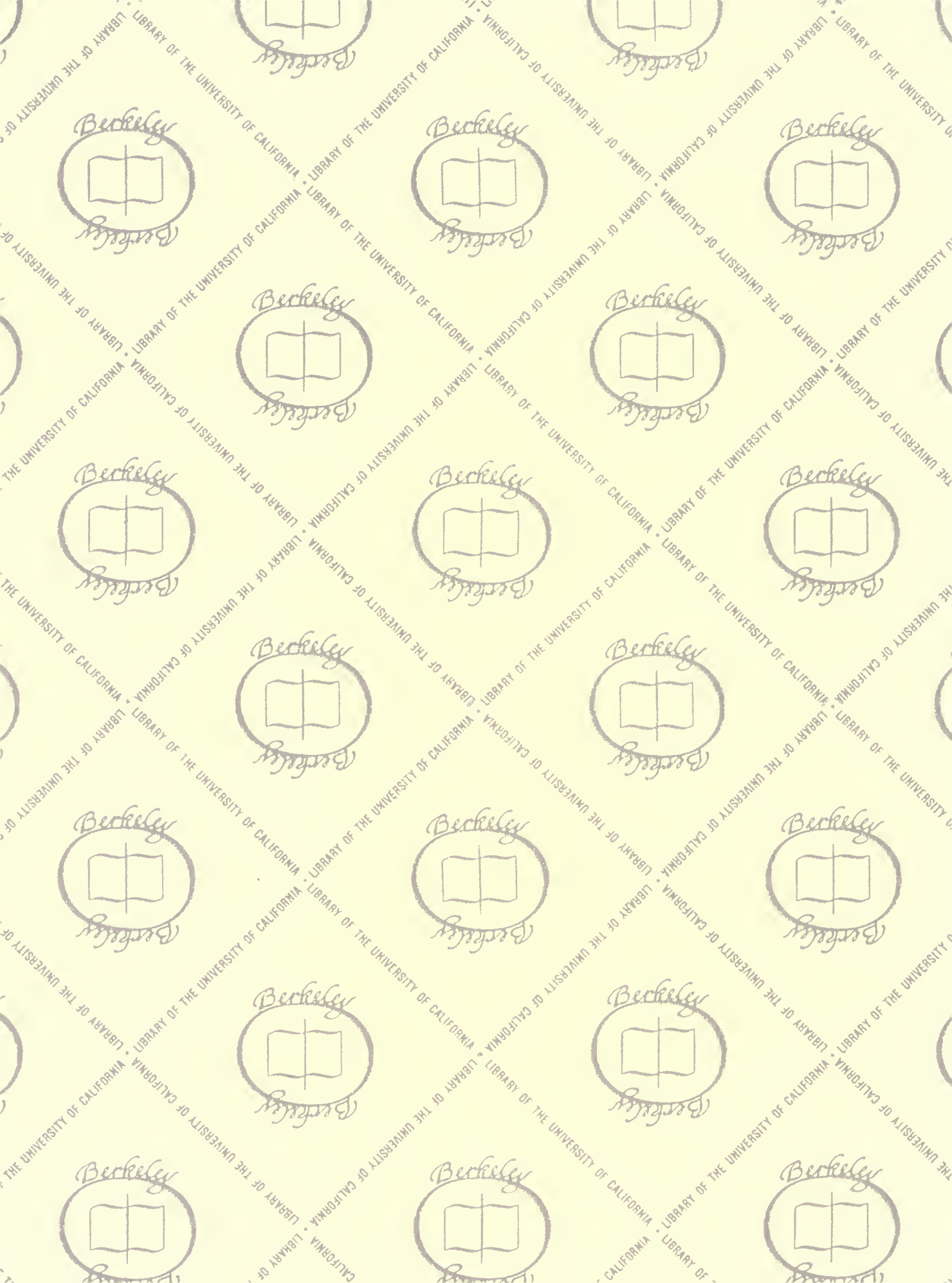


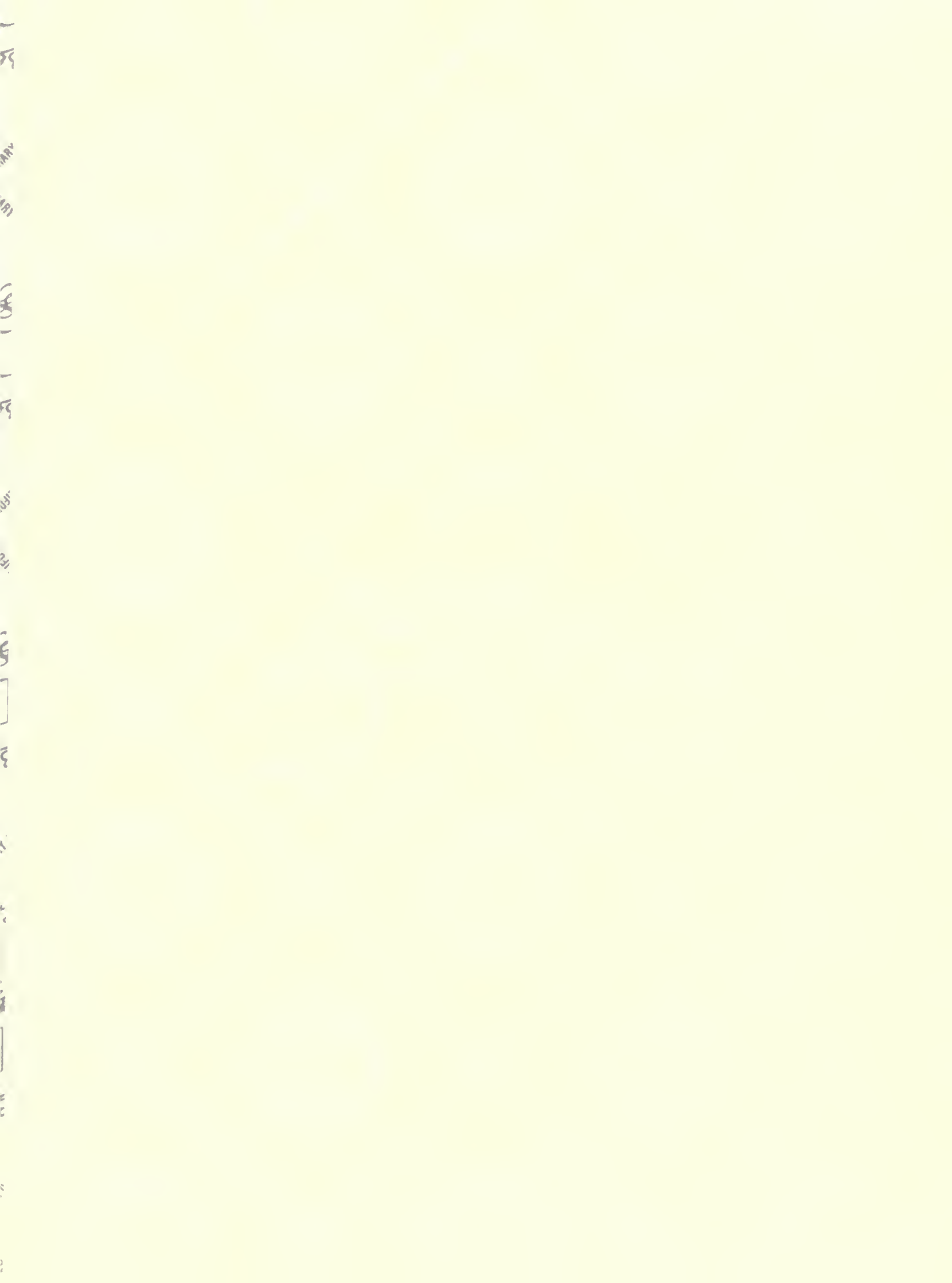
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University History Series

Ida Amelia Sproul

THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE

Introductions by
Robert Gordon Sproul, Jr.
Ella Barrows Hagar

An Interview Conducted by
Suzanne B. Riess
1980-1981

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IDA WITTSCHEN SPROUL

Master of Arts
Berkeley, 1956

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PREFACE

Under a continuing grant from the University of California, Berkeley Foundation, the Regional Oral History Office has been conducting a series of interviews with persons who have made a significant contribution to the development of the University of California at Berkeley. Many of the interviews receive additional support from University departments and offices, special alumni groups, and individuals who wish to honor a particular memoirist. A list of University History interviews is appended including an earlier group conducted in cooperation with the Centennial History Project, directed by Professor Walton E. Bean and later by Verne A. Stadtman, University Centennial Editor. The University History interviews have also benefited greatly from the expert advice and assistance of Richard E. Erickson, Assistant Chancellor, Development; and J. R. K. Kantor, University Archivist.

The oral history process at the University of California at Berkeley consists of tape-recorded interviews with persons who have played significant roles in some aspect of the development of the West. The purpose is to capture and preserve for future research their perceptions, recollections, and observations. Research and the preparation of a list of proposed topics precede the interviews. The taped material is transcribed, lightly edited, and then approved by the memoirist before final processing: final typing, photo-offset reproduction, binding, and deposit in The Bancroft Library and other selected libraries. The product is not a publication in the usual sense but primary research material made available under specified conditions to researchers.

The Regional Oral History Office is under the administrative supervision of Professor James D. Hart, the director of The Bancroft Library.

Willa K. Baum, Department Head
Regional Oral History Office

Harriet Nathan, Project Director
University History Series

February 1980
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Berkeley, California

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- Gordon, Walter A., *Athlete, Officer in Law Enforcement and Administration, Governor of the Virgin Islands*. Volume I: 1979, 397 p. Volume II: 1980, 244 p.
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- Lehman, Benjamin H., *Recollections and Reminiscences of Life in the Bay Area from 1920 Onward*. 1969, 367 p.
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- Robb, Agnes, *Robert Gordon Sproul and the University of California*. 1976, 138 p.
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- Stevens, Frank C., *Forty Years in the Office of the President, University of California, 1905-1945*. 1959, 175 p.
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- Witter, Jean C., *The University, the Community, and the Lifeblood of Business*. 1968, 109 p.
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- Wurster, William Wilson, *College of Environmental Design, University of California, Campus Planning, and Architectural Practice*. 1964, 339 p.

INTRODUCTION by Robert G. Sproul, Jr.

For me, Suzanne Riess' oral history is a remarkable document. It is almost eerie the way it captures the personality of Ida A. Sproul. All of us who have spent tens of thousands of hours in the company of Ida recognize that she has told her story to Suzanne without restraint and with words that "ring true." You may not agree with, or even like, what she has to say, but it is pure, unadulterated Ida Sproul.

Who are "all of us"? To answer this, you must start with her three children, Marion, Bob and John, and then quickly move on to her eleven grandchildren, all of whom are now adults. It is this group that forms the nucleus of Clan Sproul of which Ida has been the acknowledged leader for at least the last eighteen years. It is a very close-knit and truly harmonious group. Almost all of them live within a radius of twenty miles of the 31 Tamalpais Road headquarters.

The loyal supporters of Ida Sproul today--as she enters her 90th year--consist of people who go far beyond her immediate family. The next ring would include all of the Wittschen and Allan Sproul children; the in-laws, Vernon, Cara-May and Marjorie; her surviving friends in the University community, such as Joel Hildebrand, Harry Wellman and Ella Hagar; and, finally, students, people who worked for her, and others who feel a strong and special kinship towards Ida A. Sproul. The total group might not be large enough to fill the Memorial Stadium, but it certainly would crowd Harmon Gymnasium. Actually, these are people who cannot be properly defined as supporters of Ida Sproul. Rather, it is the other way around. These are all people who gain support and a purpose in life just by being near her.

What is missing from this essentially happy tale? I can only think of three facets of Ida's personality that are missing from the pages that follow, and they are really inconsequential and unimportant. For instance:

- Ida was never much of a cook. The only really good dish she cooked that I can still remember from my youth was Navy Bean Soup. My sister, Marion, is a fine cook, but she learned that from my father, not my mother.

- Unlike her own mother, Ida Sproul was never much of a dressmaker or sewer, and I can't remember her with a needle and thread in her hands. (I think my sister is also somewhat better in this department but, if so, she is self-taught.)

- Finally, Ida has always been "a bit hasty." This is no doubt a bona fide character flaw, although I doubt if it is serious enough to mention at the confessional.

The essential truth that I learn from reading Suzanne Riess' oral history is that the two decades from 1930 to 1950 were indeed peculiarly happy days for the University of California. Despite the Depression and World War II, I think life in California was more fun in those days--for everybody. For the three of us who were so extraordinarily lucky to be Sproul children growing up in the University community at that time, it is a delight to have this opportunity to go back and recall in detail just what those times were really like, through Ida's 20/20 vision. I am sure countless others--perhaps a whole stadium full--will experience the same enjoyment from reading this unique oral history. As Ida says at one point, "We had a happy time."

Robert G. Sproul, Jr.

14 February 1981
San Francisco, California

INTRODUCTION by Ella Barrows Hagar*

When Robert Gordon Sproul brought his lovely Ida to the Berkeley campus, it was the greatest gift he could have bestowed on the University. When they left she was the most beloved woman in Berkeley and probably in the state.

It's quite typical of her that in these interviews she doesn't speak of a most unusual and momentous occasion. It was during the 1956 Charter Day ceremonies in the Greek Theater. Chancellor Clark Kerr conferred an honorary degree upon her. This was the citation:

Presidential partner and first lady of the University for the last quarter century; gracious keeper of alma mater's expanding hearth and thoughtful guardian of her heart; peripatetic mother, homemaker and breakfast table counselor, who binds together the world's greatest collegiate family with smiling remembrance and never failing friendship.

The Regents of the University of California, in recognition of meritorious achievements, have conferred the degree of Master of Arts upon Ida Wittschen Sproul.

In these lively memoirs Ida speaks of many of the people and events that colored those years. She entertained kings and statesmen with the same friendly warmth laced with wit with which she greeted the lowliest of us. Her devotion to her husband and his responsibilities and the raising of her three children were the first priorities, but certainly what was best for the University came next.

Ida, inherently modest, speaks often of her lack of education after high school, and then finding herself catapulted into academic surroundings, but the truth is she has more natural intelligence, wisdom, and uncluttered

*Ella Barrows Hagar, daughter of ex-President of the University David Prescott Barrows, and widow of Regent Gerald Hagar, was interviewed for the Regional Oral History Office in 1974. See Continuing Memoirs: Family, Community, University. This Introduction was in part written, and in part dictated in response to a few questions about Mrs. Hagar's recollections of her friend Mrs. Sproul. [SBR]

thinking than most. She's very reluctant ever to give herself credit for anything--again and again she says, "They loved my husband, so we saw a lot of them." Well, of course it was she, too, just as much as he. In many ways as the President's wife she could have been described as the power behind the throne, for with her wise counsel and imaginative suggestions she candidly spoke her mind. She and Bob didn't always agree, but he listened, and always came back for more.

I can easily imagine how enchanting she was when she met Bob. I've seen pictures of her back in those days. Lovely-looking, blond, with a pompadour, and blue eyes. She was, I know, very popular, and I am amused at the story she tells in the interview of how she "chose" Bob, when he came to apply for a job in the organization in which she was a secretary. Her boss asked her which of two he should choose. She in her modest, gentle and direct way said, "Well, why not the tall blond one?"

Really my first memory of Ida was early in the thirties, very shortly after they, she and Bob, went into the President's House. I was working in the Community Chest and I remember planning a meeting of those of us who were organizing a great corps of women to go out, house to house in those days. The finest idea for a place for that opening meeting would be to ask Mrs. Sproul if we could have it there. The great impression that she made on me that day was her complete simple naturalness and warmth. There were several hundred there. She greeted everyone at the door when they came and she stood at the door and said goodbye to everyone. And the group came 100 percent because they had been invited to the President's House, which for many of those townswomen had been off bounds--they'd had no connection with the University. I must say simply that Ida Sproul is unbelievably kind to everyone.

And Ida became one of the most meticulous and beautiful entertainers. Her parties were handsomely and correctly done, and she had lovely things. As she mentions in the interviews, they still used the things that my mother had bought for the house, the sets of dishes, Lenox gold and white, luncheon, dinner, and the glassware and silver. Certainly she had many occasions when she had to entertain certain people, and others like one I remember--a dinner for about twenty-four, lots of fun, lots of laughter, and both the Sprouls were very humorous and lively, you know--and I said later to Ida, "How did you select the people for that dinner?" She said, "We just asked people who'd be fun!" Well, it must not always have been "fun," but she did like interesting and sprightly people, conversationalists, with a light touch.

I never learned any of Ida's background until after her husband died. She never went into her past. Her life was too full of the present. In recent years she's talked a lot about her family and her upbringing. She was strictly raised by her widow mother, and brought up very, very properly in spite of their simple background. She is proud of her background, and when she took me to see the store and flat her mother owned and where the five children were raised, she laughed and said, "And look at the mansion I later lived in."

One of the things that Ida has always done is to visit people when they were ill; the minute she heard anyone was ill, she went to see them, and this she has done for years--even if it meant, as it could, a trip by bus, or two buses, when during the war she wasn't using the car. Now when I think of the recovery she has made from her own illness, the stroke she had in late October, it is perfectly astonishing. There was a point where she thought she might perhaps be unable to talk or even move around. But now that she is recovering she once again makes her calls. The other day she went to visit Grace Bird in Alta Bates Hospital: Ida, Wanilla the housekeeper, and Edward the Chinese boy who lives there, the three of them all appeared at Grace's bedside! Wonderful! Of course, Grace is an old-time friend, and a woman Ida admires--in fact, it was Ida's recommendation to the committee that Grace be invited to be a Berkeley Fellow. She thinks of things like that. While a good deal of the effort she made, like going over to see Sidney Ehrman on his 100th birthday, and going to see Mrs. Esberg periodically, was University-related--"binding together the world's greatest collegiate family"--nevertheless that kindness is Ida's hallmark.

Something should be said about this group that we have had for some years. It started with the Nashes, Norris Nash and Myrtle, and the Rothwells, Virginia and Easton (he was president of Mills), and Charlie Howard, and myself, the six of us. We had lunch together every three or four months, and we'd go up to Inverness, the Rothwells' home. Easton Rothwell named it the Small Group. Very congenial. After Bob died, we decided to ask Ida to join us and she greatly enjoyed it. Then we asked Allan Sproul, her brother-in-law, to join us, after Marion died.

We'd go up to Inverness and Ida would talk all the way--this was in the last three or four years--and we would roar the whole way up and down. She never said anything mean about anybody that I can remember. It was just awfully funny situations, and many times the joke was on her, or Bob. I remember Norrie Nash said, "Next time we go to Inverness"--he always drove us--"I'm going to take a tape-recorder. This is the best entertainment we've ever had." He died and the taping wasn't done.

The stamina and courage with which she has taken her fading eyesight is a challenge to anyone with a handicap. She gave up driving, then reading, and writing. It's a great sorrow to her that she can't read her own letters. She has a secretary once a week. But do you think she's going to be downed by a handicap like that? Certainly not. Young Bob gave her the tape-recorder, and she gets U.S. News and World Report, and in the Small Group she always led conversations off with the latest in political news, not dogmatic, but determined, and whether you agreed with it or not made no difference. She was always informative and entertaining.

Ida Sproul continually brings pleasure to people. What can I say that does justice to such a special person? With hundreds of others I love her very much and treasure her friendship.

Ella Barrows Hagar

15 January 1981
Berkeley, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Ida Sproul, the unchallenged first lady of the University of California, was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office (then called the Regional Cultural History Project) in 1960, and now again, in 1980, and surely if she continues to be the amazing font of rare stories and possessor of the sharp memory that she now is, there will be a movement afoot in 1999 for another oral history.*

The reason for the unprecedented double oral history is suggested in Ella Barrows Hagar's introduction. As the wife of the retired president in 1960, Ida was modest and conscious of position and role, as she defined it, and consequently somewhat guarded in her responses to the interviewer. As a widow--Robert Gordon Sproul passed on in 1975--she put off some of the mantle of "office" and became fully the enjoyable, frank, self-aware, and free personality that these pages introduce.

The proposal for a second interview of Ida Sproul came from various directions. Agnes Robb, Robert Gordon Sproul's secretary and Ida Sproul's friend; Marion Goodin, the Sprouls' daughter; Ella Hagar, a friend of everyone involved, all said it should be done again. Ultimately Vice President of the University Emeritus Harry Wellman and his wife, Ruth, close friends of Ida Sproul's, took the project far enough to get it funded by the President's Office of the University.

Harry Wellman knows Ida Sproul as an able opponent at dominoes--he watched her progress from beginner to ace, "because she wanted to win." That energy and indomitability was the stuff of the great wife behind the great president. And besides that, the love--once Mrs. Sproul and I had a conversation in which I asked her what she'd like to do if she could start all over, and she said, "I would go on a nice trip with my husband."

If there is a clamor for another Ida Sproul oral history, it will be because fans and friends read this one and miss some very good tale that didn't get told here. As an interviewer, I had to get the tape-recorder on, fast, because Ida was at ease with the idea of the memoir and ready to go, instantly. I didn't get on tape the story, told to her by the Wheelers, of

*Duty, Devotion, and Delight in the President's House, University of California, 1961, 103 pp., appended.

Teddy Roosevelt here at the university on the memorable visit at Charter Day 1911, where he was very late to dinner, with only the excuse of purely enjoying sitting in the fine, old-fashioned, claw-legged bathtub, with the shower raining down on him. No wonder Ida Sproul mourns the passing of the furnishings of the President's House, including a splendid tub with presidential memories.

The reader can gather that Mrs. Sproul was a very agreeable interviewee. After some demurrals, we settled into an enthusiastic weekly routine, in July, August, and September 1980, with a brief catching-up visit in December 1980. On the first visit I was introduced to the house, to Mrs. Sproul's interesting collection of correspondence, and to Mrs. Sproul's feeling that an era had ended and that she could and should talk about it. Our interviewing usually took place in Mrs. Sproul's bedroom, sitting at a little table at a window, with a woodsy view into the back garden. There was a feeling of easy confidentiality, and when Mrs. Sproul took her phone calls she explained enthusiastically to the caller that she was being interviewed by the university, and she would call back.

The manuscript was edited by Marion Sproul Goodin, who added her own occasional notes, and prodded the interviewer to go back to Mrs. Sproul on a few subjects. Pictures and further appended family history were provided by Robert Gordon Sproul, Jr. To know both of those children and to be chronicling something about all that family, portrayed in the great multi-generational portraits that illustrate this volume, made it seem almost a noble work.

Jim Kantor, University Archivist, who really cares about the Sprouls and the university and history and accuracy, was a great help in reading for errors in the manuscript. Typist Marilyn White's care and standards are evident throughout the manuscript. And the transcriber, Michelle Stafford, joins us all as members of the vast Clan Sproul, as defined by Robert Gordon Sproul, Jr.

Suzanne Riess
Interviewer-Editor

1 July 1981
Regional Oral History Office
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University of California at Berkeley

INTERVIEW 1: JULY 17, 1980*

Robert Gordon Sproul: Scouting, Skiing, Skating

Riess: I noticed that in your correspondence you referred to your husband as Gordon, rather than Robert or Bob. I was surprised.

Sproul: Robert Gordon: Robert was after his father, but his father didn't have any middle name, and Grandpa Sproul was a great admirer of that British general "Chinese" Gordon, so he persuaded his wife to give their Robert a middle name and that's how he got the Robert Gordon; it's not after any relative or anything, it's just that Grandpa Sproul thought it was nice.

When he went to college he became an Abra and there was already a Gordon in the house, Gordon Wagonet, I think. He was "Bob" or Robert Sproul in Mission High School. (I met him, of course, after he graduated from the university. I didn't know him before.) It was only after I became a member of the family that I reverted to the Gordon. So his mother and father and his brother Allan always called him Gordon.

Riess: What was Abra?

Sproul: That was a club, and now it's a fraternity, a Greek letter one, Alpha Delta Pi, but it was just a club [then], like the women had Rediviva and Del Rey.

Riess: Was that where he lived also?

*A preliminary interview took place on June 23, 1980, and the material from that interview has been included throughout the interview where appropriate.

- Sproul: No, he lived most of the time at home. They lived on Derby Street in a flat. I don't know that he lived in a fraternity at any time. He went to a summer camp once in Swanton in Santa Cruz County and that was run by the College of Civil Engineering, I think, because that is what he was a member of.
- Riess: Agnes Robb said that he was one of the youngest Scout leaders in Berkeley.* Had he been in scouting very early?
- Sproul: Yes, he was the first Scout executive for the Boy Scouts of America in Berkeley. That must have been when he was in the comptroller's office. We [at that time] lived in a little bungalow up here on Grant Street in north Berkeley and I kept a file on them and their activities. The Scouts would come for meetings and different things. But he did get the highest rank in the Scout organization and that's a silver beaver. It was on a ribbon with lots of medals and things.
- He turned it [the job] over, but he always supported it and worked for it. They got a paid executive. I think his name was Charlie Hunt. It was too big a job with his other job, his university job.
- Riess: He obviously was a great believer in the value of that kind of organization.
- Sproul: He was; he thought it was just fine. Some of the other Scout leaders (Stafford Dunlop, I think, was one) were fine men. They did it in their spare time. They took the boys in their troops on outings and hikes and camps.
- Riess: Was there the idea that the boys were underprivileged?
- Sproul: He just thought it was a worthwhile thing, because they really came from very nice--I don't mean to be snobbish or anything--but good families in Berkeley. I mean they were not problem children.
- Riess: That's what I wondered.
- Sproul: It was something he believed in and thought was good for young people and he liked the type of men that would give their Saturday afternoons to take them off on hikes or bird lectures or nature lectures or something that he thought was good for young people.

*See interview with Agnes R. Robb, Robert Gordon Sproul and the University of California, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1976.

Sproul: [Our children and] our grandchildren are Scouts. They had a great interest. Bob got to be an Eagle Scout--that is as far as you can go--and he was a member of Troop 7. John was a member of Troop 7, but he didn't make it to Eagle; he never tried. He got to be a first-class Scout and the troop all got up and cheered him the night he made that! [laughter] In Marion's family I think she's got a couple of Eagle Scouts. It's only Bob in our family that was an Eagle Scout; John wasn't. But John has two children that were-- Johnny Jr. and Malcolm and even Richard, I think, are all Scouts.

It's something that he [Robert Gordon Sproul] thoroughly believed in. He thought it was a good organization and he liked the people who organized it.

Riess: I know that very early in his career he was involved with Newton Drury and the Save the Redwoods League. Was he also in the Sierra Club? Was he a skier?

Sproul: Yes, he belonged to the Sierra Ski Club and that was a group of professors from the University of California and from Stanford. They built [perhaps] the first ski lodge up in the Sierras that was built in California. Skiing was not an accepted sport or a very well patronized one in those days. These were professors, early California professors--I think Dr. Barrows, Joel Hildebrand, the LeContes --I guess just Little Joe. The fellowship was great. They later gave that lodge to the Sierra Club. It's up near Norden.

Riess: I was interested in whether your husband had joined what people were in those days joining. For instance, Stephen Pepper told me how popular ice skating was with a certain crowd in Berkeley.

Sproul: I used to take my children; John and Bob went when they were in Emerson Grammar School [to] Iceland here, the Berkeley ice rink.

Riess: Stephen Pepper said there was a group of faculty people who skated.

Sproul: Yes, he and Ellen, his wife, skated. He carried her skates for her and they belonged to what was called the St. Moritz. John belonged to that more than the others.

The House on Piedmont Avenue

Riess: When your husband was comptroller, where were you living?

Sproul: When we first lived in Berkeley, we lived on Grant Street near Rose right near the school [1403 Grant St.]. Then our next house was on Elmwood Avenue, between Piedmont and College [2737 Elmwood]. That is where John was born. Then we went up by the stadium and we lived in a house on Piedmont Avenue [2239 Piedmont].

Sproul: We bought it in the name of the university because they wanted a toehold in that area. She [owner] thought we were cheating because we didn't tell her we were buying it for the university. She had it on the open market. We didn't ask her to come down five cents; we just paid her price. But she didn't like it because if she had known it was the university, she would have raised the price considerably.

It was a good investment for the university. I suppose we paid rent--I can't remember all that--but anyway, they got a whole block there. Professor [Walter Morris] Hart was at one end and Professor [Arthur] Ryder in Sanskrit.

Riess: That certainly did put you in an interesting neighborhood.

Sproul: Oh, that was wonderful for the children because the Luther Nicholises lived right up the hill by the stadium and in back of our house and their boy and my son Bob were great friends. We were in the Webber house, it was called.

Riess: What Webbers were these?

Sproul: They were very prominent in the university. They are still going strong. It was a big French house. Somebody [had been] a musician in the house and it had very good acoustical arrangements. The Webbers had a beautiful grand piano.

It was built like in France with a big façade on the street, three stories, and then in the back there was a little courtyard. It had a beautiful stairway and high ceilings. The boys had an attic room to play with their tin soldiers and run their railroad tracks.

Nichols was in university administration too, Luther Nichols. Luther Jr. and my Bob Jr. were great pals and they played in this empty room upstairs in this house where the boys had their electric trains, and they also had loads of tin soldiers. Luther would be governor of Texas and Bob would be governor of California (they tried to pick the biggest states) and then they'd move their armies around on the floor. They drew up rules for their two different armies. Rule number one for Bob's army, when he was governor of California, was, "No laughing at the general." [laughter] I thought that was priceless! "No laughing at the general!" It tickles me to this day. They had the cannons and all kinds of things and they played up there and they had wonderful times.

You don't see tin soldiers anymore. I suppose it got to be bad for the children's morale, a war complex or something.

Riess: Maybe because of the lead in tin or something like that.

Sproul: Well, they had dozens of them, both Luther and Bob, as I say, and they maneuvered them around on the floor.

That house, and a whole block there, that was torn down to build International House.

Riess: In the next block was the Thorsen house, the Greene & Greene house [2307 Piedmont].

Sproul: Yes, that's supposed to be beautiful inside.

The Walter Morris Harts

Riess: When you were there, who were your friends?

Sproul: Oh, Charlie Noble across the street in mathematics, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Morris Hart at the end of Bancroft and Piedmont, that other end from the stadium. He and his wife together had beautiful, beautiful furniture and lots of books and objects of art. He was head of the English department--chairman--and he was dean of the summer school. They gave teas for the summer session faculty that were perfectly beautiful--beautifully run, all the details and the china and the service and the quality of the food. Beautiful parties. His wife was a marvelous hostess.

Riess: Were they from the East originally?

Sproul: I think he came from Haverford. That is in Pennsylvania. But her family was an Oakland family, a very well-to-do Oakland family, so they had been used to beautiful things.

Riess: So she already had a lot of connections around here.

Sproul: Yes.

Riess: Would you say that they had been particularly helpful to you when you became part of the university family?

Sproul: Very--if I kept my eyes open and observed how things were done beautifully by someone else.

Riess: On the other hand, it seems that what your husband achieved in 1930--becoming the president of the university--was just what Walter Morris Hart wanted to be. So didn't that make for some strain between the two couples?

- Sproul: Strain, yes, because he thought he was much better qualified. His academic record was different. My husband didn't have an academic record. He graduated from the university. He is the only president they had who was an undergraduate here. He was in civil engineering and the only degree he had was just his B.A. or M.A. He didn't have a Ph.D., and Walter Morris was very intellectual and very scholarly, a different type. He wasn't so good at public relations as my husband. He was just by nature not so outgoing, not so exuberant.
- Riess: Had he [Hart] not made very good friends among the regents or something? Why do you think he was passed over?
- Sproul: Well, it was because my husband was pretty young. He was only thirty-nine. Mr. Hart was older, had much more of an academic background than all the other presidents up there on that panel [in Sproul library] had. But none of them were so adept as he [Robert Gordon Sproul]. His lobbying experience up in Sacramento really was his introduction, I think, to the presidency, in a way, because he did his homework. If they asked him questions about money or funds, he could give them correct answers. He had a fabulous speaking voice and a very good memory. If he'd meet some of those people up there, legislators, he'd have something to talk to them about.
- Riess: Walter Morris Hart really lacked that touch?
- Sproul: Yes, he was far more formal, quieter, not so easygoing.
- Riess: They both had been vice-presidents for that five-year period from 1925 to 1930.
- Sproul: Yes, so had Baldwin Munger Woods.
- Riess: He was another vice-president?
- Sproul: Yes, there were three.
- Riess: During that period of time was there some tension about who was going to get it?
- Sproul: I think, secretly. They didn't wear their hearts on their sleeves, but I think perhaps within their own minds. Anyway, the faculty described the vice-presidents or the potential presidents [as] "eyebrow"--that was Campbell, and, of course, he had these very bushy, long eyelashes and brows. "Highbrow" was Walter Morris Hart, and "lowbrow" was Baldwin Munger Woods because he was just a civil engineer. He knew a lot about buildings and construction and he was an able man. But that's the way they were described.

- Riess: Eyebrow, highbrow, and lowbrow--what was Bob described as?
- Sproul: I guess he'd be a lowbrow because he didn't have a lot of academic credentials.
- Riess: During that period of time, did you and Mrs. Hart remain friends?
- Sproul: We were very good friends and we often went up to Glen Alpine at Tahoe. The Harts spent a good deal of time up there, too, and we'd go on hikes and swim.
- Riess: What is Glen Alpine?
- Sproul: Glen Alpine is a public resort up there.
- Riess: I don't know that. Was that a popular spot?
- Sproul: With lots of people, yes. They had a nice natural spring there and it was near Grass Lake and there were very good walks.
- Riess: Did the Harts have young children?
- Sproul: No, they had young relatives. They had Dr. Charles Noble*, who was Mrs. Hart's nephew. He was in medical school. Dr. Noble's father was a doctor in Oakland named von Adelung and that was a very nice, prosperous Oakland family, an old Oakland family. Mr. von Adelung was a doctor and his wife was Mrs. Hart's sister. So she was a very accomplished hostess and grew up with a beautiful home and lovely things and had very good taste. She was a very nice person, too. I liked her. She was very nice.
- Riess: Did she have as close a relationship with Mrs. Wheeler as you had had?
- Sproul: More or less, I think, more or less. Mrs. Hart was very admirable and a very fine person, and Mrs. Wheeler would respect and admire her good taste and her beautiful things.
- Riess: I understand Hart brought exceptional people to be on the summer session faculty.
- Sproul: Very distinguished; some wonderful ones, just wonderful.
- Riess: Whom do you think of?
- Sproul: I think of Professor and Mrs. Nitze. Their son is in the state department, Paul Nitze. Mr. Nitze (I think his name is William) and his wife, Nina, had beautiful things too. Her people were the

*Dr. Charles Noble, Jr., son of the mathematician Charles Noble, Sr., married Agnes von Adelung. Agnes von Adelung (Noble) was the daughter of Mary Borland von Adelung, and the niece of Agnes Borland Hart (Mrs. Morris Hart).

Sproul: Raymond Steamship Company and they were people of wealth and travel. People just adored her. Later he became a professor at UCLA.

Riess: Were instructors brought out to summer session as a kind of proving ground to see whether they would be good for faculty?

Sproul: No, not so much that. It was a sort of short--they were probably people that were maybe retired. Nitze was retired from Chicago, I think.

Anyway, there was John Adams and Lady Agnes Adams and he was in education and he was on the UC faculty for a while.

Lady Agnes Adams

Riess: Why do you say "Lady" Agnes Adams?

Sproul: Because that was her title.

Riess: Oh, I thought you were being just a tiny bit sarcastic.

Sproul: No, no. She was British--Scottish, as a matter of fact. She was a Scot and she was one of the most charming people I have ever known in my life because she had humor. For a while she lived in this funny, run-down hotel on Hollywood Boulevard--I think it was The Plaza. She liked to invite you to lunch and then she'd give you a list of the guests. She'd say that she was inviting you at 12:45 for a 1:00 lunch and the following people would be there and you got a description of the people and what they did in the community so you would have a little something to start conversation with.

She served tea every afternoon and nearly all of the prominent people in Pasadena would come for tea at 4:00 at this awful run-down hotel. In the bathroom she had a gas jet and a tea kettle and after she got the tea made she put a cosy on it and we had tea and cookies at this place. As I say, utter charm. I never knew anybody more charming or a better hostess. All of these extremely wealthy people with their chauffeurs would have to drive up to this ramshackly place on Hollywood Boulevard. They were to be prompt; if they were invited for lunch it was 12:45 for a 1:00 lunch.

- Sproul: She wrote for Puck Magazine about American customs and American people. They didn't have any children and she gave all of the proceeds that she made from her writing to her nieces so that they could buy a little fur neck piece or do something extravagant that they wanted to do, not just ordinary.
- Riess: These were nieces back in Scotland?
- Sproul: Yes, and in Great Britain. She taught me never to say anything about people being Scotch. Scotch is a liquor. They are Scottish or Scots. That's what she said! You must never call them Scotch. [chuckles]
- Riess: What were the reasons that people gathered around her? What did she have to offer?
- Sproul: Her wit and her charm and her kindness and her interest, her ability to write. Her interest in people--as I say, even when you went to a party you got ahead of time a nice, neat, little description of the guests so that you could start off a conversation.
- Riess: Would you do that when you were introducing people?
- Sproul: I think it takes a lot of thought and all of that, but I think it's very nice to do it. But she just had great talent and great charm. She looked like a little brown gnome and she made me think of that woman in Barrie's play, What Every Woman Knows. Did you ever read that play?
- Riess: No.
- Sproul: Well, you ought to read it. It's great. It's [by] Sir James M. Barrie and, of course, he's a Scot too. She makes me think of the lady in that because you know what happened in that: he was married to a plain but very charming lady, small and of great charm, but not a beauty exactly, but beauty in her character and all that. He's a beautiful big hunk of a man and he makes a great success in politics and does very well and gets a prominent position. Then he gets so prominent he meets a designing female lady who flatters him and all that kind of thing and he forgets this mousy little creature that he's married to at home and he falls for her. The little mousy lady had helped him with his speeches and was very intelligent and very literate and all that sort of thing. Anyway, he runs for something under the direction of this charmer and falls flat on his face, and then he wakes up to the fact that she was the power behind the throne and he was just this great, gorgeous, big fellow and all that. But left on his own with this charmer he didn't get to first base.

Riess: That's a fine moral story!

Sproul: Yes, and it's done lots nicer than I do it. But it's what every woman knows--the power behind the throne. She doesn't have to dye her hair or put on a whole lot of false attractions.

Benjamin Ide Wheeler and Amey Webb Wheeler*

Sproul: There were a tremendous lot of people in those days who were really terrific. Wheeler was greatly responsible for the growth here, very largely because he came from two well-established eastern universities, Brown and Cornell. [M.A., Brown, 1878; Ph.D., Heidelberg, 1885; professor, Cornell, 1886-1899]

Riess: So was it his personal request of these people to come and teach that made it--

Sproul: I think so. He had to build them up, you know, the departments.

Riess: He probably in the beginning would have to have lured them here.

Sproul: Yes, and you always have to have something to offer. But fortunately, in California, if you have nothing else to offer you've got climate. [laughter] There are not many places that have a climate like Berkeley with a view of the mountains and the sea and deserts.

When you think that when the Wheelers came the campus was just North and South Halls and, I think, a trail or path between the two, muddy as can be in winter! When they first moved here from Cornell the story is that he would come home at night and Mrs. Wheeler would be in tears. She didn't like the place; it was too rough for her standards. They had owned their own house at Cornell and their son was born there and all that kind of thing. Wheeler is reported to have said, "Amey, I don't know why you take it so hard. I've looked up the records of the people who have come to this place and none of them have lasted more than two years. Surely, you can stand it that

*For another account of the Wheelers, see interview with Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Pioneering in Education, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1962.

Sproul: long." [laughter] And they were here twenty! So she could more than stand it. She helped create it. But Cornell was her first home in their marriage, I think, and it was one that she was deeply attached to and she thought this was pretty wild and uncultivated here.

I remember we had a tea once for a whole lot of scholars and one man who came from France, a French professor, had a physical deformity. It almost looked like he didn't have any neck, that his head rested on his shoulders. He was rather startling looking. Well, she came to the party and she looked around and she saw this man who was not a great handsome fellow but a very learned professor. Her remark was, "Mrs. Sproul, I hope there are no pregnant women here!" [laughter] She thought that that would not be good for them, to spend a lot of time with this poor, deformed man. Anyway, he was there because he was very brilliant and outstanding and all that kind of thing.

When the Wheelers first arrived they couldn't live in the President's House [now called University House] because it wasn't furnished. It was too big and they couldn't afford to furnish it, so they lived up the hill on Scenic [1820 Scenic].*

After a while the university and the regents and Mrs. Hearst--I guess she was a regent at the time, Phoebe Apperson, she gave a lot of the beautiful Oriental rugs--they furnished a bedroom up there on the east side that faced the hills and it was called the Regents Guestroom. (My family never lived there. They never even slept in the room. Oh, I think my husband did once when he was ill. But it was not used by us very much. So it was put back in my day exactly as Mrs. Wheeler had it.)

After they retired, the Wheelers lived in their beautiful house on Ridge Road [2425]. Then when that house burned down in the fire [1923] they went to live in Cloyne Court, which was like a little, private hotel. It had apartments and a very good dining room. They lived there until both of them died. [According to records in University Archives, after the fire they lived at Cloyne Court, then at 2535 Ridge Road, and then again at Cloyne Court. SBR]

*The President's House, the building of which began in 1900, was used for classrooms until 1911, at which time University President Wheeler and his family took occupancy. See University House: Its History and Its Residents, appended.

Sproul: Of course, after the fire they had nothing, hardly, left of their possessions, which was very sad. The boys in the Phi Kappa Sigma house there tried to save a few things for them, a few Oriental rugs and a couple of brass candlesticks and things.

Mrs. Wheeler, Amey Webb Wheeler, was a member of the Gorham silver family. Her people were in the Gorham Silver Company; it was their life and their business. I asked Benjamin Webb [Wheeler] one day. I said I was spreading that story that his mother was connected with the Gorham Silver Company and maybe that wasn't correct. "Oh," he said, "I'm sure it must be, because I'm still getting dividends!" [laughter] She had a delightful collection of silver, which was unusual in Berkeley at that time. Faculty wives weren't affluent or didn't have as much means as her family had. So when she came from Cornell here, she brought her possessions and her eastern standards.

Mr. Wheeler had been the Theodore Roosevelt professor in Berlin and the Kaiser had given him a signed picture and he had a whole lot of books and papers and they lost it all in the fire.

Riess: I have heard so many stories of that fire.

Sproul: Oh, so many sad stories!

They had only one son--he just died the other day--Benjamin. He was eighty-five. Long after his father died he married a war widow [World War I] with a son and he adopted the boy and they had grandchildren and all of that. She was a charming widow. He [Benjamin] was the apple of his mother's eye and she didn't think he would ever find a girl that was good enough for him, but he did, just lovely.

Riess: I guess he was kind of the crown prince.

Sproul: He was in her eyes, I think, very much so. I think his father rode him a little harder, wanted him finished with his degrees sooner than he did. They took him to Europe, to Vienna. They loved Vienna. They went there most of their summer vacations. They weren't mountain people and outdoors people much.

Riess: They went all the way to Vienna for their summer vacations?

Sproul: Yes, and they had a marvelous time. Then he'd have the advantage of going to the school there and the foreign language and all that kind of thing, much more on the intellectual side than the outdoor athletic side.

Mrs. Wheeler set high standards that have never been changed. Mrs. Wheeler wore white gloves. [When] Mrs. Wheeler went to dinner, if she went at seven, her driver called for her at ten punctually.

The Wheelers moved into the President's House in 1911. When my husband graduated in 1913, they had a luncheon there for the graduating class and he remembered all our married life what Mrs. Wheeler gave him for lunch that day because he was so impressed!

Well, when we got married we had to do several things like they did.

Riess: Is that what he had said to you?

Sproul: Yes. We had a ceiling as near as we could like theirs was in the big living room on Elmwood and all that kind of thing.

Anyway, I said to her, "Mrs. Wheeler, your husband was president twenty years. He must have been very successful and had a very happy time here." (He was very successful and she was a very distinguished hostess. She was a perfectionist and everything was just right.) [I said,] "I don't know how long my husband will last here, but if you help me I'll put this house back exactly as you had it." And I did. I changed one lighting fixture in the dining room, just one, because they had one of those old-fashioned colored lamp things with fringe that hung down and when I looked down at the end of the table I couldn't see my husband. [laughter]

Riess: The Wheelers had many friends and connections in Germany, because he had gotten a degree in Germany, in Heidelberg.

Sproul: Wheeler was a Theodore Roosevelt professor there for a while; I've forgotten in what field. But that was a great honor which hurt him after World War I because everybody accused him of being pro-German because the Germans had rolled out the red carpet, showered attention and books and degrees and all kinds of things on him. They spoke well of Germany, spoke well of the Kaiser.

Riess: That was a hard time for Wheeler. Do you think it was hard in the same way that the loyalty oath was hard on your own husband or was it not such a--

Sproul: Oh, I think it was very hard, yes, because he had trouble with his memory--what do you call that?--arteriosclerosis. That was sad. That was hard on him. He wanted to go back to Vienna and he went back every summer, and I think he died back there in Vienna. Mrs. Wheeler was criticized for making him outdo himself.

She was proud and rightly so, because he was extremely handsome, and she was this tiny little lady. She dressed beautifully. She had the most expensive clothes of anybody in Berkeley--beautiful black silk faille. She was very small and she had tiny little feet and the shoes were made to order. The Berkeley faculty were rather critical of her, I think.

Riess: You are saying that he had lost his prestige because of the association with Germany? But he must have had some supporters in all of this?

Sproul: Oh, he did, some of the older faculty who realized his worth and his qualities.

Mrs. Wheeler, the faculty were critical of her pretty much, I think, because she was so outspoken.

Riess: Yes, I guess it got to be a difficult dose after a while.

Sproul: That's right, a forthright person. But she was always very independent.

Riess: But then you are also suggesting that she really didn't let him retire as early as he should have or wanted to or what?

Sproul: Well, I don't know. I think she felt whatever she did was good for him and I think that was the basis she operated on. She felt probably he'd be unhappy and miss a great deal of the honors that were heaped on him and all that kind of thing.

Riess: So what did she do then?

Sproul: So she wanted to keep him more or less in circulation and in his old routine as far as she could. But then he lost his memory and he would wander around Berkeley and people would have to bring him home sometimes; he'd forget.*

*Oddly enough, my mother always dreaded that what happened to President Wheeler would happen to Pa--which, of course, alas, it did. It had a lot to do with her urging him to retire, and with her purchase of 31 Tamalpais Road as a place to retire to long before it was needed. [MSG]

Riess: What it says in the university centennial history is that Mrs. Wheeler took her husband then to Vienna to take him away from the gaze of the university community because he was in poor health at the end.*

Sproul: Yes. She loved him dearly and whatever she did for him was on the basis not of her prestige or what she wanted [but] what she thought was good for him. There was no doubt about that.

President William Wallace Campbell

Riess: Then when the Campbells came along, what was their style?

Sproul: He was a world famous astronomer and he lived at Mt. Hamilton a good part of the time.

Riess: Which made him basically scholarly and aloof and all of that?

Sproul: Oh, very.

Riess: When he came down here, how did he--

Sproul: He was too old. [laughter] Well, not too old, but "older" is a better way of saying it because he was close to sixty when he came, and then he retired at sixty-five. He wanted to be young and one of the students, but he just didn't know how. It wasn't that he wasn't brilliant and well-fitted for the position, but he lived up there as an autocrat of that mountain, Mt. Hamilton.

There is a story about one of his boys that one Fourth of July he allowed them to have fireworks up there, firecrackers. He had three sons and they were all very outstanding boys. One of them

*"Wheeler retired from the Presidency on his 65th birthday, July 15, 1919, with the title of President Emeritus of the University and professor of comparative philology. For two years, he taught a graduate course in philology, but could not continue because of failing health. In 1926, he and Mrs. Wheeler made a trip to Europe. While in Vienna where their son, Benjamin Webb Wheeler, was studying, Wheeler died on May 2, 1927." Centennial Record.

Sproul: was a flyer in World War I, way early in aviation. That was Douglas. Then there was one named after him--what was his name?

Riess: William Wallace?

Sproul: Yes, there was one named Wallace. Then there was a younger one. Who was the youngest son--Kenneth?--who had four daughters, I think.

Anyway, one Fourth of July, Papa allowed them to have fireworks up there and one of the boys got up in a tree and his voice came up before the ceremony, "Be careful, Father, be careful; realize you are setting a precedent!" [laughter]

Riess: By contrast with your husband and with his predecessors Barrows and Wheeler, Campbell's tenure was not full of affectionate stories.

Sproul: No, he had a distinguished scholastic record. He was a fine scholar known all the world over. He went on expeditions where they were testing scientific things, and Mrs. Campbell was a nice-looking lady, not as strong and as striking looking as Mrs. Barrows, nor as small and as determined as Mrs. Wheeler, but she was a nice person.

Riess: Do you think that she took advice from Mrs. Wheeler in good grace?

Sproul: I don't think Mrs. Wheeler offered it to her. Mrs. Wheeler was very particular about that. The reason she offered it to me was I was thirty-nine when my husband became president and I said, "Mrs. Wheeler, I'm terrified of this job. I have never lived in such a big house and I've never had so many people to manage and to work for me. Now they are continually asking me to make speeches and I'm scared to hear the sound of my own voice really. What will I do?"

She said, "To begin with, your husband is talking all the time and all you have to tell these people when they so kindly ask you is that 'one loud speaker is enough for a family.'" That's the whole story and it's probably right.

College Teas, and the Section Club

Sproul: When I first came, they had for faculty wives the college teas, about six of them. It was a two-semester system. Three in the spring, three in the fall, to welcome new faculty wives to the campus. • But it had nothing to do with the Section Club.

The Section Club was a wonderful institution. That began when Mrs. Campbell was the president's wife and she got the idea from Mrs. George Rippey Stewart, Theodosia Stewart, whose father was president of the University of Michigan, Marion Leroy Burton. The Section Club, where the wives of the professors are divided by interest, rather than by prestige, that originated there, and I thought that it was a great idea.

Riess: Was Mrs. Stewart a young faculty wife at the time?

Sproul: During Mrs. Campbell's time. We had a big meeting in the drawing room. I was there. (My husband was in the comptroller's office, I guess, at the time because this was earlier.) She told how, instead of dividing the university according to departments so there would be the same people all of the time, you would get a complete cross section because you would have people that were interested in dancing, people that were interested in Greek, who were into cards, all kinds of things.

Riess: They met at the President's House for these events?

Sproul: No, [they met in] the Senior Women's Hall. Mrs. Hearst had given that, and then it burned down.* Then, I guess, it must have gone over to the house. Of course, then when it got to be the Section Club we went outdoors. Mostly we could have it in the garden, if you have it at the right time of the year. They could have their tea and coffee inside and they could get an idea of the President's House and all that kind of thing.

We had lines in those days. I would be in line and the head of the Section Club would be in line, and the chairman would come in with her string of new members behind her. That was good, too. I learned all of this from Mrs. Stewart, what it was all about.

I felt it was a good idea to give the new members that came with the chairman something to do so it wouldn't be awkward; they would serve the tea, coffee, and sandwiches. That way, as they asked whether they wanted tea or coffee or something, they could start a conversation. People wouldn't be shy; if you can pass things you don't feel awkward. I set the stage maybe a little bit.

*Mrs. Sproul probably means Hearst Hall, which burned in 1922.

Sproul: The structure of it they worked out and improved because the faculty grows and it got to be how many to invite, how far you went down? Associate professor, assistant professor, instructor?

Riess: Was it a dressy occasion, a proper occasion with hats?

Sproul: And gloves and long dresses.

Riess: Long dresses?

Sproul: Yes, at first. But the war changed that. Alice Deutsch did a lot to change that. She said it was silly for women to run around in the afternoon in long dresses for tea and coffee and sandwiches.

Riess: How elaborate was the food?

Sproul: We couldn't have open-faced sandwiches for so many, but we had some very good closed ones. Then we had cakes and coffee and tea. At the very first, when it was small, we changed that plate and had ice cream. Oh, that was something! But after a while it had to get simpler, because it got so much larger.

Riess: You felt you were the hostess, of course, of all of these things?

Sproul: Yes, and I treated the house in a different way than it's treated nowadays. Maybe this [the new] way is better, but that was our home and we didn't have big faculty functions. There are other facilities on the campus where they could have them. There was a students' union on the campus, the old one. There was a women's lounge and a men's lounge and they had parties there, too. But I never had too much outside socially. I had as many as the dining room would hold, dinners and things like that. But it was our home. My husband was tired when he got home and he wanted a home, and my children needed a home.

When they fixed the house over they got adequate things for dinner parties--storage and a new stove and all that kind of stuff. There always was an entrance from the outdoors like a back door where they could come in from Hearst Avenue with equipment. But I never had equipment enough to have a big dinner down there [in the ballroom]. We had all of our food upstairs on the main floor.

Riess: It sounds like every day you must have had a social event, or every day you had to graciously open your doors to some group.

Sproul: Only at certain times. I didn't have all of these big parties because the downstairs then was not equipped for it. My children, when they got to high school, had high school parties and dances down there.

Luncheon Arrangements, Freshman Receptions

Sproul: In the early days I used to call on every new member.

Riess: Did you really? Then you really established an intimate relationship?

Sproul: Yes, and then another thing, I realized that we couldn't entertain them all in the house, and lots of people like to see the house; it's an interesting, beautiful house. So I used to be at home the first Tuesday of every month and have a tea. I would serve them cake and tea. I didn't send out invitations. Anybody who wanted to come, came. I was just home.

Riess: Did that work smoothly?

Sproul: It worked beautifully. I had marvelous help. That was another thing that made it nice. In those days we had a downstairs maid, an upstairs maid, a cook, a laundress, and a gardener. The salaries, of course, were very low compared to now, but the people were lovely. They were interested and they were helpful.

Riess: Who would coordinate all of the staff? Was there a housekeeper that did it?

Sproul: No, I did it all. I brought home--which is perfectly silly when I tell people--I collected the sandwiches very often for the teas. There was a woman on Piedmont Avenue or someplace or Linden Avenue somewhere in Piedmont. Anyway, after I had ordered them, I would pick them up before the tea because I would be nervous about them getting there on time and all that and I wanted everything done ahead of time. I didn't have a driver.

Riess: Somebody would make sandwiches that were worth going all the way across town for? Couldn't your cook have done it?

Sproul: I had a good cook. She made the open-faced ones and sometimes made layer cakes and things. But I had to supplement that and buy more for the numbers. She made the open [sandwiches]; I bought the closed. I cut the double sandwiches into corners, so they got little bits of pieces, not great big sandwiches but tiny ones. But a marvelous variety of food, beautiful open sandwiches. Really and truly we had a lovely staff.

The gardener did the flowers. We had these little tables and we would put about seven at a table. We didn't put eight; eight was too crowded. Six--we had to squeeze them in better than that.

Sproul: So we'd put about seven at these round tables. I didn't seat them husband and wife; I had to mix them up and give them different places.

Riess: That's tricky. I was going to ask you about the seating.

Sproul: I mixed them up at Charter Day because they had time to relax. In between the lunch and the dinner there was a little time.

Riess: When they came in did they know where they were to sit? Did they have a card ahead of time?

Sproul: Yes, I had a secretary and she'd tell them what table and the tables were numbered and she'd seat them. But for football luncheons I didn't do it that way because they all wanted to eat in a hurry and get up there before the game started and it was a tighter schedule. So then I put husbands and wives at the same table, so they could both have lunch and they both could do without dessert if they wanted to or whatever.

But Charter Day was very formal.

Riess: The main events, it sounds like, were the Charter Day lunches and football lunches. We should start in the beginning of the year. Was there a president's reception for new students?

Sproul: Yes, all new students. That took in junior college transfers and everybody.

Riess: Was that at the house?

Sproul: No, it was in the gymnasium. [There were] too many. That was a wonderfully organized affair. A faculty member would take each student down the line to be introduced to us and then there would be a senior there to take them off the professor's hands. (He didn't want to be left with the same one all evening and it's awfully hard for children to break away from older people; it takes a little diplomacy sometimes.) Anyway, after they had been dutifully down the line and met us--because we were determined that nobody was going to say there was no use going to that party, you never meet anybody--then a student met them and they would have dancing with their own generation and the refreshments. The professor would rotate around and pick up another one until they were all picked up and formally introduced.

Anyway, my husband was really sharp and kept himself on his toes. There was a boy who came down. He was the first one to come and that was fine and we greeted him. Three hours later,

- Sproul: about 11:00 when most of them had gone down, this boy comes down again. He was playing a trick on us to show how impersonal it was. Now, what do you think my husband said, after he had stood up there shaking hands for three hours? "Well, you must have liked this party. You have been down this before!" [laughter]
- Riess: What was your standard line? What would you say to them so that you could have some personal contact and yet move them on?
- Sproul: My husband generally gave me a clue--not purposely, I don't mean that. But if I listened, he had a very carrying voice, he would pick up something and say, "I met your father in Sacramento," or something like that. Then I could say, "How do you like the weather in San Francisco, those hot days?" Something trivial.

University Meetings, Esprit de Corps

- Riess: Were there any other people that you remember from the summer sessions? When Thomas Mann came the first time, was that a summer session visit?
- Sproul: I'm not too sure. But we used to have university meetings once a month and my husband always tried to get somebody that would be interesting to the students and be outstanding. Marian Anderson came once and sang. I think it was on Lincoln's birthday in February. In any case, the students were hanging from the rafters to hear her. It was just packed. Then he had Knute Rockne from Notre Dame.
- Riess: The university meetings were for the students, unlike Charter Day, which was sort of--
- Sproul: The university's birthday, and that was a little academic. But the university meetings were for the students and for a family esprit de corps.
- Riess: Do you mean the family of the university?
- Sproul: Yes, the young people.
- Riess: Would it also be a time when your husband would make pertinent announcements?
- Sproul: He would make announcements of what was happening and what he wanted to do. They were very loyal meetings, very "California" enthusiastic meetings.

Riess: The band would play?

Sproul: Yes, and they sang "All Hail" and nobody left before--if they wanted to get out and rush away he would call them down and say, "Nobody leaves before 'All Hail,'" and that kind of thing, very "Californian."

He used to introduce every new coach they had and they had several--Bill Ingram and Andy Smith and Pappy Waldorf. I can't think of the names quickly, but anyway, he introduced Waldorf this way once. He said he wanted to introduce the new coach to the students and he would like to introduce him as an S.O.B. He said, "Just a minute. Most people thought that was going a little bit far. Lest you get me wrong, I wish to tell you that Mr. Waldorf is the son of a bishop." [laughter]

Riess: Well, at least he had their attention.

Sproul: Yes, and he really pulled it off in a way that was amusing. Of course, then everybody laughed.

Riess: When you were living up there in the old Webber house where the International House is, you had your bridge group and your own gang of friends. Were they town, or gown, at that point?

Sproul: At that time, they weren't university so much. Well, they were too. They were people of his generation in college, like Margaret Dexter. She's older than I am now and I'm eighty-nine. I think she's past ninety. And Jean Lynch--Matthew Lynch was a law professor. They were friends he had made while he was going to college. Mabel Rushforth was Mrs. Mattern's sister, Laurinne Mattern. Archie Rushforth was in that class. Mabel was in the '13 class. Those were Mr. Sproul's classmates.

Berkeley's Distinguished Women, Wives

Riess: When I was talking with Benjamin Lehman many years ago, he talked about the people he remembered when he first came to Berkeley and I thought I would mention some of them.* What are your recollections of Marion Randall Parsons? Did you know her? She lived up in the canyon.

*See interview with Benjamin H. Lehman, Recollections and Reminiscences of Life in the Bay Area from 1920 Onward, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1969.

- Sproul: Yes. I didn't know her very well. I didn't go to college, you see, so I didn't have much of a--unless they entertained me and I entertained them according to my husband's position, I didn't have too much chance of knowing them in their college days or when they were younger, because when I came to Berkeley I was twenty-five, I think. I was twenty-five when I got married, at any rate, and I lived out here on Grant Street. I depended on my husband to introduce me to his friends, which he did and which I enjoyed, like Professor [Charles] Derleth in civil engineering.
- Riess: This crowd that Benjamin Lehman ran around with--Bertha Pope Damon?
- Sproul: Yes, she lived around the corner here. She wrote a book, Grandmother Called it Carnal. [laughter] Did you ever read that?
- Riess: No. She sounds like a fairly sophisticated character then.
- Sproul: She was married to a very famous professor, Arthur Upham Pope, who was a great authority on Persian history and Persian art. He had a girl in his class named Phyllis Ackerman and they fell in love and Bertha got divorced.
- Riess: That was unusual in those days, I guess.
- Sproul: Yes, it was, very. He (Arthur Upham Pope) married Phyllis Ackerman. Then she married, I guess, Mr. Damon.
- Riess: And Elizabeth Ellis?
- Sproul: She lived down in the area around where the Harts were on Piedmont Avenue, I think. She was a friend of Mrs. Wheeler and had a great collection of Oriental art and was a very close friend of Benjamin Lehman's. Oh boy, she had beautiful things that I understand are now in Dwinelle Hall. I have never seen them.
- Riess: The beautiful jade horses.
- Sproul: Yes, she had beautiful things. She was a friend of the Wheelers and the Harts and they were a very distinguished part of the university really.
- Riess: So until you became the president's wife they were really not your circle.
- Sproul: No, I never had classes with them. My husband in engineering had classes with Gayley, but Gayley had such big classes that he had to hold them in the Greek Theater at 4:00 in the afternoon! [laughter] He was one of the greats, a handsome man too, but I didn't know him well.

The Duncan McDuffies, and the Sunday Walking Club

Riess: How about the Duncan McDuffies?

Sproul: Oh, they were good. They were wonderful, very close friends. They had a beautiful house and garden and they were the handsomest couple you ever laid eyes on, big tall people, very good-looking, distinguished. Mrs. McDuffie's half-brother was Sidney Coe Howard, the playwright, class of 1912, I think. They did a great deal of entertaining and they did it beautifully. They were a real asset to the community and to the university. Duncan McDuffie was one of the members of this group that skied and built the Sierra ski lodge. They had a Sunday walking club. They walked all over the Berkeley hills and then they came back and had lunch in the McDuffie gardens.

Who was a member of that and did all that walking? The Wentworths, the Smiths, the Leavens, Dr. Legge, a lot of people like that.* Thomas Putnam was one, Dean Putnam. I think Dr. Barrows too. Harry East Miller, he was a man who lived in Oakland. His wife was a charmer too, Myra Miller. Harry East is with an old family that has been connected with the opera and all that kind of thing in the city. My husband liked to invent original words for familiar ballads. One of them was, "Harry East, Mae West, Which one do we like best?"

They were a very intellectual and a very interesting group and a great asset to a town where people didn't live in such a big house and have such beautiful grounds.

Riess: You have said a couple of times that somebody is an asset and I think what you mean is somebody who adds a kind of eastern quality or flair.

Sproul: I think so, a little bit of Old World culture or whatever you want to call it.

*Frank and Jean Wentworth, Mr. and Mrs. Selden Smith (Emily), Mr. and Mrs. Robert Leavens (Eleanor), Dr. Robert Legge.

Phoebe Apperson Hearst, and Senator George Hearst

Riess: I know you wouldn't have known Phoebe Apperson Hearst, but what did you hear about her?

Sproul: She came from Kansas, I think, a little Kansas schoolteacher, and she founded the P.T.A. in Kansas.* When she married this George Hearst he was rich, very wealthy, talk about money! [laughter] Somebody recently gave a program on Mrs. Hearst, how they spent their honeymoon or part of it at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco and he would take this Kansas schoolteacher out shopping and he would buy and buy and buy. They had a carriage with horses and they drove up to the garden court or whatever and all those would be in the sitting room when they came back, and she was enchanted to open all of those boxes and boxes that her delightfully generous, wealthy husband provided. They had a lot of fun and, as I say, she had good, solid ground in her anyway, though she hadn't grown up with it, I don't believe. To be dropped into all of this luxury and grandeur!

Then he became senator and they lived in Washington, Phoebe and George. There's a story about how people said, when she had these big teas when he was a senator, and had all of these beautiful things, that she ought to put them away because inviting a lot of people that she didn't know, she was taking the chance that she might lose them, some of them anyway. She said "No," she had those beautiful things for people to enjoy, and she would not hide them when she had a party.

Do you know what President Wheeler wrote on the mining building for Mr. George Hearst? "He filched from no man's store, he lessened no man's opportunity," or something like that. I love the word "filched." He might have said "stole," but he didn't. He said "filched." [laughter] Then Wheeler wrote one for the agriculture [building] for Hilgard. He wrote for Hilgard: "To rescue for human society the native values of rural life."

Riess: That's a very poetic turn too.

Sproul: Don't you think so? He came when the university was just rising and he built such a platform and he was such a handsome man. He knew what real scholarship was and all that kind of thing.

*Should be Missouri.

Winifred and Charles Rieber

- Riess: We've mentioned real highlight people. Were Charles and Winifred Rieber part of the early friendships?
- Sproul: Yes, and they left the Berkeley campus and went south because they were protesting against the stadium being built in Strawberry Canyon. He was a professor of philosophy and had a house on Canyon Road and one Sunday when they were digging the big hole to put the stadium in there, Rieber, who lived just right in that canyon, met my husband, who was out for a walk with Marion when she was a little girl. He said Rieber shook his finger at him and said, "Look at that man, your father. He has desecrated this canyon."
- Riess: Actually, his fight, though, was more with John Galen Howard, wasn't it?
- Sproul: I suppose, but he didn't want the stadium there.
- Riess: The stadium was completed in 1923. I think Rieber left in 1922.
- Sproul: Anyway, he left in a huff. Then he was glad to be on the UCLA faculty and she was too. She was a portrait painter, Winifred Rieber. She never painted Bob, though she liked to paint men better than women. She didn't paint women very well. She painted the Balches [Mr. and Mrs. Allen Balch of Los Angeles], who were very wealthy people, gave a lot of money to Scripps, I think.
- Riess: Was she asked to paint Bob?
- Sproul: No, I don't think so. She was quite antagonistic toward him for a long time.
- Rieber himself came from Placerville in California when he came to the university, and he was a very outstanding man.
- Riess: His wife had some amazing connections; I think she's famous for her portraits of Santayana and Royce.
- Sproul: Einstein, too, and she did that one [photograph in Sproul library] of David Starr Jordan. It's magnificent really. She was good. He has a cane and he has his hands on the cane--beautiful--and a big black hat.
- Riess: She was a little bit out of the ordinary, wasn't she?

Sproul: Yes, very outspoken and I don't think altogether people agreed with her.

Riess: I know that one of the portraits she did was a portrait of Mrs. Hearst and she is said to have breathed a sigh of relief when the first gymnasium burned down because she had never liked the portrait!* [laughter]

Andy Lawson

Riess: You said that there were lots of stories of Andy Lawson.

Sproul: My husband had him as a professor of geology. They would have, during the weekend, gathered all kinds of specimens, samples of rocks, marble, all kinds of minerals. On Monday morning they would put them on the table and Andy would sit on the other side of the table and he would name them and then he'd brush them off the table on the floor.

So one day they decided to make up a specimen. They made it out of mud and plaster and bricks and they planted something all around it. It was quite a conglomeration of all kinds of stuff and they mixed it with other things and they put it in front of him to identify. He would say, "This is malachite, this is stone, this is that"--and then he'd brush them off onto the floor. When he came to that thing, he brushed it off onto the floor like everything else and then he said, "This is a piece of damned impertinence!" [laughter] He was a great guy, that fellow.

When he retired, he was about seventy. He went back to Montreal to visit a colleague who had a daughter, Isabel, twenty-one, who was going to Montreal University or college, and Andy married her.

** [telling story of Charter Day speaker Viscount Alexander of Tunis] And I was on the sofa with Alexander and we were all waiting for my husband to go over to the Charter Day banquet, and the Gazette was lying between Alexander and where I was sitting. He picked it up and Andrew and Isabel had just given birth to a son. As I say, Andy must have been close to ninety.

*In Sproul-Rieber correspondence.

**See note, p. 96.

Sproul: General Alexander looked at me and said, "Mrs. Sproul, can this be true?" I said, "Yes, his wife is a great deal younger than he is and he is a very outstanding, remarkable person." Then Alexander picked up the paper and looked at it again and he looked at me. "Oh," he said, "I find this very encouraging, very encouraging." [laughter]

George Plimpton Adams, Father of Cornelia

Riess: Did you know George Adams?

Sproul: George Plimpton Adams and Mary Adams, his wife, had three children. They had George Jr., who teaches. They had John, who worked with Dr. Naffziger, in brain surgery at UC Hospital. They had a daughter, Cornelia, married to a handsome, very good-looking sea captain [Helge Lönberg]. He had his own ship and every once in a while he would have a furlough and would be off duty and he would come to Berkeley and just made his home here. Cornelia was here. She had several children. He was a very attractive man. He is still living, I think. [tape interruption: telephone rings]

Then he'd go back and after he left, Cornelia was invariably often pregnant, adding to the family. So one of the good, well-intentioned faculty ladies would say to Mrs. Adams, "Poor Cornelia, she's expecting again."

Mrs. Adams didn't like that no-how. She would look at them and stare back at them and say, "Don't worry about Cornelia, please don't worry about Cornelia; Cornelia knows what's important in life." [laughter] So if my children got into a hole, "Remember, Cornelia knows what is important in life." [laughter] I used it for a family slogan! She eventually had only four, I think.

Riess: Actually, it works out nicely because he doesn't have to go through the pregnancy with her and he only sees the happy results.

Sproul: Exactly, and people make such a fuss about pregnancy. It's a job that only one person can do really, and that's the woman, and any amount of holding hands or attention, it doesn't change it any.

Cornelia gave Marion's children music lessons while he was gone to help raise the family.

They [the Adamses] were interesting. They used to give a lot of faculty parties. That's what the faculty did in those days, too. They'd have Sunday night suppers, and they would have charades;

- Sproul: they loved charades. Once Mrs. Adams was a snake. She had her hair all down and she had on a tweed skirt and she writhed on the floor and then she shed the skirt because she was a snake shedding its skin. [laughter]
- Riess: The "roaring twenties"--sounds like fun.
- Sproul: Really it was something. Mr. Derleth--Charlie Derleth--my husband's professor in civil engineering, gave his last lecture to the senior class on how to pick a wife. A lecture on how to select a wife! His graduating seniors got treated to that.
- Riess: Actually, was this a kind of "flaming twenties" era out here?
- Sproul: In dress, somewhat. We had that very exaggerated waistline. It was way down. There was such a thing as a slit skirt so you got on and off a streetcar without too much trouble, and great big Merry Widow hats. The wind in San Francisco would blow them off and [they would] roll down Market Street when I went to work over there. My hat would blow off quite often!

