywhere across the Sierra in winter. But the railroad was. So we could always take the railroad and get off and go right two or three hundred yards to this little building.

Of course, these members got older and older and older, and finally they all died except, I think, Jim Hutchinson. I can't think of all of them. There was Robert Sproul of the University of California, and Duncan McDuffie, James Moffitt, Walter Kellogg—four or five others. Eugen Neuhaus of the art department was one of them. Colby. All these people that were in this little group. They bought or leased this land from the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. It fronted onto Highway Forty (US 40), which is what it was called then (The "Lincoln Highway"). By the 1950s I think they were all dead but Jim Hutchinson, and he died around 1959. He transferred it somehow or other to the Sierra Club. It's just a very short way from the Clair Tappaan Lodge. (Club records will explain this.)

Van Tyne: What year was it they built this?

LeConte: They built it in 1924 and finished it in 1925. A group would go up every summer and work on improvements.

Van Tyne: It's older than the Clair Tappaan Lodge, then.

LeConte: Oh, yes. It was called the Sierra Ski Club. They hired one man who was an expert at construction, and his wife was the cook. And they all came up there in the summertime and had a camp and helped build. An architect named Walter Ratcliff, pretty well-known in San Francisco, designed it. It was all made of stone with a heavy-log, very steep roof, and a doorway up in the gable, about fourteen feet off the ground, which we used to get in and out in the winter. [laughter] We couldn't even get to the door in the winter.

I was up there several winters, and I worked up there about three or four weeks one summer.

Van Tyne: You said you didn't go on any of the early Sierra Club trips?

LeConte: No, but on these trips with my father, we would very often run into the Sierra Club on their outing, and they'd just say, "Come on in and eat with us and come to the campfire, and then you go off on your trip, and we're going to someplace else." So I knew a great number of those people. Of course, Cedric Wright and his wife were always on the trip with their music,

LeConte: their violin music at that time. And actually, I took lessons, violin lessons, from Cedric for a while. But when my mother died, I kind of lost the inspiration to continue, and I wasn't that good, so--

Early Camping Food and Equipment

Van Tyne: Tell me something about the equipment and the food. You didn't have the lightweight equipment and the freeze-dried food we have now.

LeConte: No, and that was the big trouble. We carried cans of tuna and salmon because we couldn't rely on fish. [laughs] We'd get fish sometimes, when we caught them in the streams. And then Campbell's soup. Well, you were carrying tons of water around all the way from San Francisco. It was just foolish. But the dried food was so terrible.

Van Tyne: I didn't know there was even any dried food.

LeConte: Oh, yes. In World War I they had some horrible stuff--potatoes--It was just awful. Of course, my father--in the early days they just had flour, and they made flapjacks, and they ate fish, and that was about it. They might have carried a side of bacon, but they had no butter, they didn't carry preserves and all that, which we did. We carried canned butter and some preserves, and then we'd have flour and make biscuits. And macaroni can easily be made, because that's not heavy. Mush. And cheese. But we had few dried soups or things that we have now. We did have Knorr's dried pea soup; it is still sold in supermarkets.

Van Tyne: You would have had some dried fruit, I would imagine.

LeConte: Dried apricots and apples was about it. Mostly apricots. And maybe raisins and stuff like that.

But the Sierra Club, of course, had three tremendous stove that they got from Army surplus. It must have come from the Spanish-American War. The army furnished them, or gave them, and they were enormous things--about the size of a big television set or bigger. One mule could carry one plus two bedrolls. All their pots were on the ground, and they just served out of them. They maybe still do that; I don't know. But my father bought these special pots. He always found that whatever pot you bought at a hardware store would never fit into another one, because there was always a handle that stuck out, a worthless



LeConte: handle. So he asked Abercrombie and Fitch in New York, if they would build him a nesting set of cylindrical aluminum pots that would exactly fit into each other, with the coffee pot going in the middle and getting bigger and bigger. And of course, as soon as they went on the fire, they were instantly black. So no pretense was ever made to clean the outside; we just kept the inside clean. They had a little blue denim bag made that fit each pot. When he got up to pack in the morning, he'd put the pot in that bag and then slip it in the next bigger, and it didn't dirty the inside. One they never put on the fire-- they called it the virgin pot. [laughter] That was for water and whatnot. Because it got you dirty every time you touched these things.

Van Tyne: Have you been at all active in the Sierra Club?

LeConte: No, I haven't.

Van Tyne: I know you're a life member.

LeConte: I know, and that came about because at my father's death my sister and I transferred to the club all my father's photographic negatives--four or five thousand of them, I think. They just granted us these life memberships. We appreciated that very much, and I've enjoyed getting the Bulletin and all that. My sister Helen has been a member since 1922, but I'm not really active. It's an entirely different organization now. Nationwide.

Van Tyne: It's different than it was when I joined twenty-one years ago. I know you came to one meeting of our local group.

LeConte: Yes. I really didn't know anybody, and they were probably talking about environmental stuff, which I'm in favor of, but I couldn't seem to quite tune in with the people.

Van Tyne: Well, it's sometimes difficult, I think.

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