Morals, Yesterday, Today

- Riess: How different were morals in that period?
- Sproul: I think the churches played a more important part. They had socials and dances, and I think that's what's wrong with--where do young people go? I listened to a thing on the "talking books" by James Michener and he said, "Where do young people go to meet somebody when they want to get married and raise a family nowadays? A movie picture, a bistro, a cocktail lounge? They don't go to churches or socials and get somebody just like the girl that married dear old Dad."
- Riess: Well, that's true. I'm thinking of a period of free love and bathtub gin. Wasn't something of that happening out here?
- Sproul: Oh, they had these things for college parties, panty raids and things of that sort, but they weren't so devastating. Do you know what I mean? It wasn't drugs. And there was the "golden rule" police force of August Vollmer. You could go down to Berkeley and never lock your doors front or back.
- Riess: I have certainly heard about August Vollmer. It was called the "golden rule" police force?

Sproul: Yes. The children were on campus until 10:00 and then the campanile chimed and everybody had to go back to their sorority or fraternity or boarding house or wherever they lived because those parties didn't last so long. There weren't such hazards, so much danger. You didn't bother at all whether you locked your door. It was a different era.

The girls were very attractive. They didn't have this long hair and weren't constantly jerking their heads back to get the hair out of their eyes! [laughter] I don't see how they can make a bed with their hair hanging all down around.

They were better groomed and more particular about clothes and had very nice shirtwaists and skirts. They didn't sit on the sidewalk all day like some of these poor people now. I don't think they should allow it.

Religious Upbringing: Bob Sproul and Ida Wittschen

Riess: Could I ask you a couple of questions about religion? You were Catholic?

Sproul: I was born into a Catholic family and I tried to tell the Catholic church that I believed in it, but I thought it was an accident of birth. [laughter] My husband was a Presbyterian for the same reason!

Riess: But you did go to Mass and so on.

Sproul: Yes, all the time. My mother was very Catholic and she felt we should be married by a priest or we were not married. The Catholic church said they wouldn't marry us, not at all, by a parish priest, unless my husband would promise to bring up the children Catholic. Well, he would make no such commitment. He didn't think that that was a reasonable thing to ask him. We did want children, but who knew how many we were going to have? He would not promise.

There was a man on the board of regents named Father [Charles A.] Ramm. Father Ramm had been a convert to Catholicism. He had been an Episcopalian, I think. (That's the easiest transition!) Anyway, after every regents' meeting, he gave my husband a stack of books that high, The Lives of the Saints and everything, to see if he could soften him. It got to be quite an impasse and I finally came in and I said to him I thought they were not being really very fair.

Sproul: If my husband-to-be had no religion at all, he was fair prey, they could work on him and do their best to convert him, that was fair enough. But it so happened that he had very religious parents. They were United Presbyterian (Scottish Presbyterian) and they had given Bob and Allan, my husband's brother, a great deal of religion. They taught in Sunday school and they sang in the choir of the United Presbyterian Church in San Francisco.

My husband's father came from Scotland at the age of twenty-one-- that was the first he could get away from his home. His father was a stone mason in a little town which was a suburb of Glasgow. He built stone walls. He was quite an irascible, red-haired, blue-eyed Scot! The son broke away from that Scottish home, and where did he go? He went to San Francisco. He [Grandpa Sproul] didn't have a letter of introduction to a single soul. He didn't know anybody in San Francisco. He was twenty-one and he had very little money, but he came to San Francisco and headed straight for the United Presbyterian Church and there he met Sarah Elizabeth Moore and they taught Sunday school, as I said before, and they sang in the choir, and they got married and they had two sons.

Robert and Sarah Elizabeth Sproul

Sproul: They lived in the Mission district in San Francisco. Their two boys walked to Golden Gate Park every Saturday and played tennis on the free courts every day, all day long Saturday, and walked back again to Sanchez Street or Noe Street or wherever they came from. Really and truly, Grandma could tell you if she were alive the most weird stories of how when their shoes began to get thin, she cut layers of newspapers to help them along a little bit longer.

The reason he picked San Francisco was that he had read Robert Louis Stevenson's Silverado Squatters. It had intrigued his imagination and that's why he came here.

And as I said, Grandpa Sproul's father was a very short-tempered man. He didn't go along with his oldest son, who was studious, taught school. The mother wrote poetry, and they were very close, he and his mother. His mother's name was Agnes Allan. So when he got to be twenty-one he just left home. But imagine not knowing one person in the city and not a letter of introduction to anybody!

Riess: What was his work?

- Sproul: He worked in the Southern Pacific office in a room with a hundred file clerks or something. He never did have a very fancy job. He didn't make much money. He had worked there a long time, long enough to have a little pension when he died.
- Riess: Did he live long enough to see what kind of a success he had produced?
- Sproul: Yes, both the children, both of his boys. And he was devoted to his grandchildren. He loved children. He loved babies, especially Marion because she was a girl and he didn't have a girl. He wheeled her in her buggy all over Berkeley, in the hills and down the dale, and just everywhere. But just imagine! He was not an influential person or anything, but that's why I was telling you about the church. He did go to the church.
- Riess: But you were saying that you think that it was wrong for the Catholic church to try to convert somebody who had a perfectly acceptable religion?
- Sproul: Yes, and I said, "I should interfere with his mother's and father's life work just because I happen to be a Catholic?" That was a church I was born into; I didn't pick it. I didn't think it was cricket to ask him to do something that they wouldn't want me to do. I couldn't go promising anything like that, and why should I have the advantage? For what reason? Just because I happened to be sitting down there in the office of the civil service board? [laughter]
- Riess: You found a priest?
- Sproul: Yes, my mother got her way. She said I had to be married by a priest. She was a very devout Catholic, my mother, and that's what she said.
- Riess: Did you find much solace in the church in hard times?
- Sproul: I thought it was great. I was very happy with it. Now I've got a grandson who is a very ardent transcendental meditator, very interested, tremendously so. He's tall and he's handsome and he graduated from Harvard and all that kind of thing. But whenever he wanted me to take a course, I'd say, "No, thanks. I've had a religion that has sustained me all my life. I can't change now." I said [in tone of finality], "That's it."

While they don't call it meditation, we used to go on retreats, and it was the same principle. You pray and you listen to lectures.

Riess: You did that throughout your life?

Sproul: Oh, off and on, just off and on.

The "V.O.P." and The Belle

Sproul: You know, when my husband came down there to the civil service board to be interviewed for the job, the man I was working for said, "Why don't you look these two boys over? You're going to have to work with them. We must ask you which one you would take." I said, "It won't do much good, but I'll tell you."

Anyway, first a big, tall, dark, good-looking boy came named Willard Beatty, and then this tall, thin, blond fellow came several hours later. I just said, "Mr. Robinson would be happy to see you now" or something. Anyway, Mr. Robinson interviewed both of them and then my boss said to me, "Whom did you pick?"

I said, "How could I pick anybody with those few words? I don't know. But I think I'd take the blond!" [laughter] And he did take the blond. The other boy [it turned out] was engaged to a girl in his class, and if they had taken him it wouldn't have done me any good at all! So, by a stroke of good luck, the blond got it!

Riess: You got it!

Sproul: I got it, yes, and that was the way we met. Then those old smart newspapermen, they were always around our office, the civil service board. They called my husband a "v.o.p.", and you know what that is?

Riess: No.

Sproul: A "victim of propinquity!" [laughter] But after all, how can you marry anybody if you don't meet them or talk to them or get acquainted or walk home from work with them?

Riess: I have it on authority from a woman whose father worked in that office that you were the belle of the ball, in great demand.

Sproul: Where, down at city hall?

Riess: Yes.

Sproul: Oh! [laughter] There was an old roué--my granddaughter who graduated from this university didn't know what a roué was [spells roué]--a newspaperman (they hung around our office, quite a few of them), a seedy fellow, and really I think he was a forerunner of the hippies. He invited me to lunch one day and I didn't think I wanted to go, but I didn't want to hurt his feelings. I really thought he was very careless about his appearance. But while he was parading around all the time, he boasted that he was an FFV. That meant he came from one of the first families of Virginia. FFV. Well, that didn't mean much to me because I thought he needed a cake of soap [laughter] and a little bit of grooming! Anyway, I said I would go to lunch, and he said he would come by the office at 12:00 and pick me up and we'd go to lunch.

I was working for an awfully nice man. I was his secretary. He was married and had three children and his name was Frank Colburn. I said, "Mr. Colburn, you will never guess with whom I am having lunch today."

He said, "You are not going out with him, are you?" I said, "Yes, I am. I told him I'd be here at 12:00 noon and I am going." He said, "You are not going. You go home as usual and have lunch with your mother. That's what you better do!"

I said, "My mother won't care if I don't come home every day right on the dot." He said, "Well, you aren't going to go out to lunch with him and that's all I can tell you." I said, "I promised. Anyway, what will we tell him?"

He said, "When he comes around at noon to pick you up, I'm simply going to say"--the big boss in our office was a lawyer in Oakland named Harrison Sidney Robinson who graduated from this university in the class of 1900 and he married a girl that was in his class--anyway, he said, "I'm going to tell him that Mr. Robinson has sent for you to take some dictation during the noon hour and that you are not going to be able to go and that you are terribly sorry and all of that stuff." So he got me out of that date and he wouldn't let me go. He said it wasn't the thing for me to do! [laughter]

Riess: You used to go home and have lunch with your mother on West Street ordinarily?

Sproul: Yes, I took a streetcar. We didn't have a car. It went within two blocks of where I lived. And I walked every morning. Mr. Colburn wanted to know what kind of a clock I used because I never arrived five minutes ahead of time or five minutes late. I was to be there at 9:00; at 9:00 I was there. But I walked it from Thirty-second and West down to Fourteenth and Broadway, and that was that.

Riess: How did your courtship with Bob Sproul proceed?

Sproul: [Mrs. Sproul understands the question to be of how Bob Sproul got to work.] Oh, it was simple. He lived in Berkeley and he would walk part way home with me and then he would take the streetcar. He didn't have a car or even a bicycle. Then he would take the streetcar and go home to his house. His mother lived on Derby Street, so he went home.

Anyway, the immediate man I worked for was a man named Frank Cox [sic]. He was a kind of cynical newspaperman, but he was ill; he had tuberculosis and died afterwards. But he was very nice to me, a very decent and nice person. He was a former newspaperman, and so all of the newspaper people from the Tribune and the Berkeley Gazette would come around our office to know what Mr. Robinson had planned to do that was startling. I think he gave Oakland a new city charter, Mr. Robinson. He was an idealistic man, had no children, and he came by one day during the lunch hour. (I took my lunch quite frequently, too; my mother put it up.) Anyway, this day I was having lunch over a box of candy that his younger brother brought me, and he frowned no end on it. He thought that was not what should be going on in the office. [laughter] But anyway, it didn't come to anything, so he didn't need to get so--

Riess: It sounds like they all kept watch over you.

Sproul: Oh, he did!

Romance

Riess: Once Bob came into the picture then you were just off-limits to everyone else? Was it clear that you two were courting?

Sproul: After a while it was, because the bright little newspapermen pinned a label on him; they called him a "v.o.p."

Riess: After you met, did you find yourself reading things and making special efforts to be interesting for him?

Sproul: No, I played by ear.

Riess: I thought maybe there was some interest that he had that then became your interest.

- Sproul: No, he played tennis. I wasn't the least bit athletic. Oh, he belonged to a fraternity and I went to his house dances with him and things like that.
- Riess: After a while did he get a car so he could take you out?
- Sproul: Not until after we were married and had three children. He said we were conspicuous when we got on a streetcar with all those children and everything! So then we got a used car, a Packard, a nice, great big car.
- Riess: Did he ask your mother for your hand in marriage?
- Sproul: Oh, I think so. My mother, he was very fond of her. He admired her courage and stamina and all that kind of thing.
- Riess: I often think a man is smart if he looks at the parents of the girl he is going to marry and sees what her role models are.
- Sproul: Well, that's what I've always thought. I don't know that boys do it. So many people say the thing to do is to go on a camping trip with a girl and see how she faces up to some things that aren't so smooth. But my husband always said that the best thing that a man can do is to look at the girl's mother and the home she comes from and see if she could make a home. Some girls can't make a home; they're not interested.
- It's important to take a look at the mother. Then you have some idea how she ages.
- Riess: Yes, I'm afraid that's also one of the things you find out.
- Sproul: Yes, and the kind of house she runs and if it's orderly and attractive and all that kind of stuff. My mother was a very good cook, so he had plenty of chance to judge her cooking as far as that went.
- Riess: So he became kind of a member of the household for a while, dropping by for dinners?
- Sproul: Yes, and my mother loved to play cards and we played a foursome of bridge or whist, or five hundred, which we were playing at that time. His brother, Allan, would come with him. Allan was a very attractive man--a brilliant mind, good-looking, nice disposition, good sense of humor, like Bob.



Ida Amelia Wittschen and Robert Gordon Sproul, Jr. 1916



Ida Sproul with her children Marion and Robert Gordon, Jr.

INTERVIEW 2: JULY 23, 1980

Albert Bender

Riess: When did you first make the acquaintance of Albert Bender?

Sproul: When my husband first became president, in the early 1930s, was when I first met him. Albert Bender was very well known in San Francisco and had many connections with colleges, Mills College, Stanford University, and Berkeley. He was a little Irish Jew. His father came from Dublin, Ireland, and was a rabbi. Albert was a patron of the arts and he lived with a cousin, Ann Bremer, a painter, and that maybe accounts for his great interest in art. His whole idea was to help young, struggling artists in music or painting--in the arts. He was very much interested in Chinese art and that kind of thing.

Riess: Was he giving things to the university?

Sproul: He gave gradually over the years until he died. He not only gave to Berkeley, but he gave, as I say, to Mills and to Stanford. He was a very great friend of the Wentworths. Mr. Wentworth was a treasurer of Mills, I think. Albert liked Mr. Sproul, and me too, I guess, because he gave me lots of pretty things.

Riess: Would he just spontaneously hand you these?

Sproul: At some social thing like Charter Day or a luncheon or a dinner.

He had an apartment in San Francisco and the first time my husband ever went over there to have dinner with him he came home with a big box of candy and said that Mr. Bender had sent it to me. That was my first gift from Albert. He said that Mr. Bender went into his bedroom and fished under the bed [laughter] and it was

Sproul: full of packages under the bed. He always had something wrapped up to give to somebody. I got one beautiful string of beads and yards of pretty brocade and that kind of things.

He was very impartial. He didn't favor any one place particularly, that I know of anyway. He may have because I don't know what gifts the other ladies got, but he certainly was very generous and very kind to us. He was very fond of Mr. Sproul, and every university function I invited him to, because he loved parties.

Riess: Did he fit right in?

Sproul: Oh, yes, intellectually very much so, but not personally attractive really. I have a couple of stories about him. He came to the President's House when we lived on campus very, very often. He was short and he was rather stout. (I have a picture in there I'll show you.) They say in a little poem that Albert's friends wrote about him that "Albert woke up in the morning and thanked the good Lord for another chance to give away his coat and shirt and vest and pants!" [laughter]

He celebrated his birthday--I don't know when it actually was--but he was called "Mickey" Bender. His father, as I say, was an Irish rabbi in Dublin and Albert changed his birthday when he came to San Francisco to St. Patrick's Day. So on the seventeenth of March his apartment overflowed with people. They didn't wait to be invited, they just went, to give him their good wishes and congratulate him.

He had a legion of friends that he had helped. If you would like a book about him, Marion has a short book about him and the foreword is written by Mrs. Walter Haas. It's quite nice. I couldn't read it at the time I got it. Marion was a beneficiary of the pretty strings of beads he gave me and all that kind of thing, so that I gave the book to her.

Riess: When he invited your husband to dinner, what kind of event would he be hosting?

Sproul: It would be all the prominent people--or some, I won't say all, some of the outstanding people in San Francisco. His friends numbered the most prominent people over there. But there were all kinds. They were poor struggling artists or musicians, all kinds of people; philanthropists who might be interested in something he was interested in. I think he was quite well-to-do and I think he made his money in insurance.

Riess: Do you remember Bob ever actually asking Albert to give any particular things?

Sproul: No, nobody asked Albert. Albert was too generous, gave too many things already. And he divided his interests so impartially. I know the Wentworths had beautiful Oriental things he gave them and he gave me that Chinese lady that is down in my dining room. He gave me that and he gave me a painting done by a very promising California artist named Joe Raphael.

Riess: That's very exciting.

Sproul: He was expert in every sense of the word. He was intellectually interesting and he had a lot of talent for art. Then this cousin, she was a painter. She may have stimulated him or encouraged him or helped him to buy because he had no children and so he had funds. He had a good business.

Riess: He had really created quite a legend around himself.

Sproul: Oh, he was something. He was short and he was rather fat and not attractive and he wore a big black hat and he lisped a little bit. At that time I had a very attractive Norwegian girl for downstairs maid, and she would open the door and help him off with his overcoat. And she said she was very slow in doing it because she said she always waited until Albert had given me a kiss. She said I always drew back and was a bit shy! She said before she hung up the coat she had to see that performance. [laughter]

But he was a good friend and a wonderful person. Look that book up. It's only a little thin book, published, I think, by the Haases, who paid for it, when he died. The surprising thing to me was that the introduction was written by Mrs. Elise Haas and it's beautifully done. She's talented, too. She's pretty far along in age now and doesn't make the effort, I guess, but she was a sculptor, too, and successful. It's a beautiful foreword.

Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Sutro

Riess: Did you know Noel Sullivan?

Sproul: Connected with Mrs. Oscar Sutro? No, that was Curtis O'Sullivan and I think he was in the Army or something. That may have been Molly Sutro's brother. I don't know.

Riess: Noel Sullivan lived down in Carmel, and was a nephew of Senator Phelan, and a friend of Mr. Lehman.

Sproul: No, I didn't know him.

Oscar Sutro was a graduate of the university and president of the Alumni Association and one of the most cultivated men I ever knew. Oh my, he was a credit to the Charter Day banquets! He could have been in Paris or Berlin or London. He was just a man of the world with brains. He was a lawyer in San Francisco and his wife was an Irish lady, Molly--what was her maiden name?-- O'Sullivan or something. But anyway, Oscar was president, and I remember one Charter Day banquet in the Ivory Ballroom of the Hotel Oakland and he presided with such grace and wit and intelligence. He was an ornament to the university.

Riess: Where did he get his cultivation and education?

Sproul: Sutro Heights in San Francisco, and a very cultivated family.

Riess: But after all, Californians aren't that cultivated. They learned it in one generation.

Sproul: You bet your boots! And you know right well, I'll tell you, that they did learn it. He had a beautiful library. Oh, it was so big. I don't know what Oscar did with his library either. He was a successful lawyer and had children.

I was going to tell you about Molly. I think Molly was an O'Sullivan. Anyway, she was Irish and Oscar was Jewish. They fell in love and they had a rocky road trying to get married with all of the rites on both sides and all that kind of thing. So Molly got kind of tired, I guess, of all of the arguments and everything and she said she was going to be Mrs. Oscar Sutro or nobody and so she took to her bed [laughter] and became ill, although I don't think she really was! So they smoothed out all of the difficulties then and they finally got married. [laughter] She was tired of talking about it and arguing, so she became an invalid and went to bed! When she got cured, why, the whole thing went along beautifully.

Judith Anderson and the Artistic Crowd

Riess: Speaking of Benjamin Lehman, did you know Judith Anderson when he was married to her?

Sproul: He was married to that actress, Judith Anderson, and I tried to include her in faculty things, but she was not a faculty lady. She was a very successful actress and she was bored stiff with faculty teas. They weren't her cup of tea in any sense of the word. She didn't like Tamalpais Road and she didn't like Berkeley, I don't believe, anyway at that time. She had a little dachshund and she liked him or whatever it was. But that marriage broke up. They weren't congenial. You know what I mean. She had her environment where she fitted beautifully and it wasn't Berkeley. He was the head of the English department at one time so they were intellectually probably very interesting, but it wasn't a workable arrangement apparently.

Riess: But all of the hostesses in town made a try?

Sproul: They did. Berkeley was very hospitable and I thought very delightful. But, of course, I was lucky. I didn't know a soul, which was maybe helpful, too. I don't know. Mrs. Wheeler took me under her wing and I could not have had a more loving or a more qualified or a more sophisticated hostess than that. The faculty was outstanding. They weren't wealthy, but they had taste and cultivation, and here I was. Susie, I'm going to take you down to where I came from because you have to really see that to realize that when I got put in that beautiful mansion that was quite a change in my life.

Riess: Mrs. Sproul, would there ever have been times when you would have included the Boyntons and the Temple of the Wings people in any of your occasions?

Sproul: They didn't come in my category (you know what I mean) very often.

Riess: Did your daughter dance at the Temple of the Wings?

Sproul: There were so many faculty people and I had very little contact with them. It was quite a full time and more so than it is now because UCLA was launched in that time.

Riess: I was wondering whether for you as the wife of the president, whether all of that would have been just a little too arty to include in your parties?

Sproul: Yes, I wasn't arty enough, or I was going to say "intellectual," or however you want to put it. I was more--Peggy Hays describes me with a word I don't really like too much, but I think she's right so I have to like it. She says "pragmatic."

Riess: Practical.

Sproul: That's it; I was. I didn't have any background that would lead up to the arts.

Getting Launched

Sproul: There were so many groups and really it was awfully hard to contact all of the people you should have. The Wheelers had distinguished friends because Mrs. Wheeler came from a distinguished New England family and she was well-to-do and she knew all about china and rugs and everything. But I didn't and I had to get acquainted with all of these people. You can't just thrust yourself on people and say, "Here I am; my husband has a good job, a prestigious job if you want." You've got to grow and make your way. I had no social background, and another thing, my husband didn't either! [laughter]

Anyway, he couldn't launch me, so to speak. Nobody could launch me! My mother couldn't. My mother could make beautiful clothes and was a wonderful dressmaker, but socially, hm-mm. So I had to wait until I was invited so I could see what went on in the world around me, and if it was what I liked and felt was successful then I could copy it or learn anyway. I couldn't have had a better mentor than Mrs. Wheeler.

Riess: She took you under her wing. What about later on? Did Mrs. Barrows take you under her wing?

Sproul: By that time I had kind of stirred around on my own pretty well. I loved her children. They were more my contemporaries. Mrs. Wheeler's position was a little more--the Barrowses were only on the campus four years and the girls were in college or high school and they got married in the house, one or two of them.

I always thought that Ella [Barrows Hagar] should go with the job because she's so attractive and such a wonderful social asset. I had a kind of an inferiority complex, if you will, on the social side, altogether I did. So I went slowly and I didn't push until somebody invited me and then I would do my best.

Riess: Are you saying that you didn't feel sure enough of yourself to include people who would not be absolutely guaranteed--

Sproul: Not unless they sought me first. They had to seek me first and if they were nice and kind and friendly and did, then I would return the obligation. But I never did go looking for them.

Allan and Marion Sproul

Riess: Were Allan and Marion Sproul in the San Francisco area in the beginning?

Sproul: For a little while they were. Now, wait a minute. When my daughter, Marion, was born, Allan and Marion were here.

Riess: Did Bob and Allan spend a lot of time together?

Sproul: Yes, growing up they were very congenial. Then Allan was in New York twenty years.

Riess: But when Bob got the job as comptroller in 1923 or so--

Sproul: He was just being engaged to Marion and he was working in a bank in San Francisco. Then when his third child was born, he was promoted to New York and then he was in New York most of the time that Bob was president because we went back there all the time and we'd stay with them and they were very congenial brothers really. They liked the same sort of thing and they played tennis together and all of that. They were very congenial. Allan would come out to Berkeley and spend the summer sometimes and they would stay with us on campus.

Allan was quieter, but he was very bright, very smart, or he wouldn't have been president of the Federal Reserve all during the war, in New York City. They complemented each other in a way. Allan was like his father, who was quite intellectual. I always said Allan was sixty percent his father, forty percent Grandma, because Grandma was the great extrovert who knew everybody. My husband, on the other hand, was sixty percent Grandmother, because Allan wasn't like that, and forty percent intellectual because he couldn't have done his job if he hadn't been. They balanced off their paternal and maternal qualifications. I don't think they realized this, but Allan did agree with me one day when I said that. He said he thought that was pretty fair. I gave him sixty percent on the scholarly side.

Riess: Did he have the same self-confidence?

Sproul: Oh yes, but in a quiet [way]. He was never head of the Rotary Club nor a lobbyist up in Sacramento, any of those things. He had a fine sense of humor and read a great deal, because he had more time to read than my husband. My husband was a good reader though.

Planning Ahead: Inauguration Eve

- Riess: When Bob was offered the presidency, were there ever any second thoughts?
- Sproul: I don't believe on his part. He always was--what's the word?--ambitious. Anything he did he wanted to do better than it's ever been done before if possible. He didn't say "if possible." [chuckles] He was sure he could do it better.
- Riess: When you were the comptroller's wife for seven years and you were able to observe how the Campbells did things and your husband also was able to observe, were you and he already planning the way you might do things differently?
- Sproul: No, we didn't plan ahead. If it dropped in our laps, it did. I certainly never pushed him once. I didn't care whether he became assistant comptroller or comptroller or vice-president or president. We were going along nicely. We had a family. We had a happy time.
- Riess: Was he inclined to say things like "this university could really get going if we would start getting new faculty" and things like that?
- Sproul: No. He seemed to wait until he grew into it and then he would pick up the pieces. It's like a football game. You can't make a touch-down unless you pick up the ball, and whenever he got a chance to pick up the ball and run--he was a pretty good track man! [laughter]
- Riess: When he got in in 1930, did he share with you what his hopes and plans were?
- Sproul: I could tell you one story which is perfectly dreadful, but I won't tell you. Well, I'll tell you! The night before his inauguration--he was inaugurated on October 22, 1930--I had just moved, more or less, with the family into the President's House, and we were dedicating a whole lot of buildings. The dining room table was spread out and I was just making my debut with the regents, inviting them to all of these lunches mostly, all of these big parties. I guess I had Mrs. Barrows' Chinese cook at the time. I wasn't very well acquainted with him, but I had him! [laughter] I was dead tired because the responsibility was weighing me down pretty considerably.

Sproul: Anyway, the night before he was going to be inaugurated he said, "I'll read my speech to you." I said, "Fine, you do that," and I fell asleep. [laughter] He said that I took the starch right out of him! [more laughter] I was exhausted. I couldn't stand any more of anything and I really fell asleep. After that, he never read a speech to me ahead of time, never! It's a wonder I didn't lose my happy home right then and there because he said I just deflated him so, and he didn't want to be deflated. He's a guy who could be built up better than knocked down. Oh!

The Regents

Riess: One of the first things you had to do as president's wife was get yourself acquainted with these regents?

Sproul: That's it and then I had to entertain. My husband never gave me any preparation nor any coaching. That was my job. I was expected to do what was expected of me and that was that. I was brought up that way. I thought he had all he could possibly manage. He was learning at the same time and he didn't have time to worry about whom I invited. Sometimes he would give me lists of people to include in parties. I never took his list exactly as he gave it to me. I'd take names off of it if I thought he had a good idea, but that was my job and I was going to do it. I would pick my list, but I didn't mind suggestions. He was always thinking he had a better idea for the party than I did and I'd say, "Okay, give me your list." Then I would take whom I pleased. Anyway, that, I think, was better.

Riess: The regents, besides Crocker, whom do you remember right offhand?

Sproul: Guy C. Earl. He was wonderful. Mortimer Fleishhacker. One of the noblest men in California, James Kennedy Moffitt. What a man he was. He was a great man, I think. Garrett McEnerney, chairman of the board. (No, he couldn't have been; the governor was chairman of the board. I guess he was chairman of finance. I don't know. Anyway, he was prominent.) [The governor is president of the board; McEnerney was chairman.]

And the Loyalty Oath

Riess: When your husband came in, was this group supportive of the president? Was "supportive" the way you felt about the regents in the beginning?

Sproul: Oh, yes, I felt they were our friends, and after a long period of years the loyalty oath just tore us apart.

The only reason my husband bought that bill of goods--it didn't do him any good; he wasn't going to get any more money or anything; it didn't do him a bit of good. But it was the McCarthy era, and there was a committee up in the legislature that said that there was a Communist under every desk at the university. Well, my husband thought, at the advice of one of his advisors, if they all took the loyalty oath, he could say, "Why, heavens, you're crazy. It's a hundred percent pure and all that."

Well, that's where a good deal of the faculty balked and my husband didn't think they would, I don't think, because all of the people that were doing war work on the hydrogen bomb or atomic bomb had to take that oath every day of the week. That didn't seem to cramp their style. But they did. There were a few that started all this business and it lasted quite a while.

My husband was brokenhearted because he thought he had made a decision that hurt the university. That is something which he wouldn't have done consciously for all of the rice in China. But he went along with that and he couldn't blame it on any of the other people that were working for him. He was the leader and accepted it. So he had to take the consequences.

That was serious and a long time and hurt him--hurt him terribly. It came at a time in his life when he was older and let's say his combative powers were getting a little tired. It certainly, I think, shortened his life ten years. If we had left after twenty years we could have sailed out on a breeze. We could even have gone on through twenty-five years pretty scot free of very serious things. But when that cropped up, it just knocked the props out from under him. He had had to take the blame. He was the head of the show.

Riess: He had a close relationship with Earl Warren, didn't he?

Sproul: Yes, and Earl Warren agreed with him. He was one of the ones who agreed with him. But there were those who thought it was bad--academic freedom and all that business.

Riess: He even had something called his president's advisory committee.

Sproul: It hurt because he thought that something he did hurt [the university] and there was nothing he wouldn't do for the university. He really worked awfully hard anyway. Nobody is willing to work that hard, I don't think.

Ida Sproul's Influence

Riess: I am sure it has plagued you and I am sure it always comes up.

Sproul: My husband was a born competitor. He couldn't stop just making the same record. It had to be a better record. So we went on to twenty-eight years, and in that time we had not a cloud in our sky hardly up to twenty. It was really just blissful and beautiful.

Riess: Were you really a strong influence on him, would you say, compared to what you can see of other wives and so on, or was he uninfluenceable?

Sproul: Oh, he was influenceable, absolutely. He might not always do it, but he would listen. He didn't always do it, but he would listen. Of course, my interest in the whole business was he would succeed and that he would be happy. The university was fine, it was all right and lovely, but that wasn't my consuming passion.

Riess: So you wouldn't have been like a Rosalyn Carter.

Sproul: [with emphasis] No! Not for all the rice in China. No, I wouldn't. I don't believe in it and my husband wouldn't be like President Carter either--hire a man named [Gerald] Rafshoon, pay him \$50,000 a year to improve his public image. My husband improved his own public image. He was good goods! [laughter]

But I was not ambitious. I liked a nice house, don't misunderstand me, and I liked children. But I would just as soon he had been vice-president or comptroller. I was more interested in him than I was in anything else. I wasn't blessed with any talents, any passion to pursue singing or dancing or painting or writing. I just wasn't ambitious anyway. Maybe I was, but I didn't think I was. I was satisfied. I wanted somebody interesting to spend my life with.

This was a story I heard the other day sitting next to a lady. She said that one time in Bob's career he had gone down to the men's room and it was just crowded with professors, and when he opened the door he said, well, he was so glad that so many of the faculty could agree on something unanimously! [laughter] They were entirely in agreement about something! That was a story I never heard until the other day. I thought it was a kick!

Southern California Regents Dickson and Sartori, and Socializing

Riess: With all of these regents, did you have friendships with their wives?

Sproul: Oh, yes, they would invite us to dinner and introduce us to prominent people that they knew in their group. They widened our acquaintance enormously and we were friends. I always regarded them as friends really and I liked the wives. Some I liked better than others, but I always regarded them--we were all in the same boat together, I thought.

Riess: Did you have fixed occasions where you entertained the regents and their wives?

Sproul: Charter Day mostly, and then if I had a guest that I thought certain ones would be interested in.

Riess: Did the regents from Los Angeles come up for Charter Day here?

Sproul: Oh, yes, they did. We had the same show in duplicate. My husband had promised UCLA that he would not favor Berkeley because he graduated here and lived up here, but whenever there was a prominent occasion, it would be duplicated on their campus. So we had Charter Day here, we had Charter Day in Los Angeles.

Riess: But the Los Angeles regents would come up for the Berkeley Charter Day?

Sproul: Sometimes, yes; they could do as they wanted to. They had a free hand.

Riess: When you were in southern California, one of the early regents was George Cochran. Do you remember him?

Sproul: Oh, yes, I knew him. His wife was a good friend of mine. I think his business was insurance.

Riess: It's a name that doesn't come up frequently. Did you know Margaret Sartori?

Sproul: Yes. Her husband was something like Albert Bender. Some of those early regents [like Mrs. Sartori] took it upon themselves to launch us in these communities. We didn't know anybody in Los Angeles, but Mrs. Sartori was a grande dame down there, whatever you call those prominent ladies, a beautiful woman too. One summer she gave us her house in Malibu to spend a month there with the children. She was lovely. She often entertained.

Riess: She was given the regency because of what connection?

Sproul: Her husband was a prominent banker for one thing.

They had an adopted daughter--they didn't have children of their own--and they were devoted to her, and the daughter had children and she belonged to the prominent clubs down there, socially very prominent.

Riess: Regent Edward Dickson was another.

Sproul: Oh, yes, the Dicksons were really determined my husband would be president, and they had a deliberate program to get us started in the south. Mrs. Dickson entertained constantly and included us with all kinds of prominent people. Edward graduated here and was prominent on the Daily Cal. He was a well-to-do successful man who had a newspaper down there, I believe, if I can remember that. They had no children and like Mrs. Sartori they were in that group that belonged to all of the big clubs--I shouldn't say "best"; I don't mean that--but big clubs.

My husband was a member of the Bohemian Club up here, and the Sunset Club in Los Angeles, which is like the Bohemian Club. Then there was the California Club where we could entertain, which was beautiful. Then Mr. Sproul belonged to the Lincoln Club down there and made a speech on Lincoln's birthday almost every year.

Riess: I noticed that there were several clubs in Los Angeles. In fact, it made me think that there was more of a club social life down there than up here.

Sproul: The Sunset Club was patterned after the Bohemian Club, a good deal like it. They had a building where they could have lunches like the club house in the city here.

Riess: What was the Jonathan Club?

Sproul: That was just a social, friendly group. I don't think it had any political--you can check some of these clubs with Miss Robb if you want to. She knows a lot more than I do. But the Lincoln Club was a staunch Republican club. It celebrated Lincoln's birthday.

Another prominent man down there was Henry O'Melveny. One of his sons, Stewart, was a regent for a short time. He was like McEnerney in San Francisco. I think there is an O'Melveny law firm. He was a great, great man and he was, like James K. Moffitt, interested in gardening. He had beautiful flowers when he lived out in Bel Air, acres of daffodils and all that kind of thing. He was an awfully nice person, had vision, he really did. He was a leader. He had a nice family of boys.

Riess: That is what I was going to ask, whether these people really were leaders or whether they were just kind of a committee for your husband.

Sproul: No, they weren't. When we got down south, especially--in San Francisco my husband had gone to school there and it was a little different, but UCLA was entirely new to us. That's my husband's brain child, anyway.

Riess: You are saying that it was really essential to have this group.

Sproul: Yes. Oh, you can't go into a place and say, "Here I am. I'm going to go to work." You don't know whom to ask or anything.

My husband had a very good philosophy about a lot of that. He never asked people for money, large sums anyway, unless he had a project he thought they might be interested in and a star on any one of those campuses that could go down and talk to them. He says, "You can't just go down cold and say to somebody, 'I need a million dollars' and expect them to pony up." But you can work a little bit on it and you have some man who will take the time or is an expert in the field and can tell them what he's trying to do with his life and for the university.

Riess: Do you mean a faculty man?

Sproul: Yes, then you've got an opening. You've got a reason for pushing yourself into an open door.

Riess: Can you think of any particular times when faculty people were very effective?

Sproul: Oh, Edward Dickson, Mr. O'Melveny--I don't want to leave anybody out.

Riess: But those are regents.

Sproul: No, O'Melveny's son was a regent, but old man O'Melveny wasn't. He was just a graduate of the university who wanted to promote its interest. Dickson was a regent three times and he graduated from Berkeley, but he had a newspaper down there.

Riess: But in the faculty, who were the good friends and effective spokesmen? Vern Knudsen, Gordon Watkins--I wondered which names would come to your mind?

Sproul: Oh, Knudsen and Gordon Watkins, of course, the Dykstras when he was president down there. He had been the president of the University of Wisconsin and city manager of Cincinnati, I believe, a big, tall,

Sproul: very likable man, a lovely personality and a charming wife. His wife, Lillian, made many friends. She was very popular, not only with the faculty but with townspeople that she met, the community. She was a charming, lovely person, but she has since died.

Max Dunn was another one.

Regent Chester Rowell

Riess: Another newspaperman was Chester Rowell, and a regent too.

Sproul: Oh, he was a genius! He had a big house on the end of this street, right down at the very end of Tamalpais Road. It's got a stone fence there.

Riess: I thought he was from Fresno.

Sproul: He was from Fresno; he had the Fresno Bee. But when he was on the regents here, he had a lovely old house down there with a stone wall and a whole group of redwood trees all around it, just at the end of Tamalpais Road down there.

Riess: Why did you call him a genius?

Sproul: He could speak I don't know how many different languages. He was very prominent in the 1915 Exposition and he would welcome delegates like the Pope in their own language. Oh, he was brilliant; he had special qualities; he was literary.

That 1915 Exposition was something out of this world anyway. It was so beautiful. Indirect lighting came into being at that time, no glaring lights anywhere, and all of these little nooks and corners were a lovely shade and I think it was called travertine.

Riess: Was that the pink marble?

Sproul: It was pink, pale green, and yellow. Oh, it was fairyland! Then they'd have music, not rock music, but music, soft, in these little different nooks and corners.

Riess: Mortimer Fleishhacker you remember fondly. What kind of a man was he?

Sproul: He was quiet and reserved, but a fine gentleman. He really was.

Riess: Were there some your husband would lean on more than others do you think?

Sproul: Oh, Mr. McEnerney for sure; James K. Moffitt for sure.

Mr. Rowell was so talented and such a good speaker. My husband was a lobbyist and he would get him to speak before the legislature. He said that one day he was terribly nervous. Rowell had agreed to come up to speak and he was late. Bob was terribly worried that the whole thing wouldn't go on and wouldn't be successful. Rowell rushed in at the last minute and said, "Okay, Sproul, here I am. What side do you want me to speak on?" [laughter]

Riess: That's amusing!

Sproul: Isn't it? Thereupon he made a brilliant presentation and it went off wonderfully.

Mixing Up the Seating

Sproul: Let's see, who else?

Riess: Jesse Steinhart later.

Sproul: Yes, we had a lot of fine support from the San Francisco Jewry-- Albert Bender, the Haases (Walter Haas and Elise, his wife); Mrs. Stern, a beautiful lady.

Riess: Would you always think of them as "the San Francisco Jewry?"

Sproul: [forcefully] No! People are people in my book. It didn't bother me a bit. [laughter] In fact, Mrs. McEnerney called me down once after a Charter Day luncheon. "My dear," she said, "your seating was terrible. You got us all together, the Catholics and the Jewish people." She said, "Mix us up a bit!"

I said, "The reason I do that, Mrs. McEnerney, is that you all seem so congenial and friendly and get along so well and I want you to have a good time." She said, "That's all right; don't worry about that. Mix us up." I said to my husband, "I don't like that." I was upset.

He said, "She's dead right. People like to meet other people." Just because they happen to have a bond--and they do really, Catholics and the Jewish people, like "Abie's Irish Rose," you

Sproul: know. He said, "You don't have to follow that slavishly, like you've been doing." I thought they weren't spending their lives [at the dinner] and for a little while they would have a good time. Boy, I tell you! You learn the hard way.

But there were so many in that time. There was a man from labor-- [Cornelius] Haggerty?

Riess: That's right. Did he fit in with the other people?

Sproul: I think they had respect for him. I think he was a good labor man.

Riess: He came on later.

Sproul: Oh, way later. He used to row with Mr. Neylan. Mr. Haggerty once said he never heard language in the labor union--swearing--that could equal Neylan! [laughter] He was amazed at his vocabulary!

Regent John Francis Neylan, The Early Days of the Board

Riess: At the very beginning Regent Neylan was--

Sproul: A very good friend, a close friend. He had a lovely wife really; Gertrude was a very good friend of mine and of my husband's. We stayed down there with them at Rancho Corte Madera. (I think that's the name of their house down in Woodside.) He was very helpful, but as I say, sometimes even the people that are close, things come up that are kind of dividing. They separate you even with old friendships and that was that.

Riess: You can at least look back to earlier days with them.

Sproul: Oh, it was lovely.

Riess: A couple of early regents were C.C. Teague--

Sproul: Oh, he was a nice man too, and his wife was lovely. He was a rancher down in Ventura. Isn't that where he came from? Yes, Ventura. He was a fine fellow--generous--and his wife was lovely. A good friend; we stayed with them down there too.

In those early days we were friends. We weren't in different camps like it grew later on. We were really all in the same boat and we got along very well, which was a very good thing, or we wouldn't have lasted that long.

- Riess: The regents are appointed by the governor, and the governor at that point was Young, and after Young there was James Rolph and then Merriam and then Culbert Olson.
- Sproul: Merriam was loyal. I stayed up there once with them and slept in Merriam's bedroom. He wasn't there. His wife took me in. Then who else did we have?
- Riess: Culbert Olson.
- Sproul: He was not friendly. He was an unfriendly regent, the first Democrat after a long line of Republicans.
- Riess: The earlier governors, like Young, Rolph, and Merriam, would they consult your husband before they chose the regents?
- Sproul: Mostly. Warren, certainly; Warren, certainly. I think Young too. You know what I mean. A lot of them, mostly. The most antagonistic governor was Olson, who was a Democrat, the first Democrat in a long time. But fortunately, Earl Warren had three terms, I think. It was a long time. But it was only in later years we had to read the paper at breakfast to find out who the new regent was. That didn't go on in our early days.
- Riess: It seems like your husband would have had a majority of support.
- Sproul: He wouldn't start something unless he did, I'll tell you. [laughter] When he went into one of those meetings he had a little piece of paper in his top pocket and he knew who was going to support him and who wasn't, and if he wasn't going to put it over, he wouldn't bring it up. He knew where he was going and what he wanted to accomplish and if that wasn't a favorable climate, why, that would go back to his pocket--another time. He had a good sense of where he was going and what he wanted. He wasn't going to bring up something and then talk all morning and then ding it. When he brought something up-- I mean if he could, within his power--he knew just where he stood. He knew if Gianinni was for it or Neylan would vote for him and if the ground was favorable.
- Riess: Did he kind of grit his teeth before the regents' meetings?
- Sproul: He worked awfully hard at them. Yes, he really did. Now they have social affairs when the meetings are over. Why, he'd be too exhausted. He would want to get home and relax. He had had a day and that was enough! [laughter] [voice expresses surprise] Now they have parties, dinners, and things! He would never let me make a date on the day of a meeting, a social date of any kind--lunch, tea, or dinner.

Riess: He just wanted to collapse?

Sproul: Yes, he had had it. He had given it his best and that was that.

Riess: When the regents' wives would travel up for the regents' meetings would you then do something with all of the wives?

Sproul: I never made it a regular thing. Generally it was lunch because, as I say, he didn't want me to have a dinner because he had done his best and he was tired. He always says that he liked the social and he enjoyed it, but it was too much to do with his regular job. You wear yourself out.

Riess: You have to present two different faces, I think.

Sproul: Yes, that's it, and different people to please and all of that kind of thing.

Regent Sidney Ehrman, and Weekends at Tahoe

Riess: Sidney Ehrman was another regent.

Sproul: Oh, was he ever! That's why I shouldn't mention these people [fearing missing someone]. Mr. Ehrman was a great regent too--friendly and generous and a very cultivated gentleman. Oh, yes! If we miss anybody I'll cry, especially Mr. Ehrman. For twenty years we went and sat in their box and had dinner on the opening night at the San Francisco Opera. Oh, if I had missed him I would have been a boobie!

Riess: Well, I'll make sure that that doesn't happen because I know you care about them.

Sproul: Oh, I care terribly. The Ehrmans--twenty whole years out of our twenty-eight--we sat in Box Q. We had a superb dinner at their beautiful home on Broadway, 2070 Broadway, and then we were driven to the opera. I always had a new dress. Lovely! And the most superb food I ever had anywhere in my life.

Riess: Did you visit the Ehrmans in their house at Tahoe? Where was that house?

Sproul: That house is right near Meeks Bay and it was called Pine Lodge. It had a long slope down to the lake studded with giant pine trees. Then they had a whole section at the end of the lawn that was planted with native wildflowers--Indian paintbrush and alpine lilies, all kinds of things.

- Riess: I know that a lot of Jewish families were up there--the Hellers, the Hellmans, the Ehrmans.
- Sproul: The Fleishhackers.
- Riess: A great merry crowd?
- Sproul: Oh, yes, every afternoon after we had lunch, the boatman who had charge of their motorboat would take us around the lake. We'd go over to--where is that island up there?
- Riess: The island in Emerald Bay?
- Sproul: Yes, and we went all around in the motorboat. Sometimes on weekends Mr. Ehrman and some of his nephews went over to Nevada.
- Riess: To gamble?
- Sproul: Yes.
- Riess: Did Bob and you go?
- Sproul: Yes, but my husband would never gamble because he thought he might meet some students and he didn't think it was a good thing for his students to see him up there.
- Riess: Yes, I think that was correct. That sounds right.
- Sproul: And the others didn't really gamble. They shook dice and things like that.
- Riess: For how long would you go up? Would you be house guests for a week or two weeks?
- Sproul: Oh, no, a week at the most and mostly a long weekend.

They had an indoor and an outdoor dining room and the most superb food I've ever had anywhere in my life.

Then they had a whole row of little beach places where you could change your clothes and go and swim. But if you ate in the outdoor dining room or even the indoor dining room, you had to be on time. Mrs. Ehrman ran a beautiful house, very elegant food and lots of help. The people, the help that worked for her, always had to be fed before anybody else and that had to be over with. Then we would go swimming and come back and have lunch. Oh, it was great.

Riess: Did you have to get dressed for lunch? You couldn't just come in with your bathing suit?

Sproul: No, you had to get dressed, and you always got dressed for dinner with tuxedos and the ladies in long dresses. The upstairs maid unpacked your suitcase and if she saw that a button was missing somewhere, she sewed it on. Oh, it was magnificent service--your nightgown laundered every day and folded fresh so when you went to bed it had been laundered. Oh! It was just marvelous, just marvelous!

Riess: Who else would usually come on the weekends that you went?

Sproul: Friends of theirs from the medical school and from the faculty and from the San Francisco social friendly families like the Fleishhackers and who else? The Hellers. Did you do Ellie's [oral history]?

Riess: No, but it was done in the office by another woman, Malca Chall.*

I wondered whether the weekends were mostly oriented to university people.

Sproul: No, a good, big cross section of this whole state of California.

Riess: How many people could they keep in their house?

Sproul: Oh, I'm not sure. Beautiful old-fashioned brass bedsteads--elegant. It was the most beautifully run place I've ever been in my life. Now, she consulted her cook every morning early at breakfast time about the day.

Riess: Was it like going down to San Simeon, or was there a very different feeling?

Sproul: It was different because [of] all of the little details. San Simeon was lovely; you had your meals and you had a beautiful place to stay. But if you had a button missing on your dress, why, it wouldn't be sewed up like at Mrs. Ehrman's.

Riess: How about when guests came to your house? Did your maids sew the buttons on?

*See interview with Elinor R. Heller, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, in process.

Sproul: My upstairs maid took care of the bathrobe of a very prominent British economist that we had staying at our house on campus. He was going home to England; he was British. She said, "You should see that bathrobe. It's just holes! I'd like to launder it and mend it. Do you think he'd be offended?" He was a bachelor and didn't have a wife. He just came alone, but he was needing some attention. I said, "Heavens, no, I think he'd be grateful." So she laundered his bathrobe and she sewed and darned and patched and sent him home with practically a made-over one. But she was hesitant about doing it. She thought she might hurt his feelings. I said, "No, he's not married. There are no women involved. I don't see why you can't." So she did, and his name was Sir Arthur Salter, a prominent British economist. But she was wonderful with a needle, that girl.

Regent William H. Crocker

Riess: The various regents were also great benefactors of the university?

Sproul: If my husband was in a pinch--and he wasn't always soliciting them for money--but if there was something that he cared about and he had to turn to somebody in a hurry, these people all came out.

He was on the verge of losing Ernest Lawrence to Texas because Ernest wanted a little laboratory. Well, my husband said he didn't know where he was going to get the money for it. He asked him how much money he wanted. I've forgotten how much money it was--seventy-five thousand or something for his laboratory, and Mr. Sproul didn't know at all where he'd turn for the money. But Regent Crocker gave it. Lawrence was saved and the Crocker Radiation Laboratory (that little one on the campus) was born and the whole physics program developed here. Oh, look at what kind of a regent that was!

Regent Edwin Pauley, Appointment to the Moscow Mission

Riess: Regent Pauley?

Sproul: Oh, generous and kind and a friend.

Riess: He was also from the south.

Sproul: Yes. He had Truman appoint Mr. Sproul on a mission to Moscow after the war to collect reparations from Russia. Pauley suggested him and I guess it was Truman who appointed him.

The Pauley Ballroom over here is something, and the sports arena in Los Angeles. His wife, Bobbie [Barbara Jean McHenry], was a student in our early days. She was women's representative, I think they called the job. Bobbie Pauley, a pretty, pretty coed.

Riess: Was that appointment to Moscow something that your husband wanted to do?

Sproul: He didn't want to do it. He said he couldn't take the time. I said, "You have a big pile of papers on your desk. If you sweep them all into the wastepaper basket and go to Moscow you will have a new experience and a broader vision, and it's high time you took your nose out of those papers!" Well, I urged him. It was after the war, it was reparations, and it was an honor to be appointed, and he met prominent people from all over the United States because it was a big committee.

He worked awfully hard. He wore himself out actually because he used the dictaphone so much and he used it so successfully that when we'd leave Los Angeles sometimes, he would leave enough of the rolls on that dictaphone to keep a girl busy until our next trip almost. If it didn't last that long, at least she got an awful lot of paperwork off his desk. [laughter] I had no respect for those papers; they accumulated too fast; they kept him up too late at night.

Offers of Other Jobs to Robert Gordon Sproul

Riess: I'm sure that you had many a reason to wish that he was still comptroller.

Sproul: [emphatically] Oh, yes! I thought he worked too hard. But on the other hand, I thought he was enjoying it.

He had an offer to be president of Columbia once.

Riess: Yes, he had a couple of offers.

Sproul: Yes, that was the most lucrative one. It was a bigger salary than he got here, and then one was as a head of a bank.

Riess: I read that a very important person offered him the vice-presidency of the United States if he were to make a certain faculty appointment. Do you know anything about that?

Sproul: I guess there were a lot of things I didn't know because I'm liable to get wound up, and he wouldn't like that. I don't know about the vice-presidency; I didn't know about that. But they did want him to run for senator once when Knowland stepped down and beat out that man from Los Angeles, which he shouldn't have done. It was disastrous for Knowland too. Who was governor at that time?

Riess: Knight.

Sproul: There was some talk of his running against Knowland for senator. But then my husband was getting older.

Riess: How did your husband deal with Goodwin Knight as governor? Did he get along with him?

Sproul: He got along with most all of them pretty well excepting Culbert Olson and he was a Democrat! [laughter]

Riess: That's right. I know how beautifully he got along with Warren.

Sproul: Oh, they were classmates.

Riess: Did he have a lot of respect for Knight as governor?

Sproul: Well, he could work with him and I think he could sell him his program. He could work with him.

He didn't expect anything for himself. That's why I think he did so well. He never asked for a raise. I think at one time when the faculty wanted a raise, he didn't get a raise. He did without it. Miss Robb knows more about that than I do. But if he made mistakes (and he did), they were not to advance him either financially or with prestige for a job. He liked what he was doing, he could live on what he earned, and he was quite satisfied.

John Sproul, "My Father's Job"

Riess: Your husband went to the limits.

Sproul: Yes, really, if he hadn't been physically very strong and terribly dedicated-- here he was, as I say, an engineering student and he didn't even have a master's degree, just a B.A.

Sproul: I wish I had a document that I thought I was saving, but I don't know where in heaven's name it is. It was written by my son, John. When he entered the University of California at the age of seventeen you had to take Subject A. I said to him when he came home, "Johnny, what's Subject A? What's that all about?" He said, "They put titles up on the board and then you select one and write a composition."

I said, "What did you write about?" He said, "There was one up there, 'What is wrong with your father's job, and why you wouldn't want it.'" I said, "Oh, did you take that?" He said, "I sure did."

I said to Bob afterwards, "Why don't we get that paper of Johnny's and we'll see what's wrong with your job and why he wouldn't want it!" [laughter] (Oh, I'm so angry. I don't know what I did with it. I thought I put it in the safety deposit box.) Anyway, I remember it. It starts out by saying about Father; he said, "Father came up on the business administration side and not the academic. My objections to the academic side of his job are that you have to travel a great deal; you have too many people to please." That's the first thing he said. "You've got the regents to please; you've got the students; you've got the faculty." Let's see, who else do you have to please? The regents, the students, the faculty, and the public. "You're away from your family a very great deal and there is a great deal of traveling." But in the end, when he got all through with what was wrong with it (those were some of the things that were wrong), "but however"--I guess he thought he was being disloyal--"in my opinion, nobody could do the job as well as Father."

(I'm so mad I can't find it--all done in childish handwriting! Don't you think it's something? He'd analyzed it.)

He said, "If I would take the job, I would take not the academic side but the business side." He goes on to say what's wrong with the academic side, but then I think his conscience hurt him, so he puts in the last sentence, "however..."

Riess: It seems that he was reflecting something that your husband must have felt also.

Sproul: That was going on around him, yes. But I was so amused at it all. I said, "Did anybody else pick that?" He said, "The boy next to me." I said, "What does his father do?" He said, "He's a plumber." [laughter; telephone rings]

Bob Sproul on the Agricultural Commission

Sproul: I wanted to tell you some things that my husband did that took imagination. I think only a younger man would have the courage and the stamina. They appointed him, when he was a lobbyist, to a committee when the bill was up before the legislature to separate the College of Agriculture from Berkeley. It was called the Agricultural Extension Commission and he went all over the United States to visit other land grant colleges with a group of prominent agriculturalists.*

*"The criticism of the people of the state, especially farmers, of what they regarded as bad planning for and inadequate support of the College of Agriculture, had gone so far that a bill was introduced into the 1919 session of the legislature to take the College of Agriculture not away from Berkeley alone, but away from the University. A new state college of agriculture was proposed, to be built at Davis under the control and jurisdiction of a new and independent board of trustees. Well, that would have been disastrous. So Mr. Sproul, who was the comptroller and the legislative representative of the regents at the time, when he discovered that bill in the legislature was able to persuade the legislature to kill that bill, and in its stead authorize and set up an agricultural commission to study the whole field of higher agricultural education in America, with the hope of learning something from other institutions, what their faculties and administrators thought and were doing that might help California solve her problem.

"All right. The commission made its journey eastward visiting several agriculture colleges, both independent and university, and they came back. I'm told that one of the most ardent proponents of separation on the commission didn't even complete the tour. He saw that he was wrong, dropped out, and came home saying he was convinced that we must never take the College of Agriculture away from the University."

From an interview with Claude B. Hutchison, The College of Agriculture, University of California, 1922-1952, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1962, pp. 56-57.

Riess: From California?

Sproul: Yes. Charlie Teague, A.C. Hardison, and all kinds of people that were way up in agriculture went, and they defeated the bill. Bob wrote the report, and he was successful.

Jim Hollister that Hollister is named after was also on the commission. I can't remember all of the men. Scottie Mortland, who was a newspaperman, and the fellow Lake Mead is named after, Elwood Mead.

Bob said that Mead always had to speak when they went to these places because Mead was senior and most prominent, and he said that Mead made the same speech every night. [laughter] So they all (on the commission) got so they could memorize it. One night before Mead had a chance to talk, some member of the commission (appointed by the rest of them) got up and gave Mead's speech word for word! [laughter] A dirty trick!

The Agricultural Commission was a very important piece of work because look at what the wine industry has done for California. What would it be like if we didn't have that? Millions and millions of dollars.

Riess: [laughter] Among other things!

Sproul: Among other things! Then Hilgard, of course, was pretty prominent in the whole affair too. Professor Hilgard brought his--I call it cuttings--from Europe, from Germany and France, and started all of these vineyards.

Riess: Speaking of the wine industry, how important was the wine industry in your entertaining? Did you entertain with liquor?

Sproul: We entertained with liquor. Red wine with roast beef, white wine with fish. I don't think we went in very heavily for cocktails, but we certainly must have had some. We never served hard liquor to students. We didn't want that responsibility.

Riess: Were there people who drank too much, or did you just not make it possible for them to have too much?

Sproul: We just didn't make it possible. [laughter] Financially, I guess, maybe I can say for financial reasons!

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A Committee to Locate UCLA

Riess: Was it when your husband was comptroller that he started bringing home talk about the development of the university at Los Angeles?

Sproul: First he was on a committee to find a location. There was a committee of regents down there and they traveled all over that southern area, trying to find the right location. Then they were going to move the teachers' college from the Vermont Avenue campus to this new campus when they found it.

They had a nucleus, in other words, on the Vermont Avenue campus, a teachers' college--what did they call that?--a normal school. The faculty to a pretty large extent was mostly women. All professors have tenure and Los Angeles wanted a university as prestigious as Berkeley and you couldn't really say, "Okay, the normal school is." It was good, but it wasn't any full-fledged university.

Campbell was president at the time, I think, and he was interested naturally where there would be this extension.

Riess: People say that Campbell did not particularly work on behalf of the expansion.

Sproul: No, he didn't. Almost at the end of his term is when the whole question was being settled. He was to speak one night at a meeting in Los Angeles--I guess it was shortly after he took over the presidency--and they had so many speakers and such a long program that he didn't get to talk at all. When it was his turn to talk he said, "Due to the lateness of the hour, I will have to give this talk another time."

Riess: You are saying that he just never really got behind it.

- Sproul: No, he never did. They were going to give him a real big send-off as president and everything, but he never got to deliver much of a speech and he never got terribly involved in it--not at all as far as I know.
- Riess: Do you remember your husband talking about Regent Crocker and Regent Dickson's attitudes and how he was working with them at the time?
- Sproul: Not particularly. He just said, "It's hard to find a site that pleases everybody," that kind of thing. It was general conversation.
- Riess: The "everybodies" that they had to please? The agriculturalists wanted a site that had a lot of space?
- Sproul: Yes, and they already had a toehold at Riverside, agriculture, and the population of the state of California had shifted pretty much at that time from San Francisco being the largest city to Los Angeles being the largest city. They weren't going to be the majority in the legislature and be second choice. A great deal of the wealth of the state was concentrated down there, naturally with the increased population, and San Francisco was of less importance. So [who] had the dominant voice had a lot to do with it.

But the whole situation was vastly changing and it was time to decide what to do or else they would have a separate one and that would tear the university apart. My husband's whole idea--one of his ideas; I shouldn't say the whole--was that it would be not a terrible financial burden because the budget then could be divided, and if they did certain things better at UCLA or had more facilities for, say, moving pictures and dances and the arts, he didn't want to have a complete duplication, that everything Berkeley did, UCLA had to do too.

He promised them and kept his word and that's why I think he was so successful. He said, "I can't give you a whole new faculty overnight, and you can't have the reputation Berkeley has overnight, either. It's taken years to build it. But I can promise you that every time there is a vacancy, I'll give you the best man I can find according to the money I have to spend." And he kept his word. He wasn't building one up against the other. He preached the gospel that it's not the university of Berkeley, it's the university of the state, and that's why he justified all of these centers.

- Riess: It must often have been a struggle.
- Sproul: It was. It took a lot of patience and a lot of tact to sell a program as large as that and to please as many diverse sections in the state as that. It took a great deal of tact and patience and a very great enthusiasm for being sure that that was the right course for the university to take.

Sproul: It was quite advantageous that Dickson had graduated up here; it helped him understand the problem. Although he was vastly loyal to UCLA, that was his brain child and his baby, on the other hand, he could get the picture because he had been up here as an undergraduate. In those days regents had very long terms--Dickson had four--their terms were for sixteen years and he had at least three. That would be forty-eight years! Several had three. I forget all of them, but Dickson was one, and maybe Crocker, too, for that matter. I don't know for sure. You will have to check.

Riess: Dickson was in there from 1913 to 1956!

Sproul: A very nice era as far as the world went. It wasn't so upset as it is now. It was a pleasanter time. In our day I don't think we had a student riot.

Provost E.C. Moore and Mrs. Moore

Riess: When your husband was first in touch with the Los Angeles campus, was Provost Moore the one in charge down there?

Sproul: I believe so, yes. He was a very good friend of my husband's and his wife was also. She liked to talk to Bob and discuss things, and she liked music and plays and art. She was an M.D. in her own right, Dorothea.

Riess: Moore, according to the reports, was essential in the growth of the Los Angeles campus, and yet at some point it sounds like he really had a kind of breakdown.

Sproul: He swallowed that whole program with a grain of salt, I think, because he said to me one day when they had annexed still another place--I think it was Santa Barbara--he said, "This thing is going to be a colossus that will destroy itself." He wasn't a go-getter particularly. He was an intellectual and he was a very interesting man. He had a Ph.D. naturally. My husband didn't even have a master's degree. I shouldn't stress that maybe, but anyway it's true.

When he married his wife, Dorothea, she had just gotten separated from a very famous husband by the name of Charles Lummis. He was an anthropologist and the Southwest Museum was his baby down in Los Angeles. He [Lummis] had a roving eye, and Dorothea was very interesting and very intellectual and very talented, but he liked the ladies and he got interested in, I think it was, a Mexican girl who worked for them. Mrs. Moore taught her what the doctor liked to eat and what he couldn't eat, what would upset him and what wouldn't, and

Sproul: then she stepped out of the picture and they got divorced. (That marriage did not last, as you might expect it wouldn't with this very, very famous man.)

Anyway, my theory is--she was a good deal older than Ernest Carroll [Moore], Dorothea was, and I don't know anything about psychology, but I think she fell for Ernest Carroll because he was a lot younger and she was deeply in love with Mr. Lummis and hurt and I think his falling for a younger girl, this soothed her vanity.

Riess: That she could have a younger man herself?

Sproul: Yes, and an attractive man and just as intellectual, but in a different field. It was a good marriage, although she was seventeen or twelve or more years older. He was just as good to her when she got old and sick! He read to her and he never left her. He was a gentleman and a scholar. There was nothing wrong. He was sort of quiet and a bit odd in some ways. He didn't like children, but then Dorothea persuaded him to adopt a little boy and he did.

Riess: He got a little hysterical about the Communist menace. [1934]

Sproul: Celeste Strack.*

The Need for a Strong Southern Campus

Riess: Then your husband had to go down and sort it all out?

Sproul: Yes, that was it. His role was to make peace and sell his program. That was nobody else's idea but Mr. Sproul's, these different campuses, because he just figured out it wasn't sensible; the legislature wasn't going to pass a big budget and then the people would have to come five hundred miles to come to school when there was no room up here and not enough teachers. He had been a lobbyist long enough to know that that wouldn't work, that something had to be done and constructively done. He was a Scot, my husband, and he wanted something for his money and not [to] waste money.

Riess: He had already seen evidence of resentment of the people in the south?

Sproul: Yes, but you see he had been a lobbyist and he could see that the power in the legislature was shifting from San Francisco to the south, and when it got to be powerful enough the budget would be made up down there and the money allocated from there, let's say. So he had to come up with a better idea than that. He had been a lobbyist long enough to

*See Stadtman, Verne A., The University of California, 1868-1968, McGraw-Hill, 1970, pp. 298-300.

Sproul: know that you can't battle all of the time. You have to get some of your measures over, and he was good at that, because I know so well that he never brought up things--even little things that he honestly believed in--until he had that little white card in his pocket and knew how many votes he had in the board of regents before he would propose it. You have to have the backing, but you have to have vision, and I think he did have vision.

The Site

Riess: When he was going down to look at the sites, did he talk about the Palos Verdes site?

Sproul: Oh, yes, the Palos Verdes and Santa Monica--

Riess: Do you remember whether he would have advocated the Palos Verdes?

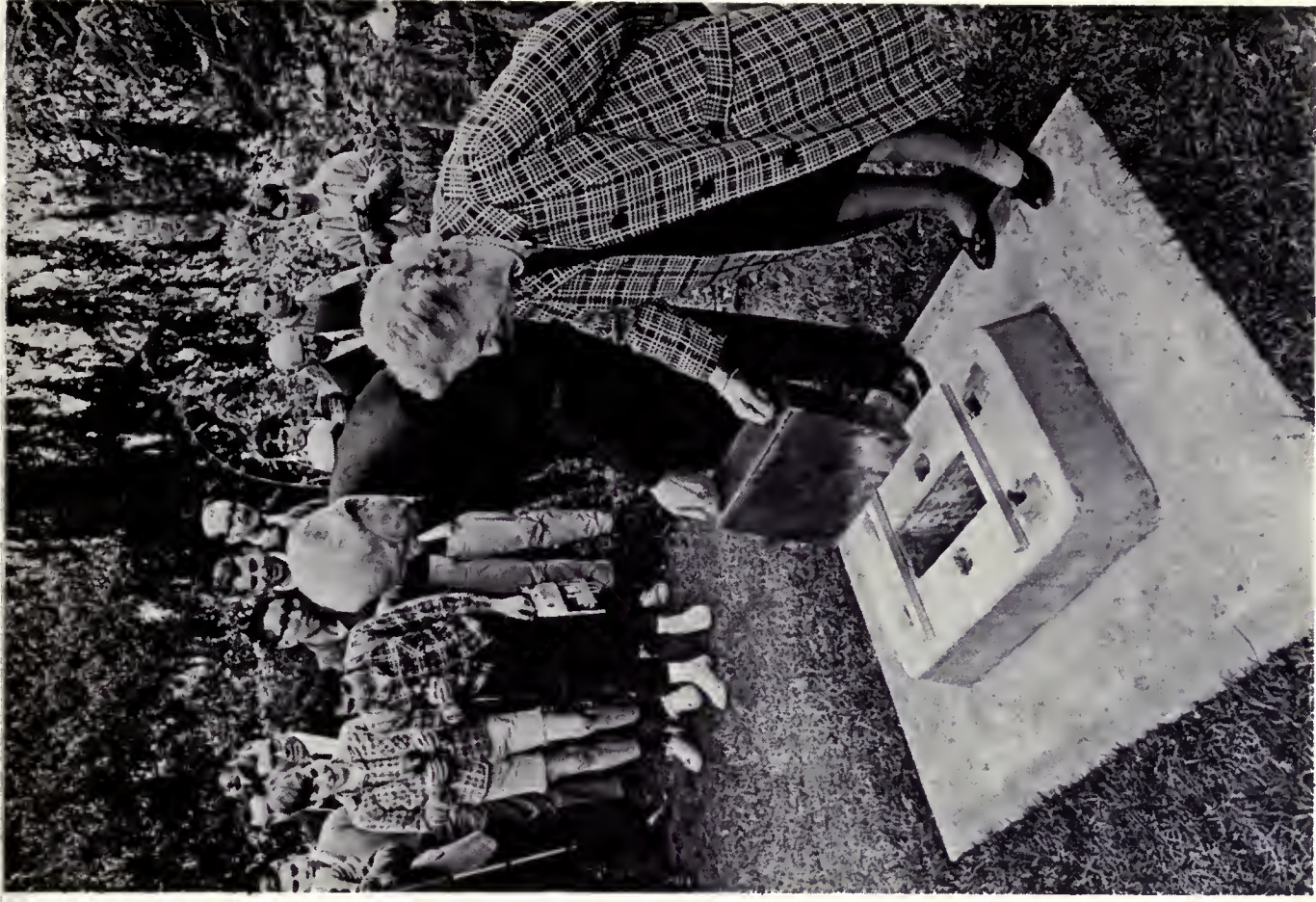
Sproul: I think they were all trial balloons, so to speak, those trips and those places. They were tossed up in the air to be considered and voted on. There was a strong enough committee, a powerful enough committee of the regents, to make it work if they could get a majority, I suppose.

Riess: As far as the location went, you don't remember any great--

Sproul: No, they didn't have any hassles that I can remember. I think that was more or less "what has to be, has to be." I don't think they swallowed every one that came up, and I suppose that some of them had political implications too.

Riess: Some of the locations that were suggested?

Sproul: Yes, I would be surprised if they didn't. But on the other hand, they weren't paramount. The whole thing was transferring the normal school, which had a faculty. My husband thought there was some weakness there, that there hadn't been a prestigious faculty and that his job, once they got a place, was to build up the faculty.



President and Mrs. Sproul placing time capsule in the ground following Dedication of Centennial Tree in glade east of Giannini Hall. Charter Day, March 23, 1968



President and Mrs. Sproul at the Tournament of Roses, Pasadena, 1958.

Sproul: I don't think the Jansses [Edwin and Harold] made money on UCLA.* (They gave the Janss Steps to the university [UCLA].) They never gave any great sums of money, but they developed that whole area, Bel Air and all the rest of it. They were a real estate firm. They weren't antagonistic.

My husband crowned lots of campus queens on those Janss Steps, kissed the pretty girls and gave them a wreath or a bouquet of flowers.

Riess: Regent Pauley is another name which comes up there. Pauley apparently in the early years of the southern California agriculturalists really insisted on having some agricultural teachings right there on the Westwood campus.

Sproul: The way they started actually, after they got the Westwood campus-- it was a gorgeous location, great big open fields with meadow larks that sang in the morning. I used to walk across that field and go down on Westwood Boulevard and do my shopping, and I asked the regents once if they wouldn't mind putting tables and benches out in those fields so that the students could bring a picnic lunch. Well, they did and they used it, but little by little [the campus] encroached on the grounds around the house as it grew, and those big fields and the meadow larks are a thing of the past. But once there was nothing there, just some wheat fields, clover or something, and those birds were simply marvelous. I would walk across the path and I would go down Westwood Boulevard and I would shop, groceries and stuff.

Dorothea Moore, and the President's House at UCLA

Riess: Where did you stay when you were there?

Sproul: The Moores had a house which belonged to the university. [That house is now called the Chancellor's Residence.]

Riess: Did the residence at UCLA have the charm that your house here had?

*"The owners of the land, Edwin Janss and Harold Janss, who controlled some 200 acres of the site, and Alphonzo Bell, owner of the rest of the 383-acre tract, offered to sell the land for \$1 million, though its value for subdivision purposes was several times this amount. The Janss brothers, in effect, made a gift on the order of \$4 million; Mr. Bell, a gift of \$350,000." Centennial Record of the University of California, UC Berkeley, 1967.

Sproul: It was a nice house, but not the same as here. That Berkeley house is something out of this world, I think. The other house was a brick house and it had what I call [chuckles] the slave quarters like in the South. There were two maids' rooms and a bath between and then beyond that was another room and a bath that was for a chauffeur.

Mrs. Moore and Ernest Moore, too, were very fond of my husband-- Mrs. Moore particularly. She used to clip for him things that were pertinent in The New Yorker, that were clever and interesting.

Riess: They didn't consider it to be an "invasion" when you came?

Sproul: No, we were their guests.* They had a guest room. The university owned the house. It was all part of the job.

Riess: So there was no resentment?

Sproul: Oh, we never had any of that, never, never, never. As I say, she was very fond of Bob. We took potluck when we went there, and she wasn't a very good housekeeper--don't put that in! [laughter] We'd get there in the morning on the "Lark," and we had driven out there, and there was a guest room and twin beds, and the beds would maybe not be made. The fresh linen was all piled on a chair or something.

She was a difficult lady temperamentally. She didn't bother about the faculty much or make too many friends with them. She didn't like entertaining. When she had parties, she had paper cups for punch, not china, and paper napkins, and maybe a bouquet in the center of the table that should have been changed last week, but the gorgeous china--she was an artist. Beautiful! You turned the plates upside down if you got a chance [laughter] and you'd find out that the President of Mexico, Porfirio Diaz or whatever his name was--they had his crest on it and things like that.

She was very artistic and she would go to New York in the spring when they had big art exhibits. She herself personally had an income, must have, and she knew enough to buy artists that were just beginning and good ones too that had a reputation. She knew art.

She hated these big teas, had nothing but paper cups when we went there for a big tea party.

Riess: So she hadn't married E.C. Moore for the power or the glory.

Sproul: No. Actually she was always talking about sex, and I didn't know much about sex in those days [laughter] and cared less, but she was kind of hipped on the subject! (You don't have to put that in.) But she was

*While Moore was provost, it was the Moores' home. After E.C. Moore's retirement in the latter part of 1935, it was the Sprouls' Los Angeles home.

Sproul: an authority on it, too. I always felt that I had nothing to contribute, that I was woefully inadequate. In fact, I am still! But I wasn't as opinionated as I am now.

I thought that in some way the fact that he was so much younger accounted for her getting married at all because she didn't need to. She was an M.D. and had a good practice. So she wasn't bound to him for financial reasons. When she went to New York to all of these exhibits and things, he didn't go. But they had in their hall--what is that man's name that I am so crazy about, a painter? Renoir. She [subject of painting] was a kind of a red-headed girl with a shawl around her. I would just drool over that picture. She had many others. When she died, they went to the Los Angeles Museum of Art. She didn't give them to the university.

But that one Renoir--oh, I just loved that girl. It was delightful. As I say, she had kind of a vivid complexion. His ladies were all kind of healthy looking anyway and she had a nice, big shawl around her that was decorative, one of these fancy ones with flowers. Anyway, I sort of hoped the university would get it, but it didn't get wasted.

Riess: She sounds like a very interesting woman.

Sproul: Oh, she was.

The Sproul Family's Role at UCLA

Riess: When you first went down there, she wasn't willing to do the teas and all of that. Did you have to start doing teas right away?

Sproul: I did some, but she was supposed to carry on from day to day. I did the big ones for the faculty and the freshmen and the seniors. I had to do that because they had to be just like Berkeley. I did one in Berkeley the same.

Riess: What your husband wanted you to do was to make it exactly like--

Sproul: Yes, I had to. He wanted to get the children down oftener to make it more of a home, but I flatly refused that because it interrupted their studies. They didn't go to school down there and they had their homework to do.

Riess: But he was saying if they would just come down for two or three days it would give the semblance of--

Sproul: Yes, like Thanksgiving and take a box at the football games. One Thanksgiving weekend we were to go to a USC game. We had a box and the kids were to sit in it too and it would be "just like home," but the kids didn't want to stay. They had commitments at home. Young Bob was going to speak in San Jose at a YMCA thing, and Marion was in college and she had to study for finals. They said they just didn't want to go to the football game, and they didn't think it was a reasonable thing for Papa to do. I didn't either.

Well, they came down, we had Thanksgiving and a whole lot of fanfare, and the morning came for them to go home. I said, "Okay, you can go home." (You see, we drove our car down there. The children drove--Marion, I guess. She was seventeen.) I guess I didn't discuss it with him. Maybe I sprang it on him. I don't know. Anyway, I said, "You go up to the bedroom and say good-bye to your father and be polite and say you had a nice time and all that stuff." He wouldn't speak to them, he got so mad! He turned his face to the wall, and they marched through the bedroom and said, "Good-bye, Papa, good-bye."

And he was so cross with me! I said, "I think you're totally unreasonable. Marion has finals. Why shouldn't she go home? Bob has a YMCA speaking engagement. If you had a speaking engagement, you would jolly well keep it. You wouldn't give it up." I stood my ground. But he didn't really like it. I had to laugh. The kids laugh to this day! They all filed into his bedroom--he was up in bed--and dutifully said good-bye, and he didn't speak to them! [laughter] He turned his face to the wall and there he was.

Riess: Was that the first time they had seen him so genuinely displeased about anything?

Sproul: I think so, because he had it built up, he didn't want an empty box, and it was all supposed to be filled with family. I said, "Well, invite somebody else to sit there, some faculty. What's the difference?" And we did, and they came on short notice, which was nice. (You don't have to put that in.) But I still remember to this day how cross he was--whew! I guess I didn't lay the ground ahead of time; I sprang it on him.

Riess: Had they been resisting this over the years? In fact, you had said to me that you didn't take them down.

Sproul: Only occasionally. They never had a program. It's only occasionally, like Thanksgiving weekend or something like that.

Arrangements for Entertaining at UCLA

- Riess: When you had Thanksgiving dinner down there, did you invite important regents?
- Sproul: No, a family is a family, and Papa was entitled to have some privacy. The public was just fine, I liked the public, but our house was our home, more or less. We were only there by virtue of the job and we did what we could, but we never opened it up.
- Riess: Did you have a house to yourself when there was a chancellor?
- Sproul: Then we rented a house once, and we stayed at the Hotel Bel Air very frequently.
- Riess: But when you rented the house it wasn't for a long term.
- Sproul: No, no, no; part of the month and just maybe to return some important engagements or something, because if people invited us to dinner--we didn't know a soul down there. So we had to cultivate, to till the ground a little bit, and when they invited us, then I was supposed in due time to invite them back to something that the university was giving. I tried to do it, too. Oh, we lived in apartments and we rented a house once, and then afterwards we stayed at the Hotel Bel Air.
- Riess: I noticed in your diaries of events and Charter Days that you used the Bel Air Country Club a lot.
- Sproul: Oh, yes, they were wonderful to us. They were just great because if there was nobody there and it was a quiet season, we would have a great big suite. But if they were busy, for the same rate we would have just a bedroom and bath, and then we would entertain accordingly. But if the hotel was very, very quiet, the man was just wonderful to us. At the same rate that we got the room and the bath, we got a whole lot [more]. It was lovely. We'd have a little patio and we'd have a refrigerator and we'd have a sitting room and all for the same price. They were glad to have it used, put out the red carpet no end. But then we had to be content if they were busy.
- Riess: You used that, the Bel Air, for your Charter Day lunches, too.
- Sproul: Yes, after a while because then, you see, there was somebody in the house, like the Allens were there. I don't think the Hedricks were there, but the Allens were there, Ray Allen when he was chancellor. The Dykstras were there when "Dike" was chancellor.

- Riess: Then you moved on to the Los Angeles Country Club for a few years and then went back to the Bel Air.
- Sproul: I guess we weren't members of the Los Angeles Country Club. We weren't members of Bel Air either, but we had more privileges at the Bel Air that went with the job, and Papa wasn't spending any more money than he had to.
- Riess: Who figured out all of the details representing you in Los Angeles? Up here you had secretaries and people who could tell you who needed to be invited to what.
- Sproul: I did all of the inviting from up here maybe, or I did it down there, because I had an unmarried sister who lived with us. She was working for General Arnold in the Air Corps. But she did my secretarial work for living in the house.
- Riess: One of your sisters? Which one?
- Sproul: Emma. She worked for General Arnold in the Air Corps.
- Riess: The famous "Hap" Arnold?
- Sproul: Yes. She would help me. I made every place card. She wrote them sometimes, but I placed them. And I did even up here with a secretary. I never let them place my guest list. My guest list was immense. I had fun doing it and I took the responsibility and I liked it. I always did it. I never turned that over to a secretary. Maybe I should have, but I didn't.
- My sister Emma was very good, and she was delightful and had a good disposition, and we would do the things together. One of the real advantages of having her there was she opened my mail and if I got invited to something, she knew my schedule and knew whether I would be in Los Angeles or I wouldn't. So she could either accept (telephone me or something) or decline right away. People didn't have to wait weeks for me to get back to Los Angeles to accept or decline. It was speeded up.
- Riess: In fact, how much were you down in Los Angeles? Somewhere I read that it was a third of your time, but what would that mean--every three weeks?
- Sproul: We were down there eleven years altogether. I think it amounted to something like that between provosts or 'chancellors or whatever they call themselves. But we were [there] a part of every month, maybe about a third, I'd say. We'd certainly try to give the important things like Charter Day, and like faculty receptions, and to be a friend of the students, give a student reception like Berkeley.

Riess: Did you build up the same kinds of relationships that you were able to up here?

Sproul: Pretty much. The faculty were fine; by and large they were fine, really.

I used to play bridge with a group of faculty ladies there. They set the date when they knew I was coming and we would have lunch and bridge. So I mixed with them.

Riess: Were they able to create traditions down there that were similar to the ones up here?

Sproul: Yes. I started Prytanean down there.

Working with Provost and Mrs. Clarence Dykstra

Riess: I noticed that in 1945 you had occasion to write in your journal: "I made it clear to Mrs. Dykstra that Charter Day is an all-university function that I intend to carry on as I have always done."

Sproul: [laughter] Good lord! Whew!

Riess: That was unusual because I assume that meant that you and she had battled it out or something.

Sproul: No, we were awfully good friends, really. I was very fond of her. But, you see, her husband had been president of the University of Wisconsin and it was a little more difficult for them to be second in command than it would have been for the Allens or the Hedricks or someone like that, because he was a man of authority and a very big, upstanding, wonderful man and she was lovely. I can't imagine putting it down in writing, though; I can't imagine! [chuckles] I probably told my husband I intended to do that, but I don't know whether I would tell anybody else. Sometimes I do talk too much anyway!

I know one kind of a conceited remark--any of this stuff you don't have to put down--but when Dykstra came out to see whether he'd accept the job, he didn't know whether he would like being second in command after having run a big Middle West university. He wanted to find out from the faculty what kind of a person my husband was to work with and all of that stuff. So this is what a faculty member told me (and I don't know who he was), but anyway, he said when Dykstra made a tour and he stayed down there for a while and did all of his investigating, he said to him, "How about Mrs. Sproul? Lillian will probably want to know something about her." This nice professor--I have no idea who he

Sproul: is--said, "Mrs. Sproul? She is the sweetheart of the university." [laughter] I don't know who the man was, but wasn't that a nice pat on the back? Dike told me that, so I know that it's a true story.

We were young and really wanted to make good and keep our word. We really did try.

Riess: But for the good of the university at Los Angeles, stronger and stronger men had to be in charge there, so your husband really had to be--

Sproul: Oh, yes, they didn't like it. One lady--one of the criticisms of my husband according to this woman was that he picks weaker men and has to run everything himself. They didn't like it. He had to come up with a big name every now and then. That was important. And he felt when he got Dykstra, who had been president of the University of Wisconsin and a charming, delightful man, that he was really in luck. He wasn't always in luck either because--well, it's a gossipy sort of thing--but that was luck because Lillian was lovely and he was a fine man. They were very popular, but everyone we picked wasn't that popular, I'll tell you!

Riess: Was Hedrick the one who immediately--

Sproul: Hedrick had about seven or eight children, I think, and a nice wife who made me think of Bess Truman, a motherly sort of lady.

Riess: You would be if you had that many children.

Sproul: Yes.

Riess: He was heard to complain that he had too little to do except appear at dinners.

Sproul: Yes, and some people accuse my husband of not delegating his power and he wanted everything to himself. Well, he had a tendency to do that, that's for sure. He had a plan and he thought he could do it better than anybody. He would work harder than anybody, I'll tell you that. I don't say he would do it better, but there was nobody that ever worked as hard as he did, as far as I know--nobody--because he was good on the dictaphone, and we would go down there, and then when we were leaving to go back up to Berkeley he would leave enough on those machines to keep a girl busy for a couple of weeks! [sighs]

Riess: All his time down there, did he have some particularly trusted representatives among the faculty or friends so that there were bonds other than just with the administration?

Sproul: I think so. Some of the faculty. I was trying to think offhand. Well, Ernest Carroll Moore; they were very good friends, only Ernest was not a Rotarian, or what's the word--gregarious? He was too scholarly, not too scholarly for his job, but to be a hail-fellow-well-met; he wasn't that. But he was a gentleman and a scholar and he had respect for Bob. He didn't always--as I said, he said, "This is going to be a colossus that will destroy itself." That's what he told me once. But anyway, that's why it had to be divided up, I guess.

Wilhelmina Dickson: Caterers, and the "Whirl"

Riess: What if your husband wanted to get in touch with somebody to find out what the lay of the land was down there when he wasn't around?

Sproul: I was trying to think. Mr. Dickson was his tutor and his friend and launched him in a social program because he knew all of the oldtime Angelenos. What his wife, Wilhelmina Dickson, did for me was introduce me to a staff of caterers and cooks and things like that that she'd use for her own parties, so when I went down there I had help, first-class people like we use here. The one I had [at Berkeley] for forty years was Mrs. Margaret Nathland, all the while I lived on the campus and even when I came here. And now Lila Carmichael uses Mrs. May Bystrom, who was young and pretty and looked like Ingrid Bergman. She worked under my cook once or twice. She was a friend of the cook we had there, Anna Hedean. Anna was a Norwegian, I guess, and when we had the Crown Prince of Norway, she was not only the cook, she wanted to wait tables, she wanted to say something in Norwegian to him. So she curtsied to him when she passed something! Anyway, we were lucky, we had very good help down there. Oh, yes, Edward introduced my husband and he took us under his wing. We used to go out every other night to somebody's house for supper or dinner or something.

Riess: I thought the rule was that every other night--

Sproul: That was the limit for up here. We didn't have so many engagements down there. He didn't want to go out all of the time either, but Dickson would launch us and then, of course, if it was somebody influential that we thought we should know, we would have to go.

Riess: He didn't have the conflict there with being a father and a family member?

Sproul: No, that was it, and we didn't have so many engagements.

When we lived in our house on Elmwood Road I used to be home a lot. Of course, I think I took care of the upstairs and just had a cook and a downstairs [maid]. Anyway, the telephone would ring, and John was a

- Sproul: little boy, and the phone would ring, and I would get up to answer it, and he would say, "Tell them no, Mama, tell them no." [laughter] He didn't think it was my place to be gone all of the time.
- Riess: Was he saying you shouldn't be going or his father shouldn't be going?
- Sproul: Me. "Tell them no, Mama." He was used to having his father go, but I was around a lot, although to hear my son Bob tell it, I was never home, I was always away.
- Riess: I notice that you had a good deal of correspondence with Dorothea Moore in that box of correspondence you showed me.
- Sproul: She was nice to me really. I was closer to him. But she admired my husband greatly. She liked somebody with a lot of get up and go.

Bob Sproul and Women

- Riess: What kind of women did your husband enjoy? Women with a lot of get up and go?
- Sproul: I don't think he was terribly popular with women when he was in college. He had friends; I don't mean that. But they were mostly not on the lively side; they were mostly good students. I think he was serious-minded on that subject, and while he liked people, he liked athletics better than he did dances, that kind of a thing. I think he always liked men better really.
- Riess: When it came to the times that he had to work with women regents, women on boards, women in the academic field, do you remember him saying much about this?
- Sproul: I think that when he was growing up he was shy, and his family was not well known, so that he didn't have much of a--oh, he played tennis with his brother and he went to church, Sunday school, at the United Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. I think--this is my thinking--as he grew older he found out he had more personality and had more appeal, that he was much more attractive to the women than he was in college.

He was just like one of my grandsons--shy and quiet and a homebody. Grandma and Grandpa only had the two boys and they were very close and they never had a girl, a daughter. Girls didn't figure much in his life. He was president of the YMCA, and a track man. But he developed the fact that he had much more charm than he thought he had, or appeal--I guess that's the word--with women as he grew older. He wasn't so shy and he enjoyed them more.

- Sproul: One further person he enjoyed a lot was Mrs. Imra Buwalda. Her husband, John, was a professor of geology here. And there were some classmates of his too, but the girls in his class were more the quiet, studious type.
- Riess: When he had to deal with powerful women regents and so on, do you think he would avoid them?
- Sproul: No, he would take them on as he grew older. Mrs. Moore, as I say, would cut out very interesting things that he could use in his speeches, and there are others, too. Of course, he always had Miss Robb and she was very attractive.
- Riess: I'm basically asking a women's lib question. Did he think women were really the equal of men?
- Sproul: He never bothered his head about it--I don't think. He wanted to treat everybody fairly, as fairly as he could. He had his things that he wanted to accomplish, and they didn't depend on women; they depended on him. But he wanted to have a nice home, and he wanted children.
- Riess: How did he feel about Marion working? Would he have brought her up to think that what she needed to do was to be married and have children?
- Sproul: Oh, he was very much interested. He didn't think Marion would get married or was in any hurry to get married, and he always wanted to have her equipped so that if anything happened to him she could earn her own living, because we weren't well-to-do, although we had a good salary and all that. He thought she would make a marvelous president of some women's college. That's what he had in store for her. So he encouraged her to go to Europe for a year, sent her to Middlebury College one whole summer before she was going to Europe for that year, so that when she got to France she could speak French. He encouraged her the two years she went down to Lima to work in the embassy in '45. She learned Spanish. Then he encouraged her to get her master's degree in English*, and all this was supposed to be, if she didn't get married, to be president of a women's college. She could have been a good one, too. She was quick; she really was.

*I got my MA two years before I went to Lima. In between I worked for IBM at the Fair and in Oakland. [MSG]

And His Children

Riess: He found time to work out a program for his children, too?

Sproul: Oh, Lord, yes; [he] had the boys working every summer. They had to work somewhere and know what it was to earn money. He was marvelous at that.

Two things I can tell you about that. He had hired a graduate student once in I guess it must have been geology for Bob. His name was Carl Sharsmith, and he took Bob out on Saturday afternoons to explore rocks and flowers and things of that kind, a botany sort of thing.*

He got somebody from the physical ed department to give the boys boxing lessons. He had a lively imagination. He thought the boys were not very husky. They [the boys] were interested in sports. John particularly was very good in high school in basketball; he was on the Berkeley High team. We had a net in the garden where they had their friends after school and they could play badminton, too, and catch, and their father played with them. When Marion was over in Dominican Convent when she was in high school, we went over every weekend, and we took a basket lunch and a blanket to put on the ground, and we had picnics, and we took a ball and a bat!

Riess: Did you ever consider putting the boys into private school?

Sproul: No, quite the contrary. Very public-school-minded. The reason we did that for Marion was that we didn't have any neighbors, and we wanted her to have a little private school experience, and we thought a girls' private school would be good for her--she'd have sisters, you know. As I say, we had nobody who would run in our house and borrow an egg, or anything. (Although when we lived on Tanglewood we had wonderful neighbors across the street, the Connicks. Marion was bridesmaid when Katherine Connick got married. And they roomed together for a whole year before the war; they spent a year together in Europe.)

*Sharsmith went on to become a professor of botany at San Jose State University--and I think he still is. He was also, for many years, the Seasonal (part-time) Ranger at Tuolumne Meadows. He is somewhat of a legend in Yosemite Valley. One thing: he fell while climbing Cathedral Spire and lived to tell the tale. He also was the author of the Yosemite Meadows Study, which is still a landmark work.

[RGS, Jr.]

Sproul: But another thing my husband did was he had John learn to read, with another of these graduate students, when he went to school in the first grade, so he skipped a grade right off. But that didn't work out too well for John, not that John wasn't bright, but John had a stammer and accelerating him the way his father did was not good for his stammering.

Riess: That could have been a place where you and your husband might have been in some conflict about what to do.

Sproul: I just said, "Why don't you join a glee club, John? If you learn to sing, your speech would come out more fluently." He got him a speech teacher to tutor him, a man and a woman both, Papa did. I mean he never lost interest in them. They could always discuss their homework with him far more intelligently than they could with me because I wasn't any good in mathematics and things like that.

Anyway, they thought my idea about having him join the glee club was fine, maybe it had some sense. John tried it and he came home and he said, "It's no use. I can't join it." I said, "What's the matter?" "Oh," he said, "I can't get up to 'the rockets' red glare.'" [laughter]

Riess: Well, who can?

Sproul: [laughter] That's what his father said, "Forget it, very few can!" But I had to laugh. Poor John. He wanted to cooperate so badly, but he said they wouldn't let him join.

He [RGS] had ideas, and he loved to play games. We'd be going to Los Angeles or some place like that and on the way down we would play games with the children because they would get tired. He had a game of names of little towns we'd go through--one of them was "one father" and they were supposed to get what town it was. They would be quiet for a long time and then try to guess. Then they couldn't guess and that was the town of Soledad. [laughter] He made it up as he went along. He was good at things like that. A lot of men that were as busy as he was hadn't the time to play games with their children.

Riess: You all managed to dine together?

Sproul: When we didn't have company, yes. When we had company they had a little room closed off somewhere which was perfectly adequate for them, and they could go up the back stairs and do their homework. But if we were home alone, we all ate in that beautiful dining room.

Riess: Then did he go off into an office that he had?

Sproul: A little study that he had off of the living room.

Sproul: I'll tell you something to illustrate that. One night we were all at the table when John was small. He said to his father when he got through expounding down there at his end of the table, "Daddy, just because you said it three times in a loud tone of voice, that doesn't make it so!" And my husband didn't say, "You are very impertinent. Will you kindly leave the table?" He threw back his head and roared, for the simple reason he was caught off ground; he didn't expect that to come out of a little boy at the end of the table. When Papa laughed, then we all laughed because that broke the ice. We were not quite sure what punishment John might get, but he didn't get any.

To illustrate that point another way, when Marion was working for the American embassy after the war in Lima, Peru, somebody said, "Oh, my, are you pretty homesick?" She said, "I'm enjoying it. I'm not really very homesick. But there are times when I know there is an interesting discussion going on around that table and I'm having no part in it."

Riess: Would he review some of the difficult events of the day with his family?

Sproul: Oh, if he had something funny, if an athlete told him something--

Riess: But it's not like he brought home his troubles to the table.

Sproul: Oh, no, he never discussed them [in front of] the children; maybe with me if he thought I was going to be involved or something. But Miss Robb had been his secretary for so long a time and Garff Wilson and, oh, a lot of people that he could call on--Earl Warren.

Riess: Did he help the children with their homework, too?

Sproul: If they got in trouble. [laughter] I never did, because I didn't know enough, I wasn't competent enough.

Another rule was they had to eat what they had put in front of them. One night, when Marion was just a little girl, she had squash and he said before she could get out of the high chair she had to eat her squash. He had me warm that squash I don't know how many times and finally she said, "But Daddy, I don't like it." He said, "That's fine. Nobody asked you to like it. All you have to do is eat it." He was a good disciplinarian but with a sense of humor, not one that was so rigid and unbending that the kids couldn't relate to him.

Riess: Did you try to protect your husband though from all the kinds of little, busy, fussy details and things that might worry him?

Sproul: Oh, as far as the house was concerned. He never had a thing to do with it. We lived in several houses before we got up to the President's House. He didn't ever look at them except that if I decided, he'd send somebody to check them out to see that I wasn't getting stung.



Family Photograph, Thanksgiving 1957, at The President's House

standing: Curtis and Leila Cutter, Vernon L. Goodin, Marion (Sproul) Goodin, Cara-May (Cutter) Sproul, Robert Gordon Sproul, Jr., Robert Gordon Sproul, Sr., Ida Amelia Sproul, John Allan Sproul, Michael Torrey, a friend

seated: Sarah Elizabeth (Moore) Sproul, Martha Moore, Robert Gordon Sproul III, holding Carey E. Sproul, Robert S. Goodin, Curtis C. Sproul, Douglas Goodin, John Allan Sproul, Jr., Marjorie (Hauck) Sproul, holding Catherine Sproul

on the floor: Richard Sproul, Sally Goodin, James M. Sproul, and Malcolm Sproul

the children of Cara-May and Robert Gordon Sproul, Jr. are Robert Gordon III, Carey, Curtis, and James; the children of Marjorie and John Allan Sproul are John, Jr., Catherine, Richard, and Malcolm

Photograph by Miss Cecil Davis



Family Photograph, Ida A. Sproul 90th Birthday Party, March 18, 1981,
at the Pacific Union Club

[Grandchildren's names followed by parent's initials and numbered in order
of birth]

standing: Catherine E. Sproul (JAS 4), Malcolm J. Sproul (JAS 2), Casey
Sproul (Mrs. Malcolm), James Martin Sproul (RGS 3), John A. Sproul, Marjorie
H. Sproul (Mrs. John), Robert G. Sproul, Jr., Cara-May C. Sproul (Mrs. Robert),
Marion S. Goodin, Vernon L. Goodin

seated: Carmen Goodin (Mrs. Douglas), Dr. Douglas Goodin (MSG 2), Marion O.
Sproul (Mrs. Curtis), Curtis C. Sproul (RGS 2), Ida A. Sproul, Marjorie C.
Goodin (Mrs. Robert), Robert S. Goodin (MSG 1), Charlotte V. Sproul (Mrs.
Robert), Robert G. Sproul III (RGS 1)

on the floor: Sarah E. Goodin (MSG 3), William McKenzie (Sarah's fiance),
Glenda Sproul (Mrs. Richard), Richard O. Sproul (JAS 3), Michael R. Crosby,
Carey E. Crosby (RGS 4)

Missing grandchild, John A. Sproul, Jr. (JAS 1) in Texas



Real Estate*

Riess: Your son Bob says you have had some successes in real estate. Did you begin that when you lived on Grant Street?

Sproul: No, on campus, and I'd rather not say anything about it. I was not as successful as young Bob will say, and I didn't do very well. I made a terrible mistake. I sold a place I never should have sold, because if I'd kept it, with the high prices now, it would have been a very, very profitable thing. I would have done very well. But I didn't. I trusted somebody whom I was working with and I was ignorant. I can't blame it on anybody but myself; I didn't know any better. But I can blame it somewhat on my husband because he was involved in it, too, signing the papers, putting up the money, all that.

I did it because I liked houses. But getting the help, and managing it--I wasn't knowledgeable enough. And he just said, "If it's too much for you what with that big house and the children, just get rid of it," so we did.

But I wasn't comfortable doing it. I didn't think it was fair to the university. I didn't have enough energy to run a business and a family and a big house. I was very lucky in the help I did have, they were great, but I got tired and I couldn't manage it, and I didn't like the way I was doing it.

Riess: Did you think there was some criticism from people for your doing it?

Sproul: No, nobody knew about it much, nobody hardly knew about it, and I never talked about it. And I'd rather not talk about it now, because they'll all think I made a fortune, and my giveaway mail will increase!

Riess: Women are naturals for real estate.

Sproul: Yes, my mother did a bit of it, you know.

I think it's kind of fun to fit yourself into a house and see what you'd do with it. You open the door and step in and say, "Now, what can I make out of this place?" I think it's fun.

Riess: And with the help, you did have enough time.

*Recorded February 13, 1981.

Sproul: Oh, I had enough time, in a way I did, really. I just was not knowledgeable enough. I should have given it to Mason McDuffie and let them run it. But I'd go down there and get busy trying to clean up the place myself.

Riess: Not executive enough.

Sproul: Oh, sure, I don't delegate enough. I don't delegate enough even now if I can help it. I like being the boss. The only thing my husband ever said was, "Get your money out of it." He didn't care if we didn't make a lot, just so we didn't lose it. So I did do that.

This place was near Shattuck Avenue, and I remember I went and looked at it, and I thought, well, if I had to rent a place I would rent one of these apartments--I think there were four small apartments--I wouldn't mind living in it, so I don't think I'll have any trouble renting it. You see, I put it on that basis: "Would I live there myself if I had to?" Well, it would have been wonderful if I'd kept it, because here are these married grandsons who want a place to live that's convenient.

Riess: Was what you were doing unusual?

Sproul: Men more often did it. I think it was the dean of men or something at the university--he went headlong into it and did extraordinarily well. But I didn't do that. I didn't have that much original money.

Riess: How did you pick out your first house, the house on Grant Street?

Sproul: We walked around north Berkeley one Sunday, and it had a "For Sale" sign on it, and we went in and looked at it. It was a brand new bungalow; nobody had lived in it. It wasn't very expensive, and it was small. It was on the tail end of a lot on Rose Street that ran through; on the back of the lot the man who owned it had built this little bungalow. It didn't even have a garage, but it has a garage now--they had to dig down under.

We didn't make any fortune on it. They were asking \$3,750, and my husband wasn't thinking of buying any property at the time. I guess maybe he could have bought it, had money enough saved. Finally--we rented it for about five or six years--then when it got up to \$4,000 I think we bought it, and then we sold it when it proved too small, for \$4,500. So that's the kind of profit. But that was his requirement, that we had to get out what we put into it.

Riess: Did your husband like to putter around and garden, that kind of thing?

Sproul: No, no.

Sproul: He got off the streetcar, up at Rose and Grove, and I could hear him whistling, and I'd go out in the kitchen and turn the burners up under my cooking so that when he got down to Grant Street his supper would be ready, or his lunch would be ready. He came home for lunch a lot, actually. We had bought an Edison talking records, or Red Seal records, Edison Talking Machine, and we'd play records and have our lunch, and it was very nice. He'd have an hour for lunch or so. And he would go back.

Riess: What was your next house like?

Sproul: That was on Elmwood Avenue. That was an old Berkeley house, much larger, much more expensive, and it had a redwood living room, a very nice living room, big like this, with a window seat. And by the fireplace it had a bench on each side; I think they called them inglenooks, one here and one there. But it was big, with a beamed ceiling.

Riess: You bought that one?

Sproul: We bought it, and we sold it for a profit also. We bought it for \$10,000. (This year it was up for sale for \$90,000.) It was a nice, comfortable house, much like this house. There was quite a good-sized garden in the back, with some fruit trees, and a nice place to plant stock and delphinium, that sort of thing. We had a wonderful man who did that, because I was not a gardener. And it had a garage.

I like houses. I just plant myself in them and see how I can live comfortably. The Elmwood Avenue house had beautiful big elm trees, and the children could walk along Piedmont Avenue and go to Emerson Grammar School. We got our first car when we lived on Elmwood.

The Sentimental Side

Sproul: He always said he was like Al Smith. Al Smith said that every time that his wife made a move he came home when the pictures were on the walls and the dinner on the table [laughter], and my husband followed that. As far as the house was concerned, he was never too particular. But he did give me a nice compliment about the houses we lived in. He told me once he thought I could take a shoe box and make it into a comfortable house. (Once in a while, the Scots come through and pat you on the back.)

I've saved some of the cards I got during our early married life. I've just recently taken some of the letters out and Marion came and read them with me. She has them, actually. I gave them to her. She

Sproul: said, "My goodness, Mama. I had no idea Papa had that side to him," sentimental or complimentary. She always thought of him as brusque and going on with the show. But this was something that she was really very impressed with. The reason I went through my husband's letters with Marion was I didn't want to leave them and then have him maybe criticizing something, and somebody else [might] write something and build it up. I wanted them to be a credit to him. I hate these people that after many years knock all of your idols off the pedestal.

Riess: When you write your own letters, are you very conscious of making--

Sproul: My husband said I was perfectly terrible when I wrote letters when we were courting. They all could have been printed on the front page of the Tribune and nobody would have gotten offended--nobody! [laughter] That wasn't true of his. His were much more sentimental, but I'm a practical soul.

Riess: For a man who spoke loudly and strongly, probably his most personal feelings were best put in writing.

Sproul: Yes, and the mission to Moscow ones I knew were historically interesting. So I didn't mind that.

I was so afraid, like so many people--like Grandpa Sproul; he was terrible: one Sunday when Grandmother went to church, he burned all of his letters to her.

Riess: But that's not fair. They were her letters.

Sproul: Oh, that's what she said. She was crushed and hurt. She had treasured them for a long time.

So I just decided that I would not have that happen to Papa's letters, that for better or for worse from the family's side--I don't mean from the public's side--they can know all sides of their father, the good sides, bad sides, all sides. But anyway, I didn't want to give something [in which] he might have criticized somebody. I thought that would be too bad. So they're all publicly pure! [laughter]

Riess: They've all been laundered.

Sproul: I wanted to cry over some of them when she read them because I couldn't read them myself.

Riess: That's sad, but then what could be nicer than to have your daughter share this.

Sproul: And my granddaughter helped me, the little one that lives downstairs. (She is in her second year in law. She will finish in one more year.) She loved it.

Sproul: I'll tell you another story. One day we were at the breakfast table, my husband at the head, and his mother at his end, on his right, where she always sat, and I opposite him, and I'll tell you, he was a great competitor. He picked up the paper and he saw that Lord Beauchamps or somebody from England had been entertained at Stanford University. Well, he looked at me down at my end and he said, "What have we done?" I said, "Nothing. I'm sorry, but we just haven't done anything." I was very crestfallen, like I was a total loss to the university. Finally, he looked up again and he said, "Well, well, don't let that bother you. You've always entertained me!" [laughter]

That's the way he did with the kids. He'd give you a crack and then he'd give you a plaster almost in the next breath. That's what his mother said, "A true Scot. They crack your head and then they give you a plaster."

The Davis Fishing Club

Riess: Did he have time for close friendships with any men in particular?

Sproul: Oh, yes, the Davis Fishing Club.

Riess: The Davis Fishing Club? Tell me about that.

Sproul: The faculty up there. Oh, there are a bunch of them up there. He went every year. In those days the university had its commencement in May. Soon as it was over the fishing season opened. Oh, he went with them regularly. He loved Davis and he had great rapport with them. They included Dean Thomas Putnam, who lived across the street from us on Elmwood, and Dean Claude Hutchison, whom he brought out to be head of the College of Agriculture.

Riess: Didn't Mr. Putnam go down and run the southern branch for a while?

Sproul: He may have. I think Deutsch did too, didn't he? It seems to me Deutsch did. But Putnam was his dean of men up here and he was a neighbor across the street and he was a member of the fishing club. Then there was George Hart and, as I say, Hutchison, Stan Freeborn, Bill Regan, and there was another man up there, a good fisherman. They went fishing in May for years.

Riess: And he could really let his hair down?

Sproul: Oh, yes.

Riess: More so than perhaps the Bohemian group?

Sproul: I think in a way. Mr. Regan's daughter painted a little picture called "The End of the Trail." It's my husband on a horse and all of these fishermen sitting around. I've got it up at Echo Lake. But he was very much at home with them. He really was. Mr. Hutchison was a wonderful guy, too. He was the head of Davis. He came out from Missouri to be dean of the College of Agriculture. His wife [widow], Brenda Hutchison, will know the names of every last one of them. Deming Maclise, who was in the controller's office at UCLA, was a Davis grouper, a Davis fisherman. George Hart was the powerful one really. He had a lot of prestige at Davis.

Public Roles for Ida Sproul

Riess: Friends of yours would say that you were a woman of strong opinions, like when you said that your children should be allowed to be where they wanted to be on Thanksgiving weekend. Would people come and ask you to plead their cause with your husband? Did you find yourself in positions in conflict with your husband?

Sproul: No, my whole program was--I'm not a women's liberation front lady anyway. If I do the work of a man, I want to earn every bit of money he would get. But I don't want to get a job because I'm female, because I'm white or Catholic. My husband's philosophy was you pay on the score. If you perform, you get the whole works.

Riess: Your job was being the wife of a president, and I should think that in that position you would have lots of things asked of you.

Sproul: Well, I didn't do them if I didn't think so. For instance, when I lived in the house there I kept it more as a home, and I wouldn't have the big organizations that wanted to meet there because if I had one, then I would have to have them all, and I didn't want to collect any fee or anything. It was invitational. It was our home. Papa came first anyway. "Wherever MacGregor sat was the head of the table," I told you that. [laughter] If Papa wanted it, we did it.

Riess: You said you were alarmed at the prospect of having to give speeches and all of that and that Mrs. Wheeler told you that you didn't have to do that. But there must have been times with women's groups and so on.

Sproul: Oh, I'd entertain them, but I never did make a speech until after my husband died. When they dedicated [Ida] Sproul Hall, I did. But I just wasn't good at it. (I didn't think I was.) Mrs. Wheeler had indoctrinated me, as I told you, and said that one loud speaker is enough for every family. [laughter]

Riess: There wouldn't be times at the last minute when your husband had to go to a dedication and he couldn't and you would go and stand in for him?

Sproul: No, no, I wouldn't think of it. He would have to get Deutsch or somebody who was more qualified.

Perfect Hostess Ingredients

Sproul: What made entertaining [easy] for me was that I knew that whatever interests some of these people came [with], there would be somebody on the faculty that I could invite that was interesting and that would be helpful to them. I didn't have to depend on my own talents, which were certainly very sketchy. But I could get a top man, for instance, in physics or anything.

Riess: That is perfect to draw on such a reservoir.

Sproul: That's it, and I wouldn't have to have a lot of notice because they would be pleased and flattered to come. I wouldn't have to have elaborate refreshments.

I never read Who's Who to see who any of my guests were--I shouldn't say never, not often. My idea was just to give my guest a key, tell them when we have tea and when we have meals, when they should be ready to leave for the Charter Day banquet, that sort of thing. And if there was anybody they wanted to meet who was in a field that he was interested in, I would get them for him.

I didn't take the person on. I would make him comfortable, have good meals if I could--I had a good cook, good cooks all the time--and that was that. The beauty of the whole thing is you can get whom-ever they are interested in, a wide variety of people. I wasn't limited and that was fun. I liked that.

We had definite rules about the house. There had to be because there were too many people to take care of. We had the three children and Grandmother [Mrs. Robert Sproul] and all of the staff, and they had to be fed, they had to have dinner. [laughter] So they got their definite instructions!

Riess: Were guests invited for as long a period as three or four days sometimes?

Sproul: They weren't ever really invited as far as I can say except for just those two occasions, Charter Day north and south. But they mostly all stayed longer, and if they stayed then we used the university car

Sproul: and driver and sent them off to Muir Woods with a luncheon to see the redwoods and all that kind of thing. We gave them as much freedom as we could. We didn't want to have too many rules or it wouldn't have been any fun.

I remember Findley, Mike Findley, of the New York Times. He had a scarf he'd wind around his overcoat and he had a pedometer and he roamed all around the Berkeley hills and all around the campus, and when it was time for tea he was right back in the house.

Riess: Did you do a real English tea with a few little sandwiches?

Sproul: Yes, and cakes like Scottish coffee cake and sometimes like scones (whatever they call those things they have in Scotland). But we did a little of that, too.

Riess: Would Mrs. Sproul, Sr. also come down and preside?

Sproul: If she felt like it. It was absolutely up to her. She was a member of the family. Often she did and she was very entertaining. She could hold her own in any group and she had a good sense of humor and she liked it.

One of my favorite guests was Sir Josiah Stamp, the economist. I was just devoted to him. (In the war he had a bomb shelter in his basement and he and his wife and son were killed.) He stayed with us and he got to know us well, because when he went back east and met some of the prominent bankers and all that sort of thing, and they asked him was there anybody in the West of presidential timber for the country, he said, "Yes, I've just been staying with one, Bob Sproul."

Trying to Please Everyone

Riess: How did you decide what social events you would go to? You must have been asked from town and gown and fraternity--

Sproul: Mostly in the order that I got the invitations, and once I made one, I never changed it for a better one or a worse one.

Riess: That must have been a problem.

Sproul: If I accepted one, I accepted it and that was it. My husband did the same thing. He never did this hop, skipping, and jumping around, making an appearance for five minutes. He felt that you never pleased anybody. It's not a compliment. If the medical school faculty were

- Sproul: giving a tea, he would stay from the beginning to the end. That was it; we didn't take another one. I think that's a good thing because nobody is going to be terribly flattered if you spend ten minutes and then have to go.
- Riess: But there must have been things that you would have to say no to.
- Sproul: Oh, that's the hardest thing of all.
- Riess: But a whole category of things. Would you, for instance, be guests at various fraternity and sorority functions?
- Sproul: We went to lots of sororities. In those days, sorority girls and the faculty wore long dresses in the afternoon for the teas, and hats and gloves. We went to a lot of things. We accepted as many as we could and then we would have to say that we had another engagement, something of that sort, or else we would have to set aside a period when we were going to be up at Echo Lake and we wouldn't take anything.
- Riess: That must have been a relief.
- Sproul: Oh, it was great. His philosophy there was "we won't entertain anybody up there except the children." He always said, "We have a nicer house to do it in in Berkeley. This cabin isn't the place." So we protected ourselves as much as we could.
- Riess: The little details of gifts to staff and things like that and buying gifts for friends, was that something that secretaries took care of or you took care of?
- Sproul: No, I did it, and I really love it when people say they have a candlestick or a plate that I gave them. I had a girl up from Los Angeles this weekend who came last night with her daughter and two grandsons. She said, "Oh, Mrs. Sproul, I still use that little silver bowl." Oh, I get all excited! I kind of had to skip around with that. I couldn't do everybody, but the ones we had the closest contact with.
- Riess: It is often something that is just delegated to secretaries.
- Sproul: I didn't delegate much. I'm like Papa. As I say, I really didn't delegate much, to tell you the truth. Lini Allen worked for me for forty years--that's a long time--and she's still a good friend. She would write those place cards. Her handwriting was nice. But I would juggle them around at night. In Los Angeles I would do it with my sister Emma. I didn't delegate such an awful lot.

Another thing I did that was silly was I went and picked up all the sandwiches for the teas. That was kind of crazy, but the reason I did that was I wanted everything in the house so there was no [chance of]

Sproul: breakdown. Somebody would say, "I'm awfully sorry I was a half hour late or two hours late with those sandwiches. I didn't have them ready." I made sure, before I put my party dress on, as near as I could, that everything was going to work. I was strong and I was used to working hard.

Melting Ice Cream

Riess: I remember in one of your diaries, you wrote about the ice cream being delivered a little bit late for a Charter Day lunch or something like that. You had a strict time schedule, and then your ice cream didn't arrive.

Sproul: Oh, it was terrible. It was Prince Tokugawa of Japan. When I went in after the party was all over, there were mounds of this ice cream that was just melting down for the first time. It was so hard! I looked in there once when we were at the table. They had a fork and they were trying to split this thing--it was in segments--and it would split and hop all over everywhere, it was so hard! They would retrieve it and put it on their plates. Oh, it was my most humiliating experience! [laughter]

Riess: That was your most humiliating experience or one of them?

Sproul: Really one of the most because that was terrible. Here was this prince and he was so polite and he would twiddle his fork on that mound of ice cream, a segment [demonstrating].

Riess: How was the ice cream delivered? How was it packed?

Sproul: In bricks, and then I could tell how many I needed. I didn't allow--six to a brick you get too thick a slice, and eight I thought was too skinny, so I divided up my bricks into seven and I figured that was enough for anybody. [laughter]

The time I had an awful time with Prince Tokugawa, we had a Chinese cook, and I asked him ahead of time if he understood about this, and he said yes, he did. But when I went out in the kitchen when he was going to cut them up in sevens, he had a cleaver and he was whacking them up out there [demonstrating] and he was hopping all over the kitchen! Bob said he thought that because the cook was Chinese and the prince was Japanese, he did it on purpose.

Riess: He was creating an international incident?

Sproul: [laughter] I don't know, but all this ice cream melting down on the plate! It was terrible.

Belowstairs: The Help

Riess: Did Tom live in?

Sproul: Yes, downstairs.

Riess: With a family?

Sproul: No, he was just a single person.

Riess: Did he let you into the kitchen?

Sproul: He let me in if I had any inclination to go in. But I wasn't much of a cook.

He was a reasonably good cook, but I've had cooks that I liked better, women. There was a wonderful agency in the city and I used to get my cooks from her. But then she went out of business and that was too bad. I had some good Swedish cooks. And I had Antoinette, who was Viennese, and she was marvelous. She made wonderful things; she was one of the best I've had.

Riess: Would the cooks let the children into the kitchen and let them experiment?

Sproul: No, no, no. They had to keep out of the cook's way.

The children didn't appear at every party I had. I didn't think they needed to, and they didn't. There was a room off the kitchen where they could have their dinner ahead of time. We had our dinners around seven o'clock and they would have theirs around six. There was a back stairway and they would go upstairs and do their homework.

Riess: So the cook would provide a little dinner for the children.

Sproul: Oh, yes, for the children and for Grandmother Sproul, who lived with us. Of course, sometimes she would be one of the guests, and then again if she didn't want to make the effort or anything, she didn't need to. But there was a nice room off the kitchen where the children ate before we had the big parties in the dining room. (They have since made that room off the kitchen into another bathroom, which I think is ridiculous, but I didn't do it, so don't blame me.)

Riess: What about the help, the maids, and so on? Did they eat at a special time?

Sproul: There was a little table in the pass pantry where they ate. There was a little counter and it opened up. The cook cooked in the kitchen and passed the food through that.

- Sproul: The cook washed all of the pots and pans and things of that kind, but the downstairs maid washed the good china and the glassware and the silver.
- Riess: Did all of this work out very easily, or did you have to keep helping them sort of sort themselves out?
- Sproul: No, the upstairs maid and the downstairs maid were sisters, and they were beautifully trained by their family.
- Riess: Your daughter, Marion, said that during the period when Tom was in control of the kitchen it made for an exciting life belowstairs, that the governess, Miss Lundstrom--
- Sproul: Oh yes, the upstairs and downstairs girls were Norwegian. They were lovely girls. One of their names was Petra and one was Elizabeth. Petra was just as pretty as Ingrid Bergman and had a lovely laugh. They were both very nice people, and the children had to be very respectful and polite. But the children did not like the governess, Miss Lundstrom, because they said she was--Bob complained that she was making a sissy out of him, that every time they turned around they had to wash their hands and put on a clean shirt or something. And Miss Lundstrom was Swedish and she did not care to eat in the pass pantry with the Norwegian girls.
- Riess: Miss Lundstrom thought that she was above these Norwegian girls?
- Sproul: Oh yes, she didn't want to eat dinner with them. Of course, the cook ate, too, with them.
- The pass pantry was a pantry with lots of cabinets. The good china was put away, and there was some very nice china there. Mrs. Wheeler had had a nice white and gold pattern. Ella's mother [Mrs. David Prescott Barrows] had a good Lenox pattern, I think, awfully pretty. So that was not just used carelessly. That was cherished.
- Riess: Did you have a pattern also?
- Sproul: No, there was enough there. I didn't need to.
- Riess: I never thought to ask you about that, whether you acquired and left behind a set of china or silver.
- Sproul: No, I had plenty of silver and I had some china. I could use what was there. I didn't add much in the way of furniture or drapes or rugs because there were beautiful rugs there. Mrs. Hearst had given some of them, beautiful ones.

- Riess: As far as the household management went, did you have a conference every morning with all of the staff? How did you go about the business of arranging each day?
- Sproul: I suppose maybe early in the week for the week, yes. I don't think I was too systematic or organized, but I did every bit of the marketing--always.
- Riess: That actually gave you a lot of control over the situation, I'm sure.
- Sproul: Oh, yes, that gave me a lot of control.
- Riess: You got rid of Miss Lundstrom early on?
- Sproul: Very early, yes! [chuckles]
- Riess: How did Tom leave? Did you just fire him or did he depart?
- Sproul: He got another position because he didn't like so much entertaining. Of course, when we first went into office, the first month or so, the dining table would be stretched out to full length, and the family was all fed in this room off the kitchen, a breakfast room sort of arrangement. So there was a lot of cooking.
- Riess: Would he be able to bring in some help for himself?
- Sproul: He managed with the aid of the maids.
- Riess: Then would you be presented with breakfast in bed, Madame Sproul, every morning?
- Sproul: Heavens, no! [laughter] I wouldn't have minded it. I probably would have liked it, but I never did it.
- Riess: Because you were up seeing the children off?
- Sproul: Well, I came down the back stairway and had breakfast with Grandmother and the children and saw that they had lunches packed for school.
- Riess: Did Bob usually leave earlier in the day?
- Sproul: We generally had breakfast together because he liked to get up and start the day, and then he would sit at the head of the table. He always sat at the head of the table because my philosophy is, wherever the head of the house sits--wherever MacGregor sits--is the place of honor, and that's my husband. As I say, I'm not an ardent women's liberation lady.

Sproul: Did I show you a letter I got from a Charter Day woman named Goodheart? I worried about her because she was British and I understood the British were difficult. Anyhow, I worried about her. And this letter, if I can find it, is so full of praise that I am really embarrassed. But I really felt that all of my worry must have paid off. [looks through letters] I don't think that's it.

Riess: That's from Mrs. Warren, very recent--July 16, 1980.

Sproul: Some of these you might want to look at sometime. But this one--Sir Arthur Goodheart; he was from Oxford and he had me worried stiff!

Riess: Were you worried about him even before he arrived?

Sproul: Yes.

Riess: Why, because he was British?

Sproul: Because he was British and I thought the British were stiff.

Riess: Of course, you had had a sensational time with those Canadians.*

Sproul: Oh, those Canadians, they were just something again! Oh!

I wanted to show you this letter because I really was so scared. I didn't think I would ever have anything of interest to the gentleman to say to him.

Riess: It's one thing to have to talk with the gentlemen, and I suppose something else when the wives come along. Was it better when the wives stayed home as far as you were concerned?

Sproul: [laughter] It was easier, I thought. [continuing to look through box] What did I do with that letter? It's all pages of handwritten stuff.

Riess: Maybe you parked it in a different box.

Sproul: I'm going to get it straightened out.

Riess: It looks like you have very old letters mixed with current bills and things.

Sproul: Yes, this is my bank statement! [laughter] My secretary better work on that or I'll go to jail or something! They always turn up sooner or later, but I have to have somebody with eyes to look. I don't see it.

Riess: Well, I think we should call it quits for today anyway.

*See Sproul, 1961, pp. 44-46. Also see p. 138 following.

INTERVIEW 4: AUGUST 5, 1980

The Garden at the President's House

Sproul: [tape turned on as Mrs. Sproul reminisces about the garden at the President's House] Peruvian lilies. That may not be their botanical name, but it's what they are known as. They come in a pretty shade and they last longer than day lilies. Day lilies you can't pick very much. They make a good thing along a driveway or something.

Riess: So that garden was a fond memory. Did you go out and fuss about that one?

Sproul: Yes, I fussed about all of the gardens! They bought me a book and I could check off what I wanted them to plant. Oh, that was very extravagant and very lovely because I rotated with the season--big chrysanthemums, then snapdragons, all kinds of things; they came in rotation.

Riess: Did the landscape architect, John Gregg, get himself involved in that?

Sproul: He may have been consulted. We had for twenty years a Scottish gardener. Then he got mad at me one day and quit.

Riess: What did you do?

Sproul: He didn't get along too well with the cook and the two housemaids. He used to bring in the big, tall flowers for the hall. There was a round table in the downstairs hall. The vase was big and heavy, and when the flowers were dead he had to empty it and take them out. One day he got in a fuss with the cook and the downstairs maids. I was in Los Angeles and I was tired because I had had two Charter Days and I came home and I looked around and the dead flowers were still where they were when I went down to Los Angeles. (He used to

Sproul: spread a big burlap on the floor and then drag them out through the doorway.) They were still there and I asked the maids what happened, why they didn't get the flowers out while I was gone. They said that McRae (that was his name, Albert McRae) refused to take them out.

I said, "Refused? After he has been doing it all these years?" I bounced down the brick path and I gave him Hail Columbia. [laughter] And he got mad. I hurt his feelings. It's been one of the regrets of my life because he had been there twenty years. But I was dead tired and the last thing I wanted to see in that big house were those dead flowers.

Anyhow, he quit. I said, "Okay, quit," and he did quit. Then I got another one for eight years. He was an Italian and he retired. I never got another one for as long as McRae and I felt awfully sorry I hurt his feelings. He was a sensitive guy, too. We were great friends for twenty years, just great friends. That day when I flew down that path, he said, "I used to like to see you coming down here, Mrs. Sproul. But not after what has happened." He was mad at me.

Then he repented and he wanted to get back, but he had some difficulties because he had been there so long, and was so arrogant in a way--he had to have his way--that the university didn't want to take him back. I would have taken him back.

Riess: Is this a little bit of the Scots temperament?

Sproul: Yes, my temperament too! I liked him fine, but I thought when I was gone was no time to quarrel with the upstairs maid and the downstairs maid. They were sisters, and I thought, "Why doesn't he wait until I get home?" As I say, I had had enough of everything at that point, I think.

Riess: I'm glad to hear that you were a little mortal in all of this.

Sproul: [laughter] You don't know me! I'm kind of a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. I go along a long time pretty even-tempered. Then when I fly off, I fly off and quick. I don't mind saying I'm sorry. An awful lot of people won't do that. They can't say they're sorry. I can say I made a mistake, and to this day I wish I had been nicer to McRae. But we had lovely relations for twenty years, so maybe that was as long as they generally last. I don't know.

Then I had John Maloni for eight years. I was there twenty-eight years, you see.

Riess: He was the Italian?

Sproul: Yes, and they always brought me a book, and then I checked out what looked pretty in the book. I didn't know much about flowers, but I would pick out these big chrysanthemums and little chrysanthemums. I didn't touch Mrs. Barrows' rose garden there, the little Cecil Bruner roses; I always left those. I tried to be reasonable to other people's ideas.

Riess: It was not a demonstration garden, the way the Blake House became?

Sproul: No.

I never bought any flowers except to give to people who were sick or something. But for the house, I never spent any money on flowers. We grew enough. We had snaps, we had stock, we had delphiniums, we had roses, we had chrysanthemums. Everything that we put inside the house was in the garden.

Riess: Was it a kitchen garden also?

Sproul: A little; not much, but a little, some herbs and some parsley and some mint--something like that--way down in the back. Also, I grew way in the back what I love (I have some down here), anemones. I'm partial to white flowers. Why I do not know, but I like them. Those that grow on the fence there are kind of a rhododendron. It's called fragrantissimo. It smells like nutmeg to me, spicy in a way. I love those.

Riess: You were very indulged in your gardening.

Sproul: Oh, yes, I was indulged! McRae and I were good friends for a long time.

Riess: Did you belong to the local garden club?

Sproul: I did; he did, rather. But I'll tell you what happened. After a while the unions wouldn't let him come inside the house. After I left, the job was unionized or something and he could go so far and no further.

Riess: Mrs. McDuffie's garden was always a showplace for garden clubs. I wonder if you had garden club activities at the President's House.

Sproul: She had an Italian who lived there, George his name was, and he was a wonderful gardener. The McDuffies took his children under their wing because they had no children. They sent George's daughter to dancing school and all that kind of thing. They had kind of a paternal arrangement. He was a fine gardener and it was beautiful, a showplace, the McDuffie place. They were almost like members of his family. McRae had a wife and he had two children.

Flower Arranging

- Sproul: [At the President's House] when they couldn't arrange the flowers anymore and they had to hire somebody, they hired Mrs. Holmes. I've forgotten what her first name is. But anyway, she is a professional flower arrangement lady. I never had that because my downstairs maid was very good at that and she could arrange flowers that were perfectly suitable for the house for me.
- Riess: I noticed that for one event you had Mrs. Obata arrange the flowers.
- Sproul: She and Mrs. Holmes were friends. They worked together sometimes. Mrs. Obata's arrangements were beautiful. I told her once she ought to go over to Gumps and see what they were advertising, that they weren't one bit prettier than ours. Oh, she did beautiful things. Now, like with the iris. She would put those in a bowl, and then coming out from the bowl on one of those big white tablecloths (a huge, white, linen tablecloth) some of the leaves were arranged in a pattern like a fan. In those days you had finger bowls at dinner, and she would put the nicest little flower arrangement in the bowl, not elaborate and not gaudy, but a little bit of color and maybe a pretty red leaf or something. She was just very good.
- Riess: Mrs. Obata was the wife of the painter?
- Sproul: She is the wife of a Japanese who had a little shop on Telegraph Avenue. I don't know what her official capacity is. She is very well known to the faculty and all that. He did a lot of drawings. His first name was Chiura and he had a little shop on Telegraph.*

Bob Sproul, and Japanese Relocation

- Sproul: They were evacuated when the Japanese were evacuated, at least her husband was, and I guess she was too. I gave them storage space for whatever they wanted to store--so people couldn't vandalize it and take their things--in the attic of the President's House, a beautiful big attic up there. They put a lot of things up there because the building is a fireproof building. We never went up there. Oh, one of my children used to go up there and play sometimes. Young Bob had one room up there where he developed his pictures. [He] made a darkroom out of it and got his photographs developed. But they kept their furniture there, whatever they wanted to store until the war was over.

*Chiura Obata began to teach in the Department of Art, UCB, in 1932. He retired as an associate professor in 1953.

Riess: I notice that your husband was the chairman of the Pacific Coast Committee for Fair Play during that period.

Sproul: You should see the letters the Japanese wrote when he died, the letters that came after his death. Mr. Kantor in the University Archives has them. They are beautiful letters from the Japanese, thanking him for his understanding during the war and all that.

I'll tell you what my husband did which I think was terribly smart and tactful. At the commencement, when they gave out the gold medal for the student who had the highest scholastic award, that year it was won by a Japanese student. When my husband announced the award at the commencement exercises, this is practically what he said: "This year the gold medal from the whole university has been awarded to Harvey Itano, who unfortunately cannot be with us today to receive the medal as he is serving his country elsewhere." And he was in an internment camp.

Riess: That is very touching.

Sproul: Wasn't that lovely? I think that was beautiful. No wonder the Japanese wrote nice letters because he announced it, just as if he had been there, and when he didn't come up to receive it he said, "Unfortunately, he can't be with us today. He is serving his country elsewhere."

Riess: Of course, everyone must have appreciated how ironic it was.

Sproul: Yes, that was the worst time of all for a Japanese in a way to make it.

Riess: Did your husband feel that that was an effective committee?

Sproul: I don't think that he was so pleased with it because they suffered quite a lot. People went in and took their possessions, their refrigerators and their gas stoves, when they were evacuated, and that was pretty tough.

But I've been thinking about that lately. When you think how they, without any provocation at all, sank the Arizona--was that the name of that ship?--in Pearl Harbor and how many of our nice young men were killed, more than a thousand, you couldn't really blame people for being hysterical about it all. Most people will wring their hands and say, "It's a blot on our conscience," because they were American citizens, the ones that we sent off from here [to be relocated].

- Sproul: But that was a Japanese act that was very wrong. They didn't consult us. They had all been to Washington just before that to see the president, the higher-up Japanese, and bowed and scraped and were nice and polite, and then they went home and sank the Arizona.
- Riess: Do you remember whether your husband was in disagreement with Earl Warren in handling this issue?
- Sproul: No, not accurately enough to tell you unless it's written down somewhere. You'd have to check that.
- Riess: Do you remember Joe and Katherine Kaplan in Los Angeles?
- Sproul: Oh, yes, they were at UCLA. I think Joe was in physics. I liked Joe, too. Katherine was prominent in women's organizations like the League of Women Voters and things like that.
- Riess: I think she was also on this committee in Los Angeles.
- Sproul: Joe was Jewish. I don't mind at all. I'm very fond of Jewish people so that didn't bother me one bit. They didn't have any children and they may have been very ardent about this, especially Katherine because she was [with] the League of Women Voters and she was ahead of her time as a progressive woman, a nice woman too.

The "Whereases"

- Riess: When your husband was faced with causes, and people who were ardent about them, did he retreat behind the fact that he was president of a university? How did he handle the things that people wanted him to serve on as honorary chairman?
- Sproul: When he died--now, this may sound irreverent--I took all of those things, scrolls and plaques and pieces of paper, a lot of them anyway, "Whereas Dr. Sproul has served the country" on this committee and that committee, and I put them in a box in the basement and I labeled them "Whereas" because you cannot hang "Whereases" in your house, all those things extolling your character or your acts. It would be boring and awful! So I think it's nice to thank the people prettily and then store them away. [laughter]

He got a number of ribbons with medals on them to put around your neck. Those are in the Archives. I gave those to Mr. Kantor a long time ago, with the "Whereases." I don't mean to be ungrateful, but what can you do with something like that? You can't hang them up. It's nice. It's nice recognition, especially if you've worked hard it's very nice.

- Riess: Can you think of some organizations he got himself honorary associations with that he regretted later?
- Sproul: He didn't regret; he regretfully accepted it too. There's one that was Italian and it was the time of Mussolini and it was on a ribbon with a beautiful enameled pendant, all that stuff--not stones, but enamel. You know what those medals are made out of. But he accepted it because it came from Los Angeles and it came from a large group of Italian people and he wanted to make friends for UCLA and he did not admire Mr. Mussolini at all or feel complimented that he got the medal, but he took it and, I suppose, wrote the appropriate letter and all that. I think sometimes you have to take them and put them in your top bureau drawer and forget about them.
- Riess: Did the newspapers pick up on this and make an issue of it?
- Sproul: No, nobody made anything of it. He didn't elaborate on it either with his press relations, but that was one that he didn't take a lot of pride in. In fact, he was sorry. But he took it because UCLA was young, needed friends. The university certainly needed them in that community, and when people are trying to be nice to you, there is only one thing you can do, I think--regret politely maybe, but then they wouldn't like that, or just accept them and forget about them.
- Riess: Yes, but the question is whether they are going to use your name then.
- Sproul: Well, I don't think they do to any great extent. It's kind of a passing sort of thing. There are a whole bunch of them down there--six or seven. I can't remember them all. I remember Mussolini. I remember Sweden. I can't remember all of them. Mr. Kantor would know all of that. Honors are nice, but you can't live on them.
- Riess: Well, not the enamel ones, but solid gold ones you could!
- Sproul: No, even the solid gold ones! After the Second World War, a Marine came to my door on the campus all dressed up in his Marine uniform with his tin hat and everything. Maybe he had been shell-shocked or something. He had a gold medal and it was up to him to sell it to keep him going. I have often thought they don't put any bread on your table. That's why I don't think you should get puffed up in any sense of the word. It's a passing kind of a performance. Maybe I'm wrong.

The Statewide Alumni Tours

- Riess: You and your husband developed the north-south relations between the campuses and made things go very smoothly, in part through the statewide alumni tours.
- Sproul: Yes, I used to go on all of those. Every year there was one up in the northern part of the state and the next year down in the southern part.
- Riess: Did that mean you had two or three stops?
- Sproul: We stopped in little hotels along the way that were arranged by the Alumni Association. We'd have lunch in one place and then go on and drive and have dinner in another and cover as many as we could. We went way up north into Arcata, I think it was, where there was snow on the ground when we got up there. A man (he was in the legislature, I think) who was a Cal graduate turned over his house to us. There was snow on the porch; there was a fire in the grate. Oh, it was beautiful.
- Riess: Then when you were there would there be a group of alumni?
- Sproul: They would have a meeting somewhere. That day we went into his private home and we went into a little public place for the meetings. The ladies of the various churches had prepared the lunch of fried chicken and biscuits, kind of a town hall affair.
- Riess: In a small town, the entire town would be likely to show up?
- Sproul: Yes, they could come. One thing my husband was smart about, I think (maybe I shouldn't say this), but anyway, what he always managed to do was to bring, when we went to one of these small, out-of-the-way places, a star on the faculty, not just a person who was just beginning or wasn't noted and hadn't made a reputation yet, but he took one of the brightest stars in the university. He wanted to make them feel that they were just as important as San Francisco, for instance.
- Riess: Were those stars willing to put that time in?
- Sproul: Oh, they were wonderful. Oh, we had them.
- Riess: Who do you recall as some of your favorite stars?

- Sproul: We had Melvin Calvin once. He's a Nobel prize winner. We had Stafford Warren, a prominent doctor, and we had a very entertaining and witty man named [Austin] MacCormick, who was a professor of criminology. He was fun to be with all day and hear his jokes. Oh, we had a lot of them and a number of Nobel prize winners, always somebody of great significance.
- Riess: For the northern tour would you take a Berkeley person?
- Sproul: No, we mixed them up. It was not the University of Berkeley or the University of Los Angeles, but the University of California. It covers the state, my dear! [laughter] We promised them when we started that anything that could be duplicated they would have it. That was the philosophy.
- The professors were really wonderful. I think they enjoyed it. It didn't last more than a week and we went to all of these meetings at different places that we would never have gotten [to] on our own. We couldn't have. They arranged the tour.
- My husband's philosophy was that when he made a speech, he never bothered to know how many came. He just gave them the best performance he could. He never talked down to a group.
- Riess: Was he looking for money too?
- Sproul: At some other time. His philosophy was that you can't go out looking for money like that. But if you develop a situation where they get an interest in some man, in what he's trying to do, what he's working toward, then you've got a little wedge. You get your foot in the door, so to speak. You couldn't possibly just barge up there once a year and say, "Look, we want this, that, and the other thing." But if you put them in the way of meeting somebody who captures their imagination or something--it doesn't always work, but it's worth a try.
- Riess: What was your job on these trips?
- Sproul: My job was shaking hands with people. I'll tell you who was an enormous help on these chores--Beth McCaffrey.
- Riess: Stan McCaffrey?
- Sproul: Yes, they were in the Alumni Association. Stan was head of it, wasn't he?
- Riess: Yes.

Sproul: They were younger than we were, and both Stan and Beth were very attractive. Beth was so pretty. She would meet these people at the door, these alumni that were shy and didn't know us, and she'd say, "I'm Beth McCaffrey," and shake hands with them.

Riess: So she made a kind of receiving line for you?

Sproul: We always had a receiving line. We didn't think it was worth going on all of those trips and not having them meet the people that were intended for them to meet. We had a plan and we had people that we wanted them to meet. If you have a purpose, you can't accomplish it just by going in and milling around; you really can't. If you've got a plan, you've got to at least try to make it work.

But they were two very attractive people, one very brunette and one very blonde, and very friendly. Then we always had music too.

Riess: I guess I don't know the whole dimensions of this group. You had the McCaffreys, and you and your husband, and your star and your star's wife if he had a wife, and then who else?

Sproul: We'd have a meal, and my husband would make a speech, and then when it was all over the band would play "All Hail" or something like that. What was that musical section called?

Riess: The Straw Hat Band?

Sproul: No, it was just a few, the yell leader perhaps, and with a little music. It was spirited and lively.

Riess: Did you do this by train or by car?

Sproul: By automobile because we covered two places. We couldn't have wasted so much time. We had to give a lunch at one and dinner at another and they had to be within driving range.

My husband was particularly good at it for this reason: most of the people who went (of course, they were different places) would give the same speech. These professors were used to talking and used to giving their talks and would give the same speech. But my husband would no sooner get home from the luncheon but we would get in our hotel room and off would come his coat, he would hang it on the back of the chair, and he did not give the same speech every time.

Riess: Was he writing a new speech between lunch and dinner?

Sproul: Not altogether new, but he had been a lobbyist enough to know the communities. So when he gave his second speech he could weave in what he had learned as a lobbyist and include some of the prominent people.

Riess: He was a good politician.

Sproul: Oh, a wonderful politician. The professors wouldn't know those people. They would take my husband's word. They had to talk about this, that, and the other thing. They're used to talking; that's how they spend their lives is talking. My husband would take the basis of his speech (what he was trying to put over) and then he would talk about Mr. So-and-So that he met when he was in the lobby or something and how nice it was to have his children in the university.

Riess: How skillful.

Sproul: A tremendous piece of public relations.

Riess: Did he have advance people in the towns who would be able to tell him who was important?

Sproul: Well, he would know pretty well because he had covered them as a lobbyist up there. It was his job to be familiar with the senators and the assemblymen. He would do research; George Pettitt would look things up for him. He always wrote his own speeches, but a lot of people did homework for him--what the county was good at producing and all kinds of local stuff.

Riess: Who were the people back in Berkeley who were doing that kind of homework for him?

Sproul: Pettitt did it and Miss Robb was good at it. She had a good memory and had good relations with people. Oh, who else was there?

Riess: I guess Garff Wilson would be.

Sproul: Garff Wilson. My husband would take advice from anybody. He wouldn't always use it, but he wouldn't mind having it. He would seek it out. Then he would redo his talk, not wholly, because he couldn't write a speech in that length of time; that would be stupid. But he could include enough of local history to make it interesting to the people. We had tremendous public relations.

I've forgotten all of those people we took. We drove with them for hours. We had a lot of fun [in the] in-between time. MacCormick was one, and Calvin, and I think Ed McMillan went for physics. I don't think E.O. Lawrence ever went, but McMillan did.

Riess: So people were most impressed with big scientists' names?

Sproul: Yes, at that time. Well, we knew that. Then we went south and did the same thing. Beth and Stan did a lot of homework too, the people that they wanted to cultivate for the association.

Riess: What was your own impression when you went south? They were different people and different communities. Did you find yourself resisting the south? Was it not as comfortable or as congenial?

Sproul: No, I didn't. I just tilled the ground as I found it! [laughter] And do you know what? My job was [to respond] if they made an effort to pick out something that would appeal to the ladies, and if the chicken was particularly good or the biscuits or something. I didn't have any very great intellectual part. I just went along and met people.

Riess: I should think you would have to keep doing sit-ups between meals if you had to produce that much chicken-and-biscuit enthusiasm.

Sproul: Oh, boy!

My husband had another wonderful public relations scheme, and it really took a lot out of him though. I'd say to him, "For heaven's sakes, your luncheon speech was great, it went over well, the people were pleased, now why don't you do like the rest of the tour? Take a nap between this and dinner. I think you ought to; it's too hard on you. You do one job; then you go and take your coat off and you go at it again until it's practically dinner time. I don't think it's good for you." Well, he'd say, "I've got an idea" or "I've got something I want to do." Then I would have to keep still and read a book because I couldn't even talk to him if he was writing a speech.

When it was all over, he'd sing and be happy and all that. But when he was writing a speech, I couldn't go chattering away like I do now. But anyway, all of this stems out of his lobbying. I don't think he would have been president if he hadn't been the lobbyist he was. I don't really think so.

Riess: I guess he had proved his abilities to the regents.

Sproul: Yes, that was it. They never had anybody like it, nobody who had worked that hard or had an imagination like that.

Now, another thing he did was oftentimes in between these tours and all, if a senator or assemblyman's child would come to Berkeley, he would write him a personal letter and tell him how nice it was to have the roots deepened, how pleased he was that they chose to send this child to Berkeley. Well, they were flattered no end to get a personal letter. Now, it was true that it was a form letter, but there again it was tailored to fit all kinds of situations.

Riess: It shows thought and caring.

Sproul: You bet, and a lot of hard work. He had to sign them and all that. That wasn't hard, but it's time-consuming and he had to take it out of himself because he put so much in it.

Riess: How would he know?

Sproul: He would get a list of them from the alumni maybe or various people. But they liked it very much when their children were noticed. That's a nice piece of public relations.

The California Club

Sproul: Those letters were very effective, and the alumni tours were good public relations. Then another thing he did was the California Club--the Cal Club. That was terrific. That was for the young people and they spend weekends at these different campuses. They went on a Friday night and they'd come back on Sunday. There were representatives from however many campuses there were at that time--maybe eleven, maybe ten, maybe eight--but all the campuses. Then they would have professors up there too that they could talk to and then they would have a dinner. They loved to go to Davis. They had such gorgeous food at Davis--great big steaks and everything! And they'd have dances.

Riess: What was the point of these get-togethers?

Sproul: Discussion of student opinion. It was a place for the students from all campuses to know what the university was all about and what they were trying to accomplish.

Riess: So your husband went also?

Sproul: Yes.

Riess: Was he there to answer their questions?

Sproul: He had people there, faculty there. I think he made an opening or a closing speech maybe. But he didn't spend the whole weekend with them because the point was they were to be on their own and discuss among themselves. There were enough of faculty there that would keep the thing geared the way it should go, not cramp their style, let them talk and yet give them somebody of importance that they could refer to if they had a problem. Do you see what I mean? They couldn't just solve it themselves.

- Riess: Presumably the problems were problems that had to do with the relationships between the campuses.
- Sproul: Yes, that's it and what it was all about. My husband, as I say, might start it and then close it. Garff Wilson would know all about that. I think he ran that. They were to be free to talk and criticize among themselves.
- Riess: Then what would they do with the talk and the criticism?
- Sproul: The university would evaluate it. It would go up to my husband and in the administration it would be considered.
- Riess: Oh, really? And taken seriously?
- Sproul: Very, because after all, you've got to get along, as my son John said, with the students and the faculty. It would be evaluated to make it worthwhile putting up the whole performance. Once in Santa Barbara I went down there and gave a tea for them. I don't think my husband was around that time. But I did give a tea for them. You meet student leaders; that was the whole point. My husband got student opinion on the campuses and not just faculty or townspeople. He got the young people's point of view. He had very good relations with young people. He liked young people anyway.

Receiving Students at the President's House

- Riess: These students felt free to come to visit you at the President's House?
- Sproul: [Although question referred to Cal Club members, answer relates to all students.] We had them at teas and we had a different system of teas. We used the house differently. Now they fix up the ballroom downstairs. In our day, they went all over the house. They liked to go upstairs [chuckles] and look at your bedroom and use your bath, and we had a maid up there to direct them.

The bathrooms had marble tile floors and marble sides around and they had an Oriental rug on the floor. A young student came to see me one time when I lived here, and he said that he and his wife used to enjoy the refreshment receptions or whatever they were that we had at home and that he was building a house in Honolulu, and one thing that his wife said was absolutely a must in that house is to have an Oriental rug in the bathroom! [laughter] They never would have known about it if they hadn't been wandering and then found one on the floor.

Riess: It is a very rich touch. Why did you have such a rich touch?

Sproul: Well, you can't wear it out. You are in your bare feet mostly and it would wear out anyhow. But that's the way it was when I went there. I gave them their house back exactly as I got it. I didn't make any structural changes.

But that Cal Club was a segment to let the students feel they had a voice, that it wasn't all cut and dried, that if they really cared, if they really had something that was worthwhile, Garff Wilson or somebody would take it to my husband and see that it was properly handled, that it wasn't just washed away with a steak or a dance or something.

Riess: So they were taken seriously?

Sproul: Yes, so it had substance. He wasn't going to waste his time anyway on something that wasn't going to promote the interests of the university. That was his main theme.

Riess: We were talking a bit last time about him beginning to delegate authority, but it sounds like he had a lot of difficulty really just letting Dykstra take over.

Sproul: It wasn't in his nature to hand out too much authority. [chuckles] He always thought he could do it better himself, to be perfectly honest! It was his brainchild and he wanted to work on it and he was not lazy.

Riess: Of course, he did have limited time.

Sproul: Oh, and strength. In the end, I think if it hadn't been for the loyalty oath, he would have lived ten years longer because he felt that the decision he had made had hurt the university and he'd rather die than do that.

Riess: There must have been a lot of pressure on him from the campuses to let them develop more quickly.

Sproul: They wanted to have the prestige of Berkeley overnight practically.

Riess: But don't you think, if he had let them go a little bit by themselves, if he didn't feel that he had to be responsible for every small decision, maybe they would have been more content?

Sproul: They would have gotten out of hand. He couldn't have controlled it. The miracle of the whole thing was--[tape interruption]

Bob Sproul's Health

- Riess: I noticed that after the loyalty oath he had a two- or three-week bout with pneumonia.
- Sproul: He did, and he had asthma very seriously for the first years of our marriage, but fortunately Dr. Charles Rowe arrested it.
- Riess: With medication?
- Sproul: I guess. I don't know. Anyway, he checked it. He had it for about the first five years of our marriage and it was very drastic.
- Riess: What was it like?
- Sproul: He would wake up at night and [imitates gasping for breath, breathing deeply] if he was due to make a speech he wouldn't have been able to appear. That would have curtailed the whole thing in a nutshell right in the beginning, I'm sure.
- Riess: That was when he was comptroller?
- Sproul: That was when we were first married. Yes, he was in the comptroller's office. He had it for about five years, but he had constant medication from Rowe and he seemed to outgrow it.
- Riess: Had he had it when he was a child?
- Sproul: No, he had pneumonia when he was a child. He had about three bouts with pneumonia during his life.
- Riess: But he was a terrific athlete.
- Sproul: Yes, he was good. He played tennis and he was a track man.
- Riess: Obviously he didn't treat himself like a--
- Sproul: Oh, no, no, no, he wouldn't mention it. I never could say he was sick because people would think he wasn't fit for the job!
[laughter]
- Riess: Oh, dear, isn't that desperate? It's a little like presidents having to slip in and out of hospitals.
- Sproul: Yes. You know, I got a great respect I didn't have before after I read one of my talking books about Franklin Roosevelt, who was on his fourth term when he died. The poor man couldn't even get in and out of bed. He had a manservant--the manservant's name was Prettyman,

- Sproul: because I met him; Truman had him--who put his braces on. He was always standing up with two canes, and look what he went through as President of the United States of America for four terms, and he couldn't even get himself in and out of bed or dressed. Oh, I've just got more respect for him than I've ever had before.
- Riess: Had you liked his politics much when he was actually president?
- Sproul: No, I don't like something for nothing, and I never thought it made good sense to tear up peach orchards and throw them in the Bay and then pay them for them. I thought too many people were hungry and all that sort of stuff, and that there ought to be a better way than that. I don't know. But I understood a whole lot more about him after I read this book. He had great personal charm, of course. He was a handsome man with his hat on and his cigarette in the holder, and the world was his oyster!
- Riess: Yes, very distinctive. Style was really important.
- Sproul: Yes, and personality. It's god-given. You can't go to a store and buy it, but it's a wonderful characteristic, I think.
- Riess: I noticed as I was flipping through old Daily Cals that when you and Bob went down to the UCLA campus it was always announced. It sounded almost like the people in Berkeley felt deserted.
- Sproul: Oh, and they'd feel sorry for me, and I'd say, "Please don't feel sorry for me." To begin with, I'd go down without my children and we'd go out to eat a great deal, which is fun in all of those big restaurants down there--the Brown Derby and those places--and we stayed in the most beautiful hotel I've ever stayed at. I said, "The people are nice and we have fun. I will grant you it isn't Berkeley and I'm glad to get back to the children and all of that, but the people are very kind."

Alma Werfel, and Other Movie and Stage Friends

- Riess: Did you know movie people when you were down there?
- Sproul: Well, Loretta Young. We didn't know her too well. She lived across the street from the campus house there, and one night the phone rang late. I flew to answer it upstairs and Bob flew to answer it downstairs because I thought maybe it was the children or something. There was a voice on the phone that said, "Is this Dr. Sproul's residence?" (He answered then, but I stayed on to listen because it was so late.) He said, "Yes." He said, "I wonder if by any chance

- Sproul: you have Loretta Young's telephone number?" [laughter] My husband said, in the middle of the night, quite quickly, "No, I don't have it. I'm very sorry I don't have it." And this man said, "I'll bet you're sorry," and hung up! [more laughter]
- Riess: Was there a group of Hollywood people that you would include in your entertainment?
- Sproul: Oh, we had quite a few. Yes, all kinds of people. There was Bruno Walter, who was a musician. And then there was Mrs. Werfel. Her third husband wrote "The Song of Bernadette." We went to dinner one night when they lived in Hollywood with them, and they had I guess it was Ludwig Bemelmans. He was witty and interesting. Mr. Werfel was small and not too well, I guess, because after a while he went to bed, and all the rest of the company (which wasn't too large) stayed up and Mr. Bemelmans entertained us.

Mrs. Werfel was one of those stunning creatures, a Brunhilde, tall and statuesque with strings of pearls and blonde hair and blue eyes. Three husbands did she have and every one of them a genius. Her first husband was a musician, Gustav Mahler. Her second husband was a man named Gropius who started a famous architectural school at Harvard. Her third husband was Franz Werfel. She had one daughter when she was married to Mr. Mahler, I think.

She lived in New York in an apartment and she was very fond of my husband. When we were in New York at various times, she would take us out to lunch. She had a car and a chauffeur, and when we drove up to the lunch place they would roll out the red carpet. The maitre d' would come and take Mrs. Werfel's arm, and she usually towered above everybody else. She'd march down that red carpet and sit at a special table. Oh, she was a great personality! All my husband had to do to charm her was to laugh. She liked his laugh. She liked us, and I had a postcard (I don't know what I've done with it) of her apartment in New York hung with all kinds of pictures of the great and the mighty and the honors and the whatnot.

- Riess: This was a very fine cultural group.
- Sproul: Loretta Young we knew, and then we knew a fellow named Walter Wanger. Who was he married to? One of the de Haviland girls, Olivia. [married to Joan Bennett]

Who else was there that we saw a lot of?

- Riess: Joan Fontaine, her [Olivia de Haviland's] sister?

Sproul: Yes, and they were friends of that woman whose husband was an actor. She was a daughter of the editor of the Washington Post, Eugene Meyer, and she was married to a moving picture man, Oscar Homolka. We used to see a lot of them; we were rather well acquainted socially, because she had us often to lunch and that kind of thing.

And there was Bob Hope, who introduced my husband at a football luncheon before one of the Rose Bowl games. He introduced him as a man who, on account of his voice, "must have been weaned in a boiler factory!" [laughter]

Winning the Bible Prize, and Mrs. Sproul, Sr.

Riess: Your husband developed good public relations pretty consciously?

Sproul: [Question misunderstood. Mrs. Sproul responds to more general question on Mr. Sproul.] I would say it was a mixture of natural talents. He made good use of his natural talents. He had a good speaking voice and a plan. It wasn't all just politics. You know what I mean--political or whatever you want to call it. He had certain attributes or whatever you want to call it that any politician would have been glad to have, but that wasn't all. That's what he had to put over when he became president. He didn't have a long string of academic honors, he came up on the business side, and he had to prove to this faculty that he wasn't just a good Rotarian, if you want. (I don't mean that in a derogatory sense; if you want to put it another way, a hail-fellow-well-met.)

He had a good upbringing, strict. He knew the Bible very well because when he was in Sunday school one of his teachers was a carpenter and he had offered a prize of ten dollars to his class if somebody would memorize a whole chapter of the Bible (I've forgotten which one it is now), and who should do it but my husband and he collected the the ten dollars. His mother said that wasn't fair because that was a lot of money for a poor man like his Sunday school teacher was and he shouldn't take the ten dollars. It was good for him to know this chapter of the Bible.

He said he earned it, he would take it, and he shouldn't have put up the prize if he couldn't have afforded it. Of course, he was blessed with a good memory. Maybe the teacher didn't know that. But in any case, he was the only one in the class who took the trouble to do it. He went to work on it.

Sproul: I think he got the best of both his parents. His scholarly attainments he certainly got from his Scottish father; and his being a complete extrovert and liking people, he got from his mother. She was wonderful at it. She had a sense of humor and she was big and impressive and genuine. So he got a good inheritance that way, a good mixture.

Riess: When his mother lived with you, to change the subject since you mentioned her, was she in a way like the queen mother? Did she stand in the reception lines and have her own role?

Sproul: Only if I said so. I was the boss of the house and if I thought it worked out or if I thought there was some other lady who might help the university more by being in that position, then Grandma wouldn't be there. She was a member of the family. My motto is "family hold back." If you could be useful, why, you were used. But if you're not, you sit in the background. I don't believe in the women running around like they do to elect their husbands.

Often she came, lots of times. But there were times when she didn't, and I think that's better because she had all of the fun of living there in that lovely house with a big room, and the children were pretty good, and good health, and it was a nice old age. You know what I mean. She met interesting people even if she wasn't always there all the time.

Irene Gerlinger

Riess: Who is Mrs. Irene Gerlinger?

Sproul: She came every Charter Day and she was a prominent Kappa in her day. Her husband was a big lumber man up in Oregon and her daughter is Georgianna Stevens [Mrs. Harley Stevens]. Do you know her? She was Georgianna Gerlinger. Mrs. Gerlinger was a very good friend of the university's and she came for every Charter Day almost every year I was there.

Riess: She was given the honor of staying at your house.

Sproul: Yes, she had Marion's bedroom.

She was a good contributor to the university, and Harley and Georgianna have been also. She was a very loyal and devoted Kappa in her day and knew a lot of prominent ladies here. She knew Mrs. Hearst, I think, very well, wrote a book about Mrs. Hearst. (I often wanted to read that book, but I never got hold of it.)



Sarah Elizabeth Sproul with her sons, Allan and Bob, outside the entrance to the President's House, 1955.



Ida and Bob Sproul at home in the President's House, February 1949.

Sproul: I had a picture of Mrs. Hearst that I gave to the Hearsts and they put in San Simeon, I think. Somebody gave it to me and I thought it would be better for them to have it. [She was] regal and stately. I always say "little" as if she was a tiny woman. I don't think she was at all.

William Randolph Hearst, and San Simeon

Sproul: Her son, William, wasn't a discredit to them either. He may have had a strange life, but he was a talented man, and when he inherited all of that money he didn't just open the window and throw it away or become dissolute; he increased his fortune. And he had a great sense of beauty, great. How else could he have built San Simeon?

Riess: Without the wonderful Julia Morgan, too.

Sproul: Yes, to choose her and to approve of her and give her free rein to do and spend what she liked. He didn't spend it on foolishness. He spent it on beautiful things. So whenever they criticize him too much, I think for an only child and the father of five sons and married to a chorus girl, and a very pretty one, why, he hadn't done too badly.

Riess: Did you actually know him?

Sproul: We went down to San Simeon and stayed one weekend. That was great.

Riess: Was that when his wife was in residence?

Sproul: Yes. Dr. Campbell wouldn't go down unless she was. It was against his morals to have some other lady presiding over the place. That included Vice-President and Mrs. Sproul, Vice-President and Mrs. Woods, Vice-President and Mrs. Walter Morris Hart. We went down on a Friday and we left on a Sunday.

What was that woman's name? Millicent. Anyway, she lived in New York. They weren't living together, and Marion was down there most of the time, I guess, later. But Dr. Campbell would not go and stay in a house that was presided over by Marion Davies, although she left a lot of money to the clinic down there at UCLA. So we all went because his wife in New York came out and presided. She wore a pretty pink what we used to call shirtwaist dress, a pleated skirt, and she was slender and had brown eyes and light hair.

Sproul: In the evening at dinner he presided at the head of the table where he belonged. In the morning he wasn't available. At noon he gave us a car and a box lunch and we rode all over that countryside there. At night we had cocktails at the top of the hill and we had dinner at the long table. You've seen pictures of it. That long row of condiments was there, peppers and salts, Lea & Perrins, and all the rest of it. But he was at the table and she was and after dinner the weekend we were there, Mrs. Woods, who was a fine musician--and they had two pianos in that big room--she played music. He was a cultivated man really.

Riess: What kind of a room were you given?

Sproul: Oh, gorgeous! There were three little bungalows, guest cottages. We had one, the Harts had one, and the Woods had one. In the middle of these guest cottages was a sitting room and on either side was a bedroom and a bath. So you had your own sitting room and your own bedroom and bath. I remember that one person--I think it was the Harts probably or the Campbells--they probably went by rank and we were next to the tail of the kite the way we were. But anyway, I think they had the main one, and you went up a little platform and the bed was Richelieu's bed.

Everything was beautifully done. Well, just imagine having a little bungalow, with a common sitting room for yourself and a bedroom or bathroom on either side. You could either mix or be private.

Riess: They told you what the hours would be for breakfast?

Sproul: Very definitely, and you were on time. For cocktails you gathered in an outdoor courtyard that had a lot of nice tile and all that sort of stuff. At a certain time you were told and then you were there for the drinks and dinner. That was the only time that they showed up. But you had *carte blanche* all the rest of the day.

They had a zoo there for the children--lions in cages--and Patty's father and his twin, David and Randolph, those two, would run and run on the top of that hill on scooters. The zoo was there with the lions, and zebras and giraffes walked along the paths. A fascinating place, and the name of it is so lovely, I think: *La Casa Encantada*, the enchanted house. Ah, imagine!

So I give the man a whole lot of good marks. He liked my husband anyway. [laughter]

Oriental Carpets

Sproul: My husband had another interesting experience once. On a Sunday morning when we were first married and we lived in a little bungalow out on Grant Street near the Garfield School, the phone rang early in the morning and it was Mr. Hearst. He wanted to give some rugs, he said, to the university, but he needed someone to come out and select them, and it being Sunday he didn't know who to call and he couldn't rouse anybody. But he got hold of Bob and he said, "I want you to come out."

Bob said, "I don't have a car, Mr. Hearst. I can't come out, really." This was down in Pleasanton, Castlewood, or someplace.

He said, "Never mind that. A car will pick you up and bring you home." Bob said that all the time he got in this car and the meter was getting bigger and bigger, his eyes got bigger and bigger because he wasn't used to such extravagance. Anyway, they got to a big warehouse out there and the rugs were on racks like they were in Sloane's or in a carpet store. Mr. Hearst sat in one chair and he said to Bob, "You sit in this other chair here and we'll have these spread around for you to look at."

Bob said, "I don't think I'm the person to do this, Mr. Hearst. My knowledge of Oriental rugs is very limited and I think you'll do better and the university will do better if we wait and get somebody more knowledgeable." Mr. Hearst said, "No, we'll do it now. I'm here now and this has been on my mind and I want to do it."

So they sat in these captain's chairs, just ordinary camp chairs, and then somebody spun them around for them to look at. Mr. Hearst said to Bob, "Now, you can select five or six of them." [laughter] Bob was young. We were just married only a little while, and we had never seen an Oriental rug about that time, hardly. Anyway, he was shipped for the voyage and he sat there. Mr. Hearst said, "We'll go through once and give you an idea of what the collection is." Bob said, "Okay" [laughter] and he's just trembling. "Then when they go around the second time though, you're to point your finger out at what you want."

So they sat there in these chairs, he being very much impressed with Mr. Hearst, so at the last one he said, "I think that's the one we'll take." He picked his five, and Mr. Hearst said to him when he picked one of them, which was sheer luck, "Did you say you didn't know anything about Oriental rugs?" Bob said, "No, I really don't, Mr. Hearst." He said, "You are very fortunate in that selection. That's a very good one, probably the best one in the collection." Anyhow, wasn't that a kick?

Sproul: Then he put him back in the automobile and sent him back to Grant Street near Rose by the Garfield School.

Riess: What became of all of them?

Sproul: I guess they got some rugs, though I don't know if that was really something that went through. But it actually happened. At six in the morning to have your phone ring and have it be Mr. William Randolph Hearst, who wants you to go to Pleasanton or wherever it was, Castlewood, and pick out Oriental rugs!

Bob's uncle had been the carpet salesman for Sloane's (Uncle Harry Moore) and through him we bought a piece of Brussels carpet for a bungalow for the living room, and we really didn't know anything about Oriental rugs. We were young and that was our first introduction, Bob's, to Mr. Hearst.

Riess: These aren't the ones that ended up in the bathrooms in the President's House?

Sproul: No, they were in the house. Mrs. Wheeler selected those, I think from the Hearst collection, and Mrs. Wheeler had beautiful taste. She was used to good things.

She had tiny little feet and she had her shoes made to order and she wore good black faille silk, well made. She wasn't the least bit showy or gaudy. She wore her hair pulled back in a knot. Dark hair and dark eyes she had. She was small and very outspoken, very.

Mrs. Arthur Goodheart Meets the Trembling Hostess

Sproul: I've found that letter that I wanted you to see, from Mrs. Arthur Lehman Goodheart. I want you to read that. It is the most flattering letter I ever got in my life and I think almost a bit over--listen to me saying immodestly--it's terribly overdone. But I was very much worried when they were coming. They were British and I thought they would be very hard guests, and this was a letter I got after she stayed there. But it's almost too full in its praise.

Riess: [reading] I can see already the whole spirit of it.

Sproul: Oh, the whole thing! When it came to light in later years--

Riess: She said [reads], "You have really spoiled us for life anywhere else."

Sproul: Imagine that! It's too extravagant, I think.

Riess: Yes, that is a little extreme!

Sproul: Oh, I think so, for a house guest and a stranger. The only reason I still have it is I remember what fear and trembling--I thought the British were stiff and unfriendly.

Riess: And she says in her letter, "As we drove up to your house the night we arrived, we wondered if you were half as alarmed at meeting us as we were at meeting you."

Sproul: She'll never know.

Riess: Do you think that that's often the case, that your guests were trembling, as she appears to have been?

Sproul: Well, I never worried about it! [laughter] I was too concerned about how I was going to come out of the deal. I never worried about how they were going to think about me.

Riess: She seems like a very modest soul.

Sproul: It's so overdone. If I hadn't been so frightened I don't think I ever would have saved it, but I thought it was really quite something. I don't care whether you keep it or not now because the poor lady is gone.

Riess: She is saying, "I shall never get into even the lowest grade of your class if I try for the rest of my life. It is just something that is not only cultivated, but born in you." I guess you would disagree with that, wouldn't you?

Sproul: I would in a way, but in a way no. I never once had taken any kind of speech lessons or any kind of, let's say, "how to entertain." I have a copy of Emily Post up here. [chuckles] My husband gave me that. I worried about it, but I just didn't think that I had to overdo. I always could call on somebody.

My husband was an enormous help. No party could be dull where he was, in my books anyway. It may have been extravagant praise, but on the other hand he laughed heartily, he was witty, good company, never dull, and full of ideas and all that kind of thing. So I had a lot of support, but I did have a lot of trepidation too because the only way I learned--I couldn't learn from my mother because she certainly never ran a big house, nor Grandmother Sproul--I had to learn my own way and observe. But I never did go anywhere where I didn't notice how they put their forks and their knives and the rest of it when I was starting out.

Riess: Of course, Mrs. Arthur Goodheart will never know--

Sproul: [laughter] She'll never know what went on behind the scenes! But I mean to say that I never thought that I had to go to a finishing school when I got into that job or have somebody instruct me in how to do it. I thought it would be my way or bust! [laughter]

Comments on Regents Crocker, McEnerney, Moffitt, Ehrman

Riess: Let me ask you just a couple more questions about regents. When Underhill was interviewed*, he said that Regent Crocker was meticulous and punctual and he would never allow anybody to discuss anything because it was a waste of time--which didn't sound very nice.

Sproul: It sounds more like John Francis Neylan!

Riess: And that McEnerney, on the other hand, was careful to call on everyone for their opinions and wanted to have everybody feel that they had a say-so.

Sproul: My husband got along, I would say, superbly with Mr. McEnerney because he was maybe a self-made man. I don't know his background too much. [He was] extraordinarily wealthy and left a lot of money to the university and to a long list of friends. He left something to Bob and to me and our three children, a sum, I think it was \$1,500, for the whole five of us.** [probably \$15,000]

But he left money to all kinds of people, friends who were down and out. He was the lawyer for the Catholic diocese and had a tremendously long list that he left money to. He left money to Jane Neylan, for instance; I know that.

Riess: Your husband got along better probably with Mr. McEnerney because of--

*See interview with Robert Underhill, University of California; Lands, Finances, and Investments, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1967.

**I don't know what Mr. McEnerney left Mom and Pa, but each of the three of us got \$2,500. [MSG]

Sproul: Of his difference in social position. Mr. Crocker was prominent in San Francisco society. The McEnerneys had no children and they were not so social. Bob felt more comfortable and freer [with them], and Mr. McEnerney did for Bob what Mrs. Wheeler did for me. He'd take him under his wing.

Bob would get invited to a whole lot of things right in the beginning and he was quite overwhelmed with all of the attention and all of the prestige of his job. It could have gone to his head too, but it didn't. Mr. McEnerney was a confidant and friend, and Bob would get these offers and he'd say, "Mr. McEnerney, should I really join this? It's very nice of them to ask me." I don't think Bob did belong to a lot of things.

Mr. McEnerney would say, "No, you shouldn't. You won't have time. You should just thank them for asking you. It's a compliment to have been asked, but that's something that you don't need to do. You don't need to belong to everything that comes up and run around to all of these different things. You won't have the time, but it's very flattering to be invited and you just tell them so."

So Bob felt very free to talk to him. He was almost like a father, you might say. She was a good friend too. Oh, she was awfully good for me. She's the one who told me not to put all the Catholics and Jews together!

Crocker was a man that Bob respected, and when he needed, as I say, the money to hold Lawrence, it was Crocker that gave that money for the little Crocker laboratory that's right down on the campus here where he first smashed the atom.

Riess: Another two regents who were very helpful at that time in advising the university on budget and money matters were Moffitt and Ehrman.

Sproul: Oh, yes. I had a letter from Mr. Ehrman. I wonder what I've done with it. It's such a beautiful letter.

Riess: Were either of them men your husband was particularly close to and did they advise him?

Sproul: Mr. Moffitt. [locates letter] Who is this from?

Riess: Oh, this is from Sidney Ehrman.

Sproul: Mr. Gianinni was a rough and tough man that my husband could relate to, too. [He had] a modest background and was a tower of strength. Gianinni was one of those men who was much more forceful in a way than Mr. Moffitt, not so gentle and not so cultured either as Mr.

Sproul: Moffitt and Mr. Ehrman. Mr. James Moffitt was one of the finest gentlemen--and had a beautiful library--that I think we've known. Mr. Ehrman did too. We went to the opera with him and sat in his box for twenty years and, as I say, for me it was Cinderella going to the ball.

Bob Sproul and Investing

Riess: Did they give Bob personal advice on investments ever?

Sproul: I don't think so. It was much more likely through Underhill or somebody who was handling university money.

Riess: I wondered when your husband wanted to invest your own personal funds--

Sproul: Allan Sproul, who was head of the Federal Reserve Bank in New York City, gave him the best advice as his brother. And that was very good because he was successful, they were close all of their lives, and that kept my husband away from university connections about money, except his salary. So that was very fortunate for him. He was lucky there.

Anyway, my husband (and I've probably told you this before)--this Uncle Harry who was selling carpets for W. & J. Sloane, that was his mother's brother. He was a Moore. He said about my husband that he was the only man he knew that could fall down a sewer and come up smelling like tea roses! [laughter] And that's what he did. He came up smelling like tea roses when it came to investing. He had his brother.

Now, I don't know what this is. [looking in box of letters] I put some of these that I've come across lately in here and I don't know whether they are worth saving.

Riess: This is Catherine Marshall.

Sproul: If they're not worth saving, I'm going to throw them.

Riess: Well, I wish you wouldn't do anything hasty.

Sproul: I'll keep them. My children say they're going to put on my tombstone what Mr. Woollicott wrote, or somebody wrote about him maybe, but anyway it was, "A good man, but too hasty!" [laughter] I'll keep them for a little bit.

Nehru and Madame Pandit

Riess: Yes, do keep them. This is from Pandit Nehru!

Sproul: I'll be darned. I didn't know I had that.

Riess: Did you have any rapport with Nehru?

Sproul: No, nor his sister either, Madame Pandit. But I think Madame Pandit was beautiful. Oh, she was lovely. She had the nicest dark eyes and hair that was kind of dark grey and it gleamed.

I had her to lunch and I had her to a tea or something; I had her twice. Then I heard she was going to be at the Women's Faculty Club for tea one day. So I got myself all dressed up in my best and thought, "Well, I did entertain her and she is a beautiful woman." I went down there and she never said "boo" to me hardly. She didn't say, "I had the pleasure of meeting you before" or "I've been in your home." Nothing warm.

Riess: She probably didn't have the social graces you did.

Sproul: She should have just had ordinary ones, it seems to me. I don't expect to be patted on the back for doing my job. I got well paid for it. But I like people who can pick up a ball and run with it a little bit.

President Harry Truman's Visit

Sproul: [continuing to look through box of correspondence] Do you know, I found a checkbook the other day with a nice large sum in it. Didn't know I had it! And somewhere I have a card from Harry Truman that I've been looking for. It was a common little place card, but he signed it "Harry Truman" and he wrote on it, "Thank you for a pleasant evening" or something. What do you suppose I've done with that? [continues to look for card]

Riess: Here's a letter. This one came by air and it's all handwritten and it is from Bess Truman: "Dear Mrs Sproul, I intended to write to you long ago but found I could not write on the train, and until today have not had five minutes to myself. Our day with you and President Sproul was simply perfect from beginning to end and we especially

Riess: appreciated being in your charming home and the delightful dinner you gave for us. Thank you so very much for the many nice things both of you did for us. Most sincerely, Bess Truman." That's a very nice personal letter.

Sproul: Isn't that a nice letter? [continues to search for card] I'm so annoyed. That place card was signed by Harry S. Truman and it says, "Thank you for a pleasant evening" or something in his writing. But it was a common place card. You would have thought I would have gone out and bought a fancy one. I bought very fancy steaks. [laughter] I had a beautiful decorator do the table. I spent a lot of money for that.

This is something from the White House. It has a crest or something.

Riess: Another letter from Bess. I now recognize her handwriting! This is her note "accepting your invitation to stay with you while we're in Berkeley. Our plans at present are so indefinite, I cannot give you a very satisfactory answer, but I must tell you that if you only knew about the cavalcade we are compelled to have with us you would be far happier knowing we were staying in a hotel. We are looking forward with the keenest pleasure--"

Sproul: She writes well, doesn't she?

Riess: Tell me more about entertaining President Truman. What did you talk about?

Sproul: Well, I won't tell you that because that's kind of silly, but anyway it was a commencement and then we all went over to the house. We had the dinner and the table was all stretched out as far as it would go, twenty-five people, the governor and everybody and the chairman of the board of regents and Bess and Margaret.

The food was good, and I spent an awful lot for it. I gave him some fancy steaks, and there is a story about that that is probably interesting. There was a bridge club of my friends in Claremont and we all had the same butcher. There were two men there and one was a bachelor, Mr. Sauer, and the other guy, Mr. Watson, was married.

When I was ordering the meat--I always did all of the ordering; I'm a great one for not wanting to waste anything and to live within my budget and all that stuff--I said, "Now, these have to be extra nice because tonight I'm having Mr. Truman. You'll be interested that he's going to have your steaks," and all that kind of thing. (We had little filets, I think.) I thought it would be more fun if he had to cut twenty-five of them if he thought he was cutting them for the President of the United States. I didn't think I was doing anything wrong.

Visitors to the University



November 11, 1953. Luncheon at the President's House. President and Mrs. Sproul with King Paul and Queen Frederika of Greece.



October 31, 1949. Prime Minister Nehru of India, receiving an ovation from an overflow audience in the Greek Theatre. Standing with him are President Sproul, Nehru's daughter, Indira, Madame Pandit, sister of Nehru and Indian Ambassadors to the United States, Governor and Mrs. Earl Warren, and Mrs. Sproul.



Commencement, June 12, 1948. Alumni Luncheon in Faculty Glade. Mrs. Sproul, U.S. President Harry Truman, President Sproul, and Mrs. Truman.

Sproul: Anyway, this little bridge club in Claremont, oh, they made more fun of me. All of their jokes at that meeting were on Mrs. Sproul and what she was going to give Truman for dinner and how much she's paying for the meat! Well, I didn't like that. I didn't think he was going to tell everybody who came in the store about what I was doing and how much it was costing.

I sailed down there and it was Mr. Sauer, not Mr. Watson, and I said, "Now, when I told you that, I thought that was just a joke. It was just in fun. I had no idea you were going to tell so many people, especially what it cost me!" So he beckoned me to the back of the store and he opened the door to the freezer. It was a walk-in freezer where he had all this stuff hanging. He ushered me in there and he put his arm around me and he apologized! [laughter] I never got apologized to before in frozen storage!

When we had President Truman for dinner we had to have strict body guards. Everywhere in the garden there was a Marine with a tin hat or something and a gun, a rifle or whatever. We had to give a list of the guests to the protocol [office] and we had to give a list of the extra help, the extra maids, we had. They checked them off at the top of the hill when they got to the big staircase. One secret service man's name was Husky. I thought that was a wonderful name!

We also had Truman's valet. The valet had been Franklin Roosevelt's valet, too--valët or valët or whichever way you pronounce it. Anyway, his name was Prettyman. Did you ever have a name like that for a valet, to keep your clothes in order? Prettyman! I think he was a black man.

Riess: On that Truman visit, how did you know how to handle the protocol details?

Sproul: In San Francisco the State Department had a woman, and I've forgotten what her name was now, but she was one I could consult.

Riess: That was always a consultation by phone, or would she come to some occasions?

Sproul: Oh, no, just by phone.

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Budget, Maintenance, and Household Purchases, President's House

Riess: How did you manage your budget?

Sproul: Once a month the secretary balanced my statement, and my husband never questioned me about it because we didn't have a joint account. I got a check at the first of the month.

Riess: To finance all the social events?

Sproul: Certain things--and he had certain things. I had the children and I had their clothes, but his shirts, and major operations--Marion had a ruptured appendix once--those big bills I didn't pay. I paid the help and I paid the food.

Riess: Official events was a whole separate budget?

Sproul: If it was official entertaining, I had to tell the number of people I took care of and send that in. I guess I sent that into the office because my secretary didn't handle that.

Riess: Were you living on a tight budget or was it comfortable?

Sproul: It was very comfortable.

I think that one of the reasons it was comfortable was to live in that house was my idea of heaven. You have Buildings and Grounds and you don't pay them every time they come in your front door. Whoever pays them, the Lord only knows. But if you need a plumber you take the phone off the hook. If you need your floors waxed, you call. If you need your car washed, your windows washed, and once a week Alphonse Cannelli came over, went through the house, every bathroom, because they had marble around and tile on the floor and he cleaned

Sproul: the bathrooms. He cleaned the porches, because there were a number of porches all around, and a lot of leaves from the trees. He tested every electric light to see that the bulbs were working.

Riess: Oh, perfection!

Sproul: Oh, heaven! You didn't need anything more, just a telephone--and Alphonse! [laughter] Buildings and Grounds. I really thought that was the biggest luxury any woman could have. When we retired I didn't have anybody; I had to start in all over again building up a list of plumbers and carpenters.

In the summertime, we went through the house and we turned every rug around so the wear on the Orientals was being distributed and all that kind of thing, a good, thorough housekeeping.

Riess: When you had to invest in a major piece of furniture, or a new rug, how did you go about that?

Sproul: As I say, I bought and the university paid for a big rug in the dining room and there is a beautiful one in the drawing room. I went shopping with Mr. Will Hays. He was in the department of architecture and he helped me pick out what was proper and appropriate because I didn't know. Then I politely sent the university the bill. [chuckles]

Riess: How about paintings?

Sproul: Oh, we got donations. I didn't buy any. People gave us things. If I didn't like them, I didn't use them, but people did give us things. The university must have a big warehouse because when we lived in that house there was a huge tapestry over the stairway. Well, that's not there [now] and I don't know where it is and it's none of my business. But it was a beautiful, big tapestry like you see in a museum. I had to clean it once and the cleaner told me it was worth \$3,500 and I took his word for it because I had to be sure he had insurance.

There was also an armoire, a big chest that you could hang clothes in. That was in the middle of the upstairs hall and it was made by Vickery, Atkins, and Torrey in San Francisco, leading decorators under Mrs. Wheeler. It went out. I think they made a bookcase of it for the library. [in the director's office of The Bancroft Library]

Riess: Were any of the carpets the ones your husband had picked out from William Randolph Hearst's collection?

Sproul: No. I don't think we got anything at that particular time. He changed his mind or something. But there was a nice big one in the hallway between the drawing room and the sitting room, the library. Phoebe [Apperson Hearst] donated that. I don't know where that went. It was there when I left.

People change [things]. The Kerrs had it done over. The living room oak, they had it all painted light. Whoever was the decorator said it was too dark and too heavy with those big posts. It was oak all right and it's still oak, but they gave it a light coat of paint.

Redecorating, Berkeley and UCLA President's Houses

Riess: I had heard that the director's house at UCLA was once dark wood and it was painted gray by somebody.

Sproul: No, French blue, even the piano.

Riess: The whole thing was French blue? What was the effect of all of that?

Sproul: Blue is not a warm color really, I don't think. Yellow or reds are better, I think. Blue is kind of cold, that French blue.

Riess: Was it considered to be terribly stylish when whoever did it?

Sproul: Mrs. Allen did it. She got herself a decorator and they did it.

Here on campus, the oak that was made light, I don't understand what the people were thinking about. I thought that I had to give the house back in the same way I got it, that it belonged to the state of California, that I was just a temporary occupant.

That living room has the kind of ceiling that has got squares; the posts run this way and then they run that way. At the end of each one of those beams was a beautiful hand-carved acanthus leaf. They lopped them all off because it made the room look heavy. It was a room [with] proportions that were so elegant and so nice and so high that nobody probably ever knew that they were there unless you sat on the sofa, looked into the fire, and then let your gaze wander up to the ceiling.

In those squares (I don't know what they've got now) they had kind of an iridescent--I don't know whether it was paper or tinting of some kind--but it wasn't just pale yellow or any color; it was kind of an iridescent sort of thing, almost like an opal with flashes of color.

Riess: How wonderful!

Echo Lake, The Fire

Riess: What was the look of your place at Echo Lake? How did you decorate that?

Sproul: Oh, that was nice too. That's pretty. I have some nice things up there.

I went to dinner once with my husband and the kids at Treasure Island at the Fair there in '39 and they had a Tyrolean room there with some lovely Philippine mahogany furniture. As my husband paid the bill and we went out, I said, "Excuse me, I'll be right back." He said, "What are you going to do now?" I said, "I just want to speak to somebody here."

The place was about to be closed. They had this lovely furniture-- a big long table and benches, awfully nice--and I said to the woman there, "I understand you are not going to be here very much longer. I would like to buy this furniture for my place up at Echo Lake, as much as I could afford, and if you will just kindly let me know when the time comes and the price, I will send for it." She did, and I got the table and some benches, and they were beautiful, just beautiful. Too good for Echo Lake, but if it's beautiful, I don't think it's too good for any place. That's my philosophy!*

Riess: What a surprise for your family!

Sproul: Well, I could have had a painted wooden table because I painted a lot of things up there. But, of course, I wouldn't paint that. I don't paint good wood.

Riess: That's fun. That was a house that everybody felt that they could really--

Sproul: Oh, everybody goes up there. They are all up there now more or less. Even little Andrew, who is not more than two years old yet, has taken to the cold water. Malcolm makes tree houses for the birds. John's family are very much nature lovers and bird lovers and animal lovers

*When Cara-May and I were in Vienna with Ida in 1975, Ida bought the tablecloth after we finished dining at a very fine restaurant.
[RGS, Jr.]

Sproul: and conservationists, all that kind of thing. Malcolm is a landscape architect, and Johnny Jr. had his master's in animal biology or something at Wisconsin. [wildlife management. MSG] They like it.

Riess: Do you think that was the influence then of those summers?

Sproul: Oh, yes, I think that was the best investment we ever made in our life for our family. It's [organized on] a quota system because the season is very short, and John runs it. They get a schedule early in the year to tell them which months are going to be theirs and they have to rotate, because the weather and the fishing are better at certain times, so one person can't be there always at that time. So whoever has first choice this year goes back to third and then they move up. When they went up, we never went up with them. Only when they were little, but when they got older they could have their own friends, their own children. My husband and I wanted to be by ourselves and we didn't give them so many rules that we made the place impossible.

At the end of the season, John, who is very careful and very punctual, would keep track of what the expenses were. They bought their own food. We didn't pay anything for food. But you have to have butane for the hot water, butane for the refrigerator, butane for the stove, all that sort of thing. At the end of the season, nobody asks any questions, they are added up, and they are divided into three. We don't quarrel. It's such a privilege really to go there.

Riess: Is it closed down every winter then?

Sproul: Yes. Sometimes some of the more adventurous of the children go up there. You can ski in right across the whole two lakes, but it's as cold as Greenland's icy mountains because all you have is a fireplace, a great big fireplace, plenty of wood, but you have to practically crawl into it to be warm! [laughter] I wouldn't go up there in the winter for all of the rice in China. It's too cold. But it's beautiful, beautiful back country.

This year when they went up to open they said there weren't the usual hordes of people on the trail for some reason, in Desolation Valley or in Haypress Meadow, another place up there, or around the little lakes. It was not so crowded. It got so you had to get a permit from the forest service. When we went up there, we just took our ears of corn and our pots and camped up there, and that was fun when there weren't so many people. But this year, they said it was pretty good. It was not too crowded.

Sproul: My husband's philosophy was Echo Lake was not a place for us to entertain, the two of us. The university gave us a far better house in Berkeley on the campus, and when we were up there we just did as we pleased.

Riess: He loved the fishing, and what else did he do?

Sproul: We would hike and swim. He invented a baseball game for us that we played up at Echo Lake with pictures of the players that we got on the bottom of a package of Z-nut candy--it was like popcorn. We would shake dice. If you shook a double six that was a home run, and if you shook a seven you were out. [laughter] We'd all play and everybody collected a team. I was the Oaks and he was the Seals and Young Bob was the Hollywood Stars. We played it up there, by the hour. [He was extraordinarily good at inventing games. He could have worked for Parker Bros. RGS, Jr.] And we played dominoes, bridge.

He always had stacks of papers that he had to go through. He would sit at one end of that big table and work like everything. But he didn't mind it. It was pleasant and we had a fire going in the fireplace. We had a lot of good records and one of those cranky phonographs, although those are a nuisance, hopping up and down all of the time trying to get the music going. But we had music all of the time because there is no electricity and the radio isn't too good.

It is a pretty little house really. It has a nice big veranda, a deck in the back, and one off of the kitchen where you can eat your breakfast from the kitchen in front of the little cabin, a beautifully built cabin, and then a stone terrace with a table and an umbrella. It's pretty.

Riess: Did you have it built for you?

Sproul: Yes, our first one burned down, so then we rebuilt, and when we rebuilt we had a little nicer house. We really have three bedrooms.

Riess: Did you have an architect of note?

Sproul: We had a man up from Davis--I guess he was on Buildings and Grounds--a man named Jacobsen? He was devoted to my husband, and we have nice construction with braces--king braces and queen braces. Good wood, too, knotty pine. We improved on the one that burned down.

Riess: What were the circumstances of the fire? How did that happen?

Sproul: Oh, it was a tragedy. We had lamp gas in a glass container sitting up on a shelf. The sun cracked the glass and all of the lamp fluid ran out, ran along the floor naturally. Everything up there has a pilot light, practically on the floor. It's very uncomfortable. The stove, you have to get on your stomach to light it, or the refrigerator. Anyway, Minerva Donald, Mrs. Bill Donald, had had it for the summer, and she and the children were all ready to go. They were down at the boat house, in the boat ready to go out. But she thought she would take one last look. Oh! She went back to see if everything was in order and turned off and the gas exploded and the house caught fire. It burned to the ground and she got badly burned. She had trousers on and those trousers were like a funnel; the flames went up and burned her legs. Her arms, she put them up this way [gestures] to protect her face because she was beautiful.

Fortunately, there was a boys' camp next to us and there was a doctor there. He got her down the lake. They had to get another boat to get out of there and got her down to the lower lake and they had an airplane there that took her down to Berkeley to the hospital. She didn't die, but she was badly burned. She was a beautiful, beautiful lady, overly conscientious. She ought to have let it burn. We had insurance.

But we waited three years before we rebuilt. Then when we did we built a nicer house than the one that burned down. That was more rustic; it didn't have bedrooms and an indoor bath. This one has a shower and all that. That one had a sleeping porch. This one has real bedrooms.

The 1935 Cross-Country Trip

Riess: I've seen a picture, in the University Archives, taken on board ship (the Santa Paula) in 1935, showing your family returning from the east coast. What was that trip?

Sproul: We drove east, and we stayed in New York. On the way he got an honorary degree at Nebraska, and one at Yale. And we had a nice new car, a Packard, and we all fitted in it, the three children and me and Papa. There were five of us. We stayed at this hotel in New York.

Riess: What hotel was it in New York?

Sproul: The Hotel Seymour. It was a little family hotel off Broadway. Marion had had her eighteenth birthday on the trip, and so she was old enough, and the children stayed in the hotel in New York and

Sproul: had their meals there, and Bob and I went up to New Haven and Bob got an honorary degree. Bob also had his birthday on the trip, his fourteenth, and John was eleven.

Riess: You put the car on the ship when you came back?

Sproul: Yes, and the boat went around through the Isthmus. We got off from the trip in San Francisco, and we drove our car on home.

Riess: Where did you stay along the way going east?

Sproul: We stayed at places that took in summer visitors. Not big hotels. We had a book. I belonged to the Women's Rest Tour Association, and we looked up places in this book. Teachers and students used it to go back and further their education, or whatever. It was lovely. Nice houses that took in people for the weekend or overnight. You got your meal and a room.

Riess: Did you call ahead?

Sproul: No, they were just in the book, and we just, by luck, mostly had good ones. I remember once--I guess it was when we were in Nebraska--we picked out a place, and the people were very nice, and John was quite young and had a cold, and we wanted to go to one of the summer stock shows back there, and they let him stay, and the lady who owned the house watched him. And Marion and Bob and Papa and I, we just trotted off to the show.

On that trip it seems to me we also went up to Maine, and that was lovely. And we picked lobsters out of ponds, pointed to which ones we wanted to eat, and they'd fish them out and boil them and give them to us with a little carton with butter and crackers. I remember one town we went to in Maine was Skowhegan.

Riess: Were there other people you looked up across the country?

Sproul: Oh, there was Allan Sproul, in Scarsdale, New York, and when we stayed in New York we saw them frequently.

Riess: I wondered whether your husband had made presidential contacts all across the country.

Sproul: No, not then.

That trip was fun. The children were old enough so that we could all eat out. We went to that place in New York, like Blum's, called Schrafft's, for lunch or a light dinner.

Riess: Did you take the children to Washington?

Sproul: Yes, we went to the Smithsonian. And then I think we drove up to Boston and they climbed Bunker Hill. It was a scorching hot day; they were exhausted. And Boston Commons. That kind of thing. Some history.

I used to have books [of pictures], but I don't know where they went. I had them on a table in the President's House, and in one of my visits to Los Angeles, when I came back, the books had disappeared. Anyway, never turned up. It was all the early letters we got when Bob was elected president, and pictures of him at that time, and pictures of the children. And really, where those lovely books went, I have never known. But they are gone. I thought they would turn up if we ever moved, that they would come to light. But they never did.

Poets MacLeish, Frost, Sandburg

Riess: Do you remember Archibald MacLeish's visit, and did he stay with you?

Sproul: He stayed with us in two places, as far as I know, in Berkeley when he spoke and in Los Angeles when he spoke.

When he spoke in Los Angeles, his mother was wintering in Arizona, I think, and Archibald spoke down at the university, and I said, "Mr. and Mrs. MacLeish, now that you're making the tour, why don't you come with me back to Berkeley and hear your son speak in the Greek Theatre? That is quite an experience to hear him speak at the Greek." She said, "Okay, I will." So she came up with us and she stayed with us in the Berkeley house. Archibald made his speech and we had a wonderful time with them.

I had a real good friendship with her. When we'd go east we would stop off [to visit]. Her husband was the owner of that big department store, Carson, Pirie & Scott. Archibald had a brother who was killed in the war and, of course, he was a poet and taught at Harvard. But she stayed with us in both places and she was very impressed. Mrs. MacLeish was a very entertaining lady. They lived in a place on Lake Michigan, I guess. What is the name of that town? The grounds sloped down to Lake Michigan. It was a big old house. They were Scottish, you see--MacLeish and Carson, Pirie & Scott. That's all Scottish background. Glencoe I think was the name of the place. Anyway, she was a fascinating lady.

Sproul: Archibald had John's room when he stayed, because his mother had the best bedroom. We had a big Sunday night supper once with all the children, and he was delighted with the fresh cracked crab, green salad, red wine, and French bread that was toasted. Oh, he thought that was great!

Riess: Was he a particularly poetic type?

Sproul: Well, he wasn't really. He had fine eyes and white hair. He was quite a good-looking man.

His [step]mother had been a teacher. She had a girls' school, I think. His own mother had died. His sisters were going to the girls' school where she taught and then they'd go home to the MacLeish family in Chicago, and that's how [his father] met Mrs. MacLeish. One of the sisters had her home for the holidays or something.

Riess: Do you remember the visit of Robert Frost? Did he stay with you?

Sproul: Not long. He had a nap after lunch up in the guest room, but he didn't stay very long.

Riess: He wasn't an overnight guest?

Sproul: No, I don't think he stayed overnight. Somebody who did stay overnight was the man who wrote a history of Lincoln, and this man took a nap after lunch up in the guest room, and rather than take the silk spread off the bed he put the telephone directory on the end to put his feet on and took a nap on top of the bed with the telephone directory down there! [laughter] I guess he took his shoes off, but I don't know.

Riess: I guess the telephone directory wasn't as thick then as it is now!

Sproul: It's terrible now. They should take the yellow pages out and put it in a separate book. The girl who worked for me before, Kathrine Thayer, she said her husband just tore the whole yellow section out and bound it himself with staples because it's too hard to handle.

Sandburg, Carl Sandburg is who that was.

Riess: He was supposed not to be as congenial a fellow as Frost.

Sproul: Oh, Frost, I think I got my impression of him more from the book I read and with his poems than I had from any official visit.

Anything that involved housekeeping--my housekeeping--I was fascinated with. I wanted to be a good housekeeper. [explaining why she had no time to gather an impression of Frost] I wanted to

Sproul: be good without being a pain in the neck. I liked things used, but not abused. I don't mind things wearing out or people using things; let them get faded, as far as I'm concerned. But I don't want them to abuse them. I was always meticulous about that. I would tell the children to take their feet off the rungs of "Mr. McEnerney's chair," or "Mr. Earl's chair," and they would maybe laugh, but they would do it anyway.

That's why I put Mohammed V to bed up there with a hot water bottle; I wanted him to be comfortable too. He was put down with a hot water bottle on the chaise longue and a throw, one of those throws that they put on beds. I was fussy about that.

Riess: How about Thomas Mann?

Sproul: He came.

Riess: Was he a house guest also?

Sproul: No, dinner and prominent Germans from San Francisco; stiff-necked and stiff, not terribly lively or exciting.

Dressing for the Position

Sproul: The one that had a sense of humor was Alexander of Tunis, the governor-general.* He had all of these beautiful ribbons, the order of the garter and all the medals along here, and at the same time he had a twinkle in his eye and a good smile. He was just a delight. No stuffed shirt, when he could have been, with all of his honors, and just a beautiful uniform! The suit was sapphire blue, and then the tails were lined with pale blue. Oh, it was magnificent really.

Riess: On an evening like that, would you yourself be more formally gotten up?

Sproul: Oh, yes, and in the San Francisco Palace Hotel it was white tie and tails, really formal. I thought it should be.

Riess: Where did you get your formal gowns?

Sproul: Magnin's. There was a girl there who used to go to grammar school with me, Gertrude McGrath, and she took great delight in dressing me for "my position." [laughter] She knew me when! When she would sell me something she would tell me, "Now, you know, Mrs. Witter and Mrs. Bechtel, they have this dress. Does that make any difference to you?" I said, "Not in the least. I'm flattered!" [laughter]

*Viscount Alexander of Tunis, Governor-General of Canada, Charter Day speaker, 1949.

Sproul: Then she'd sell me something that was very reasonable and she'd say, "Now, don't look at the price tag. Regardless of the price, it does something for you." It was her pleasure to see that I represented my public well.

Riess: When you needed something, you would give her a call and have an appointment?

Sproul: Yes, and I'd have a little room staked out and a whole row of clothes lined up there for me to try on. She took a deep interest in me really.

Riess: Would you go along with a lady friend?

Sproul: I went along with Alice Deutsch quite often, Professor Deutsch's wife, who also had elegant taste and in antiques, too. But I'd go with her.

Frances Perkins' Visit

Sproul: Madame Perkins was somebody to reckon with. I haven't told you much about her, Frances Perkins, the secretary of labor. He [RGS] appointed her [Charter Day speaker] because he thought he ought to be way ahead of his time to do something for women. Here she was the first woman, number one, to be in the American cabinet at any time. She came out here to make a Charter Day speech and she had laryngitis and it bothered her no end because she prided herself on her voice and all that kind of thing. She had a whole lot of rules and regulations. She wore a certain kind of hat. She said that her daughter told her to have it like a pillbox. She had to "dress for her public," she said her daughter said.

She was a Charter Day speaker and she spoke way over the allotted time and it was a hot day in the Greek. Hoover was getting an honorary degree that day and I think he had his eyes shut because the sun was in his eyes, but when Time magazine came out with a picture of Hoover and his eyes closed, it had underneath Mr. Hoover's picture: "Long and dull are University of California Charter Days." [laughter] Anyway, I don't think he was asleep at all.

She had arrived with laryngitis and I had to put her to bed with a doctor. Dr. Bill Donald came and gave her some pills and we got her cured in time for her to make that long-winded speech. [laughter] We got her on her feet anyhow. She wrote me, thanking me and all of this, saying that it was very effective, and she took the prescription to Washington.

Riess: You did take good care of her.

Sproul: Yes, I took good care. I put her to bed right quick because my husband was in mortal terror he was going to be left without a Charter Day speaker. Oh, he was scared stiff! At the last minute, you don't get anybody who is willing to do that at any price.

The Arts at the University

Riess: When there were special guest lecturers in the art department like Hans Hofmann or somebody like that, were you and Mr. Sproul host to them?

Sproul: Yes, we tried as much as it was physically possible to use the house and to entertain the faculty.

That's one reason why we had the big freshman receptions. We didn't want anybody up in the legislature saying that it was just a big factory down here and everything was perfunctory. My husband was going to make it so that everybody knew that he cared personally, and when these children went down the line he could say to them, "Your dad and I had a good laugh at this in the legislature," or something to make it personal. He was determined that it would not be just a big factory.

Riess: Yes, and I'm particularly interested in whether he cared personally about people in the arts, cared personally to support that.

Sproul: I think he may have been somewhat one-sided in his liberal education because, you see, he was a civil engineer, although he read a great deal and all that kind of thing. But he was a civil engineer and his background of hard work and no luxuries much--I don't mean arts are a luxury--but I mean it was not stressed, I don't think. Maybe. But he left that up to the committee on arts, music and drama. There were some wonderful people at the head of that.

Riess: Popper.

Sproul: Yes, and Sam Hume, who graduated from Harvard in Baker's workshop. Anyway, he left that to people that he thought were better qualified than he.

William Dallam Armes was a very distinguished professor and he was the one who put the Greek plays on. He was head of music and drama, and he had Margaret Anglin in Wheeler's time put on one of the Greek

Sproul: plays, and somebody asked Mr. Wheeler how it was, meeting Miss Anglin, and he said, "When I put my arms around her to congratulate her she felt like a nice soft pillow." [laughter] Pretty good, don't you think?

We always had arts and drama and plays in the Greek Theatre, Greek plays and leading productions. We went to the opera with Mr. and Mrs. Ehrman for twenty years on the opening night and sat in their box. Then I had symphony tickets for the San Francisco Symphony and I went in the afternoon and took ladies to luncheons. But we weren't very long on the arts, I don't think, as far as that goes, to be perfectly honest.

Although we had writers. We had Douglas Southall Freeman [for Charter Day]. He wrote a wonderful life of George Washington and he had a radio station in Richmond, Virginia, and he edited a paper there. He had been very busy collecting enough to write another biography of Washington. He was very conversant with that subject and could speak without notes and very authoritatively, so he didn't make the same speech in both places [Charter Day at Berkeley, and at Los Angeles]. Most people did because it was hard work and they only got one honorarium and one fee, but Mr. Freeman didn't.

Portia and Sam Hume's Wedding in Paris

Riess: Sam Hume and Portia were good friends of yours.

Sproul: Bob was best man at their wedding in Paris.

Riess: How did that happen?

Sproul: We were abroad and one night we were looking in the windows on Regent Street or Bond Street in London. (We were on our first vacation to Europe.) Anyway, somebody tapped Bob on the shoulder and said, "Where are you going to be on the seventeenth of August?" Bob said, "In Paris. We're going to be in Paris." It was Sam, and he said, "Portia and I are getting married on the seventeenth of August and we want you to be our best man." Bob said, "Okay, we'll put that down. That's a date, the seventeenth of August, 1927."

On the morning of the wedding Sam sent around a great big charabanc. It looked like a hearse. There were seats on both sides in gray velvet and at the front of the thing in the inside was an enormous bouquet of carnations. It went around to all of these pensions and picked up the wedding guests. We were somewhere on the left bank in the Hotel de Quai Voltaire.

Riess: Had Sam and Portia decided on the spur of the moment to get married?

Sproul: I think it took a little doing on their part. Sam had been married before and divorced, and Portia also.

Portia was a sculptress and her study of sculpture and art led her to be a doctor because she studied anatomy, the human figure. She had graduated in philosophy at the University of California. She went and took all of the tests and entered UC-Med. When she entered UC-Med she was married to Sam and they lived up here [on Buena Vista Way], and he encouraged her greatly in all of the things that she wanted to do. She was a beautiful looking lady really--tall and had lots of long, blonde hair that she wound around and around her head. Oh, she was stunning and very brilliant, too.

Anyway, they got married. Sam didn't like her name; her name was Maureen Bell. So when she got to be a doctor, Sam changed her name to Portia Bell Hume. He thought "Maureen" sounded like an eye wash and she was too stunning and too intelligent to go along with a name like that.

Riess: You had said that the charabanc had come to collect you.

Sproul: Yes, and we all sat in a row of seats on both sides with a space in the middle and this huge floral display at one end. We picked up all the guests that were going and went to the mayor's office, and Portia and Sam were duly married with a civil ceremony by the mayor of Paris.

After the wedding we all went out to a houseboat on the Marne where we had lunch. All this was part of Sam and Portia's planning. On this houseboat you went downstairs to the lower deck, the main deck, and all down the stairway were little plants tied with satin pink bows on both sides of the stairway. Our lunch was a very elaborate lunch.

After that, the charabanc dropped each one at their hotel and departed. We had had quite a day because we started early in the morning for this eleven o'clock ceremony and the twelve o'clock lunch on the houseboat and all of that stuff, a lot of food and champagne and everything. Anyway, we went to sleep. [laughter]

In the evening, Bob, who was the best man, and I and Portia and Sam went out to dinner. We went to a place that was very famous in Paris. Sam hadn't been there before, Portia hadn't been there before, they were saving it for their wedding, and certainly [laughter] the Sprouls had never been there before! Anyway, we got all dressed up in tails and evening clothes. The name of the place

Sproul: was the Tour d'Argent. We had those pressed ducks that have the number on. With that nice little sleep beforehand we were able to enjoy more champagne and a lot of rich French food. After that was over we went home and got some more much needed sleep.

But while we were in Paris they bought the furniture for the home in Berkeley [Hume's castle]--a huge, big sideboard, dining room tables and chairs.*

Riess: Was that place being built at that time?

Sproul: No, but they had the plans for it and they knew exactly on the plan where they were going to put a big, long table, where they were going to have a great big--what do they call those big things?--a breakfront.

Their dining room chairs had arms; their philosophy was you were to remain at the table in conversation and good food, and you could rest your arms. They bought twelve with arms, and the Sprouls bought twelve without arms because they were less expensive! [laughter] But we bought a beautiful, big breakfront. Marion has it and it is just lovely. I bought that little desk that's downstairs. I'll show you.

Riess: That was 1927. Did you realize what kind of a house you were going to be moving into with all of that furniture?

Sproul: We were living at the time, I think, on Piedmont Avenue.

Riess: All of that furniture was shipped back to that house?

Sproul: Yes, it was. We had a very good opportunity to get it here because the Humes were buying for their castle and it came on the same ship, so we didn't have to fiddle-dee-dee around with shipping. We bought just what we could afford to pay for and they bought a lot more.

Riess: Had the Humes been very good friends of the two of you when they had been in Berkeley?

Sproul: Oh, yes. I was devoted to Sam.

Sam was gifted, but he wasn't tactful. He was a very gifted man really. He was way ahead of his time. He worked with Irving Pichel, who was in the movies, and Sam could have been too because his education at Harvard was along that line, that fellow George Pierce Baker, that workshop and all of that stuff. But he

*Sam and Portia Bell Hume lived in a house designed by John Hudson Thomas and built in 1928. It is located at 2900 Buena Vista Way. It is deliberately built to resemble a small-scale castle.

Sproul: always looked down [on them]. He didn't think they were his intellectual counterparts; he didn't have much in common with them; it wasn't along his line. That was too bad, because he could have been a pioneer in it.

Riess: Didn't your husband offer him a job down at UCLA?

Sproul: I don't think he did.

Riess: I think at some point he offered him the job of the drama director there.

Sproul: Did he? Well, maybe he did. He always wanted to be. That was part of his affection for us, not that I mean there is anything wrong with it. They [Sam and Bob] were generally very congenial. They liked the same sort of things.

But he never quite made it in Berkeley (Sam didn't) because of his personal behavior. When he graduated from college he invited the Berkeley police force to something and shook hands with all of the policemen because he said they were his best friends while he was in college. He antagonized the faculty, and then he got divorced from his first wife because he was seen one morning leaving the home of Mary Morris in his tuxedo and she was a leading lady in one of the plays and all that kind of thing, and his flaunting it didn't go down well with the Berkeley faculty. It wouldn't have gone down with any faculty, I don't think, at that time.

Oh, but he had excellent taste and he was a terrifically interesting human being. I was very fond of him.

Riess: It must have been an interesting marriage.

Sproul: Oh, and do you know what? It lasted until he died. People didn't think it would because he had been divorced from Maude Hume, his first wife, and people were a little bit skeptical about his lady friends in between. Oh, they were very hard on him, you see.

Portia and Sam were married until he died, thirty-five years. It was a wonderful marriage from the point of view of intellectual understanding. He supported her wholeheartedly when she wanted to be a doctor. As I say, he even renamed her on the day she got her degree.

Riess: It's a wonder he didn't rename himself. "Sam" isn't the most elegant of names!

Sproul: Well, he had an interesting background. He was the son of an early sheriff, and his parents were elderly, I think, when he came. "The wonder of it all," and a lively, talented son--maybe he had difficulty

Sproul: growing up. But the fact that he invited all of the police force to graduation and told them they were his best friends while he was in college and that kind of thing--he enjoyed hurting the faculty's feelings, I think, shocking them anyhow, one way or another. He couldn't make his conduct conform to his rigid ideas. Maude Hume, I think, was very much in love with him and I think she was rather bitter about some of his escapades. He had a lot of them.

There were a lot of stories about him, but to me he was a fascinating human being, and I never got over those Paris days. The Tour d'Argent and the duck! The duck had a number on it--4,965 or something else--the number they had served.

Architects Bernard Maybeck and Julia Morgan

Riess: Two architects associated with the university are Julia Morgan and Bernard Maybeck. Were these figures that you and Bob knew?

Sproul: Not too well. They were older. Julia Morgan--we were a little bit in contact with her with William Randolph Hearst when we went down to San Simeon and that kind of thing.

Riess: Would she be down there working on the place?

Sproul: She was connected with Hearst, but we didn't know them too well really. She was a little bit of a thing, wasn't she?

Riess: The two of them together, Maybeck and Morgan, were the architects of the Hearst women's gymnasium, which was completed in 1927.

Sproul: There are a lot of nice Maybeck houses on Buena Vista. Various faculty people had them. There is one right on the corner of Euclid and Buena Vista that is awfully pretty, all the different colors, and it blends. Not one color hits you in the eyes. There is red, there is that bright blue, there is orange, there is cream color, and not one shade fights with the others. Oh, I think it's terrific, a terrific paint job. The woman who lived there had a studio too, Alma Kennedy and Somebody-Schmidt, and they gave music lessons. Marion used to go there for music lessons. They had a studio there. Mrs. Kennedy, I think, often was asked for a house tour, but she would never let it be shown.

Lunch for the Shah of Iran

Riess: When the Shah of Iran came, how did you entertain him?

Sproul: He just came to lunch. My husband wasn't there, but I thought it would be fun to have young people--students--because he was very young when he took office, only thirty-seven, I think. So instead of meeting the regents and too many elderly people, I had the president of the student body, the president of the football team, the editor of the Daily Cal, and all those kinds of people.

Because my husband couldn't be there that day--and I didn't sit down with him because I thought the conversation would get very stilted if I was there; he would have to be formal and all of that--I asked Luis Alvarez to take Bob's place. He was a Nobel prize winner in physics and an attractive man. I thought that that would be better for the shah. He would have more fun and make the students a little freer. Oh, I had the crew captain. I had prominent ASUC people.

Riess: Did the shah have a large entourage himself?

Sproul: No, and he didn't have any of his wives. He had been married two or three times, but he came all by himself.

Riess: Was he a glamorous figure?

Sproul: He was a rather serious young man, grave sort of. He wasn't happy-go-lucky, I didn't think.

He got his job when he was awfully young, and I was thinking the other day that he had really had kind of a tough time, and I was always singing his praises. When I heard he had gold telephones in his palace, then I began to think he must have holes in his head somewhere! Who would have a gold telephone when your people need food?

Riess: How did he happen to come to visit the University of California?

Sproul: I don't know. Public Ceremonies gets wind of all of these things, and I think people ask for you to entertain them too.

Riess: So he didn't give any speeches?

Sproul: No. There is a protocol thing, a State Department thing, and I think they're stuck with--I shouldn't say that--but I think they have to entertain people all the time and they are looking for

Sproul: logical places that might be of some advantage. They must certainly use all of the advantages they can, and why not? That's only fair enough and sensible.

Riess: So very often you might be just on the standard tour?

Sproul: They might get around to me and say, "Would you like to have a lunch or can you have a lunch or will you have a lunch?" I always thought it was all in a day's work. That's what I got paid for.

Riess: Did you ever feel that you really had much choice about it?

Sproul: I didn't care. I felt it was all in a day's work. I wanted to do a good job and if that was part of it, why then I'd try to make it a little different.

Clare Booth Luce

Riess: Was Clare Booth Luce a friend?

Sproul: No, she came to lunch once, and my husband was quite captivated with her good looks. [laughter] And she was good looking.

My husband was a good friend of her husband. Henry Luce was the son of a missionary and had a religious background, Presbyterian, I think. Once when there was a whole flock of missionaries that were going to go to China and they met in the opera house the day before they sailed, Henry Luce was the head of the thing and he had Bob make a speech. Bob was friendly with him. They saw eye to eye pretty well because my husband was Presbyterian too.

Stanford Presidents Ray Lyman Wilbur and Wallace Sterling

Riess: Were you close friends with the Stanford president and his family, the Ray Lyman Wilburs?

Sproul: Yes, but I lost my heart to Wally Sterling [laughter], my favorite Stanford man.

Riess: Why do you laugh when you think of him?

Sproul: I don't know why. I had a tea once and it was for some foreign professors from all over the world. I was in line and I didn't know any of these people. I didn't think it was a very exciting occasion; I was kind of tired maybe or something. At least, I didn't think it was a very lively occasion. All of a sudden, a big, tall, rugged-looking man comes down the line and says something very pleasant and nice to me, and I thought, "Oh, the nicest man at the party!"

I said to my husband afterwards, "I really liked that last man who came very much, a big, tall, rugged-looking man." He said, "Don't you know who he is?" I said, "No, I've forgotten his name." He said, "That's going to be the next president of Stanford University." (He had already been selected.) But after the long, hard afternoon he said something very friendly and nice, and I thought to myself, "Well, isn't he nice, out of all of this group." And it turned out to be Wally Sterling. We've always been good friends.

Riess: The reason I mentioned the Wilburs is that Newton Drury in his interview said that your husband and Ray Lyman Wilbur were the same type.*

Sproul: Ray Lyman Wilbur was a good friend of ours, that's for sure. We went with a congressional party and stopped at Boulder Dam, Hoover Dam or whatever, when he was secretary of the interior. They [Wilbur and Sproul] are as far away as poles, I think, because Ray Lyman on that hot day had on striped pants and a long formal coat, and he had a white collar that was about three inches high, and it was desert heat--he was supposed to make a speech. I thought he was very formal and very stiff.

Riess: Not your husband's style?

Sproul: Oh, heavens, no. I didn't think so, but then that's one way of looking at it, I guess. He had somewhat the same stern background, I think.

Riess: Maybe that was what Newton Drury was thinking of. That was quite a nice group of people your husband knew through the Save the Redwoods League and so on.

*See interview with Newton Bishop Drury, Parks and Redwoods, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1972.

Sproul: Oh, yes. That Newton Drury, he was something. Look at what he did for the Save the Redwoods League. He was a conservationist, he and his brother Aubrey, long before anybody ever knew about conservation, and they started the Save the Redwoods League, and the money just pours into that place. They don't have to, hardly, ask for it, and that's because both the Drurys had intelligence and absolute integrity--you never heard anybody say the Redwoods League did anything with the funds--and imagination.

INTERVIEW 6: SEPTEMBER 9, 1980

Robert Gordon Sproul's Mission to Moscow

Sproul: I'll tell you a story about when my husband went on that mission to Moscow to collect reparations from Russia for the money we loaned them in World War II, or something of that sort. People on that came from all over, prominent industrialists--the man who ran Kimberly Clark, which made all of the paper, Kleenex, paper towels, napkins, and all that.

Anyway, they went on a picnic; they drove out in the country a little bit and all of the big shots had lunch in one place, a fancy lunch, and when lunch was over my husband thought he would take a little walk. He walked and he came across a collection of people, all chauffeurs for these notables, and they were singing and dancing and playing the balalaika. You know how they dance, like they're sitting down practically on the ground in that squatting way? Well, he stood there for a while and finally one of them talked--they spoke very good English--and said they thought it was quite peculiar that there should be this group of all kinds of people, French, English, Germans, Americans, and everything, and not a musical instrument in the lot; they didn't carry any musical instrument with them. Here they were singing away, dancing. So then they asked my husband where his was, and he said he was real sorry that he didn't have a musical instrument. In fact, he didn't play any.

So they asked him if he could sing, and he said he thought, yes, maybe if they would like to hear a song he could sing. So what do you think he sang for them? "My Old Kentucky Home!" [laughter] And they thought it was just great. Here was somebody who didn't have an instrument, but he was agreeable and friendly and he didn't mind letting his voice out.

Riess: He gave the chauffeurs a good show.

Sproul: A first-class performance. He never gave a poor show, whether he had an audience with a lot of people, or if there were only a handful. There was a man in Marysville, a doctor, who said he never went in to perform an operation that he didn't think of my husband, and that he had to do a top-notch performance.

Riess: Did he really have a job on that trip or was it just an honorary kind of thing?

Sproul: That trip? Well, more or less because they [the Russians] never came through. Every time they got down to a serious talk, the Russians would pound the table and get mad and go home. Then they would come back the next day as if nothing had happened. But they had no mutual agreement; they didn't collect anything, I don't think. But it was an interesting trip because they got to go places that they ordinarily wouldn't have [gone to]. Of course, he had never been to Russia before.

There was some girl who had run the desk--a Russian girl working there--and she was the receptionist, I guess, at the hotel where they stayed. Anyway, those newspapermen on the commission were kind of fresh, pretty forward, and they gave her the "wolf call," as they call it, every time they went in and out. Somebody asked Vlada (or whatever her name was) if she understood what that was in America. They said it was a wolf call. "Oh, yes," said she, "old wolves without any teeth." [laughter] Don't you think that's a remark?

Riess: I think that's excellent.

Sproul: "Old wolves without any teeth." [more laughter] Vlada wasn't born yesterday, was she?

Riess: No, she wasn't! Now, he was also special ambassador to Korea in 1956.

Sproul: Yes.

Riess: Was that a meaningful post?

Sproul: I don't think, in terms of what it did for the country. But it was very good for him, anyplace where he could get to widen his horizon, a new experience. He had good health and a zestful life so it was right down his alley. One of his philosophies is, "Anytime anybody hands you a lemon, never get discouraged. Just make some good lemonade!"

Riess: Did the two of you travel together?

Sproul: No, I didn't go with him. He went with a man named Whitney, the wealthy Jock Whitney, ambassador to Great Britain too, it seems to me. But it was just one of those things that he made good lemonade out of.

Riess: But it didn't mean that he had to establish himself in Korea?

Sproul: No, no, he didn't have any program. It wasn't like the reparations commission, which had a definite purpose.

And Getting Along with People

Riess: What were his relations with some of the stronger characters on campus, like Teller?

Sproul: He liked people. If he had a genuine feeling or relationship I don't think he bothered about analyzing it. They were just kindred spirits. But I don't think he had anybody that he didn't think he could take on. He wasn't going to spend the rest of his life with them.

Riess: Well, Teller was a man with strong opinions.

Sproul: Yes, and Neylan was impossible. But then there was always Joel Hildebrand, who was reasonable, and always Mr. McEnerney, who was chairman of the board, and James K. Moffitt, who was a gentleman of the old school.

Riess: But Mrs. Sproul, he would be more than human if he didn't have--

Sproul: Well, he was careful, really careful. I think he really was. He wasn't gossipy. He was careful. I think, being a good Boy Scout, he would rather build somebody up than tear them down and he wasn't one who thought that he knew all the answers. That was a thing that was greatly in his favor. He could learn from everybody--the custodians in Sproul Hall--just everybody. Dave de Verona, the captain of the football team. He met him in the morning when he was walking to work. Dave would say, "Good morning, Bob." [chuckles] The only student in the whole university who ever called him by his first name, I think! If it was world-shaking, policy-shaking, if it was going to hurt the university, then he would have to do some soul searching. But on the other hand, he liked people and had some natural gifts that were in his favor. He was not a bit inhibited.

Sproul: For years, he and Lester Hink, Jr., who owned and ran the Hink's store, were on the Big Gifts Committee of the Community Chest and they really planned, had a very deliberate campaign for raising money, and they were very good at it too. They believed in it and they supported it and they were very successful. He was also very successful in raising money for the university. I think some of his charitable contributions rank high in volume of money that was contributed. But there again, he had a plan. He never went up to people and just asked for money if he could help it. He tried to get them in touch with somebody who would interest them, that was working on something that they would like, and he generally had a program.

Rockefeller Foundation and the Columbia Offer

Riess: Eventually he was on the boards of the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations.

Sproul: Rockefeller was our house guest, at least the one who is the banker (David), when they were building International House and tearing down Professor Hart's house right on the corner there of Bancroft and Piedmont. But David and Peggy--we got cards from them for years and we were not on a relationship where we called them "David and Peggy."

My husband was on the Rockefeller Foundation a long time and we were down in Williamsburg once a year. That's when they had their meetings generally, in early December in Williamsburg, and we stayed at the Williamsburg Inn. The Rockefeller that ran Williamsburg was John D., III, because his father was John Jr. He was there for these meetings of the foundation at Williamsburg.

One day when we were there we were invited to have luncheon with John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the father of "the third." We went to their house there in Williamsburg. (We also went to their fiftieth wedding anniversary, which was wonderful.) All around the table at lunch were very important people that we knew by name, though we didn't know them personally. It was a luncheon planned to look us over, because Columbia University was looking for a president and Rockefeller was on the board there to help select a new man. We weren't told we were being looked over, but we didn't see any reason why we would be invited if it wasn't for some plan they had.

Sproul: So we had luncheon at their house and the most beautiful table I think I almost ever saw, so beautiful, old Chinese things like tureens. A big long table it was and the china and the linen-- oh, it would put your eye out!

Riess: I would hate to be looked over! You could endure that?

Sproul: [nonchalantly] Oh, yes, all in a day's work. I knew I wasn't going to be there forever and I knew it wasn't me particularly they were looking over. But they did offer us the job, so we did all right. We used the right fork, I guess! [laughter]

Riess: Was the job offered on that trip?

Sproul: No, later, but that was the purpose of the meeting, like here if we were meeting the chairman of the board of regents, Mr. Earl or Mr. Crocker, we met the bigwigs of Columbia there.

The old president of Columbia University, Nicholas Murray Butler, was our first Charter Day speaker. Nicholas Murray Butler had been there for forty years, and he was getting blind and old, and they were looking for a new president. And Nicholas Murray Butler took a great shine to my husband, so I'm pretty sure that had a lot to do with it too, because when my husband went to New York on foundation trips, he would be invited to Mr. Butler's home for dinner and all that kind of thing.

The Butlers were very formal. They always had somebody who announced you out loud to the group, like a footman. Mrs. Butler was extremely formal: Sarah Schuyler Butler.

Riess: Oh, that is a name!

Sproul: That's a name to reckon with, isn't it? Nicholas Murray they called "miraculous," just to kid him. (He was a very serious gentleman.) But he was getting very old, and he had been there a very long time, and they wanted some young, fresh blood.

Riess: Why did your husband say no to that?

Sproul: Well, he liked what he was doing, and he didn't want to have to live in New York, and he was devoted to the University of California.

I told him in my silly way that I didn't think he would be very happy there because he knew where all of the good professors were and they're always raiding one university or another to build up their faculty. The University of California had a nice handful of good, outstanding people, and as president of Columbia he might have his eye on some of those people to build up departments there, and he couldn't give it complete loyalty like he did to Berkeley.

Sproul: You can't divide your loyalties. You have to care like everything, I think. It isn't money. The money was all right, and it was a lot more money than he was getting here, that was for sure. But it wasn't money. We had a nice house here and we were happy. We liked people; we had good friends. But you just can't divide your loyalties, I don't think; I don't think it's honest.

He had unusually good gifts for the job, and as you look the list over that has come before or after, I'm prejudiced and very much so maybe, but I think that--you know that ad "there is only one person at the top"? They advertise a building and loan association and they talk about how at the top there is only one person that is a Fred Astaire, there is only one person that is a Helen Hayes--you know, that sort of thing. And I think my husband would stand up against any kind of competition.

Military Men Don't Make Good University Presidents

Riess: Actually, one of the presidents of Columbia was Milton Eisenhower. Did he come in when your husband refused the job?

Sproul: No, it was Dwight who was president of Columbia.

Riess: Oh, that's right. Milton was at Pennsylvania.

Sproul: But military men don't make good university presidents.

Riess: Why is that?

Sproul: Well, that's not their life training. You stick to your knitting, the thing the Lord made you good at.

Riess: Do they make good presidents of the United States?

Sproul: [laughter] Not too, I don't think, do you? [pause] It's training.

Now, I'll tell you a story along that line. When we lived in the President's House on the UCLA campus, we had an extremely nice girl that kept house for us. She was really a Viennese, I think, or of German background. Anyway, she had a German name. She was very well-fitted for the job because she didn't waste--if I wasn't going to be there for a while, she probably wouldn't do an awful lot of housework. But if we were going to be there, the house was immaculate, the flowers were on the table and in various places, and she was as honest as she could be.

Sproul: One of the regents (I won't say who) brought along General Mark Clark--that was before Dykstra's time and they were looking for a big name. UCLA wanted somebody nationally prominent, wanted a big name. They wanted him to be of national prominence, with a great deal of publicity right quick. They didn't want to wait for a guy to prove himself or start at the bottom and work up or any of that kind of business. They wanted a big shot. And instead of getting somebody from the faculty that they had known and worked with for a long time and were very comfortable with, they wanted somebody outstanding that would make a big splash.

Well, this regent brought Mark Clark along and Cecilia showed him the house. She was there and, of course, she had it ready and in order, and we got all the dope from Cecilia.

My husband didn't want a military man to be president at UCLA. He didn't think Columbia's experience worked out and it's not their cup of tea. But Clark was a very able general in World War II.

Riess: So I guess your husband didn't even think that as a figurehead he would have been--

Sproul: He didn't believe in figureheads. That wasn't good goods; you have to have a foundation. Oh, he admired and liked Eisenhower. You couldn't help but like him. He had a tremendously likeable personality, I think. We didn't see him often, but he was not a good president at Columbia. He didn't last long there.

College Presidents James Rowland Angell and James Bryant Conant

Riess: Were there organizations of college presidents where you would meet?

Sproul: We met quite a few at different times, especially on the Rockefeller Foundation. There we met the Princeton president, Harold Dodd, and became great friends of James Bryant Conant. We went to his 300th celebration and we stayed with the treasurer of Harvard while the celebration was going on. We went to all of the parties all dressed up and the Boston Symphony and the Harvard Glee Club and the Women's Choral. Oh, they had a tremendous whoopdy-do for their 300th.

It was outdoors. It was pouring rain. They didn't call their governing board regents; they called them overseers, I think. Those gentlemen had striped pants and tails and high hats like you would wear to the opera, in pouring down rain! They walked along in an

Sproul: academic procession and they would go like this every so often [tipping hat] and the rain would run off those big high hats onto the ground. Oh, I'll tell you!

Another president we became very, very close to was the president of Yale, James Rowland Angell, a wonderful man who had a marvelous sense of humor, one of the wittiest men I think I ever entertained. He stayed on the campus with us. His wife was quite a bit older, and it was his second wife, and my husband--they wouldn't have breakfast with us very often, but Angell and I would get up early and have breakfast. He was just good fun early in the morning, very witty.

At that Harvard celebration in the pouring rain, his opening speech was that as Yale's president he had for many years admired Harvard's policy for soaking the rich! [laughter] Oh, he was very clever. He didn't look like a college president. He wasn't very tall. In fact, he was short and stocky and wore blue serge suits. He had kind of sandy-reddish hair and he really looked like a baseball umpire and not like a college president. He was terrifically witty, and during the Charter Day speech in San Francisco at the Palace Hotel he asked for a glass of water. He said, "I had no idea my speech was so dry!" [laughter] Oh, he was delightful.

He had been married before and had a couple of children. Then he married this very attractive lady; Katherine Woodman I think her name was. She had five or six or seven children maybe. So he said he didn't know, when he got married to Mrs. Woodman, who got the worst of it: he became the father of a large family and she became a grandmother because he had had grandchildren by his first marriage! [laughter] So they spent a great deal of time deciding who got the better of the bargain! He was amazing, that man. Oh, honestly!

Riess: In your interview with Edna Daniel you mentioned going to Yosemite. Was it with Angell and his wife?

Sproul: Yes.

Riess: Where did you stay, and what did you do?

Sproul: Bob drove and we stayed at the Ahwahnee, I think. It was just for fun. We were there one night having dinner--the Angells and us--when who should walk in but Ray Lyman Wilbur, and Ray Lyman Wilbur was president of Stanford at the time. Mr. Angell, who was very witty--his comment when the Wilburs were ushered in by the maitre d' was, "My word, do they just reserve this place for college presidents?" because there were three of them at one table. We were there, the Angells were there, and then the Wilburs came in and had a table. Mr. Angell said, "They must reserve this place for university presidents." [laughter]

Riess: When the three college presidents were sitting around there, did they talk shop? What is the shop talk of a college president?

Sproul: Well, you know, the usual--

Riess: Did they actually trade--

Sproul: They were very interested in our system because we were the first university to have these centers all over the state, not just the one university. My husband, when he made his speeches, said it wasn't the University of Berkeley; it was the university of the state--Riverside and Santa Barbara and so on.

Riess: In a way, your husband had a much greater task than these men.

Sproul: Oh, yes, they didn't want his job for anything. They thought it was too complicated.

Angell was Yale. The Harvard president was Conant. We saw a lot of them. My husband got an honorary degree from both Harvard and Yale. When we went to Harvard's 300th anniversary a good many of the people that were guests at the tercentenary were house guests of various Harvard professors. We happened to be the house guests--we weren't Mr. Conant's house guests--but we were house guests of a man named Shattuck. His name was Harry Shattuck and we stayed with him. I think he was treasurer of the board of overseers. We stayed with him, and then there were a lot of parties being given for all of the prominent people that came to the celebration, and if you were a house guest you often were included and you would meet a good many people. But we became very good friends of the president of Harvard, Mr. Conant.

Riess: Marion says you still see Mrs. Conant when she's around.

Sproul: Yes, she stayed a week with me last year here in this house. I had a letter from her at Christmas and she had an apartment in New York. She gave that up and then she moved to some kind of a convalescent center in Pennsylvania or Philadelphia or someplace. Anyway, she is very interesting. Her father had been a Nobel prize winner in chemistry. His name was Richards; her maiden name was Richards. Her father's name was Theodore Richards. She has a son, Theodore, and she had one named after her husband, James Bryant Conant.

But she came out here to visit her grandson and she stayed a week. Don McLaughlin taught at Harvard, was head of the school of mining. So he knew her and her husband, and they entertained here. I mean she had friends here that gave parties for her. It was very nice. I like her; I've always liked her.



Bob and Ida Sproul show Yale's president, James Rowland Angell, and Katherine Angell, the Giant Sequoia, Mariposa Big Trees, March 27, 1934. Angell spoke at Berkeley's Charter Day on March 23, 1934.



Bob and Ida Sproul, and Chancellor Clark Kerr and Kay Kerr greet a student and his faculty escort at the President's Reception for New Students, 1952.

- Riess: There must be things you have in common automatically by being the wife of a university president.
- Sproul: Oh, yes, all kinds of things--young people, trustees or regents or whatever you call them, governors.
- Riess: And a few good laughs about a few of them, I should think.
- Sproul: Yes.
- Riess: You must all bear the same kind of crosses whatever they are. What are the crosses that you bear as the wife of a university president?
- Sproul: Well, there are so many different groups to please--students, faculty, alumni.
- Riess: That's right. I guess you were just dancing to many different tunes all of the time.
- Sproul: Yes, but Harvard was very successful at raising funds. Angell had been Yale's president for a long time. Mr. Conant had been president of Harvard for twenty years, and I think Wilbur had been president of Stanford a long time.
- Riess: So like your husband they were really long-term presidents?
- Sproul: Yes.
- Riess: Then did their wives feel as you did, that the husband should retire and get out of this business? You felt that Bob should leave earlier than he did.
- Sproul: Well, I thought he worked too hard. I suppose they did, and there was a good deal of traveling, too, when they were away. But so much of it was stimulating and pleasant that you sort of overlooked things that rubbed you the wrong way.
- Riess: Were the Rockefeller meetings always held at different beautiful places?
- Sproul: Always at Williamsburg. They gave the money for the restoration to make it like it was in colonial times, and we stayed at the Williamsburg Inn. They always had a big dinner and one night the dinner was in honor of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.), their fiftieth wedding anniversary. We all had little tables like we have at Charter Day in Berkeley. Mrs. Rockefeller was a rather tall lady and I remember she had a brocade,

Sproul: golden ivory dress. She was a very big lady. Her husband was rather short, John D., Jr. But anyway, they had an elaborate program. We had a magician; we had music and beautiful food and speeches.

Advice and Ideas and Guidance for Ida Sproul

Riess: Did you take home some ideas from some of those parties?

Sproul: Always. It was fun to learn because I certainly hadn't grown up in a background so I would be competent in that field.

Riess: Can you remember any particular things that you brought home from parties like that?

Sproul: I don't think I learned so much about that, but I learned what beautiful things were and lovely possessions, and yet not putting the emphasis just on things.

Riess: How about having magicians and musicians for parties? Did you do that too?

Sproul: No, not often. I learned something when I first came to Berkeley. I used to belong to a card club when I grew up in Oakland, girls that worked in San Francisco the same as I did, rode on the ferry boat, and who hadn't gone to college. Anyway, we played bridge--I think we played five hundred actually. [pause]

Anyway, I didn't know anybody when I came to Berkeley. So my husband said, oh, I didn't need to worry about that. He had gone to college and he knew the faculty rather well and he would help me out. So the first party I thought I would give when I came to Berkeley, I thought I would have a supper like with my bridge club and we would play cards afterwards. The first faculty lady he gave me I called and I told her that we were going to have supper and cards.

She said [haughty tone], "We never play cards. We prefer conversation to bridge." Whew! I said to my husband, "I think I am not going to last in this environment!" [laughter]

Riess: I wonder who she was! Who was she?

Sproul: [laughter] I'm not going to tell you!*

Riess: Come on!

Sproul: No, she's gone. She became a great friend of mine too. But I learned, I'll tell you. Then I knew that if I had a party I had to get the stars on the faculty to come and charm the guests. The ball was not in my alley at that time! [laughter]

Riess: Actually, she was telling you something that was very useful.

Sproul: Oh, she did me a world of good, really a world of good. I would have been stupid to have held it against her too. You know what I mean. I had to learn.

I did belong to this bridge club with my girlfriends and we had a lot of fun. We liked cards and we always had good food. My mother was a very good cook. So when my husband said I had to have a party when I came to Berkeley, well, okay, we had a little bungalow, and I did the cooking, and my Japanese laundress served--she put on an apron and served and all that kind of thing.

Anyway, this woman was the first person I invited, because her husband was a very prominent professor, and then she sure did slap me down, mmm-hmm! [laughter]

*This was Mrs. Ira Cross, and she did become a good friend, and her husband was devoted to Mom until he died. He was a widower and lived close by on LeRoy. He was lonely and Mom took him into her circle of strays to whom she loved devoting her hospitality. There are quite a number of these over the years and some of them (not Dr. Cross--he was just lonely after his wife died) were really astray.

I am reminded how very instinctively, innately kind--by which I mean this is not something she thinks she ought to be or do, but something she is and does without thought--my mother is, particularly to the old, the lonely, the lame, the halt, the blind, and in one case, even the mad. I think the degree to which she devotes time and energy to them is truly exceptional. If personal comments are in order, I'd like to say that. When she says she likes people, she includes the dull and the ailing, not just the bright and the beautiful. [MSG]

Sproul: I took his advice, you see. I didn't know one from another. I was just beginning, and so I took his list. It was all right and I really learned an awful lot. I had to learn everything.

Riess: You often looked to Mrs. Wheeler for guidance in those early days.

Sproul: For me, Mrs. Wheeler was the one who certainly steered my course. I always asked her and I drove her wherever I could because she'd be waiting out in front of Cloyne Court to go to parties and things. I didn't have a driver then.

I didn't have a driver either when Butler was our Charter Day speaker and I didn't realize that I should have had one. I could at least have had a student. We were going to have a Charter Day luncheon in the house and they were staying with us. I drove Mrs. Butler up to the Greek Theatre and then I sat with her all during the exercises.

Then I was going to take her back home for the lunch, because Mr. Butler came back down with Bob and some of the regents and the governor, walked down after the academic procession and all that stuff. But I saw somebody who I thought might need a ride and I went off to ask them to go down with us, and by the time I got back to my car she had gone. I found there was nobody in it. The engine was running and I couldn't imagine what had become of Mrs. Butler. I had said, "I'll be right back." Oh, I was crestfallen! I wanted to cry.

Anyway, when I got back to the house she had marched down the hill and she was there! [laughter] What happened was that she was accustomed to a formal driver--she was a very formal lady, as I say--and she was terrified of the hills. But to leave the car empty, with the engine running!

Riess: Butlers and people to announce people, that can be really very useful. You finally did get some sort of arrangement like that, didn't you?

Sproul: That was another thing I had to learn when we moved onto the campus. When we lived over on Piedmont the children would run around and answer the front doorbell if it rang, and they wanted to do that on the campus. One day they opened the door and it was Mr. Moffitt and Mr. McEnerney. Well, they didn't like the informality of having one of my youngsters answer the front door. So I had to learn that was not very--

Riess: How did they tell you that? Indirectly or directly?

Sproul: I think indirectly. I had to learn. I told the children I didn't want them stampeding to the front door every time the bell rang. Then I had a downstairs maid. In any case, there were a lot of little things to smooth out.

One thing I learned from Mrs. Wheeler was never to publish my guest list for my parties. When I had important people I would give the information to the press because my husband said they had the right to earn their living as much as we had a right to earn ours, but I would never give them a complete list. I would say, "Among the guests will be the board of regents" or something of that sort.

Riess: What was your thinking there?

Sproul: The thinking was that even with the best will in the world you are going to leave somebody out, and people have memories like elephants; a lot of people have. I have for what I think is a slight or something, and you just don't do it. You keep out of that pitfall. You just say you are going to entertain Lord Beauchamp, say, at lunch today with the regents. Never give a completely identified list.

Riess: That's very good. [laughter] I'll keep that in mind!

Sproul: Really it is good because you are bound to make mistakes. You don't do it with mean intentions, but you get tired and you are fatigued and you're rushed and you're bound to make mistakes. But nobody can get mad, Mrs. Wheeler said, with that.

Clark Kerr, Chancellor and President

Riess: Was Clark Kerr your husband's choice to succeed him?

Sproul: Yes. He recommended him for chancellor.

Riess: Then he went on to be president and I wondered if he was your husband's choice for president.

Sproul: [pause] Well, I don't know.

Riess: Was there anybody else in mind? /

Sproul: No, you never had too many on your list, I'm telling you, that you thought you could put over with the board of regents and all that. You had to come up with someone who would please a whole lot of people. He's a very able man, Dr. Kerr.

- Riess: After he [RGS] was president emeritus, how did he work with Kerr?
- Sproul: He never offered a bit of advice or said a word unless consulted, I don't believe. There was a period in there when there was quite a lot of uproar and people would call and say, "If only you were there and we could hear you," or something of that sort. But once he was out, he was out. He never offered them any advice and I don't think they sought any from him. They had their stormy times.
- Riess: So it wasn't like when your husband had trouble, he might have asked President Wheeler what he would do. President Kerr never consulted your husband?
- Sproul: No, I don't think so. He had been his chancellor and was his choice, too, for the job (Dr. Kerr was). He had been chancellor six or eight years. But nobody came and sought his [RGS] advice and perhaps it was just as well. He wasn't in top physical form, my husband, at the time, and maybe it was just as well really. He had had his day and he never did criticize out loud. He never thought he could do better or any of that kind [of thing]. He just thought he had done his part as best he knew how and "the moving finger writes and having written, moves on; neither all your piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line or all your tears wash out one word of it."
- Riess: I have never known any of that other than the first line.
- Sproul: It's really something. My husband believed in that; he really did. In fact, he was not consulted and his feelings may have been hurt to some extent in that regard. But he didn't wear his heart on his sleeve and grieve.
- Furthermore, I was never consulted. Nobody asked my advice about one thing. [pause] Not one thing.
- Riess: That bothered you.
- Sproul: It bothered me no end, yes. But I couldn't go around saying it.*

*I think my mother and father were both hurt that Clark Kerr never consulted with him. The difference was that my father bottled up his hurt--he never said word one, even to my mother, though of course she knew--whereas my mother talked about it, at least early on, very nearly continuously to the family, and perhaps occasionally to close friends outside. [MSG]

Sproul: I said I thought it would be nice if they'd put in an elevator when they were doing all of that remodeling, toward the back--the side entrance in the back there. I never would have put on that beautiful front entrance a balustrade marching right down the middle of it. I would have put it to one side, and have the bushes hide it. You could have put your hand on it just as well. I cared a lot about it, having lived there twenty-eight years, but nobody said, "How would you do this or how would you do that?"

Ida Sproul's First Reaction to the House

Sproul: I was so overwhelmed with that house. It had to be me to be overwhelmed, and I don't think anybody else would come from my particular modest background into a mansion like that. It was a mansion. We took one of my cooks over there, a black lady, and showed her the house before we moved in. We took Frances Thomas, her name was, and my husband's mother and my mother over to go through every nook and corner of it because I hadn't done that before, though I had been a guest and had tea and meals and all that.

As we marched down that big front stairway, Thomas said to me, "I'm not going to be able to come with you to this beautiful house. It's more than I can manage. But I will pray that you will be able to raise your children in this beautiful environment." Now, that was a speech for an uneducated black woman! So no wonder I was kind of overwhelmed with the whole thing.

When we marched down those steps, Grandma Sproul, Grandma Wittschen, and I, I looked very glum. It was the end of the day. The shades were down. It was big, it was dark, and I had my doubts about myself managing a house of that size. As I went down the stairs my husband said, "What's the matter with you?" I said, "What's the matter with me? Nothing is the matter with me. I'm all right." "Well," he said, "you look as if somebody is asking you to live in a dump!" [laughter] Oh, he was so disgusted with me!

He was lifting his feet that high on the steps and his head was thrown back and he was the master of his fate and the captain of his soul, and there was I, trotting along in this parade! [more laughter] And when I didn't praise and shout and show my extreme pleasure at moving from where I was living to that great big house, that's what he said to me, "What's the matter with you?" Quite a dump!

Sproul: I was just overwhelmed, and I don't think it is unnatural, is what I am trying to say, that I had my own reasonable doubts, like Thomas. I had never had a big house to manage like that. But I think it's beautiful. I still think it's beautiful. I think they should restrain the different ladies more. That's all I mean. There is a Committee of Buildings and Grounds and I think they could have had a little more jurisdiction over the changes that were made.

I agreed with Thomas. My children did have a chance to live in a beautiful environment, but they did not abuse it--no marks on the mahogany, no marks on the furniture.

"Spook"

Riess: How about dogs and pets?

Sproul: We had a dog. We didn't have a cat. I don't like cats. We had a cocker spaniel and we had an Irish setter, Murphy.

Riess: Didn't you have a chihuahua from somebody named Earl C. Anthony?

Sproul: Earl Anthony left the university millions of dollars. He owned a radio station in Los Angeles, and Packard Automobile. There is a building on the campus, too, the Pelican Building, that he gave to the university, and he gave me the chihuahua.

He had a home in Palm Springs and we stayed with him often. He had a chihuahua. I don't particularly like lap dogs, but anyway, his was called Carmelita, and she came and sat in my lap every time I sat down. I, being a house guest of Mr. Anthony's, and he being devoted to Carmelita, endured the little thing, but I was not in love with her.

Mr. Anthony was very fond of my husband and, as I say, he gave millions of dollars to the university. The happiest days of his life--the reason he gave the Pelican Building--were when he was a student on the Berkeley campus. He was extremely happy. It's a very nice building [with] a beautiful piece of statuary there that I think Irene Rich's daughter did, a sculpture. Look at it some-time. It's a huge pelican.

But anyway, he took a great fancy to my husband, and we were his house guests several times, and that's when I made the acquaintance of Carmelita. [laughter] And what should I receive one day after

Sproul: a visit but a porter from the Owl train--they used to run the Lark and the Owl--with a basket with a chihuahua in it and the name of the chihuahua was Spook. He was born on Halloween.

In this basket was a complete outfit for Spook, a turquoise velvet little thing to wrap around him with a pearl collar, a Mexican raincoat so he could go out in the rain, a turtleneck sweater! [laughter] And Spook had a birthday cake, a cupcake with one candle, and all of this beautiful lot of clothes.

Well, this was a little dog running around the house and I couldn't let it outdoors because it was too tiny; it would be lost in no time. So the children had a playpen when they were babies and I had that wired so he couldn't get out between the bars and I would put that out in the garden for Spook to get the fresh air! [laughter]

Riess: Did Spook become a household fixture?

Sproul: Well, I liked him, but nobody else did. I thought he was cute. I never had such a tiny dog in my life. It had a better disposition than Carmelita. Carmelita I couldn't stand. Every time I went down there I had to pretend I liked it, and it was quite a chore because I didn't like it a bit.

Spook was in a fashion show once. The little boy that led the fashion show had Spook, wearing its turquoise velvet wrap-around with the pearls in the collar and leash, start off the fashion show. [laughter]

But Mr. Anthony was so generous to the university.

Riess: It was generous of you to give house space to Spook!

Sproul: Yes, because I really didn't like that little thing. My husband said I had to keep it a certain number of years because there was no telling whether Mr. Anthony would drop in and want to see Spook. Eventually I gave it to one of my relatives.* They enjoyed it, but it was not for me.

*Spook was given first to me, so he could be produced at a moment's notice should Mr. Anthony call. Ultimately I gave it to my cousin and his wife, who actually loved him, but that was after Mr. Anthony died. [MSG]

Sproul: I often think I should have done a whole lot more for Mr. Anthony than I ever did. We did go down and stay and all that, and I did get Spook and I did treat Spook decently. But somehow I think he was lonely.

The Norton Simons and the Edward Carters

Riess: Another gift that might have a story about it is the Japanese garden that was given by Japanese alumni. Was that for the southern campus?

Sproul: Oh, yes, that's UCLA. I think Regent--the man who owned the big department store down there, Broadway-Hale--what was his name? He was an attractive man. He married a second time, a very nice woman.

Riess: Norton Simon?

Sproul: No.

We went to a party that the Simons gave for Goodie Knight. It was in an outdoor pavilion of some kind where he grew orchids, and in each of the four corners of the room there were festoons and garlands of orchids and orchid plants all around. That was Simon.

I never saw a lady who had such beautiful diamonds as his wife. Oh, they were beautiful! Pear-shaped ones, big ones from the joint down to here, earrings, a pin. That was his first wife, I guess. That dinner--we had pheasant eggs for hors d'oeuvres, little, tiny, hard-boiled bits of tiny pheasant eggs. Oh, it was superb. Then during the evening three people had orchids named after them: Bobbie Pauley got one, Mrs. Knight got one, and I got one. Three different shades of orchid blossoms. Of course, he made a great success of that. He used to ship those orchids east.

Riess: It was a business?

Sproul: Yes. It was in a lovely spot, too, right by the ocean. He flew them back east. They last quite a long while, and they had the right kind of refrigeration and process for sending them east. But this was the way he grew loads of them, all around the edge of this big pavilion. Then he had, as I say, the decorations in the four corners of the room that hung down and ended in a big cluster in the middle of the room.

- Sproul: We used to drive down there sometimes and it's right along the ocean, called Rancho dos Pueblos. It was exotic.
- Riess: Did you know his first wife well?
- Sproul: Just casually at some big festivity that he was putting on for the regents. But I was wide-eyed with admiration for these diamonds.
- Riess: I wonder who that regent was who negotiated the gift of the Japanese garden.
- Sproul: Oh, you know, he's handsome. He's a merchant prince. Edward Carter. He was smart to make that gift because the university keeps it up and it's a showplace. That's his second wife that lives there. He had a couple of children with his first wife, but this second wife is a very interesting lady and she has quite a family--four or five, I think. Anyway, they use it in conjunction with their home, I think.
- Riess: It's not right on the campus?
- Sproul: No, no, it's off the campus.

The Blake Estate

- Riess: Is it like the Blake estate gardens are here?
- Sproul: I imagine, yes, a joint kind of tenant occupancy for certain things and a certain amount of upkeep because you couldn't afford to keep it up. That's something.
- Riess: How did the Blake estate gardens and that whole property come to the university? Do you remember?
- Sproul: The Blakes were very good friends of the university, Anson Stiles Blake. His wife's sister lived with her, and her name was Mabel Symmes. Mabel Symmes was a landscape architect, so a lot of that design, which I think is very beautiful, is hers. I love standing at the front door and looking at that pool. I love it! It makes me think of India where you have a retreat.
- Riess: And it's grown up so nicely.
- Sproul: Oh, yes, beautiful, beautiful.

- Riess: Did you see it in the early days when it was very bare?
- Sproul: I used to go to teas there.
- Riess: It must not have been very attractive in the beginning.
- Sproul: No, but the Blakes had beautiful art things and the building is lovely, I think, the woodwork in the living room, and the ceilings, and they had tapestries hanging on the wall.

Gifts, Objects, Giving

- Riess: When you would go as guests to Harvard or another university would you take a gift from this university to them, like a great Steuben bowl or something?
- Sproul: A gift? They had the alumni plates and things which were china and they were very nice. I could get Oriental things that they liked, which was nice. There was a store here on Center Street--Imogene Sanderson--and if I gave a student something from them, maybe just a little bowl on a teak stand, to this day they mention it. San Francisco's Chinatown had gorgeous things in those days. Then I had a standard gift I gave quite often. It was a salad set, a fork and spoon servers, not anything that was terribly expensive, but at least they could use it.
- Riess: You say you would give it to students, but if you were going to be the house guest of somebody for two or three days?
- Sproul: One thing I got at Gumps quite often was pretty little napkins. They had kind of a Chinese motif embroidered in them like cocktail napkins. They didn't use so much paper then as they do now. They were lovely, nice linen, and interesting, maybe lacquer red or black, monogrammed. Something that was usable, but not elaborate, because it got to be too many.
- Riess: Yes, I think of the sort of traditional state gifts, like Steuben bowls and things, and it does seem like it could be very costly.
- Sproul: Yes, and Charter Day speakers got a nice honorarium, so I didn't have to worry about them, and there were a lot of them. But they got a nice check.
- Riess: But when they came to stay with you for Charter Day, didn't they give you something?

Sproul: Not always; notes of thanks like Mrs. Goodheart! [laughter]

What did the Angells give? The Angells gave us something. We got those plates, too. We had Harvard plates and Yale plates and California plates (those we gave). But we got Harvard ones and then a tea set sometimes, or a little coffee pot and a sugar and a creamer. But nothing sterling silver or anything like that.

Then I got three gold bracelets from the King of Morocco. They didn't have any jewels in them at all. They were just little thin gold bracelets, enameled. That was fun, too, because I never had a king give me a gift before Mohammed V and that was because I put him to bed with a hot water bottle! [laughter]

Riess: Speaking of the house, isn't there a famous fern there that was a gift?

Sproul: Oh, yes, somebody gave me that in a big brass bowl and it grew to enormous proportions. Our dog used to come in--our big setter--and he would get underneath that fern and you couldn't see him! It grew right down to the carpet.

I had a very pretty bowl that Mrs. Wheeler gave me and, stupid me, I gave it away. I was awfully stupid at times. But I got so many silver bowls and I thought I shouldn't have so many, so I gave this to somebody. Oh, well, what's the difference? I learned that from Mrs. Wheeler after she was burned out. She had completely furnished a home for them to retire in up on Ridge Road, gorgeous things--Oriental rugs, silver, china, linen, you name it. After the Berkeley fire, when she went back to Cloyne Court to her apartment, she had a couple of brass candlesticks and some throw rugs that some students could go in and roll up and take out. She said, "Never care too much about possessions. They don't mean so much."

Riess: That's hard.

Sproul: It was sad really. His books and his honors all burned up. Oh, it was sad. But she said, "Don't put your faith in possessions." I gave that bowl away and I want to cry every time I think about it, but I think, "Well, I've got bowls. What's the difference?" But I shouldn't have done it.

I didn't have enough respect, I don't think, for the job. In a way it's rather surprising. I might have gotten too overwhelmed because I wasn't accustomed to it. But on the other hand, my attitude more or less was, it's not me; it's all in a day's work. It goes with the job. So I didn't really get--I loved the beauty of the house and the rugs and all that sort of thing; nice things, I liked to have them, but they didn't have to be overwhelming.

Riess: Do you think that if you had really thought about the importance of the job, you would have been incapacitated?

Sproul: I would have, and I would have overdone it, and it would have been too boring. I think it's better that I didn't get bogged down with possessions or honors.

Riess: You mentioned Vickery, Atkins & Torrey earlier. Did you have a regular decorator you worked with?

Sproul: Mrs. Wheeler did. When their house was first built, they didn't move in it. They said they couldn't move into the President's House. It was too big and they couldn't afford the furniture. Then the regents furnished one guest room. It was always called in our day the regents' guest room--beautiful old furniture, lovely Sheraton furniture with an inlay all around, heavy and big.

It has been dissipated. There is one piece left, a desk or something. They [recent tenants] didn't like the big heavy twin beds (one lady that moved in there), so they got rid of those gorgeous big beds with the inlay. I don't know where they are. They got a king-size bed or a queen-size bed. Wouldn't that make you weary? Anyway, that's that. I'll mention no names. That's why I think they ought to have a committee to restrain them.

Isabella Worn

Riess: You've mentioned women that you had periodically for flower arranging. But for real state occasions you would have Isabella Worn?

Sproul: I had her for Marion's wedding. I will show you a picture of that sometime. Oh, it was beautiful, coming down that stairway, the railings all outlined with gardenias.* It was beautiful and I didn't care what it cost. I told them that. I only had one daughter and when she got married never mind the bill.

*The garlands on the stairs were not gardenias but Della Robbia wreaths of autumn fruit and flowers (I was married in November). The gardenia garlands were on the cake table. It was a spectacularly beautiful wedding. [MSG]



Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Goodin, November 4, 1945.
The President's House was decorated for the
wedding by Isabella Worn.



Toasting the newlyweds outside the President's House.
Bob Sproul, Jr., John Sproul, the Goodins, Mrs. Sproul, Sr.,
and Robert Gordon Sproul.

Sproul: I asked Isabella Worn, "Did you ever decorate over here?" She said, "Yes, I did." I said, "You did? For whom did you decorate?" She said, "Theodore Roosevelt, under the Wheelers." Then I had a dinner for Truman and she decorated for that. But mostly we didn't have it. We had a gardener. I thought that was spending enough money on flowers. I never bought flowers.

Riess: What was Isabella Worn like? What kind of a creature was she?

Sproul: She was middle-aged, plump, and not too talkative. But she knew beautiful things and she decorated for many of the prominent, well-to-do families in San Francisco. She did the decorating in the 1939 Treasure Island Exposition in the Women's Building.

Everybody would talk about her and then I got the idea I wouldn't be entertaining a president of the United States very often in my life, I'll never have a daughter get married very often, so I didn't use my usual thrifty tactics.

Riess: Does that mean then that you would call her and she would consult with you at length?

Sproul: Yes, I would tell her what I was planning for. I'll get a picture of that, because it's a lovely picture really and the decorations were superb. As I say, when I got the bill I was terribly surprised that it wasn't as big as I thought it would be. All those gardenias! Oh, it was beautiful.

Riess: Did she also design gardens?

Sproul: She may have, but I think she did mostly flower arrangements, so-called. It got to be kind of a vogue then.

Athletics at the University

Sproul: I'm looking forward to meeting the Heymans [Chancellor and Mrs. Ira Michael Heyman]. I hear such good things about them. I'm just so pleased. I think to go into a job with people singing your praises is lovely. Just the other day I got a letter from him which I thought was nice, and I haven't answered it yet, giving me passes for the football games here in Berkeley--five passes and a signed letter by him. I have to write and thank him and say something. But I really thought that was a nice piece of public relations to start off with. You have to have kind of a feeling for people, I think.

Riess: Will you go?

Sproul: Oh, no, not to ball games, I don't think. It's too hard to sit with my arthritis, and personally I'm not nuts about football.

Riess: But basketball is different?

Sproul: Yes, I like basketball. I like professional baseball pretty well. My kids laughed because I used to stick up for Charlie Finley, but you know who bought his team? Wallie Haas. Imagine him buying the Oakland A's!

You know what? I would have given him some good advice if I was a member of his family. I wouldn't have touched that professional baseball with a ten-foot pole. I don't like the caliber of the people that perform. They're like children; they get millions of dollars a year and then they don't know what to do with it. They're spoiled and temperamental, athletes are, and I think that is all out of proportion. I wouldn't take that headache on if they dropped it in my lap! [laughter]

My husband had a very good statement, I think, about athletics. He said he wanted students who played at athletics and not athletes who played at students. Track was his great love, and it started when he went to Mission High School in San Francisco. He ran then and he did win the two-mile race when he was a student here at the California-Stanford meet. We have several grandsons who are track nuts, too, like he was. John has three runners in his family, Malcolm and Johnny and Richard.

Herbert Hoover, Former President

Riess: You often invited the Hoovers and the Ray Lyman Wilburs for the Big Game. Why the Hoovers?

Sproul: I don't know. My husband admired Mr. Hoover, and maybe on account of his prestige.

Mr. Hoover and Ray Lyman Wilbur were not exactly the kind of men that I would ask the good Lord to send in my path because I wanted it to be livelier and more fun. I'll take Wally Sterling.

Riess: When you had important guests, did you often entertain them at an athletic event?

Sproul: Sometimes, depending on their interest, yes. We mostly went to the athletic things on our own with the children when they were growing up. We used to sit on the opposite side--on the "enemy's" side--so that we could look across and see what our rooting section was doing, because the children were especially interested in the stunts that the rooting section would put on, and that was part of the show.

Anyway, one day I was sitting up there with John looking over at our rooting section, and John was just a little boy, and he gave me a poke and he said, "Look!" They had sent up hundreds of balloons for the opening of the game--oh, just hundreds! Johnny looked at me, he was a small boy, and he said, "Mama, that's a terrible waste of balloons, isn't it?" [laughter] So in our family anything that was extravagant or cost too much was "a terrible waste of balloons!"

Riess: You lit up at the mention of Wally Sterling.

Sproul: Oh, I liked him fine because he was warm and friendly, not stiff. Mr. Hoover was not a bit friendly; you know that. We stayed at the Towers once, the New York apartment where he lived, the Waldorf Towers. A friend of ours had an apartment there; I think it was John Mc Cone, who was later way up in the C.I.A. or something. Anyway, we would go up in the elevator with him in the morning and we would say, "Good morning, Mr. Hoover." He would drop his hat and look at his shoes.

Riess: Poor soul! What was his problem?

Sproul: He was shy, they say. I had a friend who used to go down to his house for dinner when his boys were young. He had some very nice sons, and they said there was no lively table conversation during dinner. He would sit down and pay great attention to his food, and the minute he was through, the maids removed his plate and cleared the table. Of course, nobody talked very much. It wasn't much fun. His boys were young and as attractive as they could be, nice kids. As I say, we could hardly get a word out of him.

Riess: I don't see how he could conduct the business of the world with that attitude.

Sproul: But he was a great man, I think, just the same, generous and great--the Hoover Plan after the war, the Belgian Relief and all that, and very generous with his wealth.

Once I went to a dinner in San Francisco and at the head of the table was our hostess and it was Mrs. Sloss. Hattie was her first name. On her right was Mr. Hoover. On her left was my husband.

Sproul: After Mr. Hoover, I came; after Bob, Aurelia Henry Reinhardt came. So it was a very lively table because Mrs. Sloss was very clever and lively and very talkative. She was the hostess. She had Hoover on her right and Bob on her left. On the side of Hoover I was, and the other side of Bob was Aurelia Henry Reinhardt.

I had said to my children before I went, "I'm going to go out to dinner with the President of the United States." (He was president at the time.) "I'll tell you what he said to me and what I said to him." When I got home, I didn't have a thing to report. He didn't even have any small talk that he could have said to me about the university or anything. Mrs. Sloss was very talkative, a spirited conversationalist. So was Aurelia Henry. And lost between those distinguished people was I, a little mouse sitting with not much to say in those days. And he didn't have anything to say! No small talk. He could have said something about the university's exciting life or any old fool thing.

Riess: I know, because you certainly knew how to do that kind of thing yourself.

Sproul: I was no match for Mrs. Sloss or Aurelia, I can tell you that.

Anyhow, I admire him. All the while he was president, he didn't raise his salary. He didn't take any. He gave it to the government. I think he was a really truly great man. But he lacked just some spontaneity. It's too bad.

INTERVIEW 7: SEPTEMBER 23, 1980

The Sunday Night Suppers

Riess: The Sproul Sunday night suppers are almost legendary. Tell me about them. What sorts of things did Bob make?

Sproul: He had recipes that he cut out of various things that intrigued him. I remember we had dinners that were Hungarian, Chinese, Japanese, and New England--recipes appropriate for the country. My husband's idea was that cooking was an art, not drudgery, and he gave out recipes at the beginning of the week for our Sunday night suppers, and they were different, Mexican, or French, or something.

Riess: Did you do the marketing?

Sproul: Yes, I did the marketing for him. The girls had to do their marketing. One Sunday he had Marion down for leek soup. She had never seen a leek in her whole life and she was married at the time. [laughter] She shopped around Berkeley and found leeks, which she had never made the acquaintance of before.

In the days when meat was scarce, we saved coupons and we used to play cards, hearts, and we gave the coupons for prizes.

Riess: Was it just among the family or was it with friends, too?

Sproul: No, not friends, just family.

He was very inventive, my husband was; he got his Fulbright in imagination. The best part of it all was that after we finished our Sunday night supper we shook dice to see who would wash the dishes. Whoever got the highest number had to wash, the next highest number wiped dry, and the third put the dishes away. After the performance was all over, we played hearts, and then we gave a lot of choice prizes of meat coupons for steaks and what have you!

Riess: I should think the family who won those meat coupons would be visited the following week for a good meal!

Sproul: They really were playing for blood because those coupons were scarce and meat was scarce!

He always took the most expensive dish, too. He didn't give them the most expensive dish. But we had fun shaking dice to see who was getting stung to wash. If you got the double six, you sure had to wash. [laughter] And no mercy! Even if you did it last week, and you were unlucky.

Riess: As a rule, he would have looked down on gambling though.

Sproul: He made lots of rules that people frowned on, that they thought were not right. But that didn't bother him too much. He gave prizes to the children, money, for A's. "You don't work for money, you work for the love of it," if you are whatever you're supposed to be. My daughter didn't get any A's at all on her first report cards in Emerson Grammar School, no A's. He thought she had more capacity than that, so he offered a dollar for the next report card for every A that she would have, and she got five A's.

Riess: That's very human, I think.

Sproul: I don't see why not. You get rewards and punishments in this world, don't you? What happened in that system--oh, some people just frowned. They thought that for an educator to do that was too commercial, too practical, too mundane, and too a whole lot of other things.

Riess: That's a good theory now; it's rewarding good behavior rather than punishing bad behavior.

Sproul: He was very fair because if they got a B nobody got anything. But if they got a C, they paid him a dollar for a poor grade. It stimulates you; it doesn't corrupt you. How much money can you earn? A little girl earning five dollars doesn't earn very much. You know what I mean. It's not enough to tempt you to become a criminal or spoil your academic ambitions. It never spoiled Marion. She made Phi Beta Kappa in her junior year. I mean, so what? But you should have heard all the criticisms. But you can't pay attention to all of that.

Riess: Why hadn't you served Marion leeks before then?

Sproul: I don't know why. They [the children] never got in the kitchen very much because we always had a high-priced cook. They never were called upon to do much besides make their beds and wash dishes. If

Sproul: we had a good cook they didn't want the children there, in the way; they didn't care if they learned to cook. And I didn't teach them; I wasn't a good enough cook for that. I cooked on Grant Street and on Elmwood Avenue when they were little, but it was nothing that would do for guests.

Riess: Did Marion visit your mother and learn from her?

Sproul: My mother was a good cook, and my mother-in-law was an excellent cook, but they did more baby-sitting than teaching, you know. They could have learned a lot from either one of them because they were both very capable. If they or if we had had a plan, if I had been older and wiser...

Riess: When you gave the cook your ideas for meals, what were your tastes?

Sproul: It depended on what kind of a cook she was. I had a Hungarian and I wouldn't dream of giving her one of my ideas. She was superb.

Grandma Wittschen

Sproul: My mother was a fine cook, but I didn't have enough sense to realize it. She was a German cook. As a little girl growing up--I told you about that, how a girl in my class at school had invited me to lunch. She lived in a rather large house and my mother was somewhat impressed by my friendship with her. She invited me to lunch. So I went. We had lamb chops and green peas.

Then my mother said, "Now you have to have Hazel Day to lunch. You can't just go out having lunches and not doing your part." I said, "Okay, that's fine." My mother said, "Let's have it on a Friday." We were Catholic and we didn't eat meat on Friday. [She said,] "I could make potato pancakes and applesauce."

I was horrified. I said, "Why, Mother, we couldn't possibly give her potato pancakes and applesauce." It would have been a great treat for Hazel Day to have nice homemade--me grating those potatoes until they hurt my knuckles--but no! I said, "We have to have lamb chops." [laughter] I didn't have any sense when I was young! I don't know if I have any now, but at least I didn't have when I was growing up.

Riess: Children are so fragile in their pride about things like that.

Sproul: I thought that German cooking was just out, and yet if I had the recipes now I would be a knockout cook because we thickened our pot roast, at least my mother did, with rolled ginger snaps, and it was superb. We always had it larded--do you know what I mean? The butcher took a needle (one of those long things) and some fat and threaded the meat with it, so it would be in and out, off and on, in the meat.

Riess: Did the butchers do that agreeably back in those days?

Sproul: Yes. They wouldn't do it for the love of money now. But fat, I think, gives flavor to things.

Riess: How about sausage? Did you make sausage?

Sproul: No, she didn't make sausage. But with the grated potatoes she made round balls and in the center she put little toasted pieces of croutons--bread cut in very small cubes and fried in butter. When we had these things left over, she sliced them down because it was raw potatoes that she used and then she'd fry them and they were gorgeous. I would have had a lot of good recipes, if I had had any sense.

Another thing she made was homemade noodles. She would roll those out and sometimes when we came home from school they were hanging over the backs of the kitchen chairs, a great big round thing hanging over a chair to dry, and then it got rolled up and then she'd cut them any width that she wanted. Really and truly, it was terrific, but I didn't know it.

I felt the same way about her dressmaking. I longed for the day when I got a dress from Magnin's, and yet my mother was a beautiful dressmaker, just beautiful.

Riess: Your mother was working during that period. How was she finding the time--

Sproul: I don't know how she did it. She only had two hands and she only had flat irons, no electric irons to wash our clothes and iron them. It was a cold stove with a flat iron on it. And five of us, four girls and one boy--I don't know how she did it, and did it so well. But she was a remarkably active lady--not intellectual; she didn't read much--but she accomplished a tremendous amount. A lot of energy and good common sense.

My father had had the grocery store in the east, and my mother said, "I'll have to go back there and collect what those people in the neighborhood owe me." (My father was very soft-hearted and he'd give



Mrs. Wittschen's daughters: Bernardine, 4, Ruth Augusta, 8, Ida Amelia, 10, and Emma Antoinette, 6.



Marie Antoinette Martin Wittschen, with her oldest child, Theodore, at the house on West Street before 1920.



Ida Wittschen, bridesmaid at the marriage of her sister Ruth, 1915.



Ida Wittschen in 1909

- Sproul: everybody credit.) She never did go back, but when she had the store here in Oakland after my father died, a new person in the neighborhood got a week's credit. If they didn't keep their word and pay their bills when they said they would, no more credit. When she quit business, nobody owed her anything. She wasn't working for nothing. That was her philosophy. She had five children to support and she had that other experience behind her when people simply took advantage of my father's good nature.
- Riess: How did she do and how did the rest of your sisters do during the Depression?
- Sproul: We all got the same treatment more or less. We all went to a technical school and got shorthand and typewriting, all but one. One of my sisters went to a legitimate high school and if she had been ambitious she would have had credentials for college. But the other bunch of us, the three of us--there were four, but one had more education because she was the baby--we all went to business school and we had just two years of shorthand and typewriting and then we got a job. She wanted us to have something that we could do if anything happened to her so we could earn our own living. That was terribly important when I was growing up, earning your own living.
- Riess: But she didn't teach you how to make the pancakes--or did she?
- Sproul: Oh, I'd grate potatoes for her and I hated that like poison because I was always grating my fingers! But I could have had those recipes as well as not. My sisters were pretty good cooks, all three of them. But I was the oldest and I worked in the store mostly. I liked people and I didn't mind the store. [goes over to wall]
- Riess: You are getting down that very nice picture of all those darling children.
- Sproul: This little one here is the one who could have gone to college.
- Riess: What is her name?
- Sproul: Bernardine--we called her Dina. Dina was the youngest and I was the oldest. Next Ruth, she was next to me, and that's Emma. Emma lived here in this house.
- Riess: Ruth is substantially taller, isn't she?
- Sproul: Yes, taller and more brunette. I was completely towheaded when I was young. Emma was blonde; Dina was kind of in the middle. But my brother comes ahead of all of us. He's six years older than I. My mother lost two children between us.

Sproul: After she sold the store, she had income from the flats she owned. She owned a pair, and she sold another pair, too soon. The man across the street from us, one of our customers, was a builder. Instead of four girls and one boy, he had five girls and one boy. He admired no end my mother's ability to run around and make money. She didn't make a fortune, but she made enough. She was thrifty, very thrifty; she could handle money. He built this apartment house for her that she had. It wasn't very big, but it was nice and it was income. He was a contractor, Charlie (C.M.) MacGregor. His situation--his family of five girls and one boy--was much like ours, four girls and one boy. But he supported his family and had moved from one big house to another. He was prosperous. He wasn't on the same level that we were, but nobody mentioned levels. My mother didn't have any levels. She had a job to do.

Riess: Did you ever consider having her come and live with you after you were married?

Sproul: No, because my sister Emma never married. She lived with my mother until my mother died. She worked with the Air Corps, General Arnold. My mother never had to go to a convalescent home or live with any of her children. She paid her own rent in this flat that she rented.

She had a housekeeper, Mrs. Schmidt. When Emma came home from work--my mother was bedridden toward the end--Mrs. Schmidt had done the marketing and dinner was on the table. Emma earned her own living, but she never had to come home and cook for my mother, never any of us had to do anything for her when she got older except care for her, not support her, but appreciate her. But never did we have to pay for her shelter or anything. She was always independent, even until she died.

Riess: Were she and Mrs. Sproul interested in--

Sproul: They were good friends, yes. Sure, they were good friends. Grandma Sproul came to live with me when she was sixty-two. She lived thirty-three years with us, twenty-six on the campus and seven here.

In a way, I think my mother was probably in the back of her mind a little bit maybe envious, because we always had a lot of help when Grandmother lived with us--an upstairs maid and a downstairs maid and a cook. She didn't go through some of the lean days. She did it on her own, raising her children, but not after we got married, and my husband had a good job. But my mother, right to the end, her circumstances hadn't changed terribly much. But she was always independent--owned her house, paid her bills.

Riess: How often did you see her?

Sproul: She lived around the corner from us at one time. She lived on Webster and we lived on Elmwood once. And when we were in the President's House she would come on all the holidays, Christmas and Thanksgiving.

My sister Emma was a pretty good cook, too, and a very nice person to live with. So my mother really was beautifully cared for. My mother was a great knitter. One Christmas she was knitting sweaters for six grandsons and her eyesight wasn't very good. When Emma came home from work, Emma would pick up where she had dropped stitches or where she didn't do well and all of the six sweaters got knitted for Christmas! But Emma was a good help and a very pleasant person to live with. Everybody liked Emma enormously. She had lots of friends. General Arnold, she was very fond of him.

She worked for him first here on the campus when they started the School of Aeronautics.* Then she moved along when he was down in Los Angeles. She was in a great big building. He came down there during the war once and he said that there was one person he wanted to see in Los Angeles and that was Miss Emma Wittschen. It was this big tall building. I think it had eleven stories and nobody had ever heard of Miss Wittschen. She was very pretty too and had a good disposition, but she was modest and nobody ever heard of her. So he sent his orderly scurrying up and down that building to find out where Miss Emma Wittschen was located and produce her--and he did. Emma and General Arnold had their picture taken for the Los Angeles Times after they found her. He posed with Emma in front of the building and there was an article in the Los Angeles Times saying how he and Miss Wittschen had started the Air Corps [laughter] because it started on this campus, the School of Aeronautics. Anyway, she felt he was just one of the finest men she ever knew.

She had three men in her life. She never got married. She didn't want to, really. She had chances to, but she didn't want to particularly. One of them was General Arnold. One of them was my brother, Theodore, whom she adored. The other one was my husband, whom she loved dearly and who was very fond of her, too.

Theodore was the head of the East Bay Municipal Water District and also president of the State Bar of California. He was bookish, intellectual, hard-working.

Riess: This is very personal, but how did you decide how many children you were going to have?

Sproul: How did we decide? Well, I was going to have five, but every time I had one I'd have a more difficult time, and the doctor would say I was lucky to have what I had--three healthy ones--and if I wanted to

*School of Military Aeronautics, established at Berkeley, 1917.

Sproul: take his advice, I'd just settle for that. So I did. I had a girl and two boys and they were healthy and I was also, so it just seemed okay. I gave up the five. I wanted three boys and two girls.

Riess: Bob didn't care how many children you created?

Sproul: No, he didn't care at all. He said I could have as many as I wanted and he'd guarantee to support them. So that was that. Didn't make any difference, said he. I was the one. And he would guarantee he would support them.

Well, you see, I never had a job outside of my house that I really particularly cared about. My job with A. Schilling & Co. really wasn't a bit interesting--you know, spices and teas and coffees. Very nice people they were--they had a roof garden and we had lockers where we could keep our own teacup and spoon and sugar, but they furnished the coffee and the tea. We ate our lunch up there. It was pleasant, and the Schillings, I liked them very much.

Riess: Was there a future in that job?

Sproul: No, nothing for me really. I was in an office with about forty other girls on a high stool, at a desk. It wasn't terribly interesting, or good pay, as far as that went.

Then when I took the Civil Service examination I passed third, and it was in that job that I met my husband. The first exam I took, the most salary I could ever get was \$90 a month, and then I took a harder one, and I didn't do well in that, never worked in that group.

[The following passage is under seal until 1999.]

Bob Sproul's Secretaries: Hansena Frederickson and Agnes Robb

Riess: Would you comment on your husband's secretaries, Agnes Robb and Hansena Frederickson?

Sproul: I'll begin with Hansena. When we went down to establish UCLA, he had an office in the Administration Building, I think they called it, and Hansena was his first secretary there. She was very young.

This was a long time ago; it's fifty years since that place has been established. He was loath to engage her really because she was small and lively and attractive and he thought he'd no sooner have her broken in to his ways and what he wanted her to do than she'd get married. But she never got married; she's not married to this day.

She's a friend. When she comes up here, she comes to see me, and down there she was a very good friend.

Her father was a judge, Judge Frederickson. Her mother was dead, but she had a married brother and she had family. You didn't have to worry about her private life or anything because there was her father, a judge, and she lived with him until he died, or he lived with her, whichever way it was. But as I say, in the beginning Mr. Sproul was very loath to engage her.

I guess Hansena had graduated from UCLA.

Miss Robb graduated from Berkeley in the class of what? In 1918, I think. That was closer to Allan Sproul's class. My husband was '13. So when she came to work for him she had graduated, and I think she even had had a year trying to find out what she really wanted to do, what kind of a life she wanted to have, kind of thinking it over. Then she went to work for him when he was a cashier, I guess, in the comptroller's office, right at the very beginning of his career.

Riess: Didn't he have any of the same feelings that she might at some point marry and desert him?

Sproul: He wouldn't have put anything in the way of that. But she was his secretary for fifty years--imagine!

Riess: Were there any ups and downs in that relationship?

Sproul: As far as I was concerned, I didn't have anything to do with the office. I had worked eight years in an office and I didn't want to ever see one again or a typewriter. So I didn't care. I wasn't

- Sproul: really interested in the office. I was interested in his career, but I was much more interested in a home and a family. I loved housekeeping and I loved interior decorating.
- Riess: You would have heard if either of these secretaries had threatened leaving because life had gotten too tough during one issue or another, wouldn't you?
- Sproul: They might have; they might have. But I don't think that was going to be world-shaking if they had. I think he would have certainly missed Miss Robb terribly because she made him her life work, her career.
- Riess: These secretaries were the key to the whole thing in some way, or weren't they that powerful?
- Sproul: I think in a way they were very helpful and had a great deal of power, but it didn't conflict with me because I didn't want any part of it anyhow.
- Riess: I was just thinking of how much power they accumulated as they went along.
- Sproul: Oh, plenty. You can't work for anybody with a complicated career if you don't get power or authority in one direction or another. It all depends on the person a good deal, that they don't let it go to their head or overdo it. Now, Hansena, for instance, I think has written a book about all of the men she has worked for--Dr. Dykstra and Dr. Sproul--everybody who has been in authority down there in Los Angeles at UCLA.* She feels as if she was the custodian of some of the big events that have happened at the university during her career, that she was vastly important, that she influenced them this way or that way or every other way. I think the same goes for Miss Robb.
- Riess: Do you think that feeling is correct or do you think that that's an inflated sense?
- Sproul: No, I think it's quite correct. I think you get dependent on people that you admire and like and [who] are extremely helpful, and Miss Robb certainly more than Hansena because she lived closer. Hansena was in Los Angeles, and while we lived down there in the house and were there part of every month for a long time, Miss Robb was here constantly.

In her [Agnes Robb] case she lived with an aunt and an uncle and a cousin, Gertie--the Nellises--and they were relatives of her mother. Miss Robb's mother died when she was a baby, so she always lived with

*Hansena Frederickson, UCLA Administration, 1936-1966, UCLA Oral History Office, 1969.

Sproul: Mr. Nellis and his wife, and she paid her way. She had a good job, a very lucrative one with a big salary and all that kind of thing, but she didn't have the family life that Hansena had. She was more dependent on her job for the interest in her own life. I think without her job--she doesn't think so because she thinks she made her job, and in a great many ways I'm sure she did. But it's a different kind of a life, surely--it seems so to me--not to have children and being in an office, no matter how interesting the man might be or how successful or how far he might go in an interesting way. I shouldn't put myself in it. I don't want to. But her life outside of the office wasn't terribly exciting, I don't think.

She was a very well-brought-up young lady by her aunt and uncle, and she had charm and good looks and good manners and graduated from the university. Of course, I have such an exaggerated opinion of anybody who graduates from a university that it is rather ridiculous! I think that it's the beginning and end of all creation almost! [laughter]

Riess: You think she could have gone much further with all of these capabilities?

Sproul: If she wasn't so satisfied with her job. I couldn't be that satisfied with an office job.

Riess: I guess it must have been the degree of power that she had that held her.

Sproul: Oh, she did have quite a bit, quite a bit of influence, because she was intelligent and she was wise in a lot of ways. Of course, she was fanatically devoted to it. I shouldn't say that! [laughter] But I think she was very devoted to it. I worked for people that I liked, but I never could be mad about it. I wanted something more of my own.

Qualified or not, I knew exactly what I wanted, and the good Lord sent me exactly what I asked for if you believe in prayer. I told him I didn't need a whole lot of boy friends, that wasn't necessary, but I wouldn't mind having one interesting one. That's all I was asking for, and I wanted a home and children. I really wanted five children. I only had three. But I knew exactly what I wanted.

I wasn't a very good secretary, so perhaps I wouldn't have lasted very long. I was fired once and that was because I couldn't take dictation. My employer got a little tired of me. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't conquer the insurance business. I hated it--"whereas" and "whereas" and "whereas"--I thought I would lose my mind! I wasn't a very good stenographer, and if I made a mistake I was frantically rubbing it out and making holes in the paper. Oh, it was terrible!

Sproul: My life had been really very regimented by my mother and my sisters and my lack of education and wealth. Most girls would have thought it was dull and restrictive, and I was supposed to think that, too, and maybe I did. I don't know. At least, anyway, the first chance I got to get absolutely free of it, I didn't reject it!

My mother had so many rules and regulations for me. I could say, "Good morning, Mr. Scovel. Thank you, Mr. Scovel." But I could not carry on any conversation with Mr. Scovel because he was a married man and had children. I said, "Good night, Mr. Scovel," and slammed down my desk and went home. I didn't have much excitement. My sisters would want to know what I did all day long, who said what to me, and all that kind of thing. But it wasn't what most young people would have thought was glamorous or exciting.

But Miss Robb had kind of a stuffy background, so that the whole university and all of the respect and admiration she got from people was her life.

When she went to work, she bought her clothes at Magnin's. She was well-to-do and she always wore a lot of jewelry, long earrings and bracelets. My mother wouldn't let me do that. Then she had a Cadillac automobile, a great big one. She's got it still. She was the only one in an office institution, business administration, that had a Cadillac. She drove a better Cadillac than her boss! [laughter] He didn't have a Cadillac. It's kind of a craving for status--is that the word, is that correct?--a success. She was a tremendous success as a secretary and helper. She had brains and she had the education and she had the grace and the charm to do a beautiful job. That's all part of her growing up.

But as far as--well, I ran my part and I never let anybody, Hansena or Miss Robb, entirely take over my job. When I had people to dinner, it was my ideas, my list. As I've said, they could make suggestions, and I did welcome them because I didn't know everybody, and they did make suggestions. But I never went according to what they gave me. I would weigh it in my own mind. That was my department.

Riess: You had your own social secretaries, didn't you, in both places?

Sproul: Not like they have nowadays. I had Lini Allen; she was the first one, and she worked for me for more than forty years, half a day for me, and she worked the other half over at the university. My husband thought that was enough help for me.

I never had any help when I took the job. Regent Neylan in a regents' meeting said it was high time, he thought, that they give me a secretary, that I was sending out all of those invitations in

- Sproul: my own handwriting and that was much too much with everything else, and if the regents didn't mind, the best thing they could do was to give me a secretary. That was when Lini moved in. She didn't live with us, but she came every morning until noon.
- Riess: But they weren't people who had kind of an inside line on things the way Agnes Robb had. Agnes Robb could have been very controlling if you had let her.
- Sproul: Oh, really, yes. As it was, she hovered over my husband. (I must be careful of my words.) But she made dental appointments, doctor's appointments, and she saw that he didn't take too many social engagements so that he wasn't getting overtired--you know what I mean. A whole lot of that that ordinarily I would bristle about, stand up on my hind paws and bristle! [laughter] But I was determined to run my show, as I told you, no matter who lived with me or what the situation was.
- Riess: A lot of those things she was doing were fairly tedious things.
- Sproul: Oh, I couldn't keep those schedules! An appointments secretary is terribly important to a busy man. I couldn't keep that schedule. He'd go crazy and the office would go crazy dealing with me because I had all of my own little odds and ends to take care of--the children's school clothes and all that kind of thing, and the dentist, and the oculist, and all the rest of them. I would try to take care of that much for him, too, but the appointments had to be made through the office when he had to go to the dentist; or when he had tonsillitis or something, he went to the hospital.

[transcript resumes]

Some Sensible Ideas for Charter Day and Commencement

Riess: Did you have much contact with Garff Wilson?*

Sproul: Yes. After every big public event, not private, four people got together, first my husband, then, in their proper order, it was Garff Wilson, then Agnes Robb, and then at the tail end I was the fourth. They listened to me, too. I had something to say generally because [laughter] you know me! I didn't sit there without saying my piece.

What to do to make the whole thing better next year or what went wrong this year. It was a real review of the occasion--anything that went wrong. Garff had high standards. Miss Robb did, too. My husband certainly did. Then when I thought I had the germ of a bright idea, I came in. And I think there were a couple of things I did that were sensible.

For instance, I moved the Charter Day banquet--when I say "I" that sounds very boastful--to San Francisco. That was my idea in this little discussion we had after these things. I said, "We're not expanding enough. We don't give the university enough prestige. We don't do anything in San Francisco except lectures and courses, nothing social. We should charge some money. We should wear white tie and tails, and we should invite the well-to-do and the prominent people of the city to something very worthwhile." Because they weren't in the habit of coming to Oakland. San Francisco was the city, and coming to Oakland--oh, they poked a lot of fun at Oakland.

Riess: Did you invite people besides regents and alumni to the Charter Day banquets then?

Sproul: We always tried to get a speaker that would put their eye out if we could. I thought we should have a glamour party and be tops and something really exciting. So we had tables and we had wine, back in those days, and we had hosts for the table, not just somebody to make out a list of names for me, but somebody who had a little sparkle, a little get up and go.

*See interview with Garff Wilson, The Invisible Man, or, Public Ceremonies' Chairman at Berkeley for Thirty-five Years, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1981.

Riess: Which hotel did you use?

Sproul: The Garden Room of the Palace.

Another one of my ideas was not to abandon the senior luncheon in Faculty Glade, because we didn't do anything for the parents or the students, I thought. If we had a picnic and it was informal and it didn't cost much, and we had the president of the senior class and all that, they couldn't say that the university was a machine, that nobody cared, that they didn't know who you were, just numbers. I suggested it. (I "suggested"--if I ever could be less opinionated than I am now!) [laughter]

Riess: You let it be known!

Sproul: I let it be known!

I believe there is no use in taking every word out and then putting it back because you are afraid you're going to do something. No, I have a feeling that if you care you have to say so. That's what I feel about even my grown children and my grandchildren. Nobody cares more than I do, and if I come out with something, I think I have a right to say it, whether it's soft or not. Sometimes it is pretty cruel and harsh, I'll admit. You have to care and, of course, I care terribly about some things--just fiercely almost. I don't believe in just pussyfooting around. [laughter]

Riess: The senior luncheon was instituted as a regular occurrence.

Sproul: Yes, but, of course, that's all been changed now, because we used to have graduation at the Greek and now it's all cut up in different ways and probably necessarily so. I'm not critical. Times do change.

Riess: In the notes you kept after various events, I was amused that each year you would resolve to get it absolutely perfect the next year and it was down to a matter of how many little bits of sandwiches were left. It was as if you were just bound and determined to figure the whole thing out, but then two or three sandwiches would elude you each year!

Sproul: I left off one thing there, somebody I should have asked as a donor. I didn't do it, but wished I had, a very well-to-do somebody, and I think I put down, "Next time invite So-and-So and So-and-So." [laughter] But I don't know if I ever got around to them. I think they died before I got around to them. Anyhow, I was always trying to do it better. I just didn't want to be a rimless zero in the job.

Walter Lippmann, and the Alexander Meiklejohns

Riess: One Charter Day you had as guests Walter Lippmann and his wife. Do you remember that, in 1933? He was the young editor of the New Republic at the time. And you had the Meiklejohns and the Loewenbergs. That sounded like such a dose of intellectual folk. Can you remember the Lippmanns, your impressions?

Sproul: I don't remember her. I remember him vaguely because he was very reserved. He was a rather quiet person. Of course, those people were just the people who were right for them--the Loewenbergs and Meiklejohns.

Mrs. Meiklejohn is still alive, but she can't talk. She has throat cancer. I went to see her the other day and she couldn't talk. It was very embarrassing and she had something hanging around her neck and I thought, "I wonder what that interesting piece of jewelry is that she is wearing?" I don't see very well so I came up a little closer. Anyway, she wanted to ask a question of her nurse that was there and she picks this thing up. It's the whistle! [laughter] She's a great person. I think she is a wonderful woman and she has surmounted her own difficulties in a way that is just astonishing.

Awards to Robert Gordon Sproul

Riess: Your husband received so many honors. What was his favorite?

Sproul: I think the first one he got, from Remsen Bird, at Occidental College. That was a great thrill for his mother. His mother thought that was the best thing in all the world that could happen to her oldest son. Oh my, an academic award! Scots are very keen on academic things. Then, of course, the others more or less came after he had worked as president, some of the other more distinguished ones.

Occidental was one of those southern colleges with a denomination. USC was Methodist.

Riess: The Claremont Colleges--

Sproul: That's Congregational, I think. There were a number of them, if I get them straight. The students at Cal Tech had a sign up there once on the billboard. Robert M. Millikan was the president. He was a Nobel prize winner. Anyway, they had on this big sign--as I say, they had a very religious background, a lot of those colleges-- "Jesus saves, but Milliken gets the credit!" [laughter]

Riess: Were there any honors that he very much wished to get that he didn't get?

Sproul: Yes, one that I know of, really for sentimental reasons, but I wouldn't say that.* I don't wish to say that he didn't have feet of clay at times. You can take him off of his pedestal once in a while. But on some things I'm too outspoken. He never told me this, but I have sense enough to know.

Riess: I wonder what that could have been. Well, you'll decide whether you want to sandwich that in later.

Now we must stop for today. Thank you, Mrs. Sproul.

Transcriber: Michelle Stafford
Final Typist: Marilyn White

*This was an honorary degree from the University of Glasgow. He spoke at the 500th (?) anniversary, but didn't get an honorary degree. [MSG]

APPENDICES

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UNIVERSITY HOUSE: ITS HISTORY AND ITS RESIDENTS

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Using a silver shovel, Regent Phoebe Apperson Hearst broke ground for University House in 1900. Eighteen months later, the "fine stone President's House" (designed by Albert Pissis of San Francisco) was turned suddenly from its course to be "finished off into seminar rooms as a measure of relief" from campus overcrowding (enrollment: 2,669 students). President Benjamin Ide Wheeler, his wife, and son finally moved in just before Theodore Roosevelt arrived for Charter Day 1911 and occupied the southeast bedroom overnight.

Then for 47 years, University presidents and their families made the house their home. From 1919 to 1923, political scientist David Prescott Barrows lived there with his wife and four children, and held the first wedding in the House. Next (1923-30) were the William Wallace Campbells, he a scholar more accustomed to the solitude of Lick Observatory than the uproar of 10,000 flapper-era students. Robert Gordon Sproul, Berkeley graduate of commanding presence and national stature, his wife, Ida, and family resided there for 28 years.



*President Benjamin Ide Wheeler,
1911-19*



*President David Prescott Barrows,
1919-23*



*President William Wallace Campbell,
1923-30*

The pencil portraits at right show the occupants of University House and the dates of the time they lived there over the years.



In the pencil sketch reproduced above, University House is shown as it looked when first built, before landscaping had begun. Drawn from just about the same angle, the House is shown on the front cover with fully developed landscaping as it looked in 1977. These sketches, like the folder itself, are the work of John Zane, for many years publications manager for the campus and now retired.

This folder is presented to the University as the gift of Ella Barrows Hagar, Class of 1919.

During that half century the University had come to include six campuses with three more soon to be added. President Clark Kerr acknowledged the change by relinquishing University House to the Berkeley campus for its chancellors. Because other early chancellors had homes away from the campus, they used the house only for official events.

Then in 1965 Chancellor Roger W. Heyns, his wife, Esther, and son came from Ann Arbor and moved into University House for six years. Albert H. Bowker followed in 1971—to be promptly serenaded by the Cal Band—with his wife, Rosedith, and his family.

Across the years since 1911, University House guests have included Presidents Truman and Kennedy, the Kings of Morocco, Iran, and Greece, the Prime Ministers of India, Canada, Germany, and Pakistan, and many other distinguished men and women. Sixty or more University events are held each year as the house nears its 80th anniversary, giving renewed life to the role that Phoebe Apperson Hearst foresaw for it.



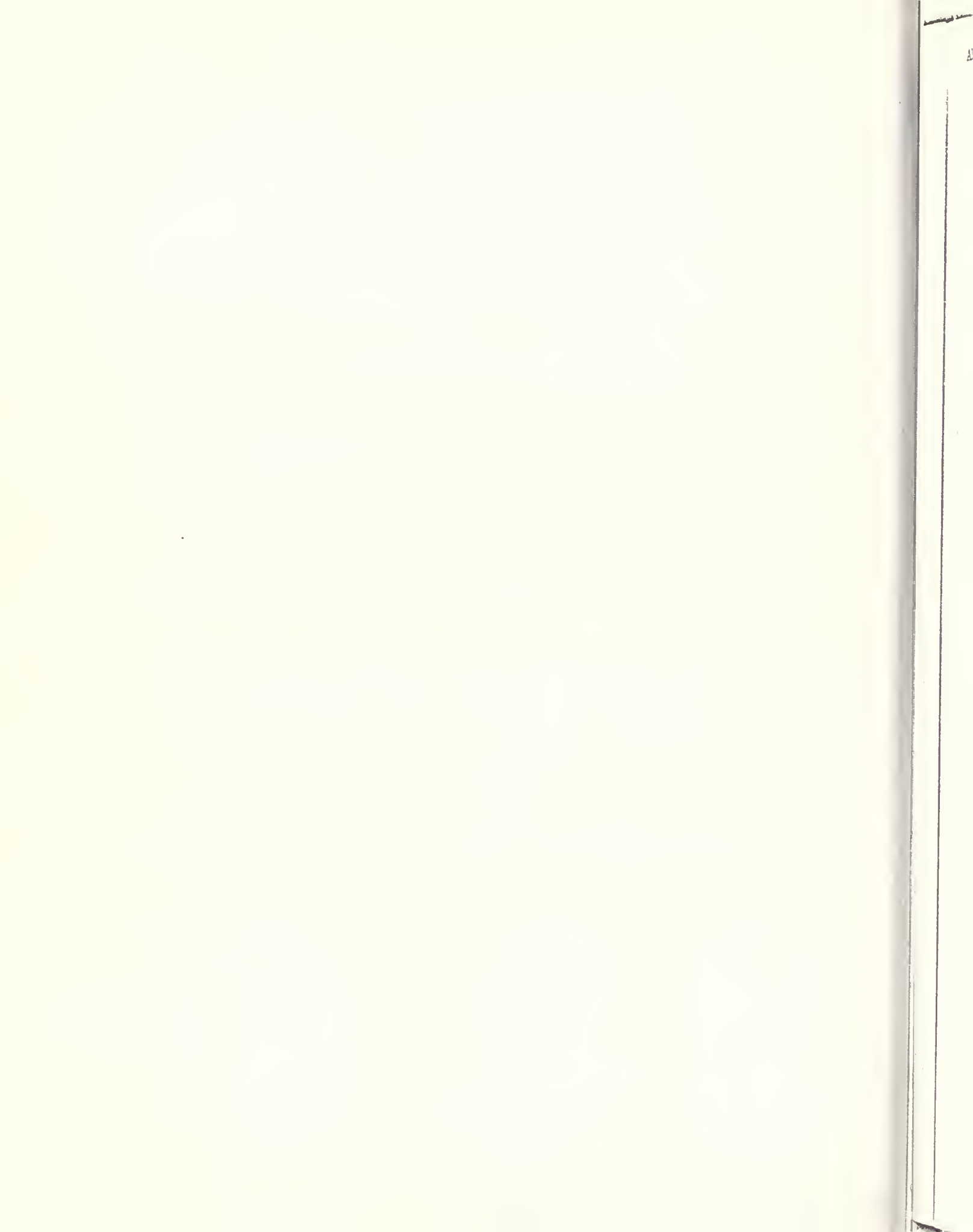
*President Robert Gordon Sproul,
1930-58*



*Chancellor Roger W. Heyns,
1965-71*



*Chancellor Albert H. Bowker,
1971-*



University of California

General Library/Berkeley

Regional Cultural History Project

Ida Wittschen Sproul

DUTY, DEVOTION, AND DELIGHT IN THE
PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

An Interview Conducted by
Edna Tartaul Daniel

Berkeley
1961

All uses of this manuscript are covered by an agreement between the Regents of the University of California and Ida Wittschen Sproul, dated 17 August 1961. The manuscript is thereby made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to the General Library of the University of California at Berkeley. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the University Librarian of the University of California at Berkeley.



A Portrait of Mrs. Sproul by Gleb Ilyin

INTRODUCTION

Ida Wittschen Sproul brought special talents to the President's House when her husband, Robert Gordon Sproul, became president of the University of California. They had been developed in the early devotion, duty, and diligence of her childhood family life and brought to fullest maturity in a constantly expanding University life requiring ever greater devotion, duty, and diligence. Realizing that her experiences might be useful to women similarly transplanted from private to invasively public planes of existence, and that her home life in the President's House on the campus was particularly significant in University history, Mrs. Sproul agreed in January of 1960 to tape-record this series of autobiographical interviews.

The scene of the interviews was the sizable, oblong living room of the Sproul home at 31 Tamalpais Road in Berkeley. Superabundant evidence of trees, shrubs, and plants presented itself at every window of the room; branches of immense California laurel, reaching up from a sharply declining rear slope could be seen through the back windows; and immediately outside the front windows, a bricked patio surrounded by small blossoming plants and strategically placed shrubs gave an air of seclusion. The entire front garden was slightly lower than the street and entered through a wooden gate in a fence along the side walk.

In this setting, Mrs. Sproul sat and talked modestly yet enthusiastically about her experiences from childhood to retirement. Sounds of other household activity occasionally came down

the stairs and through the front hall: the solid timbre of President Sproul's voice in conversation, or the firm though lighter tones of Mother Sproul's responses when she was on the telephone.

Mrs. Sproul, a small, moderately-proportioned person, well dressed, with softly coiffed gray hair surrounding a face lively with expression and free of the artificialities of make-up, developed her interviews with certainty, vigour, and dispatch. Her ideas were readily defined and easily articulated. Her manner was forthright, pleasant, and full of the endless goodwill she has always communicated to her environment.

The Regional Cultural History Project of the University of California at Berkeley tape-records and preserves in type-script the biographies of distinguished individuals in Northern California who have contributed significantly to the life of their time. The transcript of Mrs. Sproul's interviews, edited by the interviewer, read to Mrs. Sproul and corrected according to her instructions, is part of this collection.

The Regional Cultural History Project, whose head is Willa Baum, is administered by the General Library through Helen Worden, assistant librarian.

Edna Tartaul Daniel
Interviewer

Regional Cultural History Project
University of California General Library
Berkeley

3 November 1961

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FAMILY AND EARLY YEARS

The Wittschen Family

Sproul: We came to California from New York City when I was about eight years old. I was born in New York City, oldest of four girls. My mother had these four girls in five years, so we were fifteen months apart. I had a brother, too. He was six years older than I.

Daniel: Do you remember much of New York City?

Sproul: I don't recall very much. I don't know why I don't remember more. Everything else that's happened since seems to be very clear.

My father was not like my mother. My mother had much energy and a great deal of ability, and drove herself very hard, always. Her people were not well-to-do, and even as a girl she had always worked hard. She always had business ability.

Daniel: Was she from New York?

Sproul: Yes, she was born in New York City. And my father was born in Germany. He came to New York when he was about seventeen. I don't know why to this day.

His people had a farm in the northern part of Germany. It has a funny name: Kreiss Gestemunde. He was very quiet, and very kind. When he was seventeen, he had the imagination and the daring to come to New York. I don't know what he did at first in New York.

My mother and my father had a grocery store in New York. I remember that my mother was really the backbone of that business, as well as in every other thing that they did in married life. My father was very trusting, and gave people a lot of credit. There were a lot of poor people in that neighborhood on Jane Street near Washington.

My mother had a sister and a brother in California. They kept writing glowing accounts about California. My father, who was not a very practical man, thought that he would make money a lot faster in California. He had some sort of an idea that

Sproul: gold was running down the streets, I think.

Daniel: A lot of other people thought so, too.

Sproul: And so he decided to pack up and take his five children to California. My mother was heartbroken. All her family, including five sisters, lived in New York. She couldn't take any of her furnishings, nor any of the things she'd gotten as wedding presents. Shipping costs were too expensive. We came across by train.

Daniel: What year was this?

Sproul: I was born in 1891 and I was eight years old.

Daniel: Do you remember the train?

Sproul: Not much. But I remember the first house we had in California. It was in Oakland on San Pablo Avenue. It had been empty a long time and was very run-down. We could get it for a very, very low rent. My mother painted the house on the inside from top to bottom so that it would be clean. That gives you some idea of the energy she had. We lived in Oakland until I was married.

My father lived only a year after we got here; he wasn't as strong as my mother, physically.

Daniel: Maybe he was ill before you came, and perhaps you wouldn't have known this.

Sproul: Maybe not. Maybe my mother didn't know. But anyway, he was only forty when he died.

Daniel: Well, it was a good thing that he brought you here. You were better off.

Sproul: Oh, a hundred and fifty percent better off! The move made all the difference in the world. My mother never regretted it after the first shock. She lived long enough to feel that it was the best thing that ever happened to her. And it was! Even though it was difficult in the beginning, it turned out to be far and away the most exciting and rewarding thing that ever happened in her life.

Daniel: When your father died, what was the age of the oldest child?

Sproul: My brother was going to high school; he was about fourteen. He had to stop school and get a job, so he transferred to night school and did his high school work there. He did his college

proul: work at White's Preparatory School. During this time he went to school in the daytime and worked at night. From midnight on, he worked at what was then called the Oakland Traction Company. Later on it was called the Key System. It was a job which allowed him time for study. He used to take the money from late cars coming in. Although the work carried responsibility, it allowed a lot of free time for reading. Working all the time, he went to Hastings School of Law, graduated, and became a very successful lawyer in Oakland. In the course of time, he became president of the California Bar Association, and when he died, he was chief lawyer for the East Bay Municipal Utility District. He had specialized in water rights. He was a remarkable person, very dependable, and always knew where he was going. He was also particularly kind and generous. Besides, he was a tower of strength to my mother.

She was Catholic, but my brother was Presbyterian. He had gone to the Presbyterian church in New York, and when he came out here he went down to Oakland--he was then thirteen--and affiliated with the Presbyterian church there. My mother took all of us girls to the Catholic church.

aniel: Was your father Protestant?

proul: Yes. In New York we had been much closer to a Presbyterian church than we were in Oakland; in any case, my mother didn't object. He was six years older than I. And so he just got started. But the thing I think is surprising about him is that nobody questioned what he wanted to do. He took an active part in his church; I mean, he wasn't a nonentity. He was president of Christian Endeavor, and later on, when he was older, of the Men's League. It is interesting that he married a very devout Catholic. All his children are Catholic. But it made no difference to his Presbyterianism.

aniel: Perhaps this difference in the household gave him a wide point of view.

proul: I think it did. Because he never had any prejudices. He'd take us to church, if it was necessary, and leave us and take my mother. And my mother entertained his friends in the Christian Endeavor society when he was young; they came to our house for

Sproul: parties.

Widow Wittschen's Organization of Family Activities

Sproul: I grew up in a very orderly house, but to my way of thinking, it was a little too orderly. We were terribly poor after my father died. There was no WPA, and no social security. My mother did dressmaking. Every day, before going to school, we washed the dishes, made the beds, and I mopped the kitchen floor. I don't think anybody else in my class did that before going to school. But I didn't feel abused. My mother couldn't sew in a disorderly house.

My father had been sick for a year. There were doctor's bills and no reserve money to pay them. The insurance money--and it wasn't very much--was used to pay the doctor bill and the rest was put down on two flats so that we would have a place to live, and a little income from rent. They were in a much nicer neighborhood, on Thirty-second Street between Grove and West. It isn't so nice, now. It has deteriorated. Then my mother decided that sewing was too slow. She sewed all day, and the prices she got were very little. She'd sew far into the night to get people's trousseaus done, besides taking care of the five of us. The only person who worked then was my brother. The rest of us were too young.

Daniel: He probably paid some board?

Sproul: I guess he gave my mother all he made because he wasn't of age. It wasn't much. She couldn't make enough money at dressmaking, so she needed it.

The only other business she knew was the grocery business. She had worked with my father in the store we had in New York. So she opened a store right on the corner of Thirty-second and West.

Daniel: That was a good location?

Sproul: Very good. It was near the schools for us, too. We went to the Durant Grammar School, and my brother went to night school. My mother had a chance to sell that first pair of flats she bought at a profit.

aniel: She really was a business woman, wasn't she?

proul: Yes, she was.

Then she bought a lot that was just about in the middle of the block on West Street. There she built a pair of flats which had more space. We had more bedrooms. It also had the advantage of being just a stone's throw from the store.

aniel: Did any of you work in the store?

proul: We all worked in it in turn. But she managed it all by herself.

She had a partition in the back making a room where she sewed between customers. She would have a dressmaker come in for a week to help her. She bought bolts of material and made everything we wore. In those days children didn't wear jeans. We had white underdrawers, and petticoats, and pretty dresses. She had very good taste--really she was an artist!

Twice a year, in the spring and in the fall, she would go down to Taft and Pennoyer, a leading dry goods store, and buy bolts of material. We had cotton dresses in the spring, and woolen dresses in the fall and winter. Everything was made at home, and made beautifully. My mother even made my wedding dress. She was a good judge of material and knew how to buy. She would buy remnants at Taft and Pennoyer when they had their big sales. There was great excitement in our house when she came home with those bolts of materials. We'd all get excited. "This would be for Ruth, and this would be for Emma, and this would be for me." We'd all want to trade and get what the other had. Mother was very firm.

aniel: Did she make the patterns for cutting?

proul: There were Butterick patterns, it seems to me. Miss Stickler, the dressmaker, would help her.

aniel: What was your mother's derivation?

proul: Her people were German. Her father, actually, was born in New York. My mother was born in New York. But their background was German. Her father had a bakery. That was the first business experience she had.

aniel: This was very early?

proul: Yes, because her mother died. She was the oldest of about seven or eight children. When her mother died, she ran her father's

Sproul: bakery. At a very early age she went into dressmaking and had her own establishment. She gave that up when she married my father. She was twenty-eight years old when she married.

Across the street from us when we lived on West Street lived a builder, a man named Mr. McGregor, who had built an awful lot of things in Albany. In fact, there's a school named after him in Albany. My mother went somewhat into real estate along with the store. She prospered very well in real estate. My brother, who was always her advisor, had her give up the store. He said it was nonsense for her to work so hard. He seemed to be the one she leaned on.

Mr. McGregor was just getting started in building. He had a large family, I think five girls and a boy. The families were friends and we children all played together. Mr. McGregor admired my mother's ability, and he thought she was doing a good job with the particular problem of raising a family all alone. So he built several houses for her which were financial successes when she came to sell them. She built an apartment house on LeConte, and sold that; then she sold the place on West Street where we lived, and we went to live in a still nicer neighborhood. Then she sold that and went to live on Webster Street just off College, where she lived until she died.

Daniel: She didn't ever fall prey to securities?

Sproul: No, she didn't understand them and she had nobody to advise her about them. Mr. McGregor advised her very well in real estate. He was a great help to her. She never aspired to make a lot of money. She always wanted to sell something at a profit, but she only wanted to be independent. Up to the day she died, she was independent financially. She had a housekeeper, and she paid all her own bills. We didn't take care of her. There was no problem about what she would do in her old age. She knew what she was going to do. She had her own apartment and she had her own housekeeper. When she died she had all her bills paid and a little bit to give each one of us.

Daniel: And her real estate business...

Sproul: ...was all cleared off. She was the kind of a person that even when she had the store, and we'd be going to dances--and those were the days you were supposed to have a chaperone--she would

proul: work all day, and sit up all night. That didn't bother her any. Most women wouldn't do that. They would make excuses for not doing it, I think. They would say, "I work all day; I'm not going to sit up all night and chaperone my daughters."

aniel: She was a doer.

I think it would be fun to hear just a little about each one of your sisters.

proul: I was the oldest. We were all very close; we went in pairs. The sister next to me was only a year and a half younger; the next two were very close. Even when we worked together at home, we always worked in pairs. When we did the dishes, for instance, two of us would do them together and then the next two would. When we did the dishes we always recited poetry. We had a book of poems. We'd start off on them. If you get us started, even now, we can go through most of them at breakneck speed.

aniel: What poems were they?

proul: They were the selection that you had in the grammar schools, beginning with the first grade. They started out with "Great, Wide, Beautiful, Wonderful World," and then they'd go up to "The Chambered Nautilus," or something like that. One person started a poem and the other would have to finish it, you see. We made a game of it. And then the next two younger ones, just from listening to us, would absorb quite a bit.

We really did a great deal of work. When we came home from school, we were expected to change our clothes and go over to the store. We went there on Saturdays, too.

The first three of us went to Oakland Technical High School and took a business course because my mother felt that if her health didn't hold out we should be prepared to earn our own living.

aniel: How young were you when you first went to work?

proul: I was seventeen when I first went to work in San Francisco.

aniel: When did you help in the store?

proul: Oh, I helped when I was very young, all through my teens.

aniel: What were the first things you did?

proul: Oh, we had to arrange things, unpack cases of this, that, and the

proul: other. We put things away, in the beginning. And my mother was a great one for form. We could never put a can on a shelf upside down; they were put up in an orderly fashion and parallel, so that when you came into the place, everything was straight. Nothing standing off center or crooked was ever allowed; everything was right on the dotted line.

aniel: This made an attractive store.

proul: Oh, we had a very good-looking one. It was really outstanding, not just a hole-in-the-wall. Some of the leading salesmen for some of the top firms sold us things which they would sell to no other small store.

aniel: You had quality merchandise?

proul: Yes. We really did. The store was small, but good. My mother always knew good things. She never dealt with anything else.

aniel: Did you have a delivery service? Neighborhood grocery stores usually did.

proul: My brother used to deliver big orders. Generally we delivered only the large ones. Most people took their orders home. But if the order was too large, my brother would make a delivery in the afternoon.

aniel: And he would carry the orders in a basket?

proul: No, we owned a horse and buggy.

aniel: Weren't you very prosperous if you had a horse and buggy?

proul: We had our horse and buggy. We had no knowledge of animals, and we--

aniel: When did you get the horse and buggy?

proul: I don't know. Someone in the neighborhood must have had one they wanted to get rid of. We didn't have it long. My sister and I, my sister more particularly, used to deliver some things on a bicycle. The bicycle had a basket in the front.

After we got a little older we waited on customers quite often.

aniel: Did you make change yourself, or did your mother?

proul: Oh, I made change.

In those days you had to put up things. I used to have to weigh great big sacks of sugar. Twenty pounds for a dollar. And you had those all measured out and tied up so that when the people

proul: wanted a dollar's worth of sugar, you got it out of a bin. Everything didn't come in packages as they do now.

aniel: This was true of coffee?

proul: Oh, yes. We had a coffee grinder.

aniel: You had crackers in big boxes?

proul: Yes, you sold those by the pound in bags.

aniel: And lemons were always in a hanging wire basket?

proul: Yes. But everything was as clean as a pin, and very orderly.

aniel: You didn't carry any produce, did you?

proul: Not much. Sometimes we carried potatoes, onions and berries. But not too much. Also, in the beginning, we had some yardage. But that got to be a nuisance. So we didn't continue it. We had thread, pins and needles. "Notions," they were called.

We were never open on Sundays. My mother didn't believe in working Sundays. Sundays we went to church.

aniel: You liked the store, didn't you?

proul: Oh, I liked it fine. I think in a way it was--I never realized it then--it was a wonderful way to meet all kinds of people. I never thought I was meeting people, I was just doing a job. I liked people. Really I did. Some customers I thought were very interesting. There was time to get to know some of them because they didn't rush in and out. Some became friends.

My mother had profited by her experience in New York; we didn't extend much credit. She always felt that if she had time she would go back to New York and collect those bills that were owing to my father. They must have been very considerable. So we never gave any extensive credit. We might carry someone for a week, but if they didn't pay their bill at the end of the week, we didn't extend their credit. So we didn't have any elaborate bookkeeping. Which was a help. She didn't have time for it.

aniel: And probably she had favorable consideration from the sales people for paying her bills promptly.

proul: She did that to take advantage of discounts. She believed that was as good way as any to make money. She was an extremely able person.

Sproul: After I graduated from high school and was working in San Francisco, I sometimes opened the store and later went home to breakfast. My mother would be getting breakfast and getting the household underway. When I went to work, my next sister would relieve me. By the time she had to go to school, my mother had things squared away and could take over for the rest of the day. It was all highly organized.

Daniel: It was quite natural and so probably you didn't feel that you were being regimented.

Sproul: No, I never felt that. And on Sunday I always cooked the Sunday dinner.

Daniel: Your dinner was at midday, wasn't it?

Sproul: Yes. There were certain things I cooked, and my sister next to me had certain things she did. I cooked meat, potatoes and vegetables. My sister did salads, desserts, pies, candy, that sort of thing. And to this day she makes the most wonderful divinity candy! And always sends you homemade fruit cake. I never bothered with those. I did the other part.

We cleaned house on Saturdays. And we all had to do a bit of it. We did it with a broom and wet newspapers. We put the newspapers down to settle the dust, so that when we swept like mad, we didn't have dust.

And we scrubbed floors on our hands and knees. I can remember doing that in grammar school before I went to school. That was done so that my mother could sit down in peace and comfort and sew.

There was terrific system. For instance, on Monday and Monday nights we were all supposed to sit down and darn our stockings and mend our clothes so that when my mother ironed them on Tuesday, they could be folded and put away and not be mussed up after she got them ironed.

Daniel: Why didn't you iron?

Sproul: I don't know. I think we couldn't do it well enough. She was a perfectionist. We had to look nice. She took a great pride in what she did. And I can't iron to save my soul to this day. If you asked me to iron a shirt, I would die!

Daniel: Did your brother have any household duties?

Paul: No. My brother had four sisters, and all our friends said we put down the red carpet and bowed before him and did everything he told us to. We adored him.

Paul: He didn't ever badger you or tease you?

Paul: I suppose he did. But my mother thought he could do no wrong, and that was the idea that prevailed in our house. In fact, in the true German custom, if we were having something choice, my brother always got the best piece, and then the rest of us came along in our turn. The best was always for my brother. We never resented it, apparently. That's the way it was. He was wonderful to all of us, actually. Especially to me. He loved to go to these light operas, and to vaudeville at the Orpheum. Because he could not afford to take a girl, when a good show came he would take me. It was easier and cheaper to take me. He wanted somebody to go with, and I was the oldest. I went everywhere with him. We went to see light operas like The Chocolate Soldier, and The Prince of Pilsen; we went to Idora Park and the Fulton, and then we used to go to the McDonough at Fourteenth and Broadway to see Lander Stevens and Georgie Cooper.

My brother was very, very fond of music. My sister next to me played the piano quite nicely. We all had piano lessons. My mother struggled with that, and we all had lessons. But the sister right next to me played better than the rest of us. If Theodore wanted her to play, why she played; it was relaxing, and he liked it. It gave him a great deal of pleasure, and it was good for her. She would play the piano for him awhile, and then he'd go back to studying. He wouldn't be so tense and nervous; so I mean we all thought he was just perfect, actually.

Paul: Did your mother share the love and pride she directed towards your brother with her daughters?

Paul: Oh, yes. When we were young she just loved getting us all dressed up and then she would beam on us. We were the product of her hand! If anybody said we looked nice, that was reward enough. Her idea of giving us a good time on a Sunday afternoon would be to get the four of us all done up in white starched dresses with ruffles, high black stockings with black shoes, and take us over to San Francisco to the Cliff House, or someplace we thought we would

Sproul: like to go. We would trail behind my mother getting on the streetcar, and if anybody exclaimed, "Oh, what a lot of nice little girls," she would beam. And when we'd get to the Cliff House, do you think we could take our shoes and stockings off and go wading? We could not! We sat there all stiff and starched, looking at the waves. That is absolutely true; these trips were her recreation.

If we had been very good and careful children, we could wear our outfits once more; and if we weren't, they all went into the laundry, and she washed and ironed every one of those dresses the next day!

Daniel: Your mother did that?

Sproul: Yes. Toward the end, when she got more prosperous, she had a woman.

My mother took us to all the interesting places and special events she could squeeze in. I remember once she took us over to see the fleet come in. She used to take us to see the home of August Schilling, over near the lake. It had a beautiful garden which was open to the public once a year.

Daniel: Near what lake?

Sproul: Near Lake Merritt in Oakland. I can remember going through those grounds many times. My mother thought they were beautiful, and going there gave us something to do on one Sunday afternoon.

From Home to Office

Daniel: What was your first job?

Sproul: With A. Schilling & Co. on Second and Folsom in San Francisco.

Daniel: Oh yes, wholesale grocers. Was that because of your mother's connection with the grocery business?

Sproul: No, I took an examination. And my mother went over with me the day I took it to see if it was a fit place for me to work. She didn't like the idea of my going to San Francisco every day. I was seventeen years old, then. The simple written examination wasn't much. I passed it. And I worked there for a year.

Daniel: In the office doing what?

Sproul: In the filing department. That was the first position I ever had.

aniel: And you worked five and a half days?

Sproul: Saturdays until one o'clock, in those days. I went over there every day. Most of the time I took my lunch. Tea and coffee were furnished. If you wanted cream and sugar, you brought that, and you had your own teacup. You had a little locker to keep it in. They had a pleasant dining room up in the top of the building.

aniel: What year was this?

Sproul: I was seventeen. I was born in 1891.

aniel: That was 1908.

Sproul: That was the year I graduated from high school.

aniel: Why did you leave Schilling?

Sproul: My brother was always prodding me. He always thought I should advance. I don't seem to have had too much ambition on my own, but he pushed me. He told me that I shouldn't stay too long in one place. I had graduated in shorthand, and I wasn't using it at A. Schilling. He thought I would make a better salary in work requiring shorthand and typing. So I went to another position with an insurance firm, and I didn't last very long. I didn't like insurance business. I hated all those contracts that you have to draw up; and I was always making mistakes. I was inexperienced.

Daniel: It was pretty dull.

Sproul: Oh, yes. Whereas, whereas, whereas. I would get so nervous that I would make mistakes and erase holes in the paper and have to start all over again. The man couldn't put up with that very much, so I didn't last long in that job. Then I took another one that I liked. I got more money, too. It was with a firm called the Scovel Iron Store Company.

Daniel: A wholesale house?

Sproul: Yes. You took orders for axles, and all kinds of harnesses and parts of machinery. It wasn't complicated like all those documents which I didn't like at all. I did very much better at it.

Daniel: In what part of town was it?

Sproul: On Howard, between Third and Fourth. Not a very choice part of town. But the man who ran it was very nice. His son was interested in it, and he was young, attractive and pleasant to

Sproul: work with. When I walked to Market Street to go down to the ferry, I had to walk along Third or Fourth Street, and it was horrid, really. But it was a pleasant place and I liked the people. I worked there quite a long while. It was a pleasant job.

Daniel: Did you give your salary to your mother?

Sproul: I gave it all to her from the time I was seventeen until I was twenty-one, I think. She put so much in the bank every month for me. When I was twenty-one I kept my salary and paid her board.

Daniel: Let's go back to your working life in San Francisco. What did you do on Saturday afternoons?

Sproul: I generally came home. Occasionally I went to a matinee in Oakland. I loved the theater.

Daniel: You would do this in Oakland, rather than San Francisco?

Sproul: Yes.

Daniel: You shopped in Oakland rather than in San Francisco?

Sproul: Yes. We went to Taft and Pennoyer, and to Capwell's. I wasn't "city-minded" at all. I only worked in the city. The feeling I have now for San Francisco has come through all the other associations I have, not with those early four years. That was when I was from seventeen to twenty-one years old, and my mother decided that I had better come home. If I hadn't come straight home, she would have worried about me. She liked to know where we were. Usually I came home. And there were generally things that had to be done on Saturday. I never got out of doing them, actually.

On Sunday, we went to church. Then we visited friends. I belonged to a group which used to commute to the city together. We went to work and came home on the same boat, and became a close-knit group. We used to play five hundred together. We formed a club. First we started with whist, and then we played five hundred.

My mother liked to play whist. There being four girls, she always had enough to play a hand when she wanted recreation. And we'd drop out, and then another one of us would come in to make the four. At home we played whist all the time because it was

roul: my mother's favorite game.

niel: Hearts was another game.

roul: Hearts we played. And five hundred. We didn't play mah-jongg. Then we went into bridge.

This was a club of girls, as I say, that crossed the bay together, and who lived more or less in the same neighborhood in Oakland. For years we used to play nights after work. My brother used to be the official escort, more or less, to take the girls home if it was late, or to take me there and call for me. We were a close-knit group of friends. Saturdays and Sundays we had parties and that kind of thing. We enjoyed ourselves.

niel: How did you spend your vacations when you were a working girl?

roul: I never really had a vacation until I was twenty-one.

niel: Did you have time off?

roul: Oh, yes. We had time off, but not much. I don't think I ever had more than a week. And we used to go to Bolinas. And then we had a friend who lived up at Walnut Grove on the Sacramento River, and I remember that I went up there once. She was a friend of my mother's, actually. Then we would go to San Francisco to the beach, and to the Cliff House, and to places like that. But we never went away as a family in all the time I can remember because we never closed the store. My sisters would be invited by people, and I would be invited once in a while. But when I was twenty-one, by that time I had been working for four years, and I went to the Yosemite Valley.

niel: That was quite an adventure.

roul: An adventure ! Why I never got through talking about it ! I never had had such an exciting time. I went by train to El Portal, and we stayed overnight in that big hotel that since burned down. My mother had made me a new dress, and I could hardly wait to get into the hotel to put it on for dinner. Oh, I had a very exciting time !

niel: How did you get into the valley?

roul: By automobile, but it was still called a stage. We stayed at Camp Lost Arrow right next to Yosemite Falls. I don't know why I picked Lost Arrow. It was moderately priced, I guess. Everything was paid for for ten days. I could have anything for

Sproul: breakfast I wanted. I didn't spend too much on it, but I never had such a thrilling time. I was thrilled from the moment I set foot in that park. It was so beautiful. And it was so exciting! I rode horseback for the first time. I did all this on my own money. I never got over it. My brother said that I would go along Market Street and stop people and ask them if they had ever been to Yosemite Valley. And if they hadn't, I would tell them about it. Not very many people were going to Yosemite for vacations in that day. This was 1912. I went with a girl who is still a very good friend of mine, and her sister. There were three of us. And oh, what a time we had! I still think it's exciting when I go there. I just love it!

Meeting Robert Gordon Sproul

Sproul: After I'd worked four years in San Francisco my brother decided that I could do still better. I was twenty-one at the time. He kept asking why I didn't take the civil service examination in Oakland.

Daniel: Were civil service jobs better paid?

Sproul: Yes. And then I wouldn't have to cross the bay. My brother kept insisting that I take the civil service examination because he thought I wasn't advancing as rapidly as I should.

Daniel: What was the category for which you would be taking the examination?

Sproul: Stenographer, secretary.

So I took it. And I passed third, I think. Then I got a position with the office of the civil service board in Oakland. I went to work there in 1912, I guess it must have been. The office was expanding, and the president of the board decided that the secretary needed a young assistant. Next year, in 1913, he called the University of California for a couple of likely young men who might be interested in the job. The university sent Willard Beatty and a man who had been outstanding in the class of 1913, Robert Gordon Sproul.

- Sproul: There was a very high-sounding name for the new job. It was "efficiency expert," and he was supposed to go around measuring the hours people put in on their jobs in order to decide whether these hours were too many or not enough.
- Daniel: Were efficiency experts being trained, or was their work done by ear, so to speak?
- Sproul: It was done by ear in his case, because he graduated in civil engineering. He graduated in May and got the position in June or July. He came down to work right in the same office where I worked. There were just these two candidates. I think he was to do more or less what he thought was the right thing to do and to make the rules and regulations.
- Daniel: There wasn't an office manager, then?
- Sproul: Oh, yes. There was the secretary, a man named Frank Colbourn. I worked for him. I was his secretary. Mr. Sproul was employed to do this rough survey of the city jobs.
- Daniel: Of all the city jobs?
- Sproul: Anything under civil service that the president of the board might want to have looked into. More or less exploring, re-examining the jobs, that sort of thing.
- Daniel: He didn't have anything to do with developing the examinations?
- Sproul: No, Mr. Colbourn did that. He may have helped with those, but the main responsibility for that was with Mr. Colbourn.

He came down in July of 1913, and worked there for a year. That's where I met him. In 1914 we became engaged, but by that time he had decided that this wasn't the kind of a job he wanted to be working at, and an offer came from the University of California. He left in 1914 to come to work in the office of the cashier at the University.

Mrs. Robert Gordon Sproul at Home in Berkeley

Sproul: I stayed on at the Oakland Civil Service Board office for two more years, until 1916, when we were married and came to Berkeley.

Daniel: Did you know Berkeley?

Sproul: Oh, I knew Berkeley, although I had always lived in Oakland. I was married in Oakland.

Daniel: Where did you live at that time?

Sproul: We were married at a home wedding in the flat my mother had on West Street between Thirty-first and Thirty-second.

Daniel: How did you decide when you were going to be married? Did you set some sort of goal?

Sproul: Oh, not especially. He was getting started, of course. And in those days it wasn't unusual to be engaged for a couple of years. I had a little bit of money saved up, and my husband had a chance to save up a bit.

I can remember when we were going to get married, and we were deciding on where we would go on our honeymoon, my husband said that he had enough for a choice of three places: one of them was Yosemite Valley; another was Crater Lake; and the third was Hawaii. Hawaii seemed too extravagant. My mother had always told me never, never to take the most expensive thing. We settled for Crater Lake. It was wonderful. It was just being developed and the hotel was being built.

Daniel: How did you decide where you were going to live?

Sproul: After we had been engaged for two years, one Sunday while we were out walking in Berkeley, we thought we'd see about finding a place to live. We came across a brand new little bungalow. The owner said he would not rent it; he wanted to sell it. We didn't think we could afford to buy a house at that time. We went away disappointed, but came back to persuade him to rent it to us. We lived there for quite a long while.

Daniel: Where was that?

Sproul: On Grant Street near Rose. Two of our children were born there, Marion and Bob. Then it was just too small. There

Sproul: wasn't room enough for the children. So we bought a larger house on Elmwood Avenue. It was across the street from Professor Putnam. That was very pleasant. My husband had had mathematics courses with him in college and liked him very much. I liked Mrs. Putnam, too. We had many happy times together. We used to have dinner parties and play bridge during the winter nights.

Daniel: When you were first married was President Sproul already assistant comptroller?

Sproul: No, he was just in the cashier's office. I don't think he became assistant comptroller until 1920 when Mr. Merritt went off during the war. Then Bob was made assistant comptroller.

It was about this time that my husband wanted me to entertain the Wheelers. He'd always been so fond of them. So I said, "Well, why don't we wait until they retire because right now they're in a whirl and everybody is entertaining them?" So we did. We entertained them at dinner shortly after President Wheeler's retirement.

I cooked the dinner myself, but I persuaded my Japanese laundress, who came once a week, to dress up as a maid and serve the dinner. I prepared to entertain the Wheelers by cleaning the house from top to bottom. I even got new drapes for the living room. They arrived about three o'clock in the afternoon of the dinner, and had to be hung before the Wheelers arrived. [Laughter] My husband said that when he looked at me sitting at the other end of the table, I looked as though I was a beautiful sunset, my face was so red and so flushed. But anyway, we entertained the Wheelers. And the fact that I cooked the meal all by myself really impressed Mrs. Wheeler. I think there were certain flaws in our Japanese maid's serving.

Daniel: I'm sure that you worried about every single thing that went on.

Sproul: I certainly did. Every detail. There were a few things that I didn't think were exactly right. For instance, we had scalloped potatoes which weren't in a nice casserole; they were in an aluminum dish, which was supposed to be disguised by a white napkin wrapped around it. This arrangement was forgotten

Sproul: and the aluminum dish came in without the napkin.

Daniel: Naked !

Sproul: Yes, and it wasn't very elegant. But, anyway, we had a very good time. I'm sure the Wheelers did because after that we had them over many, many times, by themselves and sometimes with just a few friends.

Daniel: Was this dinner the first occasion you had to converse with Mrs. Wheeler?

Sproul: It was, actually, because as a bride in 1916, when I would go down the line at teas, I could exchange only a few words with her as we shook hands. I was brand new, and she was very nice to me, but I didn't know her.

Daniel: As you faced her over the dinner table, were your anxieties somewhat calmed?

Sproul: Oh, very much so. I thought she was wonderful. Later, she was the most helpful person I knew.

From Cashier's Office to the Presidency

Daniel: Your husband's steady progress from cashier's office to presidency couldn't have surprised you.

Sproul: I never dreamed we would live in the President's House; it never entered our heads. My husband had been assistant comptroller, comptroller, and then vice-president, on the administrative side, not the academic side. Dr. Hart, Walter Morris Hart, also was a vice-president. There were, I recall, three vice-presidents: my husband, Dr. Walter Morris Hart, and Baldwin Woods.

My husband was made comptroller, I think in 1924; I can't remember just what year he was made vice-president. But it was in 1930 when he was made president. Before this time he had had many offers from outside the University. In 1920, for instance, the Fruit Growers' Association offered him its presidency. He would have had a much larger salary. We would probably have had to live in San Jose, as the headquarters were there. But San Jose is a very pleasant place. He always made the decision, and whatever he decided the rest of us would

Sproul: follow. Because I think it is most important that a man be happy at what he is doing. I don't think there's a more miserable person in the world than the person who works at a job which he doesn't like. My husband's chief devotion was to his work. I never knew anybody who was as enthusiastic about what he was doing. As far as he was concerned, it was the most perfect job in all the world. And he didn't spare the horses. He worked at it night and day because he was so dedicated to it. He never expected to become president. When he came onto the Berkeley campus as a student from Mission High School in San Francisco, he found it was the most exciting place in all the world. It never ceased to be, and it always will be an exciting place for him.

Daniel: Were you particularly conscious of changes in your role as President Sproul assumed more important and complicated administrative duties?

Sproul: I don't think so. It was so gradual. The only big, big change, of course, was when my husband became president. The other assignments we more or less took in our stride. We had more engagements, but I never worried about them much. In all these other steps we'd lived in our own home and I didn't think so much about my husband's job. It was nice, and interesting for him.

Daniel: What was the very first indication that Mr. Sproul might be selected for the presidency?

Sproul: You hear talk.

Daniel: From what direction did you hear talk?

Sproul: In various places. In the bosom of the family we would joke about it. I'd go to places and come home to him and say, "I've got a new member of the 'Sproul for President Club.'"

He'd say, "Who is it this time?"

I'd say, "It's the man to whom I took my shoes to be mended." Something like that. I wasn't putting my heart and soul into it. Maybe my husband was, and if he wanted it, it was fine with me. But I wasn't eager about it at all. Tradespeople often would say, "Well, I hear your husband may be the next president of the

Sproul: University."

And of course I'd laugh and I'd say, "Do you think so?"

Daniel: He was the logical choice.

Sproul: Well, in some ways, yes, but in other ways it was a question mark. You never know whether a person's going to develop with a job.

Daniel: Wasn't there a feeling that it was important to have someone who knew about buildings and costs and effective handling of money?

Sproul: Oh, I think so. He had long years of training, actually from 1914, when he went into the comptroller's office, until 1930. That's sixteen years of training. But it was all so gradual that you just didn't say, "Well, now, that's what turned the tide."

When Dr. Campbell became president--I think he was sixty-one years old--he was a scholar of world-wide recognition. It had been traditional always to have a scholar for president. I'm sure the regents felt that they'd got a man of great distinction and that was what they wanted, a scholar. But the University was growing rapidly and developing administrative problems of great number and variety. Considerable stamina was required to cope with them. This was the time that UCLA really came into being, and that has become the biggest part of the University excepting Berkeley.

Daniel: Going back to the men who had been in the presidency, you feel that President Campbell's scholarly achievements were most important in his being selected. What do you think brought Professor Barrows into the office?

Sproul: He'd been dean of the faculty, Dr. Barrows had. He was a charming, delightful person, who was not only adored by the students, but by the professors. Everybody had great feeling for him and he was very greatly loved. I don't think, though, that Dr. Barrows really liked that kind of a job. It was too exacting and it didn't suit his temperament, really, when he got into it.

Daniel: He was president for a brief period.

Sproul: Yes, and of his own accord. He tried the presidency of the University and decided he would rather go back to teaching where he was happier.

Daniel: What, besides the honor of the office, do you suppose drew Dr. Campbell away from Mt. Hamilton?

Sproul: Well, I think--nobody ever told me this, and I don't know how accurate this is--he'd been on the mountain for so long that Mrs. Campbell, especially, wanted to come back into this world again. You know what I mean; she had a great many friends in San Francisco and I think she was eager to get off Mt. Hamilton and into more social activity. He was really in residence in Berkeley all the time he was president, but the Campbells kept their house on Mt. Hamilton and went there frequently on weekends and holidays, as other people would have gone to a country house. Of course they had lived there so long that the place was very dear to them.

MANAGEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

Housekeeping

Daniel: Where were you and what were you doing when you learned about your husband's appointment?

Sproul: Oh, I can't remember exactly, except that I was at home. There was a great fuss, the telephone ringing, pictures being taken of the children and of me, and newspaper reporters asking questions. I think I looked older than than I do now. At least I looked more harassed and worried. [Laughter] We did not have any celebration or anything of that sort. We just took it all in the day's work.

Daniel: Do you remember any first feelings you had?

Sproul: I was plain scared to death!

Daniel: Of what?

Sproul: Of the responsibility.

Daniel: What responsibility?

Sproul: Of a big house, and the social program, the entertainment, and of whether I would be able to cope with what was ahead. It was so much more important than being a housewife in my own home while my husband just worked for the University, it seemed to me there was just no comparison.

Daniel: I can't imagine that you'd be frightened.

Sproul: [Laughter] I'm always frightened, really, and most of all scared of the sound of my own voice. I just thought that I would never be able to measure up personally to the demands of the position or to some of my predecessors.

Daniel: Now "measure up" to what?

Sproul: Well, training, and social background. My family were not people of means. They were poor people. We had a great many friends, and always had people in our home--and we had a very pleasant home--but it was nothing that could have provided training for the position I finally assumed.

Daniel: But you had participated for a long time in campus and community activities.

Sproul: Well, I suppose so. But I didn't think about that.

Daniel: As the wife of the comptroller and a vice-president, you had been part of academic social scenery, and it would be no different.

Sproul: I suppose so. I suppose I was growing up all the time. But I didn't really attach importance to what I had been doing.

Daniel: The president seemed much higher than any other person in the academic community?

Sproul: Oh much! It just seemed to me that it was something that you really should have been trained for. Maybe I was trained for it and didn't realize it. Certainly I didn't think I was. I was completely overwhelmed. I thought to myself that suppose I had to make a speech! I would never be able to do it. I never had spoken in public in my life. I talked to Mrs. Wheeler about it. Mrs. Wheeler, at this point, was a very close friend of mine. She was the one person I felt I could ask anything about the job. She'd been there twenty years and she'd been a great success. So, about this speech making, I said to her, "Mrs. Wheeler, before I start I'm just a flat failure."

And she said, "Why?"

And I said, "Well, look. I'm supposed to make speeches, maybe, and I won't be able to. I'd be ill before I started."

"I don't know why you worry like that," she said. "I was there twenty years and I never made a speech in my life. You just say, 'No, thank you,' the first time you are asked, and after a while nobody will ask you. Further, tell them your husband's talking all the time and one loud speaker in the family is enough."

I never did have to make a speech. I told people I didn't make speeches, and, after a while, nobody asked me. She was exactly right.

Daniel: Yes, but this isn't to say that you wouldn't have spoken very well.

Sproul: I wouldn't have wanted to. She was right, my husband was talking all the time, and there certainly was no need for me to air my views.

Daniel: How did you cope with the President's House?

Sproul: First thing, my husband took me over and showed it to me. On July first, I remember. That was 1930. The Campbells had just moved. I looked around and I must say I thought it was kind of big and cold and not very homelike. I talked to Mrs. Wheeler about this and said, "Why don't you help me? I've got to fix this house up with some of my things and use what's here. Tell me what to do." So she told me what to do. And I said, "Well, I'll put it back as nearly as possible to the way you had it, " which I did.

Daniel: Was everything she had used still available?

Sproul: A good deal was there: the rugs, the dining room was completely furnished, the living room had most of its furniture, and when I left, there were the same old velour drapes that she'd bought in her time. When we moved I realized that it was high time to change them, but I had a feeling that other presidential families would be coming to live there and they might like to choose their own colors.

Daniel: You didn't think you were going to be there very long?

Sproul: [Laughter] No, I didn't.

So Mrs. Wheeler told me about little things that she thought would help to make the place look nicer. For instance she said not to ever close the dining room door, because when people come up to the front door there's a very nice vista looking through; they don't like to look at a closed door.

Daniel: She had an eye for design.

Sproul: She did. She had good taste, I think. There's nothing that Mrs. Wheeler bought, as far as I know, that was ever put in attic in my time.

Of course I always have thought the President's House was beautifully proportioned. It had lovely big tall windows and high ceilings which give a sense of space. It was really a pleasure to live in it. You look out your window right through to the Golden Gate and Mt. Tamalpais. Oh, it's like a Maxfield Parrish* with that beautiful light on it, that blue. It's

*A painter whose prints were very popular at this period. (1915 through the '20's)

Sproul: beautiful. And it's exciting. The people you meet are exciting. You have such a variety of them. And in the President's House you were set up so that you could take care of them. I think it's a handsome, well-planned house. Of course it didn't have a modern electric kitchen. But there is storage space everywhere--the attic, the basement.

Daniel: Did you make any basic changes in the house?

Sproul: When I first went there, there was a stove that the Barrows and the Campbells and the Wheelers had had. It was a coal range. Well, we put in a gas range. That was the first thing. We put some stainless steel sinks in the kitchen, finally. But we never had any electric equipment there because the dishes had to be washed so fast at dinners and at teas. There were hundreds and hundreds of people at those teas, and even though you thought you'd rented an adequate supply of china, there was never enough to go around. There wasn't enough time to wait for electric dishwashers to work. We always had two people washing dishes in the big pass pantry. As the University grew, these teas were bigger and bigger.

Daniel: Was the President's House fully equipped with china and crystal and silver?

Sproul: Well, not for the growing needs. It was pretty well equipped for Mrs. Wheeler's time, but I added to the dishes that were there. She had a very nice Lenox set. Fortunately, you could still buy more. For teas we rented dishes for a long time. Finally we bought some inexpensive china so that we didn't have to keep paying rent on china. And, of course, we had teas the size of which just floored Mrs. Wheeler! I'm not boasting, but it's just the way it grew.

Entertaining has been changing; people take you out more. We hardly ever ate out while we lived in the President's House. Our practice always was to bring our guests home, whether it was to a simple, or a more elaborate, meal. We felt that our guests might like to see our house.

All the while I lived there I never had a buffet meal. Even for football luncheon guests I got them all served in time so they wouldn't miss the kickoff. They sat down and

Sproul: the food was passed. I like it better. A buffet service is attractive to the first people approaching it. Everything looks crisp and orderly. Then it becomes messy and untidy. I thought that if you had enough help, it was better to seat guests. I almost always used place cards because I think you have a little more fun if you arrange your party. There again maybe I'm a manager, but I thought it was better. At football luncheons I put husbands and wives at the same table so that if they wanted to leave together, they weren't inconvenienced by the wife's being off somewhere.

Times were changing, though, even then. I had fine help, but it wasn't the help that Mrs. Wheeler had, for instance. She had one cook, a Chinaman, for twenty years. When he retired, he went to China to die. He was a marvelous cook. I had a procession of cooks. You see what I mean? There were difficulties; the family was large. Actually, when we sat down without any company we were a pretty good-sized family. There were five of us, my husband's mother made six, and the four people in the kitchen and around about added up to ten for each meal before you fed anybody else. The Wheeler's cook was plain joy! He raised chickens and supplied the Wheelers. And he had a garden. He had a room in the back of the basement. The two chambermaids' rooms were in the back, and his keep didn't in any way conflict with theirs. Although I had many good cooks, I didn't have a record like that. Toward the end it became harder all the time to have satisfactory help. This is why people give up big homes. Wages are mounting, and the type you get do not take the same interest, I think. They want to go home nights. People don't want to live in anymore. I can't blame them. People like to have their own apartments, and when they have their day off, they want to be in their own home. Most houses aren't set up well for them to entertain anybody. Even the President's House wasn't. There was no little parlor for them.

There is always enormous help from the University. That's the best part of the whole thing. You're on buildings and

Sproul: grounds.

Daniel: What does buildings and grounds do for you?

Sproul: It's my idea of heaven, actually, what they do for you. If you want a carpenter, a painter, a plumber, or an electrician --and they're all experts--you take the phone off the hook and call the Department of Buildings and Grounds and someone comes quickly. There was never any emergency which someone from buildings and grounds couldn't handle. The boiler burst one night. It started to flood the place. Someone came right over and took care of it. I had no worry about getting things fixed.

Daniel: Grounds includes gardening, I suppose.

Sproul: Yes. And not only once a week, like my present gardening arrangement, but every day. There is a lovely little park around the house with a little stream in it, and a nice cutting garden. I never had to buy flowers. There were always plenty of them here. The garden was laid in Mrs. Wheeler's time. It had a nice exposure, and the plants were changed according to the season. In the spring we had tulips and daffodils, and in the summer we had all the summer flowers, towards fall we had chrysanthemums. There was bloom in every season and always a gardener devoted to his job.

The superintendent of buildings and grounds when we first came, Mr. Elbert Hugill, said that it was buildings and grounds' rule that whoever lived in the President's House should never be bothered by any of the physical details because they had plenty else to do. Anyone trained under Mrs. Wheeler was likely to be a perfectionist. She didn't approve of halfway, slipshod performance. They did the floors and washed the windows. Anytime there was a party they would come and move furniture and equipment and bring extra chairs. It was wonderful!

Daniel: Did you shop for household supplies?

Sproul: Yes, I shopped for everything until I retired. I went about Berkeley the same as any other housewife, excepting my husband had a different job. Nobody ever did my shopping. I never had a housekeeper who did the ordering. The housekeeper would tell

Sproul: me what she wanted. I remember when we first moved on the campus. This was before vegetables were frozen. It seemed as if Charter Day luncheons always included green peas. I would buy a hundred-pound sack and then I would pay my children fifteen cents an hour to shell them. I didn't pay them very much, but anyway, they were paid. Later I bought packages of frozen vegetables.

Daniel: Did you always have to buy at retail outlets? Couldn't you get things in quantity at wholesale prices?

Sproul: I would buy some things by the case and get a discount. I never bought things wholesale; maybe I should have. I don't know. On the other hand, if there were fifty-five or sixty-five people for lunch, I tried to buy in such a way that there wouldn't be waste, and we wouldn't be using leftovers forever. If we were having a big party we bought a dozen avocados and a dozen heads of lettuce. They weren't too expensive. I liked to use up what had been bought, buy through with it, and start fresh again.

Daniel: Did the tradespeople always know you were Mrs. Sproul?

Sproul: In San Francisco clerks wouldn't know me or pay very much attention when they were waiting on me until I gave them my address; when they heard "President's House, University of California," they would completely change, and the red carpet would be rolled out. [Laughter] I had a lot of fun. I saved the address until the last, particularly for the book clerks. They wouldn't know whether I was Mrs. Eisenhower or who I was. They got very upset and then there would be a flurry of "Was there anything we can do for you?" and so forth. I had a lot of fun with that because I would wait to see what I could do by myself, and if I weren't doing very well, I always had that as an ace in the hole. It worked like a charm. They'd say, "No number?" And I'd reply, "No, just President's House, University of California." [Laughter] That was quite something.

Daniel: Did food and operating supply procurement take up much time?

Sproul: Oh, it didn't take too long. And in the early days, of

Sproul: there were deliveries. It was possible to telephone for most of what was needed. Certainly that was true for meat. It still is. We had the most wonderful butchers in those days. They've gone out of business now. They were on Sixty-third Street and College, the New Claremont. It was Sauer and Watson. What a pair! They were like two characters out of a book. I had a great deal of fun with them. I'd say, "Now, you know the chops have to be unusually thick today. We're having the Rockefellers." [Laughter] They got a lot of fun out of the ordering. And they were wonderful about cutting anything that was needed. Nowadays, you know, butchers don't want to take the time. They would take just as much interest in the order as if they were having the party.

I like Berkeley tradespeople. I have patronized some of them for years. I liked to go around to their shops. I had a bakery that made cakes for teas. After a tea guests would go there and say, "I don't know the name of the cake, but it's the kind Mrs. Sproul had at her tea." It happened to be a particularly nice cake with whole pecans on top. Finally the bakery said the cake was going to be named after me!

There were certain people who made particularly delicious things. There was a woman on Moss Avenue who made cakes to put her daughter through school. They were wonderful! I can't get them now. We thought they were expensive then, but they certainly wouldn't be now.

We had people who made nice sandwiches. There was a pair on Dwight Way, Dolan and Curran. I never saw sandwiches like those! I used to think I would take them down to Los Angeles for my parties because I never found anybody else to make such sandwiches. Of course I never did, because I didn't think it would be a tactful thing to do, in the first place. And in the second place, it would have been too much trouble. We didn't fly in those days. It would have been a mess.

Daniel: What about other shopping?

Sproul: When there were white sales* it was possible to stock up on

*Sale of household linens.

Sproul: towels and things like that. While there were not unlimited funds, there was enough to get what was needed. That was kind of pleasant. Besides, I just love to shop. It doesn't bother me a bit.

While there were adequate funds for household replacements, household supplies were used to their fullest extent. When repairs could prolong the life of blankets or furniture, they were made. A woman whose husband was in the purchasing agent's office made bedspreads and recovered blankets. Where do you go now to get a blanket recovered? The labor to do it costs so much that salespeople urge you to buy a new one. To me, that's terribly extravagant.

All the problems of housekeeping are different. When we lived in the President's House, although we didn't have a dishwasher, we had a pretty well-equipped laundry with a washing machine and a mangle. The cook did the pots and pans and kept the kitchen clean. Glassware, silver and china were washed in the pass pantry by someone else. We had vacuum cleaners both upstairs and down so that we didn't have to be dragging one up and down.

I don't go for all these modern homes or modern buildings. But on the other hand, there are some things about them that are quite wonderful. In our present house I have tried to combine modern ideas with past construction.

Daniel: There was probably a window there where you now have full glass doors leading to the patio.

Sproul: Yes. You couldn't go out at all. You couldn't open it. It was just a square glass. We put in the wide door. Well, I like some of the new things.

A room, I think, should have color, but it should be harmonious. It should blend, not just hit you in the eye. And I like a room not to dominate you. It should be just a background, really. At the same time it should exert a quieting influence. I don't want it to be too busy.

Daniel: How did you happen to bring the furniture in this room together?

- Sproul: I didn't start with any of these pieces when we were married. I suppose you'd call it Victorian.
- Daniel: Uncluttered Victorian.
- Sproul: Yes, it has nice straight lines. I came to like this kind of furniture. Whenever I had a chance I bought it. I think the form and shape of it is graceful and pleasing. The only thing I can remember about this furniture--I didn't have as much as I have now, but I had a few pieces in one of our earlier houses--happened when I was going to sell some things. A man came to look over my room. The only things he would buy were three Victorian chairs. He wasn't at all interested in the rest of the furniture. I quickly learned, then, which had some value and which did not.
- Daniel: You have some Oriental touches. There's a figure on the fireplace.
- Sproul: I suppose if I had it to do all over again I would go even more Oriental.
- Daniel: How did you develop the combination of Victorian and Oriental?
- Sproul: Two people were responsible for that. This nice piece--it's really lovely--well, Dr. Moore gave me that at UCLA. Mrs. Moore had collected it and after she died he gave it to me. The one in the dining room, the Chinese empress, Mr. Albert Bender gave to me. I think Albert Bender is as much responsible as anyone for my liking that kind of thing.
- Daniel: He had a terrific collection.
- Sproul: Oh yes, and he was the most generous man that ever was. Every time he came to the house he would bring something beautiful, like a piece of Japanese silk, you know, or some nice beads, or that Chinese empress there. I really think Mr. Bender opened my eyes to things. Nobody else I knew was such a collector. He had quantities of things. And he was enormously generous. He gave them to the University of California; he gave them to Mills; he gave them to all his friends; he gave them even to Stanford. He just liked beautiful things.
- Daniel: What about these lacquered tables?
- Sproul: I just bought those down on College Avenue. [Laughter]

Daniel: Do you think that West Coast homes generally show the imprint of the Far East?

Sproul: Oh, decidedly so, don't you? But of course that's true of New England homes, too. The sea captains brought back beautiful things, rugs and teak tables--

I think the thing that impresses me most about Japanese interior decoration is that it's so uncluttered. I just don't happen to like little souvenirs that some people collect. I think they're too much trouble to dust, and I don't think they're restful to look at, either.

University Hostess

Daniel: Mrs. Wheeler helped you in the physical arrangement and decoration of the house. Did you need her help in planning social activities?

Sproul: [Laughter] No, I did that myself.

Daniel: How?

Sproul: Well, there are certain things you have to do according to the calender like Charter Day, which is a big University party, and dedications of buildings, things like that.

We came into office July 1930 during summer vacation. Inauguration was the twenty-second of October. Giannini Hall was dedicated the same week and we had to have a big luncheon for the regents.

Daniel: Did the regents seem formidable?

Sproul: No, no. Some of them I knew quite well; some of them I didn't. We didn't do much until after inauguration. Then that week was terrific! At the time I didn't know whether I would really last through it.

Mr. Giannini was alive then, so the lunch was in his honor. There were speeches. Cowell Memorial Hospital was dedicated that first week, too; we had to have some parties for that.

The night before inauguration my husband decided to read his speech to me. I fell sound asleep! [Laughter] He never was so crushed in his life; he thought I fell asleep

Sproul: because his speech was boring. Actually, I was so completely exhausted I just couldn't keep my eyes open. I suppose I did at the inauguration, but not the night before. He never bothered about reading another speech to me. I was ashamed of myself, but I couldn't help it.

Daniel: Did you have a social secretary?

Sproul: No, I wrote the invitations for years. I not only wrote them up in Berkeley, but in Los Angeles, too. I was in the President's House twenty-eight years and I didn't have a secretary until the last ten years. Then Mrs. Allen worked for me. Before she came I occasionally had random help come in by the hour. My guest work took quite a long time.

Daniel: Was Mrs. Allen with you on a fulltime basis?

Sproul: No, only in the mornings. That was when the phone rang most. Also the mail comes in. She answered the phone and took care of the mail after we went through it.

I think I probably wouldn't have thought of a secretary if Regent Neylan--I think he got tired of seeing my neat little handwriting--hadn't said he thought it was absurd, my sitting there writing out all those things. He thought I should have a secretary. I thought he was very nice to notice that my letters were written by hand.

Daniel: What is the first entry in your notebook on social events?

Sproul: November 11, 1930. "Armistice Day. Tea after the Army-Navy Game. About fifty-three people came on very short notice."

Daniel: "Very short notice" would be one day?

Sproul: Less than a week, probably. That same year, on November 22, 1930, before the Big Game we had a luncheon. This was the month after inauguration. Twenty-five came. A few friends and regents were invited.

Charter Day Speakers

Sproul: On the first Charter Day we had forty-five people. Nicholas Murray Butler was the speaker, and Willa Cather received an honorary degree. That was the first really big, formal party we had. The Butlers were not our house guests, but Miss Cather was. She was very much a recluse and really didn't want to meet people. She didn't come downstairs for tea, even; we sent it up to her. She was an extremely quiet and pleasant person. I liked her. The Butlers, of course, were very formal New Yorkers.

The Butlers were there to lunch, and I remember that it was a warm day and Mr. Butler came home from the exercises and he insisted on taking a shower and changing his clothes, which meant that we had to delay our luncheon quite awhile. As a brand-new hostess, that rather upset me. I wasn't prepared for changes. I thought that after we got down from the Greek Theater, luncheon would start at once. But Mr. Butler had other ideas. He was too hot.

Somebody brought them from San Francisco where they were staying to the house and then we all went together. It was a perfectly heavenly day. I drove her on up to the exercises. I expect I drove Miss Cather, too. But anyhow, when the exercises were over, I thought I'd stop and pick up some more distinguished guests, and I left Mrs. Butler sitting in the car with the engine running. I'm sure I had the brake on. But she did not like the Berkeley hills, and she'd never seen anybody who could make a car buck and rear as I did--she really made me a little bit nervous--so when I got back to the car I found that she had departed. I drove down to the house by myself, and found she had walked down.

Daniel: By herself?

Sproul: Yes. And that upset me no end. I felt that I'd been very discourteous. Also, I thought she couldn't help knowing this was my first big event and that I was a bit nervous. When I related all this to Mrs. Wheeler, afterwards, I told her I guessed I had been a flat failure at the very beginning.

Sproul: Nothing would go right. And she said, "I don't know why you take it so hard. If, as a university president's wife, you want to drive around, you can drive me!" So that was the end of that. I don't think Mrs. Butler had been here before. And of course, it is pretty steep up there; and New York people aren't used to hills. Maybe, on second thought, I made a mountain out of all the little things that went wrong. Miss Cather afterwards wrote a very nice note saying that she thought our first Charter Day was a great success. Of course that made me feel better.

Among Charter Day guests, Mrs. Francis Perkins, in contrast to Miss Cather, was lively as a cricket. She had all her meals downstairs and she had a lot to say about her daughter, and was interested in our children. She talked about buying clothes for daughters. She came down with a bad case of laryngitis, and said, "Oh, I cannot go on. I'm just so sorry, I'm not going to be able to go up there tomorrow. My voice is one of my most outstanding characteristics, and I can't talk at all." Fortunately, it was the day before. We put her to bed and got her a throat specialist, who was able to help her. In fact she continued taking the medicine that he gave her. She used to write for it. He got her on her feet and in very good shape.

In 1932 Julius Klein, assistant secretary of commerce, spoke. He was a graduate of this University. Later he came to speak at a commencement. We entertained him just a few years ago, when he came out for the fiftieth anniversary of his class.

Walter Lippmann was the Charter Day speaker in 1933. That was the beginning of the depression years.

In 1934 we had an outstanding Charter Day. The speaker was James Rowland Angell, president of Yale. He and his wife were just delightful in every way. They stayed a long time. We seemed to have more time for people in those early days than we did later. We drove them to Yosemite Valley on our way to Los Angeles. He spoke to a Yale group in Los Angeles. Also, he spoke at UCLA.

Sproul: He was the first non-Yale man to be president of Yale. Maybe he was the only one. He was a very witty, lively person, and Mrs. Angell was also. She was his second wife, and she had quite a lot of children; I think she had seven young ones. So they had a lively household. He, of course, made an excellent talk. When we went down to Yosemite, we had a lovely time. We really had a very nice friendship with them. We went back and stayed with them at New Haven. We had a little chance to get better acquainted. He had a fine mind, which was also witty and gay.

Thirty-five was Mrs. Perkins.

Daniel: How was that choice made?

Sproul: My husband picked them, more or less. It was his job. He would submit his choice to the board of regents. But it was his duty to choose. He wanted to honor a woman as a Charter Day speaker, because we hadn't had too many women. She was the first woman to be secretary of labor. She was the secretary of labor when she came.

Daniel: You didn't discuss the problems of the working people when she was there; you had a good time chatting about home activities?

Sproul: Mostly we did, because we felt that people had to put their serious effort into their speech, and having done that, they needed a little bit of relaxation. They were expected to say something in their speech that was really worth the trip. They might as well be social after that. They arrived with their speeches and had copies for the press. Their hard work was done before they got here. We always tried to have dinner for them the night before if they came in time. And we'd always try to have people in their field: outstanding faculty people that they would get something from and would enjoy talking to. When Mr. Lippmann came, we had the Meikeljohns and the Loewenbergs, people like that, who would be stimulating and interesting.

John Huston Finley was awfully nice. He was the associate editor of the New York Times. A very, very outstanding and interesting man. He loved to walk. He always walked to

Sproul: his office, and he carried a pedometer so that he knew how many miles he walked during the year. The first thing he did the morning after he arrived was to go for a walk in the Berkeley hills before the exercises. Now you see, he was an editor. The whole idea of the Charter Day speakers was to have people in different fields. All of them weren't world famous, but they were nationally distinguished. Mr. Finley was here in 1937.

The next speaker was Mr. Freeman, bishop at the cathedral in Washington. It rained so hard that the exercises had to be held at the gymnasium. That was the first time that they held the Charter Day exercises indoors during our time. Mr. Freeman was full of interesting stories about personalities in Washington.

In 1938 Sir Arthur Salter came. He spoke in Los Angeles first, and then we drove him to Berkeley. He was also a rainy day guest. He was a bachelor at the time. We happened to have some wonderful Norwegian maids. The upstairs maid, who was marvelous at darning and mending, helped him pack and unpack. One of the things she observed was that his bathrobe really needed quite a bit of attention. If he were observing at all--maybe he never even noticed--he found it was in much better condition when he left than when he arrived. She asked me if I thought it would be all right if she darned it. And I said I thought it was a wonderful idea, why not! As long as he was a bachelor, I didn't think we would be offending his wife in any way. We wanted to make him as happy and as comfortable as we could. He got married after that, though, when he went back to London. He came from the London School of Economics, I think. He was a typical bachelor at the time. Precise and small.

Now here's a man that I lost my heart to. I shouldn't say that, should I?

Daniel: Why not!

Sproul: Jan Masaryk. Oh what a man! What a really lot of fun. He arrived in Los Angeles first. We were living in the university house down there. He came out and called on us very

Sproul: formally before the exercises. Czechs from the consulate met him at the airport. He told us that on the drive out to UCLA he was terrifically impressed with the big supermarkets and all the golden grapefruit and everything arranged in such beautiful patterns. He just couldn't take his eyes off those supermarkets. We came up to Berkeley and wanted him to stay with us. He said he couldn't, that an impossible household situation would develop if he stayed with us because the Czechs can be very friendly, and they would swarm all over him, and actually would be hanging out of our windows. He thought that would create too much of a problem. So he stayed in San Francisco. Actually he was a substitute speaker for Dr. Edward Beneš, who couldn't come. I have in my notebook: "Dr. Edward Beneš was to have been the speaker, but due to the harrassing events in Europe, he felt he could not come, and Mr. Masaryk took his place. The Greek Theater was filled, and the exercises were most impressive." He read Mr. Beneš' speech, and then put that down and made a talk of his own. It was just at the time that Hitler was going into Czechoslovakia. Mr. Masaryk made some simple and really heart-rending remarks on his own. He was impressive in appearance--tall and dark. He was a wonderful man. We liked him no end. He just had everything. Here are some newspaper clippings. I put this in here because, you know, afterwards he died. And it was under circumstances nobody knew. Everybody thinks Mr. Hitler just pushed him out of that window. I think so, too. Because I don't think he was that kind of a person.

He was living in London at the time he visited us. He had an apartment there. I asked him where he would rather live, in what part of the world. He said he would rather live in London than in any other city he knew; it was such a democratic place, and so exciting. I said, "That's interesting. My daughter is going to be in London in a little while. She graduated from the University, and she's traveling in Europe." That was in '39.

He said, "Well, she should come to see me." Which she did. She was traveling with a friend, so he gave the girls his car and a chauffeur and arranged to have them driven all over London.

Sproul: So then they had supper up in his apartment, and he's a very good cook. And he was a wonderful human being, I thought.

Oh, this was an outstanding one, too, in '40. Those Charter Days were something out of this world. That was the third rainy one. We only had three out of the twenty-eight years. This time we had James Bryant Conant, president of Harvard. Over the years, he and his wife have become our very dear friends. He's a wonderfully sensible man, I think, besides being gifted in so many ways. He was a physicist, and an able university administrator. He was a fine ambassador. He has made some very helpful studies of our public schools. We are great admirers of both of the Conants. He came again and spoke in the Greek Theater at our twenty-fifth anniversary.

The next Charter Day is '41. We had Ray Lyman Wilbur from Stanford. It was in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Stanford and Dr. Wilbur's twenty-fifth year as president. The Wilburs were neighbors and friends.

Forty-two was Dr. Aydelotte. It was a war year. The entry reads: "Today was clear and beautiful, and the exercises were held in the Greek Theater. Dr. Aydelotte was our house guest, arriving on Wednesday and leaving on Friday. Due to war conditions, there was no alumni banquet in the evening. Nor was there a luncheon at the President's House. In its place, a large luncheon was given at the International House by the alumni association."

The next man I enjoyed a lot: Archibald MacLeish. He was librarian of congress at that time. What a lively person he was! He took part in everything. His mother, Mrs. Andrew MacLeish, a very interesting lady, came with him. She spent the winters in Arizona. And so she went over to Los Angeles to hear Archie speak. At the Los Angeles exercises I said to her, "Well, Mrs. MacLeish, if you've gone to Los Angeles to hear Archie speak, why don't you come to Berkeley and hear him speak there?"

"Well," she said, "I will." So she stayed with us, too. She'd been head of a woman's college in Illinois, and she had a fine mind, too. We became very good friends with her. When

Sproul: we'd go through Chicago we'd go out to her place on Lake Michigan. She was deep in her eighties at the time she was here.

It said here, "We had our usual luncheon before the exercises, and forty-six people came. Due to the war, and to rationing, I had to do some planning to get the food for so many." So you see, they didn't have a dinner, either. After the exercises, the alumni association gave a tea in the women's club rooms of Stephens Union. And he was a charming and interesting person.

Then the next one was Mr. Juan Terry Trippe, president of Pan American Airways.

Daniel: Wasn't that an unusual choice?

Sproul: Yes.

During the exercises he said it wouldn't be long before anyone working for the University, a stenographer or secretary, would be able to take a plane for a two-week vacation in India. Of course air travel at that time was very limited compared to what it is now.

We had some very interesting guests besides Charter Day speakers. One of these was Sir Girja and Lady Bajpai of India. And Lady Bajpai wore a diamond in her nose. They were distinguished people who happened to be visiting the area.

In '45 Mr. Herbert Evatt, attorney general and minister of internal affairs for Australia, came. This time we had a work-out. We had a Charter Day dinner in Los Angeles on March nineteenth, in Santa Barbara on the twenty-first, and in San Francisco on the twenty-third.

Here's another interesting man: John G. Winant, who was ambassador to Great Britain. He and his wife stayed with us. They arrived Friday and left with us on Sunday on the Lark for the exercises in Los Angeles. It says here: "The exercises were held at 10 a.m. in the Greek Theater." I think that 10:30 is a better time. Ten is a bit early to get them all fed and out.

"After the exercises, we had the largest Charter Day luncheon we had ever had. Sixty-eight people came. The house looked lovely, and luncheon went off well. The flowers were

Sproul: beautiful. It's a wonderful time for flowers, because we have tulips and daffodils, flowering peach." You can make a terrific splash with the flowers from the University garden. When you have to buy them by the dozen, you are a little bit more careful! When you just wave your arms around and point to the containers, why it's different. But of course they're on the campus and up in the botanical gardens, and picking them doesn't do any harm.

When Douglas Southall Freeman was Charter Day speaker in Los Angeles, he spoke on George Washington. At that time he was deep in doing his research. He didn't have to have any notes. He could tell you a fabulous amount about Washington. Things you never knew, or at least that I certainly never knew. Personal things: how he got on with his mother, or didn't get on with her; how vain he was about his clothes with lace at his wrists and all that business. And how extravagant his mother thought he was. Not only that kind of thing; he also told about what a capable man Washington was. At the age of twenty-one he was selected by the colonies to represent them against the French in the talks with the Indians. The French were people who were practised in diplomacy for hundreds of years, and here was this twenty-one-year-old with unusual capacity for judgment and fairness. Charter Day speakers usually repeated themselves at Berkeley and UCLA, which was very fair. It would have been more work to prepare two speeches. But it was nothing at all to Mr. Freeman. He said, "You don't mind if I don't do that?"

And we said, "Heavens, no!"

Daniel: He didn't speak about Washington in Berkeley?

Sproul: No. But he had a speech that the faculty audience turned out for.

The next man was exciting and interesting to know. We kept up a friendship with him, too. That was Secretary of State George Marshall. This was in 1948. And he arrived Thursday night by plane, The Sacred Cow, Mr. Truman's plane. The audience was packed. But he was a very distinguished guest whom the students knew. We liked Mr. Marshall immensely. He

Sproul: was simple and sincere and possessed of a fine sense of humor. He was accompanied by a marine sergeant, George, who took extraordinary good care of him. He slept in the room next to Mr. Marshall and called him in the morning; he answered all his telephone calls and generally made himself helpful. General Marshall was quite a contrast to the following Charter Day speaker, who had an aide, a secretary, and a valet. Mr. Marshall might have traveled with a whole lot more fanfare. We traveled with him in The Sacred Cow to Los Angeles and that was fun. He stayed with us in the Los Angeles house. It was much more fun when guests actually stayed with us because there was much more opportunity to get to know them. If we just entertained them, we couldn't see much of them. Mr. Marshall's visit was particularly interesting. There were certain things, the state department told us, to which he was allergic. We had to be careful not to give him food which would have had an immediate very bad effect. It would have been embarrassing to everyone. I was glad they told us because I think it was a Friday, and I had planned to have fish. We had to be very careful.

Now we're coming to one that was outstanding, too: His Excellency Field Marshall The Right Honorable Viscount Alexander of Tunis, K.G., Governor General of Canada, was our next Charter Day house guest along with his secretary, General H. F. G. Letson, and his aide, Major Desmond Chichester. His valet was Bill Williamson. And he was really something! His clothes and everything he had with him matched that title. I think he had sixty-four pieces of luggage. We had to have a separate car to carry it. It was Bill Williamson's job to keep track of it. He had beautiful formal clothes, a suit of midnight blue lined with pale blue. With all of his formality, he wasn't a stuffed shirt. He was very friendly. We liked him and the members of his staff very much. The Canadians were most impressive in their dress uniforms, with all their medals and decorations.

The governor had a wonderful twinkle in his eye. He was a delightful person. While he had all these things that went

Sproul: with his rank and position, at heart he was a soldier. He had the best guestroom, the so-called "regents' bedroom." It shares a bath with an adjoining room which we gave General Letson. Across the hall was Chichester. Just before the dinner party, my maid came. I was getting ready for dinner. She knocked on the door and said, "General Letson wants to know how you have assigned the baths."

And I said, "Assign the baths? Why there are two of them! They're all men!" There were no ladies involved, and I thought that--General Alexander is a soldier and British--he could share the bath that connects his room to General Letson's room. That's what I had planned. The maid brought my message to the general. But that's not the way it happened. The bath was left for General Alexander, and General Letson put on his bathrobe, crossed the hall, and shared a bath with Major Chichester. If Lady Alexander had come, I could see there might have been a problem. I shouldn't have had her share the bathroom. But since they were soldiers, and coming from Britain, I didn't think there were too many baths to a home in Britain, so it would work out all right. But, anyway, they settled their own problem.

We got downstairs and were waiting for the other guests before we went to the alumni banquet. I was ready early and the general was early. We were sitting down in the living room, and I said to him, "Oh, I think you're going to have quite a time tonight. This banquet has a terrific attendance. And afterwards there is a reception. Everybody will come down the line because they will want to shake your hand. I wish there were some way of sparing you this. You must be tired."

He looked at me, and a twinkle came into his eye. He said, "Oh no, Mrs. Sproul. Don't spare me. That's something I do rather well!"

He did have a good time when all the ladies looked at his beautiful uniform and shook his hand. I'm quite sure he enjoyed every bit of it. There was nothing stiff, or formal, or false about him. He was a natural person. He had a job to do, and he wanted to do it well. But at the same time, he was a human being.

Sproul: He liked people. I certainly liked him. So did my husband. I don't think he stayed with us in Los Angeles. There the house wasn't quite so well equipped. In Berkeley, the bathroom between two guest rooms had worked pretty well, though I was amused to have someone ask me to "assign the bathrooms." (I think the bathroom has now been made into two, so there won't be the problem of someone's forgetting to unlock the door.)

On Charter Day, 1950, Admiral Nimitz spoke. They didn't stay with us because they were living in Berkeley and had a house of their own. We've always enjoyed them, and count them as two of our best friends. I think Berkeley is very fortunate that they decided to make their home here.

Then we go down to '51. Lewis Douglas, former ambassador to Great Britain, made a good speech. He was on the budget, wasn't he, under Roosevelt? He resigned because he didn't see eye-to-eye with Mr. Roosevelt. Moneywise, I think.

Now we have a man from England: Arthur Lehman Goodheart, who was Master of University College at Oxford. He's some relation to Governor Lehman of New York. He was the first American to be master of a college at Oxford, I think. They were our guests both here and in the South. The Goodhearts were charming and delightful and as they were our house guests, we had an opportunity to get well acquainted. I think University College is a law college, because some of the people we had to meet him were lawyers. His wife was a very attractive British woman.

My notebook records for 1953: "The Charter Day exercises departed from the usual pattern. Chancellor Kerr was inaugurated in the Berkeley campus, and Chancellor Allen at Los Angeles. Due to the large number of people representing other universities, colleges and learned societies, a luncheon was held in Fernwald dormitory dining room for about seven hundred people. The luncheon preceded exercises which were held in the Greek Theater at two-thirty. The day was very warm and the Greek Theater looked beautiful." It was the first time they used all those flags, and it was lovely, very colorful.

Sproul: Next, we had Chief Justice Earl Warren. The Warrens were old friends of ours. He was in college with my husband and our children knew each other. So we didn't have to get acquainted. They came on Sunday, and we just had a family dinner party that Sunday with his children and our children, who are about the same ages. We didn't feel that we had to invite people in for him to meet because, having been governor already, he knew everybody anyway. As long as he was going to have a busy time the next day, it seemed more fun to just have a family party.

Daniel: It would be interesting to have some comment about Mrs. Warren.

Sproul: She's a delightful person. I think she's a person who shuns the limelight and is essentially a family woman. Her husband certainly comes first of all. Then the children, and she has quite a large family and she is content to make that her major interest. She has terrific pride in her husband, and she does everything that she possibly can for his comfort and well-being, so that he can function in a home atmosphere that is absolutely serene. I think he's a very calm-looking person. I think she does an immense amount of work behind the scenes, and isn't interested in public activity, or even very much of a social life. I know you could not be wife of the governor and not have quite a bit of social life, but I think the Warrens held it down to a minimum. I suppose there were certain things that they had to do. In Sacramento she would have a large tea for the wives of the legislators, and things of that sort, but I don't think she made a great stir in the community. Maybe she felt the governor's job covered the whole state, and therefore shouldn't single out one city.

She came from Oakland, a young widow with a son. I think she had a position. I suppose her finances were such that she had to support herself, probably, and her son, too. When she married Mr. Warren, the boy took Mr. Warren's name. I think he probably was very young at the time. They have a particularly close-knit family life. And they're congenial.

Daniel: When he ran for office, newspaper photographs showed him surrounded by the children's glowing faces.

Sproul: They were an asset. You felt that a man who had such a fine family was fundamentally a right kind of person. I think that's what she put her major effort on.

The entry from my notes read, "It had been raining on Sunday. But the exercises were held at two-thirty on Monday afternoon in the Greek Theater with warm and beautiful weather. The Greek Theater was filled, and the students attended in large numbers. It was one of the most successful Charter Days we've ever had. It was wonderful to see the regard and friendly feeling everyone had for the Warrens. It could not have been nicer." And that was particularly true when we went by plane to Los Angeles. People who carried his baggage would say, "It's wonderful to have you back, Governor!" He enjoyed spontaneous friendship up and down the state. It was very heart-warming for us, and it certainly must have been for them.

He stood for fairness. I think his elections are a testimony to that. He received overwhelming votes from democrats and republicans. I think he's a very fine citizen. His position merited his choice as a Charter Day speaker, and it was well to honor a graduate of the University.

Between the Charter Days of 1953 and 1954 we had a luncheon for King Paul and Queen Frederika of Greece. Now there's a glamorous couple! They were on tour. They spoke in the Greek Theater. It says here, "Their majesties were simple and friendly and charming; altogether delightful in every way." It was the first time royalty was ever entertained in the President's House. After the luncheon, there was a beautiful ceremony in the Greek Theater. Oh yes, we had to find out protocol. But you always did this, anyway. It wasn't too difficult. They were democratic people. But even so, you wanted to be sure you were doing the correct thing. They were both attractive. So much had been written in the press about her, you know. How charming she was. But he is a great, big, fine-looking person. And I think they were really a happy couple. They looked as if they were very fond of each other, and not married merely because of official plans.

Sproul: Then 1956 was the twenty-fifth year for my husband, and Mr. Conant came out again. I'll read you about that celebration in all due modesty: "This year the exercises were held in the Greek Theater with all the flags flying. The honorary LL.D's were President Killion of MIT, President Houston of Rice Institute, and the surprise of the exercises"--now listen to this!--"was the honorary master of arts degree on Mrs. Robert Gordon Sproul."

Daniel: It was really a surprise?

Sproul: It certainly was! "This degree was voted to be given by the faculties of Berkeley and UCLA. Needless to say, I was pleased and touched." Now there you are! Of course I knew before the day because I had to wear a cap and gown and sit on the platform. But I never had thought, even, about a degree. I was terribly pleased.

Daniel: Did you respond when you received this?

Sproul: No, you just shake hands, which was very fortunate. I was speechless.

I have pictures of that. Governor Knight was there, and Mr. Conant. They're all in the picture.

Now we come down to Dr. Nagy. That was rather timely; it was after the Hungarian revolution. They were our house guests. Dr. Nagy was a former prime minister of Hungary, who has lived in exile in Virginia where he has had a dairy farm for the past ten years. He made a very interesting and moving speech. The students turned out en masse. You see, the students are very unpredictable. You don't know for sure whether they are going to appear in full attendance or not.

Daniel: Political figures seem to attract them.

Sproul: I know. But the faculty always turns out well, because the faculty thinks it's a University occasion which they should acknowledge. But the students, if it's a nice spring day, may think it's lots more fun to sit under a tree and hold hands with somebody. And that's all right in the spring. But I think they ought to attend University meetings on Charter Days. The University puts a great effort into getting the speaker, and while I believe in the hand-holding, too, I think it might be

Sproul: postponed.

Dr. Nagy had a particular attraction for the students because he came just after the Hungarian revolution.

Then we had Mohammed V, King of Morocco, for luncheon. We had quite a protocol problem there. This was a special luncheon; twenty-eight people in his party had to be included. He spoke in the gymnasium December 5, 1957. That's not very long ago. The prime minister and the ambassador to the United States and other officials and members of his family were there. They didn't speak English. This time I had faculty people at small tables who could speak to them in their own language. Some of the faculty had been in Morocco on projects promoted by the government; they had had some contact with these people. I thought it would be much more interesting for the Moroccans to have people who could talk to them than for me to just invite distinguished townspeople or San Franciscans. Their tables were small, with six or seven at each, among whom were these faculty members who had something interesting to say to them. It worked out quite well. I had a large table for the prime minister, the ambassador, my husband, and the king. Directly behind me and the king was an interpreter; everything I said to the king had first to be told the interpreter, who then translated it to the king.

Daniel: Rather awkward, wasn't it?

Sproul: Very awkward, because everything you say, when said twice, sounds kind of silly, stupid.

Daniel: The king probably spoke French---

Sproul: But for political reasons he wouldn't speak French. It was odd, but he just wouldn't. I think he understood it perfectly. But I don't speak French. We were told it wasn't the language that was acceptable. Our luncheon went along quite nicely, and the king was fun. He had a merry twinkle in his eye, even though you couldn't converse with him too much. He wasn't stiff.

It was a very cold and foggy day. He had felt slippers on his feet. Before he arrived, someone came over from the gymnasium with a kind of pad. We were told to immerse it in boiling water and to wrap it in towels. This was placed at

Sproul: his feet during luncheon to keep his feet warm.

I felt that there was going to be considerable time after he finished with us and his next engagement, and not being able to talk too fluently, I wondered what we would do for him. So I said to the interpreter, "We're getting through our lunch rather quickly. Do you suppose his majesty might like a little chance to rest between this engagement and his next one? He might like to go upstairs and lie down."

He looked at me and said, "I'll ask him. That's a good idea." So he asked him, whereupon the king's face broke into smiles. When he got up from the table, his aides sprang to his side, and he went upstairs to our guest room and had a restful forty-five minutes.

We had been told that nobody would be permitted to smoke while he was there. When he went upstairs, cigarettes appeared and everyone lapsed into a more informal atmosphere, and the conversation went along and it was very pleasant.

We had Mr. Wiley Buchanan, who is the chief protocol man, to help us; he was at the big table. Taking the king upstairs wasn't on the agenda, but the FBI were there to guard his person, wherever it was.

Daniel: Was the FBI tucked into the drapery?

Sproul: Two of them were in the hall where they could look over the assembled group; not right in the room, but they could look over the small tables and into the dining room where the large table was. When the king went up to nap the chief FBI man said, "My goodness, where is the king?"

And my daughter, who happened to be close by, said, "Don't you know? Mother took him upstairs. He's lying down." I had spirited him away, right under the eye of the FBI. Because they weren't expecting him to disappear, you see.

That night after the dinner, my husband and I were playing dominoes, when the telephone rang. Someone asked if I were going to be home. I said, "Yes." I was told that the king's messenger would come out with a small gift for me if I was to be at home. And I said that of course I'd be there. Three interesting gold bracelets were then delivered.

Daniel: Entertaining royalty sounds complicated. What about food?

Sproul: The state department will help. We were told what to avoid. We had grapefruit, avocado and persimmon salad, breast of chicken with mushrooms, zucchini soufflé, rolls, jelly, coffee, ice cream and homemade cookies. You are really pretty limited, you know, in the food business. If it's Friday, you have fish; if it's another day, well, there's chicken or mixed grill. In a home there's nothing sensational you can have for that many people; a hotel might do better.

At the last Charter Day we had Norman Archibald McCrae McKenzie, president of the University of British Columbia. The University of British Columbia had just had their fiftieth anniversary. We went up there and visited them for it. A number of people received honorary degrees, my husband among them. Mr. Dodge of Princeton, and the new prime minister of Canada, Mr. Diefenbaker, was another; a man from Cambridge, Sir Hector Herrington, and Lester Pearson received degrees. There were about eight people. The others were local Canadians.

Other Distinguished Guests

Daniel: What other distinguished University guests do you remember?

Sproul: Nehru was there. Never was the Greek Theater so filled with people. It was a golden autumn day. Everybody who could possibly crowd in came. Everybody wanted to see him. There was great respect for him. I don't know if it has diminished any. The people who came to deliver things would say, "I see you're having Nehru for lunch." The milkman, everybody. They were terribly impressed that a man of his stature was going to be here. We had a luncheon for him.

Daniel: Did Madame Pandit ever come?

Sproul: Twice. Once she spoke at the University, and I had her over for luncheon; also, she was in her brother's party when he came. His daughter, Indira Gandhi, came. She was his official hostess.

He's a wonderfully educated man, and well-read. My husband said something to him along that line. And he said he had

Sproul: plenty of time to read when he spent all that time in jail. I didn't get a feeling of being close to him. Even the king of Morocco I felt a little closer to.

Daniel: Did you develop a comfortable and easy way to carry on conversation with the broad range of guests at the President's House?

Sproul: I had definite ideas of my own on the subject. I think they had plenty of serious conversation with other people. And if they wanted to learn expert opinions about anything, I could produce the person to talk to them. But as far as I was concerned, being an expert wasn't my role at all. My role was to make them feel comfortable. I wanted them to have a happy time for the little while they were in my home. I just didn't go into world-shaking events. And I never wanted to talk to them as if I had looked up all my facts before I got started.

Daniel: You must have had a mental list of suitable subjects.

Sproul: I tried to. But I never felt that I had to start some serious subject.

Daniel: What's the safest and most responsive subject that you could produce?

Sproul: Well, most people liked to talk about their family and their children. For instance, just before the king of Morocco came, on the cover of Time there had been a picture of the oldest daughter, who had done much for women in his country. We could talk about her and go on to the other children. I felt the time was far too short to be very serious. They were people who were harrassed enough with the jobs they had. The little time they had with me, I wanted to be restful for them. You could talk about what they did when they were children--personal conversation without too many questions. You had to know not to steer into difficulties. Mostly, I found out that even the most serious-minded ones would just as soon have a little time off.

Lord Stamp was another pleasant guest who stayed with us. He came to give a lecture. He would wander around the campus with

Sproul: his camera and take pictures when the students came out at noon and at the end of classes. He didn't want a guide. Before he came I thought he might be cold and stiff, and that he might be difficult to entertain. But that wasn't the case at all. It was just the reverse. He just was delightful. Later he went back to England, and he was killed during the war. He was in an accident, something about a bombshelter in their home; he and his wife, some of his family, and his servants were killed. He was a big, warm, human man.

University Meeting Speakers

Sproul: The custom of University meetings started with President Wheeler. Having all the family together, you know. He was most successful at it, and always had interesting speakers. My husband, following his example, was anxious to do as well. Of course, we did have some wonderful University meetings. We had outstanding speakers. Halifax was one. And another one of the most jam-packed ones I've ever attended was when Carl Sandburg spoke. That was for a Lincoln's birthday meeting. Marian Anderson sang. Actually, the students were just about hanging from the rafters. That was a terrific meeting, and particularly appropriate for Lincoln's birthday. Sandburg came over afterwards and had lunch with us. He was another person who wanted to rest a little while before returning to San Francisco after the luncheon. He went upstairs to lie down in the guest room, and after he left and I went up there to see if he had really been comfortable, I found that he had taken the telephone book and put it at the end of the bed to put his feet on. He didn't want to put his feet on the bedcover. I thought that showed he was very well trained. Very considerate.

Another very popular University meeting presented Knute Rockne and John Dewey on the same program. This was about as big a contrast as you could achieve. Rockne was an interesting coach and speaker. John Dewey happened to be here at the time. I don't think it was planned to have those two on at the same

Sproul: time, but Mr. Rockne didn't want to speak for a whole hour, and Mr. Dewey was giving lectures on the campus. Nobody in his right mind would have planned it that way, I don't think. But it worked!

Daniel: The shah of Iran was here not too long ago.

Sproul: He came, and we had a luncheon for him. And I thought because he would meet plenty of dignitaries, I would have students. He wasn't an old man--he's youngish. I thought our boys on the campus, like the editor of the Daily Cal and the student body president, would enjoy meeting him away from a big public gathering. He was interested in skiing, so we got some ski enthusiasts. We had Joel Hildebrand, who is an old-time skier. Then we had Mr. Louis Alvarez, who is a very young professor and very outstanding. We didn't have any ladies at all. We had just young men, so if they wanted to ask him questions about his country, or if he wanted to talk to them about the University from a younger person's point of view, it would be a little more lively for him than the usual dignified older group. I thought it would be nice for him to relax. That day I didn't sit at the table. I just turned it over to Mr. Hildebrand. I put him at the head of the table. My husband was away. And I was on my own, so I did it the way I wanted to do it. I met him and greeted him, and all that. But I thought everyone would feel more free if they didn't have to consider me. I think it's nice to meet in a small group, don't you think so, and have a chance to say more than "how do you do."

Family Life

Daniel: In the President's House you wove official and personal activities through the warp of family doings. How did the children respond to the influences being added to their home life? Were they excited about moving to the campus?

Sproul: I don't think they showed very much interest in it. When we moved into the President's House I thought my children did need

Sproul: more training in department. I thought the first time the doorbell rang they would go scurrying to the front door as they used to in our own home. If the caller were Mr. Moffitt or Mr. McEnerney perhaps he wouldn't want to be greeted by a small boy. So I decided there had to be some changes in household procedure. They needed to be slicked up a little more, a little neater. So we got this Swedish woman.

Daniel: How did you get her?

Sproul: Well, I think Dr. Bill Donald recommended her.

Daniel: How would he have known about this, I wonder.

Sproul: Oh, she was kind of a practical nurse, you know.

Daniel: Oh, I see. Then she really wasn't a governess, in the usual sense.

Sproul: No, she was just supposed to keep them in line.

Daniel: A sort of nursemaid, really.

Sproul: They'd never had one and they weren't used to telling their troubles to anyone but me and they wouldn't go anywhere near her when they were in trouble. They said that every time they turned around she had them washing their hands, and she was making perfect sissies out of them. If they played football on the wet grass they had to wear rubbers, and so on. They didn't like it. They plain rebelled at that. I said, "All right, if you don't like her we won't have her. That's fine."

Daniel: How long did it take for them to rebel?

Sproul: Oh, I guess about two or three months. We didn't have her long. A very short time.

Daniel: However, you needed assurance that you wouldn't be embarrassed. You discussed this kind of thing with them?

Sproul: Oh, sure; I said, "This house isn't like our other house and you don't have to answer the doorbell. There's somebody here who'll take care of that. And if you're not presentable, you'll please keep in the background, just disappear. If you want to meet people, that's fine, but you've got to be presentable. You have to represent the University of California

Sproul: well. And if that's not what you're feeling like doing, just please keep out of the way."

Daniel: What about their rooms?

Sproul: I assigned them. I'm a great assigner, anyway, so I decided. Everything in our house was assigned, more or less, on the basis of what was best for Papa. The children just fell in with this program.

Daniel: Did you place them where they would be rather apart from the main centers of social activity?

Sproul: Exactly. And what would work out best for the john. They came out third, mostly, but they were young. And they were going to live in a very beautiful house when they really got adjusted to it.

Daniel: How did they respond to their new environment?

Sproul: At first, they felt somewhat bound by a lot of rules. My youngest went out one Sunday afternoon and bounced a handball against the campanile. He thought it was a lovely place to play handball. A police officer came and told him that he was sorry, but he couldn't play ball there. A few things like that irked them in the beginning. Later, the regents gave us a tennis court down the road and we put a basketball stanchion on it. They could play there. And then they played badminton and football in the garden. That was a little hard on the lawn right near the house, but on the other hand they had to have some place to play. There were no neighbors to visit. There was nobody, no neighbor's house.

Daniel: How old were they?

Sproul: My daughter, Marion, was thirteen. Bob must have been about ten. And John was six.

Daniel: Did they have to change schools?

Sproul: No, they continued at the same schools.

Daniel: Were they driven to and from school?

Sproul: There were streetcars. We bought tickets, tokens. And even John, at the age of six, went by streetcar over to Emerson. Marian was in Willard. Bob was in Emerson, too. All of them went through Willard Junior High School.

Sproul: Our place was always full of boys. It was a novelty for our boys' friends to play football and baseball on the campus and they came in large numbers. It wasn't too easy to bring girls there. So we thought maybe, Marion being an only girl, boarding school might be good for her. She went to high school at the Dominican convent in San Rafael.

Daniel: She boarded, of course.

Sproul: Yes. She'd come home once in a while. After Willard, Marion went to Miss Ransom's in Piedmont until it closed. She went there only six months, but she had such good instruction that she did almost a year's work. So she picked up about six months. She went to Dominican for two years.

Daniel: Did you regret Miss Ransom's closing?

Sproul: I think it was even nicer, in a way, for Marion to go to the Dominican convent, because she boarded. There were many girls there and to this day she has friends she met there. She had Wednesdays off, and I met her every Wednesday in San Francisco. That was fun for both of us, unless she had a dental appointment. [Laughter]

Daniel: How did you happen to choose Dominican? There was Castilleja in Palo Alto, a boarding school.

Sproul: Marion said, "Mostly problem children go there, Mother. What is wrong with me--why send me over there?" I'm only kidding. Sometimes children from broken homes go there. But I thought boarding school would be very good for her, I really did. I happen to be a Catholic myself, and while I never went to Dominican, I knew of it. I knew it had a high scholastic standing. I knew that she would get good training. I also thought it would be a lovely experience for her to get to know nuns. I am very devoted to nuns. I think they are wonderful people. I thought that if she wanted to come to the University of California, to college, it would be fun for her to go to a girls' school. Especially a girl who had no sisters of her own. I thought the environment was so quiet and so serene, it would be a nice little period in her life. And that it would do her a lot of good. My husband looked up the record of the

Sproul: Dominican, and he thought they had very good, high scholastic attainment. She was very happy there. In fact, I think she would like to send her daughter there when the time comes. She thought it was a great experience. I think all told, it worked out very well. She was with a group she would not have met anywhere else and I think it's such a privilege. Those two years, from fifteen to seventeen, were just a lovely time, really.

These Wednesday meetings gave me a lot of time to be with her. First we had to take care of the dentist, and the doctor, and that sort of thing. When we got through with that, we'd go shopping, or to lunch, or to a good movie. Then we'd go to the ferry building and put her back on the boat. I'd come home and she'd go to San Rafael. It gave us a lovely time together. I had the whole day and we could discuss anything away from all the rest of the people. Anything that bothered her, or anything else we could talk about. This was good for an adolescent.

We didn't want the children to go away to school if we could avoid it. The President's House was their home and we wanted to know their friends and plan their parties for them. When Marion graduated from Dominican she came to Cal. All the children went to the University at Berkeley. Even while we lived on the campus they all went there. Bob graduated from Harvard Law School and John from Boalt Hall.

Daniel: The children did not have an exaggerated position in the household?

Sproul: No. They were simply children, a part of the whole family. And within reason we handled their grievances if we could do anything about them. For instance, we modified our position about that governess we had for them. I used to say, "I'm perfectly willing to listen to you. You can tell me anything you want. And if I can fix it, fine. If it's something we can't do anything about, why we just have to let it go." They really fell into a very good routine. The house was well arranged. It had a nice back stairway. Any time they came home late, or were dirty, they could go up the back stairway. Any time they wished, they could avoid coming

Sproul: through the front part of it at all. It wasn't long before they came to love the place because there was so much to do. John could barely get home from school fast enough to go over to the different playing fields to watch practice. It was an entertaining place for boys. I don't say it was so good for Marion, but it was perfect for the boys. Every Saturday afternoon they would see what they could do about getting their gang in without tickets to the athletic events. They had a couple of tickets and they kind of spread them out. People were always very nice to them. In fact, they were unusually nice to them.

Daniel: There weren't as many possibilities of entertainment for Marion?

Sproul: No. And there weren't so many possibilities for her to learn the things a girl is supposed to learn, like cooking and making up her room and that kind of thing. She got in the way of the upstairs maid, or she got in the way of the cook. They didn't really want to take time to fuss with her.

Daniel: She was thirteen. She had had some experience before this.

Sproul: Oh, yes, in our other house, of course. She didn't do much cooking, but she took care of her room and did dishes, things of that sort.

Daniel: She had probably had a household assignment?

Sproul: Oh yes, everybody had something to do, like raking the leaves or watering. Those jobs weren't available in our house on the campus.

Daniel: What did you do, just drop their doing this kind of thing altogether?

Sproul: Well, Bob had a paper route. He had had one before we moved on the campus and then he had one when we were on the campus. But the children didn't have as many things to do as they had had in our other house.

Daniel: Was this a concern to you at the time?

Sproul: No, I wasn't too much concerned with that. The only thing we were ever terribly concerned about was their studies. We felt these other things could be handled. We'd go away in

Sproul: the summer, for instance, without anybody. Then everybody in the family had to do something.

Daniel: Where did you go in the summer?

Sproul: Echo Lake. We had our cabin and the boys had to do certain things. But the President's House just wasn't set up for that kind of thing, you know. By the time you have an upstairs maid and a downstairs maid and a laundress and a cook, there aren't many chores left for the children. But this didn't seem to be a handicap to them in the President's House. They had a lot of things that took up their time and they had a lot of time to play.

Daniel: What did you expect of them in school work?

Sproul: Good work up to their capacities. I didn't want them to be lazy. But if they couldn't do good work, they weren't pushed. But if they could do it, there was no point in being lazy.

Daniel: Did any of them display particular talents when they were young?

Sproul: Not specifically. My husband tried very hard to make college professors out of the boys. But they didn't take to it. He used to have graduate students take them for walks and see if they could interest them in geology and the different sciences. They liked the walks and the people, but they didn't seem to develop interest in the subjects. We didn't try to tell them what to do. Mr. Sproul thought maybe if he had subjects introduced to them he could excite their interest.

Daniel: What are their vocations?

Sproul: They're lawyers, both of them. They had perfectly free choice in law schools. Nobody told them where to go.

Daniel: What interests did Marion show?

Sproul: Marion's interest was in English. She was an English major, a very serious and a very good student. She made Phi Beta Kappa in her junior year. She got a master's degree in English. She's always been a serious student, very conscientious. I've always felt that she might have had more

Sproul: fun, maybe, if she hadn't worked so hard. But, on the other hand, what she did was a rewarding experience. She was determined that nobody whose class she sat in would think she got a good mark on account of her father. She was overly conscientious. She would have gotten by, I think, with a little less, but she had firmly fixed in her mind the idea that nobody would say that she had favors on account of her father. Whereas the boys, well, it was all in a day's work.

Daniel: What did she do following graduation?

Sproul: For a time she went to work for International Business Machines. During the war she went down to Lima, Peru, and worked at the American embassy for two years. That was a tremendous experience for her. That, I think, freed her personality, which was somewhat subdued. When she got out on her own in an interesting environment, she blossomed. Already she could speak French well, and she learned Spanish. The job was interesting, and the whole thing was a rich experience for her. She made a great deal out of her opportunity and did a good job. She was old enough; she had some maturity. Her good times in Peru made up for all those years when she worked so hard.

Daniel: Your feeling of responsibility, apparently, was oriented first to the requirements of the presidency.

Sproul: I used to say to my husband that I would hate to die on a Charter Day, or something like that, because I knew he would not have time to come to the funeral. [Laughter] That's all right; we all accepted it. Nobody in our family seemed to think it was unusual to meet the requirements of my husband's work.

Daniel: What about the separation of various levels of activity in your personal life? Did you continue to see the women whom you had known in your earlier years?

Sproul: Oh yes, I saw quite a few. Not as often as I'd have liked to. I kept up with some of the girls with whom I went to school in Oakland. Every once in awhile I would have them out to the house, because I thought they'd get a thrill out of seeing the President's House. And they did.

Daniel: What about your bridge-playing companions?

Sproul: Mostly, I met them after I got married and came to Berkeley. The group that I used to play with in Oakland I grew away from because I didn't have time. But the group I had in Berkeley were classmates of my husband. They made me an honorary member of the class of 1913 and generally took me under their wing, so that my activities were somewhat bound up with them. The very first group I somewhat grew away from, although I made an effort to see them every once in awhile. I didn't want to lose track of them altogether.

In Los Angeles there is a faculty bridge group with a few townspeople in it. They would select dates that would fall in the times I would be down there, and I used to play with them. If I ever go down now I try to arrange a time I think they are meeting. They're loyal friends.

Daniel: Did the children go to Sunday school when they were small?

Sproul: Oh, yes, they went every Sunday and were confirmed in the St. Clements Episcopal Church.

Daniel: Was Sunday school at that time a place where they learned about religion, or did they play?

Sproul: I think they played. I don't think the Sunday schools do enough of sticking to just plain religion. I think they ought to let the kindergartens teach children to play. I really do.

Daniel: If the children played in Sunday school, how did you make up this deficiency?

Sproul: I didn't, really, excepting by example. They accepted certain facts; that made everything work.

Daniel: You didn't introduce training in religion at home?

Sproul: No, I didn't. I figured it was the job of the church, the Sunday school. But on the other hand, I didn't make a study of what they were doing, and I didn't go and complain that I thought they weren't strict enough with them. I actually thought so, though. I don't think you need to do busy work when you go to a Sunday school.

In our neighborhood there were special Christmas activities. There was a very nice lady, Mrs. Dozier Finley,

Sproul: whose boy was a friend of our son, Bob. She had somebody come and play the violin for the Christmas story, which the children acted out. We used to make robes for them. They were wise men or something of the sort. There were also Christmas festivities at the church. I remember going to see a pageant at St. Clements in which John was a wise man. He came down the aisle chewing gum, which I thought was hardly in character. My children somehow developed religious feeling. They all go to church now as adults.

Daniel: Do they go to the same church?

Sproul: No. They've made some selection since they've become mature people. But they all go. I don't mean always, but I would call their attendance good. Occasionally they slip up. But they follow through with their children. Sometimes if the wives can't go, the boys take them. They see that the children get there every Sunday. That is really part of their household procedure. I believe in it thoroughly.

Daniel: You didn't ever teach Sunday school?

Sproul: No. And as I say, when my children were in Sunday school I didn't investigate what they were doing. I considered that was their work. And if they were going to make a success of it, they had better interest the children. I think they do their best, really.

I remember an incident about a little boy, not a member of my family, but a grandson of a friend of mine. The little boy's parents are Catholics. The grandmother isn't. She wanted to take him to her church. One Sunday when she was baby-sitting, she took this little fellow--I think he was probably about four--to her church. It was just like a public building to him. She said to him, "How did you like Grandma's church?"

And he said, "It's not a holy place, is it?"

It had no feeling of church to him. It was much more like a lectures hall.

Sproul: I am firmly convinced that I wouldn't want to raise children without religious training. I am positive of that. I think that's a very important part of anyone's development.

Daniel: What do you feel religious training brings to a person?

Sproul: I think that you have to feel that there's a Higher Power. And you have to strive to be as near perfect as you can. You can't do this all by yourself. Human nature is a little weak and frail. I think that one has great privileges and responsibilities and should be grateful, appreciate them, and not take everything for granted. With God's help you can accomplish a great deal. But you can't do it all by yourself. Even if you think you're smart enough to. You're lucky if you've been blessed with certain gifts. That's fine. But you didn't do anything to get them. You've got to use them, and use them well. A person may do nothing at all by himself, but with the grace of God and right direction, there is no limit to what a person may accomplish. A child who has effective religious training is not limited at all in what he may accomplish.

Besides, I think that religion opens up a whole field of literature, too, if you really want to make a study of it. There is such a wealth of it, it makes all your life richer and fuller.

Daniel: The Bible as literature has been avoided in primary and secondary schools.

Sproul: I can't understand it, myself. I'm not against it at all. I think it would be a wonderful thing just to have a little reading. You wouldn't even have to have a great discussion. There could be a small discussion. Most children growing up do not know anything about the Bible. And I think that's a terrible shortcoming. Such a lack of rich experience you could enjoy.

I remember giving John a Bible and telling him I hoped he'd take the oath of office of the chief justice of the

Sproul: United States Supreme Court. He still has the Bible, but he's a long way from taking the oath of office.

Daniel: I think it's quite a challenge to preserve your own ideas about children when you are forced into circumstances making demands beyond your control.

Sproul: My husband was wonderful in that regard, I must say. I'm sure the children would be first to say this. He never was too busy to talk to them, or to help them. They never stood in awe of him, and he never put them off. If they had something they wanted to talk about, they could.

Daniel: They didn't have to make an appointment.

Sproul: No.

Daniel: Well, literally, though, this could be true.

Sproul: There would be times when he was making a speech, when it would be, "Hush, you father is working," or something of that sort.

We always had dinner together. Breakfast was hit-or-miss, as it always is, someone always has to go early. But I was always around in the mornings. I got the children started. If I had to take a nap, I could do it while they were in school. I think you should be on the job to start people off. It's important to see that they get a decent lunch.

Daniel: Did you have much opportunity outside the period of your summer vacation to carry on purely family activity?

Sproul: Oh yes, on Sundays. When Marion was at the Dominican convent, we went over every Sunday. We'd take our lunch and to go Point Reyes and watch the sea lions, or we'd take a ball along the beach and have games. We always had a lot of games, and then we used to have Sunday night suppers. We rarely entertained on Sundays. We always went to church together. We continued that almost until we moved. The children could come, even though they were married. They didn't always bring their children. It would be just our children and their wives and husband. They were cooperative affairs--we'd make something and they'd bring something.

Sproul: Then we'd have buffet. The same person wouldn't bring the same thing every time. Somebody would be assigned salad one time, bread the next.

Daniel: Then you preserved a strong family feeling despite commitments to the presidency.

Sproul: Oh, yes, we had a strong family. Even to this day the children will talk about it. When they wanted a party or a dance, we would fit it in. We had a reasonable amount of entertainment for them. It was very well set up for their bringing people in for meals. We had a cook, and it wasn't like a normal household where the poor mother would have to rearrange everything. It was just a matter of putting another place on the table. We could have a lot of company at mealtimes. You could say, "Bring home anybody you want," and have no great problem in the kitchen. That really was very nice. And people liked to come. They liked to see inside the President's House. It was a novelty for their friends. There was lots of room on the campus. It gave them great freedom. We didn't have to worry where they were. They weren't confined. It was fine as far as automobiles went, in the early days.

They could also bring home people to stay. Marion had guests--we made much more of a point with it for her, of course, because the boys had more flexible athletic programs all day long. It was much more fun for her to have a girl friend come to stay. And that was no problem, either. There were certain very great advantages to living there. I would say they far overshadowed disadvantages.

One thing I do want to tell you. Those Sunday night suppers were really wonderful! Sunday was our day. We stayed home and enjoyed our family. We had wonderful Christmas celebrations, with the Griffiths family*and the Donalds* joining us for Christmas Eve parties. For years we went to one of the three places for Christmas Eve, and had a big Christmas party. We made the rounds, the three of us.

*Regent Farnham Griffiths; University physician William G. Donald

Sproul: In that way, our children were growing up with lots of children their own ages. They were never isolated. People think that when you live in the President's House you are kind of isolated, but we didn't think so. Each family had to put on a skit. And the Donalds were the cleverest ones of all. Dr. Donald was a wonderful actor, and once he put on something from Midsummer Night's Dream, and we laughed and laughed. The Griffiths and the Sprouls did all right, too. We'd have a big dinner first, and entertainment after.

Daniel: You alluded, briefly, to summer vacations. How were they planned?

Sproul: My husband didn't take a very long vacation, but we did go to the mountains.

Daniel: Did you stay away longer than he did, or did you go just as long as he did?

Sproul: He'd come back and I'd stay longer with the children.

Daniel: Did you vary your vacation time?

Sproul: We had to take them in the summer because that's the only time that Echo Lake is accessible.

Daniel: When did you acquire your vacation house there?

Sproul: We got the first house way back before he became president, in 1927, I think. We had that for quite awhile. It burned down in 1938. We thought we wouldn't rebuild; we'd find some other nice place in the Sierra and establish a new campsite. But every time we'd take the children to view something, they'd say, "Well, it's all right. It's a nice place, but it's not as nice as Echo Lake." So finally, in the end, we rebuilt in 1942 right where we'd always been. And now we all go, all three children; we take turns having it for part of the summer. You can get up in that area only from about the middle of June to about the middle of September. The lake begins to get low after that. In the winter you could go in by ski, but I don't ski. People do do it, and I think more and more our grandchildren will, because they do things up there that we never did. When we first went up we used to have a rowboat. Then we got a boat with a motor, so we could go down to the end of the lake more easily to get our supplies.

Sproul: Now they have a faster boat with a bigger motor, and they all water ski. My children didn't water ski. That wasn't done. But now the grandchildren all water ski. You have to go over two lakes, you see, but they're frozen. You can ski over them. You are so remote that if anything happened, it could be difficult to get out to a doctor, or for help. A friend of ours went up there with a girl. This child was tobogganing on a garbage can cover, and in some way she broke her leg. It was something to get her out across those two lakes.

Daniel: The people who go there must be very sturdy.

Sproul: They are. And they're peculiar people. If you like Echo Lake, you're a fanatic on the subject. There's no other place like it. And it's a beautiful spot. It hasn't been spoiled, because nobody can drive in there. You have to come across these two lakes in a boat.

Daniel: Who are your neighbors?

Sproul: Oh, we have very good neighbors. We have Franklin Moore (Dyke) Brown right next to us. On the other side of us there used to be a private camp, Mr. Frank Kleeberger's. Now it's a scout camp. All during the summer there is a doctor there. This is fine for the grandchildren. They're always getting hit with a rock, or something.

Daniel: When the children were grown, did you explore other areas in your vacation time?

Sproul: We did other things. We took the children to Yosemite one year, and we made that High Sierra trip; we packed into those camps. One year when my husband was going to collect some honorary degrees in the East, we took the car and drove across the country with the children. He got an honorary degree at Nebraska; we stopped there. Then we went on to New York and he got one at Yale. After the ceremonies were over, we toured New England. Then we put the car on one of the Grace Line ships and came home through the Panama Canal. When we got off the ship in San Francisco, we got the car again and drove home. Of course, that was a tremendous trip for all of us. We had never driven across

Sproul: the country.

Daniel: How old were the children?

Sproul: Marion was having her eighteenth birthday, so Bob would be fifteen at that time, and John about eleven.

Daniel: This was their first introduction to the rest of the country?

Sproul: Yes. To the East Coast. And of course while we were there we did Boston and Bunker Hill and Concord, and we went down to Washington and to the Smithsonian. We thought the children were old enough to get a good deal out of it. And we had lots of fun. Marion was already in college.

Marion went to Europe in 1938 for a year. We thought we would do the same for the boys, but then World War II came along and prevented it. They didn't get a trip, but we fully expected them to have it.

Daniel: You preserved family spirit in the course of your official life.

Sproul: Somehow we did. And of course we were very fortunate, too. Mr. Sproul's mother lived with us, and when we went away from home during periods we spent in Los Angeles, the children always stayed here. They were in school and we could not be yanking them out of school.

Daniel: Had she always been part of your household?

Sproul: No, she lived with us after her husband died.

Daniel: And that was when?

Sproul: She was sixty-two when she came to live with us, and she's going to be ninety next month. Twenty-eight years ago-- that was 1942--she came to live with us. It was about twelve years after we'd been in office.

Daniel: When you had outside commitments, she was always at home and head of the household.

Sproul: Yes. And she's a very interesting person, and a deeply religious person. A person with great strength of character. So they didn't go haywire when we left. The bars weren't down, and they didn't just "whoop it up," as they might have without her. She thought she had to be extra careful so

Sproul: that nothing would happen when we were away. Anybody who takes care of grandchildren watches twice as much as parents do. We were very fortunate to have a grandmother's help.

Daniel: Now that your children are successfully reared, it is safe to express some thoughts on rearing them.

Sproul: I think it's important that your children know you believe in what you're doing. Then they believe in it, too. And they don't want to let you down. That is about as important a principle as you can establish. I think after that, things fall in their proper place. Children have to know that you put first things first and expect them to, also. They must understand that you're not just talking, that you really mean it. That you're honest about it. I think that if you don't try to fool them, they really know and can see what's what. They know if you say one thing and do something else. They can size that up. But if you're consistent in your beliefs, I think that's the thing. You can't waver and change. It has to be a family principle. You don't want too many of them. You don't want to make them miserable with your ideas. You've got to allow them a certain freedom. Every once in awhile they may come to the borderline of getting into trouble, but then that's all right. They've got to learn, too. You can't always be letter-perfect. That would be stupid. I think two things here are terribly important: the kind of home a person comes from is certainly of prime importance, and then I think the kind of brains the good Lord gives you. Everybody doesn't have the same amount. There is a great deal of talk about the exceptional child. I agree with Abraham Lincoln; I think God must love the common people, he made so many of them.

Daniel: But parents often are ambitious for their children.

Sproul: Overly.

Daniel: They expect them to succeed beyond their capacities.

Sproul: I think that's just not fair, either. I think some people are

- Sproul: awfully lucky, even in their own family, they get most of the good traits of their family. And someone might get the ones that aren't outstanding. You've got to do something for them, too. I believe in encouraging the bright ones. But it all sounds like such competition. It all sounds like such a race. And we've got to race with the Russians, which is pretty terrible. Don't you think so?
- Daniel: Yes. Do you think we tend to underestimate our problems? Our movies almost always have a happy ending.
- Sproul: I think you have to know right well that everything in life doesn't come out that way. I think you might just as well be a bit realistic. I just don't think it does. For anybody, really. Lot's of things about the movies I don't like. I don't even like the Westerns. Because I think there's too much fun banging those guns. I think even though the good man triumphs, all the time they're having a whale of a good time shooting. Children learn that it's fun to shoot. It seems, at least, that they want to try it. And they try it in the strangest places! A fifteen-year-old girl, the other day. Whew!
- Daniel: Children eventually do meet situations which don't turn out well. It is important for them to meet them without being crushed.
- Sproul: I think so. And I think that people who are successful in our country are pretty much responsible for their children not being what they should be for the simple reason that the philosophy they've used is, "I've come up the hard way, and I don't want my child to have to do that." There they are, the executives of the leading companies all over the nation, having come up the hard way, many of them, and wanting their children to be successful without having to go through that training. They want to give their children everything. That's very bad. They are the products of one system, and they immediately reverse themselves when they raise their families. They don't want their children to do what they had to do. Maybe they shouldn't have to do so much of it,

Sproul: these children, but they could do some of it.

Daniel: In order to preserve energy for family life did you develop ways of avoiding excessive fatigue in the discharge of your official duties?

Sproul: Well, my husband was smarter than I was about that. He would say, "I can either do the social side, or I can do my work. You decide." Then I would relax, and let the social side slide, and then he would be after me for not being on my toes. He'd pick up the morning paper and see that somebody was in town, and then he'd say, "What are we doing for them?"

I would say, "Nothing."

Then he would say, "Well, don't you think we should?"

Then I would look dejected and think, now here's a place where I haven't lived up to what's expected of me. There was a constant struggle about this sort of thing all the time. You think you want to do things, and your husband will say you're killing him off. We finally developed a pretty good plan; we wouldn't go out successive nights. We would have a night in between if we could possibly arrange it.

Daniel: How have your activities changed since moving into your own home?

Sproul: I have a lot more official business to attend to because it comes right into my home and I don't have a secretary as I had in the President's House. She came every morning and when the phone rang she answered it.

My husband has a secretary on the campus, Miss Robb.

Daniel: But he isn't always there.

Sproul: That's it, then inquiries are made here, and there you are! In the other house Mrs. Allen took all the incoming calls from eight-thirty to twelve. That's the time the phone rings most. Now, this morning there has been one call after another. A woman wanted Ralph Bunche to speak after a meeting. Governor Brown wanted my husband to come to a meeting. This morning the house was a regular office.

Daniel: Is this official activity a continuous accompaniment to your life here?

Sproul: It seems to be. It takes up a lot of time. But it's interesting. And as long as you're alive you might as well be swimming! (Laughter) The Schilling office I worked in had several mottoes on the walls. One of them was "The live fish all swim upstream; the dead ones all go down." So you might as well get in there and kick. Other mottoes I recall were: "Worry is rust on the blade," and "Nothing great is ever achieved without enthusiasm."

THE UNIVERSITIES OF CALIFORNIA

The University of California at Los Angeles

Daniel: What about UCLA? When did you decide to set up house-keeping there?

Sproul: In 1936. At Los Angeles we set out to do a job which hadn't even been tackled before. Dr. Moore was growing old and his wife didn't like to go out to parties. She was a very nice woman and very brilliant, but she was older, and she couldn't take that pace. We decided that we would sell the University to the community. All over Southern California--not only Los Angeles, but Pasadena, just everywhere. You couldn't go in with a suitcase and out again. It just wouldn't do. We wouldn't achieve what my husband wanted to have done. So right after Dr. and Mrs. Moore retired, we moved down. They had lived in the house on the campus. I think it was called "University House;" that's what the house here is now called. It was partly furnished. The University had bought some drapes and some furniture, but Mrs. Moore had made the house look beautiful in her day with her art collection. She knew a great deal about art. She would buy the works of rising young artists when they were shown at the New York exhibits. So she had a collection of beautiful pictures. I think they went to the Los Angeles museum when she died. The house was lovely while she was there. After she moved out, of course, it was quite bare. My husband said it was up to me to furnish it, so that was what I did.

Daniel: Did you stay there an entire year?

Sproul: Oh, no. Before we lived in the house we used to go down for the summer sessions and rent an apartment or rent a house. We rented a house a couple of years while Dr. and Mrs. Moore were still living in University House. We went down quite a bit during the year and we'd take an

Sproul: apartment. After we furnished University House we actually stayed there only a part of every month. It would probably add up to about a third of the year and would largely depend upon the calendar of events. In those days the University commencement at Berkeley was in May. We'd finish completely up here in May and go down to do the same thing there in June. We would have a senior reception at the house, and use it just the way the house was used up here. For years we entertained at Los Angeles just as we did at Berkeley. We wanted to make Los Angeles feel that they were not different or separate, and that we were absolutely fair. What we did for one place, we would do for the other. Professor Paul Périgord was a great help at UCLA. He was a Frenchman who had been a captain in World War I, I think, a distinguished, interesting person, with a great deal of social grace. He knew many, many people. He helped launch us. He introduced us to townspeople. And he introduced us to Pasadena people. And he saw that we were invited to things and that we met interesting and leading people in the community. The first year we went down there we went out on a social campaign about every other night because the University wasn't too well known, and certainly we weren't, in that community. It was very pleasant, because it was fun meeting all those people. After awhile, people began to feel that we were part of the community. My husband was invited to join some of the leading organizations, and in that way he met the outstanding people. After awhile, having a house that was set up adequately for entertainment, we had dinner parties and teas. Of course all this started rather slowly and gradually built up. You don't just jump right into full-fledged relationships with people; you've got to turn up the ground a bit here and there and plant the seed. That's exactly what we were trying to do. There in Los Angeles we worked in a way we didn't have to here. My husband had been cashier, comptroller, and assistant

Sproul: comptroller. We were part of the social scene. But in the South we were unknown to most people. We had a lot of prejudice to wipe out because nobody from the Bay Area had ever lived there. Perfunctory visits had been made. The southern group really didn't feel itself a part of the University; my husband preached the gospel that it wasn't the university of a community; it was the university of a state. It was not the University of Berkeley, but it was the University of California. You had to sell them the idea that you were absolutely fair, that you really meant to build up their faculty, that if they did not get everything they wanted right away, it wasn't because you were holding back. That you had a long-range plan. That you meant every word you said. That you would get them the best people you could. And that in due time the faculty and facilities would develop. UCLA had just moved out there to a new site, and was building up the faculty. Everything was new. I certainly think it has developed. It has developed tremendously.

It started on the old normal school campus. Unfortunately, it was called the "Southern Branch." In 1919 my husband was on a committee for the Southern Branch. That was at the end of Dr. Wheeler's administration. He hadn't had any very active interest in what was just the Southern Branch.

Daniel: Dr. Barrows didn't have any special interest either?

Sproul: No. And Dr. Campbell was older. It was physically too much. By the time we came along more courses and more instruction were given and the place was growing. Then the great question came: where was the new site going to be? I think that was fixed in Dr. Campbell's time. I remember that Dr. Campbell, my husband, and Mr. Hart rode all over Southern California looking at various pieces of property. There was a place in Santa Ana, and a place on Palos Verdes. Finally they picked the present site. At first there were only two buildings, Royce Hall and the library. The curriculum was limited. It still was called the Southern Branch.

Sproul: That gave people a kind of inferiority complex. They didn't want to be a "Southern Branch." They had fierce local pride in their University. This exists not only on the board, it is very general. Most everyone feels a strong sense of competition.

Daniel: How many regents are drawn from the South?

Sproul: Oh, the regents are pretty evenly divided, I think. There are twenty-four; I think eighteen are appointed and six ex officio. They were a help in pushing for more representation. But it was the sort of thing that couldn't be pushed too fast, either. There was a great problem in giving people what we thought was good for them and at the same time going quickly without sacrificing standards. It was a real challenge. I think all the campuses are.

Davis

Sproul: Nobody had ever had any feeling like that down at Davis. I don't know why. I guess it's because it's not set in a city. You don't have all the pulls you have in a big city.

Daniel: What about faculty feelings?

Sproul: Well the faculty, I think, is always more interested in its work than anything else. It's the chambers of commerce and the alumni--

Daniel: The alumni at this time was quite well organized?

Sproul: Yes, it was. In some places it felt as if some people were getting all the plums, you know. I don't think Davis ever had any feelings like that. They never have felt neglected or estranged in any way. They knew they were good in their field and that's all they wanted to be.

Daniel: Were you tempted to spend more and more time in the South?

Sproul: We got so we liked the South very much. It was never a chore to go. And I think that's one reason why it went well. We didn't have to talk ourselves into going to Los Angeles. We liked the house and were very comfortable there. Finally I got so well adjusted there that I knew

Sproul: many, many people in the town, and liked them enormously. Even in the stores people would call me by name when I went to a place like Bullocks Wilshire. I traded there, and really did try to make an impression that we were not just visitors. We weren't just saying that this was a part of our life; it actually was so. When my friends here would say, "Oh, you have to go South again, isn't that terrible!" I would say, "Don't commiserate with me. I have a wonderful time." We were young in those days and had lots of energy; it wasn't too difficult. We got around and we really liked it. That was the whole thing in a nutshell.

Daniel: While you carried the good will of Berkeley to Los Angeles, could you bring back to Berkeley a deeper understanding of UCLA?

Sproul: Oh, I think so, and then of course I think the greatest help to understanding is the exchange of professors. A good many of them go back and forth, and I think that is very helpful.

Daniel: Was this true when you first went South?

Sproul: It was starting. And I think, as a result, relations among the faculty have become more cordial. Anybody who's really good in his field commands respect. Faculty members may disagree, but very generally they respect each other's scholarly achievements.

Daniel: Was Los Angeles different from Berkeley?

Sproul: The people at Cal Tech, the Millikans, were well-known and greatly loved, and they were doing in their own setting what we were doing at Berkeley. We felt just the same about Berkeley. We felt that was our home, and everybody knew us quite well. Up here there's a little more reserve. I think that comes from Mrs. Wheeler's New England pattern. Look at all those New Englanders! I can't mention them all offhand, but there were the Adamses and the Edwineses, the Gayleys---they were quite reserved.

Faculty people are marvelous. You could spend endless time with the interesting ones.

Daniel: This wouldn't be developing public support, though.

Sproul: No, not for a state university. The private universities widen their social contacts even more than do the public universities. You read about this sort of thing in the papers every day.

People say, "Why should anyone be generous to the University of California when the state provides so handsomely?" That's the great argument you meet all the time. You have to sell a certain piece of work that somebody's doing to somebody who is interested. Then he doesn't care whether you're private or public. It's what you're accomplishing; you have to have a faculty good enough to work on projects that will attract people's attention. They don't care then whether you're state or private; they're interested in what you're doing. You've got to work at it. It's a great matter of working, this public relations thing, I think. The University has a very nice endowment. That doesn't just happen. People are your main concern all the way through. And if you don't like people, that's just too bad. I've known some of my predecessors, some of the ladies, who were wonderfully interesting and nice people, but they didn't like people. One of these was a medical doctor and a great art collector, but she really didn't like people. She had a set number of parties that she thought she should have during the year, but when she did those she was finished. She didn't have a continuing interest, which was too bad. She was in the wrong job, that's all. She should have devoted more of her life to complementing her husband's work. A wife follows along in her husband's footsteps, which is, of course, all I did. My husband was the trail blazer. He set the pattern and it was all I could do to keep up, but I did my best.

Our time in the South was great fun because we were off on our own. We didn't have all the children and it was more like a holiday. We took them down for a football game sometimes in the fall if it came on a Thanksgiving

Sproul: weekend. We had Thanksgiving there quite a few times, so in every sense it was the home my husband wanted it to be.

Daniel: Did the University at Los Angeles have any relationship with people in the film industry?

Sproul: Probably there is more relationship now than when we were there because there is a much more highly developed theater arts department. This has been an important development, which has greatly expanded since our time. However, we did meet many movie people and entertained them. We just took them as people we liked, and invited them on that basis. We liked Joe E. Brown very much. He's always been one of our very good friends. He had a son who was president of the student body at UCLA, you see, and because he is such a personality, he would appear at rallies and at football games. That was very natural. My son Bob had to have a speaker once for something he was doing up here, and Joe came up and spoke. He's always a gentleman. He never tells any off-color stories. He's a perfectly delightful person. He has a nice family and is a fine man.

Some of the film personalities were our neighbors: Joan Bennett and Walter Wanger. They were very intelligent, nice people. We didn't circulate in that particular social group, not because we wouldn't have, but because we didn't have time. When you're in a University job you've got your own little squirrel cage to go around in. So you don't need another one! [Laughter] You can go frantically in that one if you really want to. So you don't feel slighted if you pick up the paper and find that somebody else has lunched on the movie set. I didn't care at all.

Daniel: There's a lot of money in the movie industry. Was any of it attracted to the University?

Sproul: Oh, yes. Marion Davies has given a great deal of money to the medical school. I'd have to check to know the exact amount, but she's been most generous. I think there is some wing, some building, which particularly interested her. Her

Sproul: interest was philanthropic; an idea took hold which appealed to her. We met her several times, and she was very gay and attractive.

Santa Barbara

Daniel: What sort of place is the University at Santa Barbara?

Sproul: It's a really lovely place. I think it has great possibilities. I think, though, that it hasn't yet come anywhere near realizing what it could become. I think that people in the town have to take hold more. The people in that community are not very public-school-minded; it seems to me that they are more interested in and tend to support private institutions. That's because of their background. They've grown up with their ideas. A state institution hasn't really caught their enthusiastic support.

Daniel: The standing of the University comes as a surprise to some people oriented away from tax-supported institutions.

Sproul: It comes as a great surprise to the people, but not to the faculties of Harvard, Yale, Pennsylvania or Columbia. Some people are skeptical about a state-supported university having such high standards. They rather look down their noses at it. It's a matter of leadership, too. In the case of Santa Barbara, I think the present young chancellor will push paths to the community in all directions. And I think that's going to be the first time in a long time that they have had a man and his wife who can embark on the job. Before that, Dr. Williams didn't have a home-- he was a very able man and a good administrator, but his home was really in Los Angeles and his wife would come up whenever there was a party or something--but it wasn't like living in the place. Now they have a new man, Dr. Gould, who is young and who will live in the community, put down roots, entertain, and relate himself and the school to the whole community. And I think it has exciting possibilities.

Sproul: It's a wonderful game. It's fun! I mean it really is! You have a certain amount of things that cheer you up, and you have some that make you very unhappy, that worry you and all that sort of thing, but on the other hand, if you like people, it's fun. You can't be pushing. You can't be a phony. You've just got to believe in what you're doing. It's never boring.

The students are at the University for only four years. And you do the best you can for each new group. You couldn't be tired or worn-out because that would be unfair. They're just starting out, so you have to be just as interested and eager for them. By the time they are gone, there's always that new group coming. They're always young, and you don't want to disappoint them, or let them down in any way. As long as you can keep up your interest. Besides, there's always somebody who has more promise, or that you have more affection for. That's bound to be. You just can't feel the same toward everybody. But at least you can do your best for all of them.

THE UNIVERSITY GROUPS

Students

Daniel: Which of the University groups particularly interested you?

Sproul: The Young Womens Christian Association. I've always been on the board.

Daniel: Was this an official thing, or was it because you were interested?

Sproul: I think I got on by virtue of my job. But I've been on since.

I went to a great many student things, of course. In the early days there were many sorority teas. We used to go out very often to fraternity or sorority dinners in the early days. They were smaller. And then there were faculty suppers.

Daniel: What did you do at the Y?

Sproul: I went to meetings. And I would take part in some of their activities. Not too extensively. In the early days we used to supply flowers for the cottage from the garden.

Daniel: Does the Y offer more than social activity?

Sproul: I think that the Y offers the university student many opportunities to meet interesting townspeople and faculty at a time when the students are trying to find themselves and something to do in life that would be stimulating and interesting. They have a chance to meet and talk to these mature and interesting adults.

Daniel: Do you think the Y offers something in addition to the student's relationship, let us say, to a sorority or a fraternity?

Sproul: Oh, yes, by all means. It's much broader. I think the others are good, too. I don't want to take anything away from them. But this gives them more depth, more reason for their being; it points up interests that they might like to pursue. And the people in the organization, the board, are

Sproul: so outstanding. It's a privilege to work with them.

Housing

Daniel: This university has been quite backward in developing housing for students. Have you any idea why?

Sproul: It was pretty slow, there's no doubt about it.

Daniel: What do you think the chief resistance was?

Sproul: I just don't know. I don't know whether or not it was money. It does take a lot of money. And of course there were a great many places all around besides the sororities. But then I think that that developed a lot as this university grew and you got many, many more students than you have places. Then you are absolutely faced with a problem. Before dormitories were built they had a pretty hit-and-miss arrangement, but it seemed to work fairly well.

Daniel: At one stage it was announced that a certain number of students couldn't enroll because of lack of living accommodations.

Sproul: I never knew about that. It seems to me that they always took everybody that wanted to come some way or other.

The Fernwald dormitories were built during the war and pointed up the need for student housing. I think that was just forced on them by sheer numbers, you know. The system before, while it wasn't perfect, seemed to be fairly adequate. Anyway, I think you have to feel a pressing need for something before you get action.

Daniel: What do you think of the dormitories along College Avenue?

Sproul: I don't rave over them. But on the other hand, how are you going to get eight hundred people in something? Four hundred, I guess, in each one. You can't stay low to the ground and do that. You can't have the proper rooms and parking places and everything else and keep the buildings low. I think they look like Rockefeller Center right now. But when they get more apartment houses and planting around them, I don't think they'll look as conspicuous.

Alumni

Daniel: While President Sproul was in office, there was an important public relations development which had to do with tours through the state.

Sproul: The alumni tour?

Daniel: Yes.

Sproul: This was one of my husband's most fruitful ideas.

Daniel: From the start of his work at the University, he had been active in alumni affairs.

Sproul: That's right. But I always likened my husband to St. Paul: he preached the gospel of the University of California up and down the state, in any little town, any place, always with the same amount of enthusiasm and sincerity. It didn't matter if his audience were way up in Weaverville with maybe only twenty-five people, he never gave a poor performance. In many of the little towns, women would cook the lunch because there were no facilities for big meetings. The church or a large meeting hall would be decorated for a nice party. He never thought of these meetings as just another occasion; he felt a responsibility to everybody who was kind enough to turn out to hear him.

Daniel: Did anybody from the University accompany you on these tours?

Sproul: Oh yes, we always took people, two or three, anyway.

Daniel: Who would you be likely to take with you?

Sproul: It all depended. They varied. They never were the same.

Daniel: Were there faculty?

Sproul: Always faculty who would be interesting to people away from Berkeley and who had something to say that was worth-while.

We never thought it was worth setting up a program unless it was done in the very best way. We always took some of our outstanding faculty.

Daniel: Perhaps distinguished persons whom people in the remoter areas had never had a chance to see?

Sproul: Yes, but whose names they might know. And to have that man come up and talk at a dinner or a luncheon made the University seem more real, and they got an idea of what you were trying

Sproul: to do much more clearly than they could by just reading about it.

It was a great privilege to go to all these little places. One year we went north, the following year we went south. The tour took just a week. They didn't hit all the towns. People would come from outlying districts to one place, perhaps to a union school, at Redding, Red Bluff, Marysville, or someplace. The alumni picked the towns to be visited. They developed the tours to stimulate interest in the University, to make people aware of what the University was trying to do, and then, I expect, to suggest that students come to it. The gatherings were never large enough to become impersonal. My husband would speak, Stan McCaffrey spoke for the alumni association--he was then the executive manager--and then maybe two or three outstanding faculty members spoke.

Daniel: Did you ever take students with you?

Sproul: Sometimes we'd take a student body president, sometimes a yell leader to lead the yells and songs. Community singing, you know, fills in time while people are gathering and being seated. It makes a lively atmosphere and imparts a youthful feeling. The yell leaders almost always had very engaging personalities. The people thought the meetings were fun. They weren't cut and dried; they were supposed to be lively. If we couldn't have given them a lift, it would have been a waste of time.

The alumni always had receptions. It was lovely. We met everybody, before or after the meetings. You had a chance to visit people's homes and see their pretty antique furniture.

The people we visited could get some idea of our personalities, and they wouldn't get these impressions in any other way. They have no idea what kind of a person you are if you don't get around to a place where they can see you once in a while. The meetings were immensely worth-while. There was always a question and answer period following the speeches.

Sproul: The people who had been sitting in these little towns nursing a grievance of some sort had a chance to speak out. If they had no grievances, they had a chance to say something nice.

Daniel: Can you remember any of the questions or comments?

Sproul: Not particularly. They were mostly about University policies, and the athletic setup. They loved to talk about athletics.

Daniel: Did they really care if the University had a winning team?

Sproul: Oh, they cared terribly! Oh, yes. If they didn't, they could just as well go to strictly professional games. Of course it is physically impossible to produce winning teams all the time. You might as well know that you're going to have a certain number of losses, I suppose. But, on the other hand, when the alumni drive in from a considerable distance to see one of our games, they want it to be a good one.

Faculty Wives

Daniel: Have we talked about the faculty wives?

Sproul: Oh, I can tell you a lot about them. They have always been wonderful. I really count them as my best friends. I really have enjoyed them. I never had any regrets or any unpleasant times.

-- They gave me a wonderful party on the twenty-fifth anniversary of my husband's work at the University. It was a luncheon at the International House, and Mrs. McMillan* wrote a skit about me and my whole life, and all the years I was on the job. Different people acted out my part as everyone came along through the job. It was full of sketches and songs and dances. It was a tremendous party and very thrilling! They put a great deal of work into it, writing the story, acting it out, and setting it to music. I have a tape recording of it.

*Mrs. E. M. McMillan, wife of Professor E. M. McMillan

Sproul: When we came to the University, the only group which faculty wives had was the college tea organization started under Mrs. Wheeler. They used to meet in Hearst Hall until the first Hearst Hall burned down. That was just social. After the University Section Club started, we still kept the college teas, and they are still in existence today. There are not quite as many of them. There used to be one a month in the early days. Then there got to be six in a year, and now there are only four. A great many people attend them. It's a chance to meet your friends.

The section club breaks the University down into small groups. And also, you don't see just the people in your husband's department. It gives you a chance to see other people. It also means that old and young are mixed up, according to what they like to do, according to their interests. If you like flower arrangement, why you belong to the flower arrangement section, and anybody who wants to can belong.

Daniel: Which sections have the highest attendance, do you know?

Sproul: I think the drama production has the highest. In fact, they are the only ones who have split up into sections one and two. Of course each section has a chairman. She arranges meetings during the year. The dues are nominal. It's a wonderful organization. There's an athletic, and there's a newcomers section. If you're musical, you can play or sing in a group. They meet in each other's homes as far as they're able to, unless they're too large. I think it's a stimulating and enjoyable organization for the women.

I used to start the faculty wives section club every year. While I didn't join any one section, I would have the opening party at the house. There was no other place large enough to do this. Then they'd organize for the rest of the year and meet in smaller groups in faculty homes.

The section club had a very active section in the early days called "SOS." It was a sort of service section. Anybody who was in any sort of distress, you see, could call on it. Faculty people having babies and needing layettes

Sproul: were helped, for instance. SOS branched out and did whatever seemed to be needed. I think it's changed its name to "Student Aid and Hospital Service."

PERSONS AND TOPICS OF CURRENT AND PAST INTEREST

Earthquake and Fire of 1906

Daniel: You don't date anything from the earthquake and fire. Where were you in 1906?

Sproul: I lived in Oakland.

Daniel: Were you very much shaken and so forth?

Sproul: Not too badly. Oh, the chimney was knocked down and it collapsed, and there were a few broken dishes, but on this side of the bay there wasn't so much.

Daniel: Did you offer shelter to anyone?

Sproul: We had a few second cousins who weren't very close. As soon as they were able to go back, they returned to San Francisco. They didn't want to live in Oakland. Some of them lived in districts that weren't too badly damaged. We were young, and we thought that it was terribly exciting. We could see the whole western sky all red for days. I had an aunt over in San Francisco, but I don't think she was burned out. We didn't have too much connection with it. Besides we had the store. We were busy all the time.

Daniel: Do you remember seeing the city when it was burned down?

Sproul: Oh yes! We went over. My mother took us.

Political Figures and Issues

Daniel: I have a hope that Catholic-Protestant antagonism might be dampened a little if Senator Kennedy is elected to the presidency.

Sproul: I would like to try a Catholic president, just to see that it can be done. And certainly the country can't go to the dogs in four years.

Daniel: You remember Governor Smith's candidacy.

Sproul: Oh, yes, I voted for him. I'm the only one in my family who did.

Daniel: It's my remembrance that it wasn't Catholicism as much as a lot

Daniel: of other things that defeated him.

Sproul: I think a lot of other things defeated him. When he talked on the radio they didn't like him saying "raddio" and every time poor Mrs. Smith did something, they had something to criticize her about. Senator Kennedy is polished and well-educated, graduated from Harvard with a degree cum laude-- or maybe more--and his father had been ambassador to the Court of St. James. I think lack of those things made a terrific difference with Mr. Smith. I think religion had something to do with it. It might have something to do with Mr. Kennedy before he's through. In certain parts of the country I don't doubt at all that it will.

Daniel: As a person he's very attractive.

Sproul: He's very attractive and he's very smart. He's got a past record to prove it. Up to now he's done very well. The fact that his parents are well-to-do, and that he has a bit of polish, won't hurt him at all. Without being snobbish, I think it's important. Mr. Smith was a competent person, and I think some of these external things weren't as important as people make them out to be. But on the other hand, he would have had, maybe, a difficult time in some ways. But I voted for him because I thought he had made so much of his life by himself. He was a first-class man with ability and character. And then I thought it would be nice to see, once and for all, if the Pope would move over.

Daniel: This ghost has to be laid, doesn't it?

Sproul: It doesn't have to be laid, it has to be put away forever! And why don't we get on with it? I thought that if we were not strong enough to survive a Catholic for at least four years there's something wrong with us. I like Mr. Kennedy very much.

I liked Mr. Smith's getting an honorary degree very much. It tickled me pink that a graduate from Fulton's Fish Market, so they said, was honored for his ability by Harvard University. Just like Mr. Truman's getting an honorary degree from Oxford. I liked Mr. Truman, too. I think that he's a

Sproul: good, forthright person. And I liked the fact that when his party was through with him, and really repudiated him, he did the job himself, and did it very well.

Daniel: Yes. He had great courage.

Sproul: Lots of courage. He's not a weak man. I liked him. Another thing about him: I never voted for him, but one of the things we liked about him was his nice family. Some of his outbursts are, I think, unfortunate. But then, on the other hand, he's only human. Anybody can go off half-cocked once in awhile.

Daniel: Particularly about his only child.

Sproul: And she has settled down very nicely. I'm so delighted about it. Two nice little boys. You know she always said, when people were so distressed when she wasn't getting married, she always said that when she got married she hoped she would be as happy as her mother and father. And I always thought she was a good daughter, a dutiful daughter. She didn't go off and do things that would upset him. And she graduated from college. She did all the normal things right down the line. She certainly kept her balance. She was a very good, average American girl.

The Loyalty Oath

Daniel: This recording wouldn't be complete without comment on the loyalty oath.

Sproul: It was very trying, because my husband was so torn, you know, and so upset. And of course when he came home I wanted to ask a lot of questions, which was not very tactful, I learned later. He'd had all he wanted of it during the day. When he got home he didn't want to talk about it. I think it was very wearing for him. It was the hardest thing that ever happened to him. And I think it took quite a good deal out of him physically. You could see how tired and worn he was. But to tell you the truth, I guess I'm stupid, but I could never make head or tail of it. Sometimes I'd just be completely upset, and I'd be confused.

Daniel: There were many, many complications.

Sproul: And a lot of unnecessary unpleasantness that never needed to be. I think the whole thing could have been settled more quickly and with less friction, without compromising principle, if there'd been more good will on the part of a lot of people. I always felt that some day I'd get very old and very gray, and somebody would see me in the University Library and they'd say, "Who is that little old lady over there?"

The reply would be, "That's Mrs. Sproul."

The voice: "What on earth is she doing?"

And then I'd say, "I'm trying to find out what the loyalty oath was all about."

It was just something! It started out harmlessly enough. It was after the war, and the whole country was hysterical. We were just a cross section of what was going on in the country and the rest of the world. We got caught up in it. It got to be so wordy; everybody had to have their say. It gathered momentum as it went along. I thought it was very confusing, and of course I was upset because I thought it was doing things to my husband. I couldn't do anything about it. I couldn't even talk to him about it because he wouldn't talk to me about it. He had talked so much about it to everybody else that he wanted me to keep still on the subject, and to talk about something else.

Daniel: It must have been difficult to be comfortable--

Sproul: --with everybody. It really was. Because you couldn't help-- my reactions are quick, anyway. If something comes along that I don't like, I don't have a good poker face. It was difficult. But I tried to go about my business anyway, feeling I had nothing to do with it. I resented the effect it was having on my husband. And all for what, I thought. And of course my husband was in a terrible state because the last thing on earth that he wanted to do was to harm the University. That was what was breaking his heart. He didn't care what happened to him so much; but he didn't want to have anything damage the University. That was what was disturbing

Sproul: him.

It was to do away with the charges of the legislature that there were commies here, you know. These witch-hunting people. And nobody thought anybody would mind taking an oath and saying that they swore allegiance to the country. A lot of the professors didn't mind. They were in war work and they did it every day of the week. Some of them couldn't see what the fuss was all about. And then, of course, there were others who, on matter of principle, didn't want to be asked to do something that nobody else was asked to do. You would think you had it all settled and then some other person would upset the whole thing. It was too wordy, as I see it. And too complicated. I used to pray that the University would come out of it without too much damage. And I think it has. I suppose it's left a scar--everything leaves a scar. But on the whole, I think it's survived the experience. It's certainly something to have in back of you. You wouldn't want to go through another one. And it was too bad, I think.

Of course I always looked at it from my husband's point of view, hardly from anybody else's. I used to think it was too bad to have more than twenty years with no big clouds on the horizon--I don't mean no problems; of course there are always problems--but no big black clouds, and then to have all your difficulties in the last eight years, or less. I think that is a little hard. Well, you're older, and maybe you're wiser, I don't know. It was certainly a very unsettled time. Everybody thought that there were communists under practically every chair.

Daniel: Did you remember the intensity of feeling about communists after the First World War?

Sproul: Well, I wasn't as aware after the First World War because it didn't seem to affect me much. I got all mixed up in this, though. That's why I think this was more intense. But I was younger, and it seems to me that the other blew over more quickly. At least it wasn't so stormy in our own particular lives.

Good Times

Daniel: Looking back on your experiences, we have had to consider a number of problems. Let's look back now and put down some particularly good times.

Sproul: There were many of them. The first exciting time was when we found out my husband was going to be president. The real truth is, I never thought about his being president. We had a nice house, and I was quite content. He could be vice-president, as far as I was concerned, for the rest of his life. That was quite exciting.

The student rallies, I think, are exciting. I think the students always, if you have their confidence and affection, are tremendously exciting. When my husband was offered the bank job, there was a big student rally.* The students came around to the house with their placards. I saved some. It was great fun. Students are young and lively. It was the first student rally we ever had. And I think the first one you have is always the most exciting. There were quite a few after that, but that first one was really something.

We had a wedding in the house, too, you know. Marion got married in the house. It was right after the war, in 1945. The boys got married in the East. My husband was in Russia. Marion was engaged. She wanted to wait until her father came home for her wedding. She was the last one of the three to be married, but she was married in the same year as the boys. We planned it according to the way Mrs. Wheeler had said a wedding should take place in that house. She always said the house would lend itself to a wedding and she had thought it all out. That was exciting.

Daniel: Isn't that interesting! There hadn't been a wedding during her time?

Sproul: No, but the Barrows girls, two of them, I think, were married there. Nan was, and I think Betty was. I don't think Ella was.

*March 9, 1939

Sproul:

We blocked off the front door, suspended a big velvet hanging over it, and placed the altar there. The procession came down the stairs to the altar. The people were on either side. We used the side door and the garden gate as house entrances.

Miss Isabella Worn of San Francisco did the flowers. She used autumn colors of gold, russet, and brown in maple leaves and chrysanthemums. Potted Japanese maples, really big ones, were placed in the hall corners. The altar was massed in chrysanthemums.

Before we began to plan the wedding decorations, I asked Miss Worn if she had ever been in the house. She said that she had decorated the house when the Wheelers had entertained Theodore Roosevelt.

I remember another exciting and memorable experience. This happened at an earlier time. In 1932, when the Olympic Games were in Los Angeles, my husband was asked to make the opening speech. And he said we could all go down. We would rent an apartment. That was in the summer. The children were quite young. I said, "Heavens, why do we want to go to an athletic event? We see athletic events morning, noon and night!"

"Well," he said, "you don't see the Olympic Games!" He insisted I was wrong, and talked me into that trip, and I was very glad I went. We had a marvelous time. I just had thought the idea of taking the three children and renting an apartment was too complicated. But it turned out that everybody had a wonderful time. My husband made the opening speech for a most impressive ceremony. A messenger comes with a flame from Greece, a runner with a lance. That's the way it was there, anyway. And all these prominent men, including my husband, in silk hats and striped pants and Prince Albert coats marched around in the stadium, came to a certain place, and stopped. Then my husband spoke, and opened the whole Olympic proceedings. Oh, it would have been so silly to have stayed away! We went to all the events: the swimming, the running, the races, oh, we saw everything!

Sproul: I don't think my husband had a silk hat at that time. We rented that. He'd only been president two years. But he did have the striped pants and the Prince Albert coat. It all seemed a mighty effort, but it was worth making.

Daniel: There was one occasion which must have been new and exciting for you: the republican convention in 1948, when your husband was a delegate.

Sproul: I didn't have sense enough to go to that. I thought I had to stay at home. I could have gone. I decided he would be busy; but that's one of the places I made the wrong decision I think. The first and only time in our lives. That was too stupid. I would have had something else to remember that was fun, but I cut myself off.

Daniel: Did you watch him making the nominating speech?

Sproul: We didn't have television. I heard it on the radio. This is the first television set we've ever had right here, now. I've always regretted what was a very short-sighted, silly decision on my part. I don't know what I was thinking of. It came just at the end of college, in the summer along about June. It's the time of the year when we go over the house, and all that kind of thing; I thought I had other things I could do while he was gone. But that's no way to live. I shouldn't have done that. I've had to learn to change my point of view, because it's foolish to have set ways.

Daniel: Although you were not in this one exciting experience with your husband, you were always with him for a different kind of excitement during football season. Did you look forward to the games?

Sproul: I'm no student of football. I couldn't tell you the fine points to save my soul, and I don't go to professional games because my heart's not in it. I don't care who wins. If I didn't care who won, I don't think I'd go across the street to watch football. But I do care when Cal's playing. And I think football is a tremendous spectacle; especially in the California stadium, where you can look at the beautiful

Sproul: hills. I love just sitting in the stadium on Saturday afternoons. I've gone for so many years, I would feel as if somebody had cut off one of my arms if I didn't get up there. Now I go with my grandchildren. They sit in the same place my children used to sit. In the north end. When you walk out of the stadium with the band playing "One More River to Cross," and the sun setting right behind the campanile, it is an excitement hard to beat.

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SARAH ELIZABETH SPROUL, 1870-1965SPROUL'S
MASTER
COPY

with notes

RETURN
TO EGS
TMJ+B

Sarah Elizabeth Sproul (Grandmother Sproul) was born on February 6, 1870, in New York City, New York. She died in Berkeley, California, on February 2, 1965 - four days shy of her 95th birthday.

Grandmother Sproul was a woman of great energy, wit and spirit, who retained these qualities to the day of her death. Two days before she died she was still moving through life, day by day, with extraordinary purpose and drive, which did not diminish perceptibly during the latter twenty or so years of her life. On Sunday morning, January 31, 1965, in her room at her son Gordon's home at 31 Tamalpais Road, while getting herself dressed and ready for church, she slipped, fell and broke her hip. She died two days later in Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley.

The following is a story of Grandmother Sproul's life, as she told it to me from memory during the summer of 1962.

Grandmother's forebearers were of Welsh-English stock. Her father was John Moore, born in Bentley near Crewe, Staffordshire, in 1831 and her mother was Sarah Ann (Griffiths) Moore, born in Herefordshire, England, in 1832. There were four children in the John Moore family: Charles William, the eldest, who died in 1873 at age 6; Grandmother Sproul; Catherine Ann, who was three years younger than Grandmother; and Harry Charles (Uncle Harry), who was five years younger than Grandmother. The John Moore family left England and came to the United States in 1867, three years before Grandmother was born.

One of Grandmother's favorite stories had to do with her paternal grandparents. Her paternal grandfather, William Moore, was also born in Bentley, Staffordshire, in 1782. By trade, William Moore was a gardener but, as luck would have it, he fell in love with and married Elizabeth, the granddaughter of the local Squire of the village of Bentley. Elizabeth's parents had died when she was very young and she lived with the Squire. The Squire was violently opposed to the marriage and took the customary course in those days and sent Elizabeth to the Continent to see if she could forget about young William Moore. The cure did not take, and, after the marriage, the Squire cut William and Elizabeth off without a cent. Nonetheless the union flourished and William and Elizabeth were to have thirteen children, among them John (Grandmother's father) and his twin brother, Charles, who were the youngest.

Although Grandmother never saw her paternal grandparents, she always considered that her grandmother, Elizabeth, was a lady of some substance and considerable education: Someone who gave the family a touch of class and a bit of gentility. Grandmother's father, John Moore, told her that William and Elizabeth were legally entitled to a large portion of the Squire's estate but that they had insufficient funds to fight the matter through Chancery. Thus, the Moore family, at an early date, was able to successfully avoid the problems of great wealth.*

Grandmother's maternal grandparents were Welsh and had come from the village of Mahumplef, Wales. Sarah Ann Moore's father was a farmer who raised Welsh hogs. He married an English girl and moved to Herfordshire, England, where in 1832 Grandmother's mother was born.

Grandmother's father, John Moore (son of William Moore, the gardener) was an apprentice shoemaker. He was a tall, easy-going, good-tempered man with, in his later years, the beard of an Old Testament prophet, who liked to read Shakespeare and who also liked an occasional nip to the distress of his white-ribbon wife and daughter. In England he worked in a store mending and resoling shoes. John Moore came to the United States in 1867, following his twin brother Charles, who had preceded him to this country. In the United States John Moore worked briefly as an employee in a New York shoe store before moving West. As noted below, John Moore moved to San Francisco in 1874. He was killed by a cable car on Market Street on a foggy night in 1903. He was 72 at the time of his death and had been retired from some ten years.

Grandmother's mother, Sarah Ann Griffiths, moved from Herfordshire to Staffordshire, at Bentley in England, after her marriage to John Moore. She was as small as her father was big, but she was active, spunky, capable and determined. She kept the team of John and Sarah on course and she contributed her share to Grandmother's various attributes. Like her husband, she was a devout member of the Church of England. Grandmother's mother died in San Francisco in 1914 at the age of 82.

* Note to Grandmother's heirs: Although Grandmother staunchly believed in it until the day of her death, the claim against this estate is believed to always have been without merit. The Squire no doubt employed the best legal talent available.

Enough of this parental background (all as related to me by Grandmother Sproul at the age of 92).

Grandmother Sproul, our subject, was, as we said, born in New York City in 1870, three years after her parents' arrival from England. In 1874, when Grandmother was four years old, the family left by ship for San Francisco. The voyage from New York to Panama was via one of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's steamers. When they arrived at Colon, the passengers were transported across the Isthmus to Panama City by rail. On February 26, 1874, the Moores left Panama City on the Pacific Mail Steamship Company vessel, the COLIMA. On March 15, 1874, the COLIMA lost a propeller and was forced to anchor at the Cerros Islands off the coast of Mexico, about 90 miles south of San Diego. The COLIMA spent eleven days at the Cerros Islands before it was towed away by another vessel, the ARIZONA. During the time they were marooned on the island they were short of provisions and water but, according to Grandmother, they suffered no real hardship. As a four year old, she said she thrived on a steady diet of beans. The COLIMA finally arrived in San Francisco on March 30, 1874.

On his arrival in San Francisco John Moore opened a shoe store on Folsom Street, between Sixth and Seventh. At this store he both sold new shoes and did shoe repair work. He bought most of his shoes wholesale from manufacturers but he made some shoes on the premises from raw leather. Grandmother's mother ran the store and did the bookkeeping. This latter chore was complicated somewhat by the fact that the store had credit, as well as cash, customers. First the Moore family lived in rooms behind the store; later they moved to space next door to the store; and still later lived in various houses in the Folsom Street area. John Moore's shoe store was near Columbia Square and the neighborhood at the time was primarily residential. Uncle Harry, the youngest of the Moore children, was born in San Francisco, in 1875, a year after the family arrived.

So it was that Grandmother Sproul settled in San Francisco in 1874 at the age of four. Until she was married some fifteen years later (in 1889) she lived with her parents at various houses in the Folsom and Howard Street area. The last separate residence of Sarah Ann Moore was on Tonningesen Place, from which she was evacuated at the time of the earthquake and fire of 1906. Thereafter she lived with one or the other of her daughters. Grandmother Sproul went to Franklin Grammar School in the area and graduated at the age of thirteen: This was to be the end of her formal schooling. One of the big events of Grandmother's schoolgirl years was in 1883, when

the teacher took the whole class to Woodward Gardens to see General Grant. Grandmother stood by the road with her classmates as he passed, vigorously waving an American flag.

Grandmother did not go to high school because her mother preferred to have her stay home and learn the arts of cooking, crocheting, button-hole making and housekeeping. Once a week a lady came in to help Grandmother with her English grammar. While Grandmother was a teenager, her mother also sent her over to Mrs. Sheen, the local dressmaker, to learn to cut dresses, hem and do expert needlework. Grandmother, however, took to none of this and flatly told her mother that she "didn't want to earn a living as a dressmaker". While she told her mother she did not like sewing and would never be any good at it, after she married she became expert and derived tremendous enjoyment from sewing and needlework until her eyes failed her in later life. Grandmother was particularly good at making ladies' hats, quilts and Boy Scout tents.

Grandmother had a girlfriend, Belle McDonald, who was a typesetter and, at the age of 16, Grandmother went to work at a printing job on Clay and Sansome Streets in San Francisco. For the first three months she worked as an apprentice without pay. Grandmother worked at the print shop for three years from 1886 to 1889, until she married. The shop printed a monthly magazine and it was her job to set type and proofread. Grandmother told me that she loved to set type and, although it was tedious, the proofreading was a major part of her education. The regular hours on the job were 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., six days a week - Mondays through Saturdays. When the deadline for the magazine came around, however, the typesetters had to work until 10:00 p.m. at night. All type was set by hand and put into galleys before it was run off on the presses. The material was set in the galleys first, before it was proofread. Each day she walked to and from work with Belle McDonald from Seventh and Folsom Streets to Clay and Sansome Streets.

Family life in the Mission in the days of Grandmother's youth (1874-89) was simple and uncomplicated. These, of course, were the days before the automobile, the radio, the movies and the television. Because her father ran a one-man store, the family ~~never~~ took regular vacations. Once a year the family would go with friends for a week or ten days down the Peninsula to Mountain View via horse and buggy. When he was old enough, Uncle Harry went along on these excursions with his parents, Grandmother and her sister Carrie. At an early age, however, Uncle Harry tired of these outings and preferred to stay home and play ball at Columbia Park. Also, when Grandmother was a girl, a Scottish friend of her parents,

like from home

a Mr. Howell, took Grandmother and her sister on weekends to Mill Valley, via the Sausalito Ferry and the train. Mr. Howell, was also the proprietor of a shoe store in San Francisco. When Grandmother was still in Franklin Grammar School, a neighborhood gathering place for the young set was Sommers Bakery. Mr. Sommer had four children who were friends of Grandmother. (One of Mr. Sommer's daughters married Mr. Martin, Grandmother Wittschen's brother.) When Grandmother was a teenager, a really big evening of fun and excitement was to go to the house of a friend and dance the Virginia Reel. Usually these friends did not even have a gramophone and the music was provided by the piano. Her best friends in the neighborhood were Molly Wissand (the daughter of the saloonkeeper) and Genevieve Tichlingberg (whose daughter, Laura, was later to run off with a married baker).

Grandmother's parents did not have a horse and buggy so, wherever they went, they walked or took the cable car. Grandmother's parents also could not afford baby-sitters so, whenever the family went out together, it was quite an occasion: Most family entertaining was done at home. The Moores had a piano at their home between Seventh and Eighth on Franklin Street, and Grandmother's girlfriends would come in, sing songs and play games. The only parties that Grandmother could recall in her youth to which boys were invited were birthday parties in the afternoon. In her teens, Grandmother's social life centered at the United Presbyterian Church (on Mason Street between Eddy and O'Farrell), where there were games and plays for entertainment, but no dancing. The First United Presbyterian Church was the center of all religious and social life; most of one's friends were also members; one met one's husband or wife-to-be there: It was a living thing, not a place to go on Sunday. Even in her youth Grandmother attended church twice on Sunday and every Wednesday night, a practice she did not abandon until forced to by circumstances near the end of her life. Grandmother's sister, Carrie, belonged to the Eastern Star and, according to Grandmother, she had a little broader and gayer social life. Uncle Harry was, in those early years, pretty well involved, full-time, in baseball.

Every Monday evening Grandmother's father would take the three children to the Palance Hotel to listen to the concert in the Garden Court. On the way they would buy a bag of candy at Townsends on Kearny Street near Market. Her mother would usually not accompany them on these trips because she was too busy keeping the books and tidying up the store after its 8:00 p.m. closing time.

Grandmother Sproul was married on October 8, 1889, at the age of 19 to Robert Sproul, a native of Glasgow, Scotland. At this point in our notes we take a long excursion in order to record what Grandmother had to tell us about Robert Sproul's background and ancestry. Robert Sproul's life and family background were so much a part of Grandmother's life that this excursion is essential.

The first Robert Sproul was Grandfather's grandfather, who was a stone cutter in Glasgow, Scotland. The second Robert Sproul was Grandfather's father. He was a short, sandy-haired man and not much of a talker - rather cold and brusque. When asked the time by a fat man on the train, his only reply was: "If you ate less, you could afford a watch." When a fishing companion used all of his own bait and began dipping into Robert Sproul Sr.'s, he said: "Do that again and I'll cut your hand off." His only known hobbies were fishing and playing the violin. Grandfather's father had come to New York and worked for wages in the construction business when he was very young. Then he returned to Scotland and married. Grandfather's father always wanted to come back to America but his wife would have none of it. Grandfather's father then started a business of his own in Glasgow - Robert Sproul & Sons - and engaged in the construction of brick and stone buildings in the area of Glasgow and Cambuslang, including the building of Beulah (The Happy Land), his own home at Cambuslang, in the environs of Glasgow.

Grandfather's mother was Agnes Allan. As a girl she had worked on a farm helping her mother. Grandfather's father, Robert, had gone there to repair the farmhouse and it was there they met. Agnes Sproul was somewhat of a poet. In later life she had wanted to visit and take a look at America, particularly after Grandfather and Grandmother Sproul were married. (She had some idea that Grandmother was an Indian, with dark skin and braided hair.) Agnes Sproul died in 1895, while Grandmother and Grandfather Sproul and their young son Gordon were in Scotland.

Grandfather Sproul was the eldest of the seven children of Robert and Agnes (Robert, Janet, Alberta, Helena, William, Victor and Oliver). Grandfather was born in 1864 in Glasgow but, when he was very small, the family moved to Cambuslang. The Sproul family of Cambuslang, during Grandfather's youth, was always comfortably well-to-do. They had a nice home, some day help, and the girls did not have to work.

Grandfather's six brothers and sisters were a truly mixed bag and I only asked Grandmother for a brief, thumbnail sketch of each of them:

- (a) Janet - Janet, the second eldest (after Grandfather), was well educated at private school and then returned to live with her parents and never married. After her parents' deaths she lived with her sister, Helena, for a time at the family home (Beulah) and then the two of them moved to their brother, Oliver's house to live with him and keep him company. Oliver's house was called Glenfruin (Vale of Sorrows).
- (b) Alberta - Alberta taught school for a few years and then married Robert Gilmore, who for a time was Oliver Sproul's partner in the business of Robert Sproul & Sons. Alberta lived in Cambuslang until her death and had two daughters and two sons: One daughter is now a doctor.
- (c) Helena - Like Janet, Helena never married but stayed at home with her parents until their deaths and later moved in with Janet to help Oliver keep house.
- (d) William - William in his youth came to America to look it over but returned to Scotland when his mother died. (He also came back to find out what was going on between his brother, Victor, and Willie's girlfriend, Maggie.) After his return, he worked for a bank in Glasgow. William was musical and at one point in his career he won a gold medal as the best baritone in all of Scotland: He also played the organ at church. While still a young man, he left Scotland and emigrated to Australia.
- (e) Victor - Right after school Victor went to the United States but he didn't particularly like it. He came to San Francisco in 1891 (three years after Grandmother was married) and there he met a British ship captain who offered him passage back to Scotland. Once back in Scotland, and while his brother Willie was still off in the United States, Victor went to see his brother's well-to-do girlfriend, Maggie. Victor married Maggie secretly and his mother died before she knew of this turn of events. After his marriage, Victor, in 1894, decided to go back to the United States and San Francisco and Maggie followed him so that she would not be in Scotland when Willie returned. Victor finally ended

up working for the Oceanic Steamship Company as the Manager of its office in Sydney, Australia. Grandmother never liked Victor, partly because of this business with Willie's girl and partly because she thought he put on airs and sometimes led her husband astray. That meant that when Victor came to San Francisco in later years he would take his brother to his hotel and they would have a drink or two together, which was definitely contrary to Grandmother's principles and wishes. However, Victor also had a sense of humor and he always brought Grandmother a box of peppermint candy, a flavor he knew she detested.

- (f) Oliver - Oliver, the youngest son, was sent to school in England. Following graduation, he went to work in his father's business, Robert Sproul & Sons, and in due course took his brother-in-law, Robert Gilmore, into partnership with him. According to Grandmother, however, Oliver was a very conservative businessman and Gilmore finally left the business and started a competing construction company of his own, which prospered. This was the start of an interminable Sproul-Gilmore family feud which is still carried on to this day. The Gilmore-Sproul feud included never speaking to one another, although they lived in the same suburb. When members of the U. S. branch of the family visited relatives in Scotland, they had to do it separately. The one visited first would take you by the house of the other and leave you on the curb. Oliver stayed put in Cambuslang and has never visited the United States. His delightful daughter, Agnes, however, has made two visits to this country in recent years, likes the place and will be back again soon. Oliver's son, William, works in the Eastern U. S. and is now an American citizen.

Robert (Grandfather Sproul) was the eldest of the seven children of Robert and Agnes, was raised in Cambuslang, and went to college at the University of Glasgow, where he received his teacher's certificate. Grandfather Sproul wanted to be a physician but, first, a bank failure affected the family finances and slowed down his career: Robert was forced to teach grammar school in the country to support himself. He did not like teaching, and as he did not have the money to continue on with college, he decided to go abroad. He tossed a sixpence to decide whether to go to the United States or to New Zealand - and, as fate had it, the United States it was. Grandfather was 23 years of age when he left Scotland for the United States in 1887.

Grandfather Sproul had planned to go to New York but, on the steamer crossing the Atlantic, he met another Scot who was going to San

Francisco. He got to thinking of Robert Louis Stevenson's stories of Western America and of Horace Greeley's advice, "Go West Young Man", and decided to go along with his new friend to San Francisco. He was also an incurable romantic, who would have liked to live in the open - the west was the open - a vocation for which he had little aptitude except a gentle nature and a love of the outdoors.* Grandfather Sproul had a letter of introduction to yet another Scot in San Francisco, a man named John Marshall. Marshall turned out to be a stalwart of the United Presbyterian Church, and he immediately signed Grandfather on as a member. Shortly after his arrival in The City, Grandfather went to work for a British insurance company and boarded at John Marshall's home.

About July 1888, at church, Grandfather's Scottish friend introduced Miss Sarah Moore to the young man who had just arrived from Scotland. The friend asked Miss Moore to see that the young Scot met some of the other young people at the church. Grandfather decided immediately that he didn't care about any of the other young people, only Miss Moore. Grandmother, however, was just 18 at the time and both she and her mother felt that she was too young to marry. During their early courtship, Grandmother had many dates with other young blades, which drove Grandfather to distraction. Mostly Robert and Sarah went to church affairs together but, occasionally, their social activity broadened to include plays and concerts. Finally, Grandfather decided to go away for a while and see if that would do anything to get the reluctant Miss Moore moving. He was planning to go to Canada but on the way north he took a job as a clerk in an office at a sawmill outside of Portland. Grandfather Sproul spent six months in Oregon and then came back to San Francisco. Absence did, indeed, make the heart grow fonder and Sarah and Robert were married on October 18, 1889. John Marshall was best man and Grandmother's sister, Carrie, was a bridesmaid. Uncle Harry was 14 at the time and had a minor role in the festivities. Grandfather was six years older than Grandmother.

In 1889, when Grandfather Sproul returned from Oregon, Dr. Gibson, the Minister at the United Presbyterian Church, got him a job as a clerk at the 4th and Townsend Street office of the Southern Pacific Company. Grandfather remained employed

* Some years after his marriage, Grandfather tried to make one break for a wheat farm in the Pacific Northwest. This threw Grandmother into tears because she knew he was not fit to be a farmer and because she was afraid it would disrupt her plans for educating her two sons.

by Southern Pacific all the rest of his life and retired, still as a clerk, in 1927, at the age of 63. His pension was \$60 per month.

In October 1889, the newlyweds moved into a three-room apartment on Stevenson Street, near 20th and Valencia Streets, back in the Mission District. After fourteen months they were forced to move as Robert Gordon Sproul, Sr. (always called "Gordon"* by his mother) was about to be born.

On May 22, 1891, Gordon was born in a small bungalow on 29th Street between Sanchez and Noe Streets. For the first three or four months after Gordon was born, Grandmother lived with her mother.

Next the Sproul family moved to a rented flat on 13th Street and lived there for about a year and then moved to yet another address in the Mission, where they stayed until they left for Scotland in 1893.

Janet had told her brother, Robert, that his mother was not well and that she wanted very much to see her first grandchild (Gordon) before she died. His mother also wanted to get a first-hand look at Grandmother and see what kind of a girl her eldest son had married. Therefore, in 1893, when Gordon was only two years old, Grandfather obtained four months leave from the Southern Pacific Company and went to Scotland. As it turned out, he was to stay in Scotland a year and eight months. When he got to Cambuslang he found that his mother was determined to keep her promise to help him financially and have him finish medical school and become a doctor. Grandfather Sproul took up her offer, applied at Edinburgh University, and was one of 17 out of 85 to pass the entrance examination for Medical School. This was a full seven years after he had received his teacher's certificate. Grandfather went back to school again, bought the books and commenced his work at Edinburgh University. Grandfather's father had no sympathy whatsoever with this project, but he did permit the San Francisco Sprouls to live with him at Cambuslang. Shortly thereafter, in 1895, however, Robert's mother died and his father refused to give him any further financial assistance: His father still felt that the correct and proper thing for his eldest son to do was to stay in Scotland and go into the family business, Robert Sproul & Sons. Grandfather saw only trouble ahead and, as his motto was "Live and Let Live", he left the University of Edinburgh and Scotland and went back to the United States and the Southern Pacific.

* Name given name because of common given

*He returned to California from
the Office of Economic Cooperation
in Washington, D.C. - where he may
have worked at that time to
help reconstruct the
the mind of the people.*

When he came back to San Francisco in 1895 he only had a small amount of money which he had left in a San Francisco bank. He had to start again at the SP at the bottom and, as we noted above, he stayed at the SP until his retirement in 1927 on account of ill health. At the time he retired he was still a clerk (but today he would be called a statistician - assuming the job has not been replaced by a computer). He was in the Freight Auditors Department and, each month, he made up "the estimate" of the need for and the location of freight cars, a tremendous job which meant that for a few nights every month he worked at home as well as at the office. To the day he retired he was earning a living for his family but not living the life he wanted for himself. Yet, he was nearly always of good temper and spirit and derived great pleasure in simple things. Grandfather Sproul, like many another Scot, became a good citizen of the land to which he emigrated, without losing his love for his native land. To his sons he talked of Scotland, told Scottish stories and recited Scottish poetry. He even found one thing in which Scotland excelled California - the quality of its turnips.

From 1895, when they returned from Scotland, to 1910, when they moved to Berkeley on a permanent basis, Grandmother and Grandfather Sproul lived in the Mission (except for a brief two-year period between 1897 and 1899, when they made an initial, abortive try at living in Berkeley). When they first returned to San Francisco, Grandmother and Grandfather Sproul (and the four-year-old Gordon) lived for a short time with Grandmother's parents. Then they started a bewildering succession of moves, until they finally settled in Berkeley in 1910. (It was Uncle Harry's steadfast claim that they were always one step ahead of the rent collector.) The original Sproul family home in the Mission was at 233 Clipper Street (between 25th and 26th and Noe and Sanchez) and later at 4165 20th Street, between Castro and Noe. Next they rented a flat on Valencia Street near Dolores, again in the Mission. Then, when Victor Sproul decided to move to New Zealand, they rented the house where he lived. This house was on Henry Street near the Franklin Hospital. The Robert Sprouls' second son, Harry Allen (always called "Allan") was born on Henry Street on March 9, 1896, five years after Gordon. When Allan was one year old, the family moved on to Lappage Street in the Mission. Gordon was six at that time and he started school at this address.

*the
see at
more
from

William
Bruce
Douglas
Paine
Kates*

The United Presbyterian Church continued to be the center of the family's social life. On occasional weekends, the family would take trips down to Hunter's Point to visit their friends, Mr. and Mrs. Stone. Mr. Stone was a boat builder of some talent and fame. The Stones also had a small ranch at Mountain View and the family could go there on weekends by train, and walk the hills and the surrounding countryside. The Stones also invited the Sproul family for trial cruises on the yachts and boats built by Mr. Stone near Hunters Point. On one of these trips they went to California City, near Inverness. On occasion, Grandfather would also go for a row on the Bay with his friend, Mr. Stone.

Almost every Sunday afternoon the family went to Golden Gate Park to hear the concerts at the bandstand in the afternoon, after church and the noon meal. On trips of any length the family would travel by streetcar.

Grandfather Sproul was a prodigious reader. Before he was married he also used to paint but did little thereafter. In the evening Grandfather would help Gordon with his Latin and Greek, at which Grandfather excelled. Quite often other boys in the neighborhood would come over to the Sproul house to visit. The Sproul boys would play baseball and a variety of other games in the middle of the street and in vacant lots in the area with the neighborhood gang. During this period, from 1896 to 1910, when Gordon and Allan were growing up, the Hurry boys (Aunt Carrie's children) and Clare Torrey were frequent visitors and playmates. At an early age Gordon had a morning paper route, on which Allan assisted, and this required their leaving the house at about 4:00 a.m. Allan, in fact, holds the distinction of having been a paper boy both in San Francisco and Berkeley. The Clipper Street house in the Mission had a good garden but Grandmother reports that the boys offered little assistance in that department. When President McKinley came to San Francisco, Grandfather Sproul took Uncle Allan to hear him speak. Later Teddy Roosevelt came to town and Gordon was taken to hear his oration.

During this period in the Mission, between 1895 and 1910, Uncle Harry, Grandmother's younger brother, was very much a part of the scene and this chronicle would not be complete without some mention of him - He was a very large part of Grandmother's life and that of the entire Sproul family. As noted above, Uncle Harry was born in San Francisco on March 9, 1875, and was four years younger than Grandmother. Uncle Harry never wanted to go to high school and, at the

age of 14, he went to work for W. J. Sloane & Co. as a messenger boy: Uncle Harry was to work for Sloanes for the rest of his life. In 1909 he was transferred by Sloanes to Portland, Oregon, and had the Pacific Northwest territory for the company, where he sold rugs and carpets at wholesale. At about 28 years of age Uncle Harry married Bessie Bailey in San Francisco and they were married for about ten years when she died. In 1915 Uncle Harry married Aunt Martha (Moore) in Portland. Uncle Harry was one of the happiest individuals, greatest story-tellers and wildest practical jokers the world has ever known. He took on many of the attributes of his friends and business associates in the rug and carpet trade, who were Jewish merchants of the classic mold.

The Hurry boys, Jim and Harry, were also a major factor in the Sproul family life in the Mission between 1895 and 1910, although they lived in the Richmond District during most of this period. They were the sons of Grandmother's sister, Carrie: Jim was a year older than Uncle Allen and Harry was four years younger. Carrie Hurry's husband was in the real estate business in San Francisco. They were separated (or he departed) while Jim Hurry was still in high school and Carrie went to work to support the family. Jim Hurry got in two years of high school and then went into the insurance business with Glen Falls. Harry Hurry went on to graduate from the University of California, where he was editor of the Blue & Gold: Until his death he had a successful business career in Southern California. Carrie died at the age of 50, before her son Harry graduated from the University of California.

After this rather lengthy diversion, Grandmother again picked up the main thread of her story with an account of the Sproul family's first attempt at living in the East Bay. In 1897 the family packed up, left the Mission and moved to Berkeley. The prime reason for this move was the weather: Gordon had come down that year with the whooping cough and later pneumonia and they thought the climate in Berkeley might be an improvement over that in the Mission District. While in Berkeley, a girl was born on September 23, 1898, who did not survive. The family lived on Russell Street in Berkeley for a year and a half. However, Grandfather Sproul did not like to commute and they moved back to San Francisco and the Mission in 1899. While in Berkeley, Gordon went to LeConte School in South Berkeley. The Sproul house in Berkeley was in the fields on Russell Street just below Shattuck Avenue, adjacent to where the steam commuter trains ran. This venture aborted because Grandfather Sproul couldn't walk on water and he wanted to walk to and from work. He was a tremendous walker: It was, along with dancing, which he loved, his lifetime form of exercise.

On their return to San Francisco in 1899 the Sprouls lived in a bungalow on Clipper Street. Here Allan started school at James Lick Grammar School on Noe Street at 25th and both Gordon and Allan were to graduate from James Lick. At James Lick Grammar School Grandmother's main ambition was that her sons should win the boy's medal at graduation - the Bridge Medal. Gordon was done out of it by a boy who was repeating the eighth grade, whose grades were somewhat lower but whose deportment was a good deal higher. This left it up to Allan, who made it.

When Gordon went to Mission High School on 18th Street near Dolores in 1903, the family moved to 20th Street, between Castro and Noe, to be nearer the school. At Mission High, Gordon took Latin and Greek from Monroe Deutsch, who later was to serve under him as Vice President of the University of California.

The Sproul family was living at the 20th Street address at the time of the 1906 Earthquake and Fire.

On the morning of the great San Francisco Fire and Earthquake, April 18, 1906, Gordon was being kept in bed by Grandmother because he had a cold and Allan was out delivering the old morning Call with the help of the "boss" who brought the papers from the newspaper office. They were going up 18th Street with a one-horse, two-wheeled cart and a load of papers at about 5:00 A.M., when the earthquake struck. Later that morning, Grandfather Sproul, who believed that the only decent breakfast was a bowl of steel-cut oatmeal, cooked well the night before and heated for breakfast, was up heating the porridge when the equivalent of a fire warden came in to stop him, fearing that he might set fire to the neighborhood because all the chimneys were cracked and the stove was a wood and coal stove. The family was ordered by the warden to evacuate the 20th Street house and to go to the hills above Castro Street. At the time Grandmother's mother was living with them and they took their blankets and some rugs with them and fled. There were numerous fires in the area and the word was that they were going to dynamite the 20th Street block. From the top of the Castro Street hill they could see the fire advance through the Mission District, house by house. For a couple of nights the family slept in the open and, for several months thereafter, they cooked their meals on a stove in the street in front of the house. When they returned to their 20th Street home, much of the china in the house was broken, the chimney was cracked and the wood and coal stove could not be used - but the structure was saved. The firemen and volunteers were able to break the fire wall between 17th and 19th Streets in the Mission.

The year following the Earthquake - 1907 - Gordon graduated from Mission High School, in the Christmas Class. On graduation, Gordon was told by the Principal of Mission High School, Mr. O'Connor (known as Pot O'Connor), that "an empty barrel makes the most noise". This comment had nothing to do with his scholarship. It was while he was going to high school that Gordon, as one of many jobs, worked for a while as a lamp lighter, lighting the street lamps on Castro Street with a kerosene torch on a long pole. With his earnings, one of the things he did was to fulfill one of Grandmother's infrequent wishes for adornment - he bought her a fur piece which seemed to be the thing she needed least and wanted most, but would not buy for herself. (Grandmother, in spite of an upbringing that strongly stressed the virtues of frugality, simplicity and the evils of opulence, and in spite of the fact that she was married to a man who was temperamentally simple and plain, had a basic, underlying yen for luxury. While she thought jewels and furs were sinful, she would have loved an occasional fall from grace. Gordon at an early age must have perceived this trait in his mother's character. Throughout her life, Grandmother was treated by her two sons in a most unusual manner - almost as an older sister or as a contemporary. This was in marked contrast to the deference and respect the boys always showed towards their more austere father.)

After high school, Gordon worked on a survey gang (he had decided that he wanted to be a civil engineer) for a soldier of fortune named Charley McEnerney. McEnerney foresaw the need for surveying after the 1906 fire, granted himself a degree in Civil Engineering and set up offices in the Balboa Building at 2nd and Market Streets. Presumably his surveys have stood the test of time. This was San Francisco at its roaring best. C. L. McEnerney was high up in the Native Sons of the Golden West. At the time of the first Portola Festival in San Francisco, he was the Grand Marshal of the big parade. Gordon was a Deputy Marshal and Allan was aide to the Grand Marshal. McEnerney later took up finding "missing" heirs for his brother, an attorney, and ended up pleading insanity to stay out of jail.

In 1909 Gordon entered the University of California, commuting from San Francisco during his freshman year. Grandmother was determined that both of her boys should go to college because their father had done so before them and because both Grandmother and Grandfather Sproul had arranged their whole lives to this end, all the while living very well on very little. In those days, of course, for people like the Sproul family in particular, a college education was the exception rather than the rule.

In 1910 the family moved to Berkeley to stay and they lived in a house at 2223 Derby Street between Ellsworth and Fulton Streets. At the time of this move, Allan was in the ninth grade at McKinley Junior High School and Gordon was a sophomore in college. Grandmother and Grandfather lived for twelve years on Derby Street and then, in 1922, they moved to 1810 Rose Street in North Berkeley, near Garfield Junior High School.

In 1930, after Gordon's inauguration as President of the University of California, they went to Scotland, with a feeling of considerable accomplishment and pride, and stayed a year and a half. During this trip they visited Oliver, Janet and Helena at Cambuslang: Victor was still in Sydney, Australia, and William was in Melbourne. They traveled all over Scotland and also went to England and made a short visit to Paris. Grandfather took a rather dim view of Paris.

Grandmother was 62 years old when her husband died in 1932 and she was to survive him by thirty-three years. At her husband's death she still had one-third of her life to live and she lived it well. For twenty-five years she resided with her son, Gordon, and her daughter-in-law, Ida, until 1957, at the President's House on the U. C. Campus in Berkeley, and then moved with them to 31 Tamalpais Road in North Berkeley, on Gordon's retirement. The place and the circumstances under which she lived her last thirty-three years had much to do with Grandmother's continued zest for living and gave her a rare and unusual opportunity to indulge it. She had much to do with the day-to-day raising of three of her six grandchildren. Again, that rare and wonderful quality of Grandmother stood out: All of her six grandchildren treated her as an elder equal and found tremendous pleasure in her company. Grandmother also lived long enough to get to know all of her twenty-three great-grandchildren - and, what's more, they got to know her. She was able to see both of her sons reach highest levels in their respective fields in the United States and was on hand when they retired with full honors. However, the readers for whom this chronicle was prepared all knew Grandmother well during the last one-third of her life and they could tell this story just as well - although perhaps somewhat differently - as we could. Our purpose was merely to preserve the story of the early years and tell how she got there: This is, the story of how one lives for almost a century without running out of gas.

Grandmother was never a member of either the San Francisco or Oakland Junior League

Robert G. Sproul, Jr.
Robert G. Sproul, Jr.
2/1/66

* The names and dates of birth of the twenty three ~~grand~~ grandchildren are as follows:

Marion Goodin

5/14/63

IDA AMELIA SPROUL

I DID IT, I DID IT, DON'T ASK ME TO DO
IT AGAIN

by Robert Gordon Sproul, Jr.

Ida Amelia Sproul was born in New York City on March 22, 1891. At the time the family lived on Jayne Street near Washington Square, in the neighborhood of Greenwich Village.

Ida's father was John Wittschen, born in 1858 in Kreisgeestemunde,

*Kreis Geestemunde **

~~Christgestamunda~~, a little farming town between Bremen and Hanover

in Northern Germany. His parents were farmers. In 1875, at the age of 17, John Wittschen went to New York, where he had two aunts.

John had no formal education and, after his arrival, he did odd

jobs in New York City. Eventually, he purchased and operated a

grocery store. In 1884, at the age of 26, he married ^{Marie} Antoinette

Martin Wittschen (Grandmother Wittschen)** After their marriage,

they operated a grocery store together somewhere in the vicinity

of Washington Street in New York City. John Wittschen was a kindly,

gentle man, and most of his customers owed him money.

Marie

Ida's mother, Antoinette Martin Wittschen, was born in

New York City in 1857. Her father was a baker and she had one

brother and four sisters (Bernardine, Ida, Henrietta and Augusta).

* I think it was more of a village. The name means "near Geestemunde."

** Her family came from Alsace-Lorraine in one of its German phases, but the name is more French.

Until she was 13 she went to a convent school in New York City. When she was 13 her mother died and she went to work in her father's bakery. She was always a good businesswoman and, even as a young girl, she was most useful around the store. She also was an excellent seamstress and, when she got older, she had her own shop with two apprentices, where she made bridal trousseaux, shirts, truffles, etc. She gave up the dressmaking business when she married John at the age of 27 in 1884.

Grandmother Wittschen was a devout Catholic while Grandfather Wittschen was a non-practicing Protestant. They had seven children. Theodore Wittschen was the oldest, and he was followed by a boy and a girl who did not survive. Six years later Ida was born followed, in five years, by Ruth, Emma and Bernardine.

When Ida was six and Ted was twelve (and in High School), the family moved to Oakland. Grandmother Wittschen's youngest sister, Tina, lived there and was homesick. Tina lived on 32nd Street and was married to Uncle Clements, who was engaged in both the liquor and bakery business. He wrote to New York and said that Oakland was a city of opportunity and John Wittschen believed him - being a perpetual optimist. Grandmother Wittschen didn't want to go as she was a confirmed New Yorker. However, the family sold everything except a few wedding presents, packed up and came West. On their

arrival they rented a house at 29th Street and San Pablo Avenue in Oakland. Uncle Clements established John Wittschen in a saloon as a bartender. The job was not particularly good for Grandfather Wittschen and he only lived a year thereafter. He died in 1898 of kidney trouble* at the age of 40. At the time of his death, Uncle Ted was 13 and Ida was 7. Uncle Ted promptly quit High School and went to work.

Grandfather Wittschen left some \$2,000 in life insurance but, also, considerable debts for doctors' bills, etc. Grandmother Wittschen bought a flat on 32nd Street near Grove on a shoestring and the family lived on the lower floor, and the upper floor was rented. The lower floor had two bedrooms and Uncle Ted slept in the hall behind a curtain, with a bed and one chair, which doubled as a clothes hanger. Three girls were in one bedroom and Ida and Grandmother Wittschen in the other. To support herself, Grandmother Wittschen promptly returned to the dressmaking business. For two years she did sewing for the neighbors, making such items as shirt-waists for 75¢. It was time-consuming work and she was at it until late at night.

"NOTHING GREAT WAS EVER ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM."

Uncle Clements owned a store at 32nd and West Streets and, after two years, convinced Grandmother Wittschen she could make more

* Sometimes my mother says he had TB.

money, faster, in the grocery business. In 1902 she started to operate a grocery store at this location. A friend of hers, Mr. Charles McGregor, who later became a prosperous contractor in the East Bay area, persuaded her to build and move into a larger flat on the "build now, pay later" plan. Grandmother Wittschen bought a lot two houses away from the store and on this property she built two flats so that she could have some rental income. This new home was located on West Street between 31st and 32nd in West Oakland.

The store was run on a strictly "no credit, all cash" basis, and the four girls helped mightily in its development as a paying enterprise. Ida would open the store at 7:30 a.m.; Ruth would take over until school; Ida would take over after school until closing time, which was 7:00 p.m. At first the store was kept open on Sunday but later, as the profits rolled in, this practice was abandoned.

At the age of 13, when his father died, Uncle Ted quit Oakland High School and went to work for the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company. He delivered the telephone bills by bicycle all over the North Berkeley area, then a land of grass, bushes and trees, snakes and insects, all of which combined to make him miserable - either with stings or with poison oak. At night

Uncle Ted went to night school at Oakland High School on 12th Street near Grove. After finishing his High School work at night school, he went to White's Preparatory School on Piedmont Avenue and Bancroft Way, Berkeley. During this period he worked in the evening for the Oakland Transit Company collecting receipts from the late streetcars - a job that gave him plenty of time to study as he worked. His shift did not end until midnight or later.

After White's Preparatory School, Uncle Ted went to Hastings College of Law in San Francisco. This was Uncle Ted's own idea, without any encouragement from anyone else for he was, to say the least, extremely independent. When he was graduated from High School, Uncle Clements tried to get him into the baking business, but he flatly refused. As another example of his independence, he had become interested in the Presbyterian Church in New York, of which no other member of his family belonged. After Uncle Ted arrived in Oakland, at age 14, he remained a Presbyterian and his mother raised no objection, believing with him that a Miss Crocker, his Sunday School teacher in New York, had gotten him interested in reading and scholarship, as well as her religion, and that she had done him great good thereby.

After he left Hastings Law School, Uncle Ted went to work for a while for Miller & Lux as an attorney. Next, he worked in

the Alameda County District Attorney's office. Following this apprenticeship, Uncle Ted was an attorney with Snook & Church in Oakland for a period of ____ years. After that, he was the attorney for the East Bay Municipal Utility District and became an expert in Water Law. In 19__, ____ years before he retired, Uncle Ted was elected President of the State Bar of California.

Ida was seven in 1898 when her father died. She was eleven years old in 1902, when her mother opened the grocery store. At this time she went to Durant Grammar School at 29th and Grove Streets in Oakland. For two years thereafter Ida attended Oakland Technical High School, where she took a course in shorthand and typing. At this time Oakland Tech was at 12th and Market Streets in Oakland. Each day she would walk to and from school from 32nd and West to 12th and Market, a distance of about ____ blocks, or ____ miles.

There was plenty of work to do at the Wittschen household, particularly during the period from 1898 to 1902, when Grandmother Wittschen was in the dressmaking business. The girls helped around the house. However, the bulk of the work was done by Grandmother Wittschen herself. She did most of the cooking,

washing and ironing and she also made dresses and party coats for the girls.

Sunday was the big day off and everyone got all dressed up for church. On some Sundays they would go to San Francisco with Uncle Clements and see Tante Louisa who lived in North Beach. On such occasions, everybody would get a little red wine with water and sugar. Also, on the weekends Ruth and Ida would go to Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland to place flowers on their father's grave.

One of the Wittschen neighbors on West Street was Portia Charlotta Pine, an eccentric old maid who had a particular liking for Ida. She owned a nice little cottage with beautiful flowers and kept birds in the basement. Grandmother Wittschen liked her and she would often come over for dinner.

The girls would mostly travel in pairs: Ida and Ruth; Emma and Bernardine. During Ida's girlhood days on West Street there was not too much in the way of entertainment. The girls would sometimes recite poetry at home. By the time Ida and Ruth were in Tech High they also would play cards with a group of girls called "The Emeryville Poker Club". The girls also played on the basketball team, occasionally went to Neptune Beach, and were

members of the School Dancing Club, at the formal meetings of which Grandmother Wittschen acted as chaperone.

Both Ruth and Emma went to Oakland Tech but Bernardine went to Oakland High School. By this time Grandmother Wittschen had made money in real estate and decided that Bernardine could afford a more academic education.

While they were growing up, the girls used to go to Saturday matinees at the McDonough Theater for 50¢ and watch stock companies perform on the stage. Uncle Ted also took his mother or one of his sisters to the legitimate theater occasionally (not being interested in girls at the time). For a while Uncle Ted had a horse and surrey with a fringe on top, which he had bought for deliveries from the grocery store, and kept only for a short period of time. Grandmother Wittschen, in the evenings, would play whist with old friends and the girls would occasionally fill in. A major form of entertainment in those days were card parties, with refreshments, at the homes of friends and neighbors.

After Ida went to work in San Francisco, she would visit the San Francisco relatives on Sundays. Occasionally she would go out to the Cliff House for lunch. When she was working in Oakland with Father at the City Hall they would go to dinners, the theater and to Saturday and Sunday concerts.

A big event in the girls' early lives happened in the Spring and Fall when Grandmother Wittschen went to Taft and Fenoyer's Dry Goods Store and bought bolts of remnants, etc. The girls helped pick the materials and from these, Grandmother would make Spring and Fall dresses and underwear.

In December 1907, at 16, Ida was graduated from Oakland Technical High School. In March 1908, at the age of 17, she went to work for A. Schilling & Company in San Francisco^{*}, a well-known, still existent firm, which had been recommended to her by a friend. Each day she would go to the City on the ferry boats, which then ran from Oakland to San Francisco, with several girls; and thence to the Schilling offices, which were located at Second and Folsom Streets. Ida worked at A. Schilling for one year doing clerical work in the Credit Department. In 1909 she left Schilling to take a job with an insurance company as a steno-typist, and from which she was fired in six months - a fate she states she deserved. Thereafter she went to work for the Scovel Iron Store Company on Howard Street between Third and Fourth Streets, which made wheels and parts for farm machinery; again as a steno-typist. There she worked for two and one-half years, until Uncle Ted convinced her that it was a poor place for progress and that she should get a better job. The big event of the work week in those years took

* It is from the walls of A. Schilling that the maxims (on which we were raised) came, i.e., "Nothing great was ever accomplished without enthusiasm," "The live fish swim upstream, the dead float down," "Without vision a people perish."

place on Wednesdays, when the girls would go to the Midday Rest for Businesswomen, a lunch room run by the Episcopal Church, where the key item on the menu was a Charlotte Russe, a ten-cent dessert.

In 1912, Ida took the Civil Service examination for Oakland city employment, passed third on a long list of applicants, and went to work for the Civil Service Board at the Oakland City Hall. During all this period she walked to and from work, and went home to lunch on the Grove Street streetcar. From 1912 to 1914 she was the secretary for the Secretary to the Board, and spent most of her time typing eligibility lists for firemen, patrolmen, etc.

In 1913, Father applied for a position in the office of the Civil Service Board. He applied for the job along with a man named Willard Beatty and Mother made the choice between them. Father was employed by Harrison S. Robinson, Secretary of the Board, from the list who took the examination, to improve the efficiency of the Department. He also helped in getting up Civil Service examinations for engineers, most of which (he says) he could not have passed himself, although his U. C. degree was in Engineering.

During the latter part of this period Ida sat in the outer office and acted as a receptionist, talking to various people

who felt that their status in the Civil Service should be improved and superintended the checking of the classification lists for all jobs to determine when there would be an opening.

Ruth married Ross Taylor on December 1, 1914. He was the scion of a prominent Downeyville family. Ruth was the first to get married in the Wittschen family. Ruth had met Ross in Oakland, where he was studying Drama. In the summer he invited Ruth to Brandy City (near Downeyville) in Sierra County, where his father was superintendent of a mine.

Uncle Ted was the second member of the Wittschen family to be married and that was in 1914, when he married Alice Sanford. Ida was the next to marry, in 1916, and Bernardine, the last, in 19___. Bernardine married Bill Growney, who was then in the "gas business". Emma never married but went to work for Snook & Church after graduation from High School. During the war she worked at the Aviation School on the U. C. Campus for Captain (later General) Arnold. This started her career with the Army and Air Force, of which she became a well-known and beloved civilian member.

In 1916 Grandmother Wittschen sold the grocery store and with the money she made she went into the real estate business in West Oakland. She also received some income from Ruth and Ida, who paid for their room and board. From her activities in the real

estate business, Grandmother Wittschen made enough to live at home thereafter and even have a housekeeper. Mother married Father on September 6, 1916 - the greatest day of his life. Grandmother Wittschen made Ida's wedding dress, and took calmly* the intrusions of another Presbyterian into her family.

After they were married Mother and Father went to live at 1403 Grant Street near Rose in Berkeley in a small bungalow which they first rented and later bought. At the time of their marriage Father was living on Derby Street in Berkeley with his parents and his brother, Allan, and working for the University of California. His position was in the Cashier's Office, collecting student fees, etc. Shortly thereafter he became the Cashier.

Both Marion and Robert Jr. were born on Grant Street. In 1921, the family moved to Elmwood Avenue in Berkeley, where John was born in 1924.

Father started to work for the University in 1914 in the Cashier's Office. By 1920 (at the age of 29), he accepted appointment as Assistant Comptroller of the University, a position offered to him by Ralph P. Merritt, then Comptroller. In 1924 Father was made Comptroller, and shortly thereafter he became Vice President of the University (at the age of 35). On October 22, 1930, he was made President of the University (at the age of 39).

* well, somewhat calmly

At the time of his appointment as President, there were three Vice Presidents, Baldwin M. Woods, Walter Morris Hart and Father. His great sponsors at the time were Regent Guy C. Earl, who was the Chairman of Finance Committee of the Board of Regents, and Regents Garrett McInerney and James K. Moffett, with whom he had made his reputation as Assistant Comptroller and the University's representative before the State Legislature in Sacramento. He had gone to Sacramento early in 1919 when he was catapulted into this hurly-burly at the last minute before the departure of Comptroller Merritt to Washington, D. C., for national service.

In 1927, the family moved to Piedmont Avenue in Berkeley, where they lived for one year in the shadow of the California Memorial Stadium. In 1928, they moved to No. 5 Tanglewood Road in Berkeley, where they lived for 14 months. In 1927 they also built the cabin at Echo Lake. Also in 1927 Mother and Father took their first trip to Europe, spending two months on the Continent. When Ida and Bob lived on Elmwood, the Tom Putmans (he was a Professor of Mathematics and Dean of Students), across the street, were their great friends and ever-ready helpers.

Ida was initiated into the art of entertaining at the Grant Street home (where President Benjamin Wheeler, then in retirement, was entertained frequently). At that time, among

their faculty friends were the Kleebergers (Head of the P. E. Department), the Deutschs (Dean of the College of Letters and Sciences and later Vice President of the University), the Kurtzes (Professor of English), and the Ira Crosses.

When the Wheelers first came to the Grant Street home Ida not only cooked the whole meal but also redid the drapes in the living room on the day of the party. Mrs. Wheeler was a true friend, extremely helpful to Ida in the early days of the Sproul era. When she moved into the President's house in 1930, Mrs. Wheeler helped Ida put the entire place in order. Father made little sandwiches on this occasion, in the form of checkerboard squares,* just like a civil engineer, says his wife. Soon after the Crosses and the Wheelers, the entertainment routine ballooned to the point where most of the faculty had been guests.

Breaking in as a University President's wife was no easy matter for Ida, and she recalls vividly, as one of the most difficult experiences in her life, the first faculty tea at Hearst Hall. When she got there the lady who was to meet and introduce her arrived very late, if at all, and Ida, after waiting for what seemed like hours, finally went home scared to death and eager to have Father resign. He told her that she "had to" stick it out, and she did with ever-increasing proficiency for 27 years.

* He made these sandwiches on Grant St., not in the President's House.

Additional notes on I DID IT, I DID IT, DON'T ASK ME TO DO IT AGAIN*

Page 1.

Assuming Kreisgeestemunde does mean near Geestemunde, I have located Geestemunde on the map. It is not between Bremen and Hanover, but farther north.

The two aunts Grandfather Wittschen came to be with in New York were Bertha Wittschen and Catherine Wittschen. Bertha Wittschen was a lady's maid to Mme. Schumann-Heinck.

Grandmother Wittschen's father was named Bernard. Mom does not know her grandmother's name. Bernard had six children, Marie Antoinette, Clemens, Augusta (Gussie), Ida, Henrietta (Yetta), and Bernardine, in that order.

Page 2.

Grandmother Wittschen made ruffles, not truffles.

Her children were Theodore, Bernard, Henrietta (the latter two did not survive early childhood), Ida, Ruth Augusta, Emma Antoinette, and Bernardine, in that order.

Grandmother Wittschen's sister Bernardine (Tina) lived with (was not married to) and kept house for her brother, who was Uncle Clemens, who had five children and whose wife had died. His five children were Bernard (Barney), Oscar, Josephine (Josie), Augusta (Gussie), and Edward (Eddie). Josie is still alive (in 1963) and is Mrs. Joseph Solon. [note, here and elsewhere, there is no "t" in Clemens]

Page 3.

Grandfather Wittschen died in 1899, hence Uncle Ted was 14 and Ida was 8.

Page 4.

One of Mom's chores in opening up the store was to sweep the sidewalk in front. She still remembers how much she hated to do this, and how hard she tried to avoid it, because her schoolmates all walked past and saw her.

Page 6.

Grandmother Wittschen thought that all her girls should learn to sew. She sent them first to the mending and button-sewing class run by the good Episcopalian ladies of Trinity Church. (Grandmother was very pragmatic where religion was concerned, as is my mother.) The church that my mother points out as the one where she went is the little red painted wood church at 29th and Telegraph which now seems to be called St. Augustine's. Later Mom was sent to dressmaking school, briefly. It didn't take and she never sewed.

*notes provided by Marion Sproul Goodin.

Page 9.

It is the Scovel Iron Stove Co. I am not sure about that spelling of Scovel. I always thought it was Scoville.

When my mother went to apply at A. Schilling and Co. my grandmother went with her to make sure it was a proper place for a young girl to work. My mother's job at Schilling was to prepare the coffee for the tasters, who were all blind people. My mother admired these tasters enormously. In spite of their disability they all supported themselves, lived independently, and were cheerful and resilient. She kept in touch with them as long as they lived, and I can remember being taken to see them when I was a little girl.

Mom left A. Schilling at the insistence of her brother Ted who was more ambitious for her than she was for herself, and who furthermore felt (justifiably, no doubt) that she was unlikely to meet any prime matrimonial prospects in her job at Schilling.

Page 13.

The date of the European trip is 1926, the year before the Echo Lake cabin was built.

Good afternoon. Today we would like to pay honor to our queen of eight campuses - Ida Wittschner^{er} Sproul.

Song 1 (School Days, School Days)

Ida, Ida
 Helper and confider
 She doesn't ever forget a name
 She knows just how to treat all the same
 She is the queen of Cal, you know
 She is the one who helps him so, and to-
 day we all want the best to go
 To Ida Amelia Sproul.

We sincerely hope the scenes which follow have a happy and silvery note as today our queen celebrates her 25 years as first lady of the University of California.*

To set the proper atmosphere for you to know and love her even more, let us for a moment go back to Jane Street, New York, where I am sure we all feel a plaque should have been placed saying "Birthplace of Ida Amelia Wittschner^{er}". New York was not our Ida's home very long as at an early age she moved to West Street in Oakland, California, where her fine mother, now a widow, raised the five children by her own wonderful efforts of dressmaking and running a grocery store. I am sure when the scene opens, Ida will well remember this childhood activity.

Song 2 (Heigh Ho, from Snow White)

Heigh Ho, high ho
 That dirty walk! I know
 I must go out and sweep it off
 Oh oh! Oh oh! Oh oh I
 work and work, all day I'm to and fro,
 to keep the sidewalk clean, the dirt must never show.

Oh oh, oh oh
 I much prefer you know
 to wait on people in the store
 What fun, heigh ho, heigh ho, it's
 jolly fun when people come and go,
 but dirty sidewalks must be swept, alas, oh, oh.

We hear too that the five children were the best dressed in Oakland, as their mother, a remarkable woman, found time to also sew for her own children. Ida went to Coamercial High School, now Technical High, and at the age of 17, accompanied by her careful mother, was interviewed for her first job at the Schilling Spice and Coffee factory: Of course she was accepted and became the

* presented 1955.

lady in charge of the coffee tasters. Incidentally, these tasters were all blind women as of course they would have developed a finer sense of taste. To this day, Mrs. Sproul still hears from these ladies. And I am sure she well remembers that over the door of the factory one read, "He who enters here with good intent shall welcome be and forth with blessings sent". Of the many mottoes on the walls, I like the one which seems so typical of our queen: "Nothing great is ever accomplished without enthusiasm".

Song 3 (Sipping Cider Through a Straw)

The nicest girls we ever saw
Were testing coffee thru a straw

If you asked why they test and try
They'd answer, "We're not here to spy.

We taste the coffee thru a straw."
The nicest girls we ever saw.

If you said, "My, I must know why
You give these diff'rent kinds a try!"

Then they would say, "Mr. Schilling pays
us all to sip and taste all day.

The nicest girls we ever saw
Were testing coffee thru a straw.

Ida's next job was secretary to Harrison Robinson, the head man at the City Surveyor's Office. She became so indispensable to her employer that he even asked her to help him to decide between two civil engineer applicants for a job in the office. Miss Wittschner^{er}, for some reason, chose the tall, blond young man, Robert Gordon Sproul. So let us salute the Surveyor's Office and our Ida's good judgment in choosing her man.

Song 4 (I Want a Girl Just Like the Girl That
Married Dear Old Dad)

I love my man,
Big, strong and tan he
Always has been true.
I surely do love his eyes of blue, his
Booming clear voice too.
We've worked together to the very top
We've had such good time may they never stop.
I love my man
Oh, what a man and
They all love him too!

I love my man
He is so grand, the
Head man of U. C.
There he does rule California's school, a
big job it must be;
He's so dynamic and has lots of friends
He keeps up with all the modern trends.
I love my man
Oh, what a man, the
prexy of U. C.!

The wedding took place in 1916. By this time Robert Sproul was back at his alma mator, having been a 1913 graduate. He was first with the Controller's Office but soon elevated to the position of Vice-President along with Walter Hart under President Campbell. As you all know, Mr. and Mrs. Sproul became Prexy and Mrs. Prexy in 1930. The festivities started with a female dinner, if I may use that term, on the 16th of October, 1930, which was ably run by Mrs. Grady and, of course, was to honor the new Mrs. President Sproul. Many distinguished visitors arrived for an October 21st celebration of the bimillennium of the Poet Virgil, a part of the Inauguration ceremonies. The big day dawned on October 22nd, with the formal inauguration and academic procession at the Greek Theatre followed by an elaborate reception at the Men's Gymnasium. Here I felt I might well borrow an old tune to bring to a close the beginning of our story of our wondorful Robert's and Ida's reign as King and Queen of the University of California campuses.

Song 5

Hail, hail, Californians
To our new president
To his lovely lady
Hail, hail, Californians
At this inauguration time.

Hail, hail, Californians
Here's to every campus
Over which they trampus
At this inauguration time.

Hail, hail, Californians
Let the Sprouls ever reign
Bring to us their great fame
At this inauguration time.

Hail, hail, Californians
To our new president
To his lovely lady
Hail, hail, Californians
At this inauguration time.

SCENE II

When we think of our President's wife and her many activities, such as her Baby Hospital Group, Ladies Relief Society, and her work on the board of the Salvation Army, we gasp with wonder that one such tiny lady would have so much energy and feel in deep sympathy with the story our good president tells of her first year as the president's wife 25 years ago. He came home one night to break the news that they must give a large reception. Mrs. Sproul asked, "How many will be present?" He replied, "About a thousand." She said, "Oh, I can't possibly entertain that number." President Sproul, in relating this tale, says, "She may not be able to entertain a thousand people, but she has entertained me all her life." We feel Mrs. Sproul must have gotten over her fear of crowds as she and President Sproul inaugurated the idea of the large Freshman Receptions.

We understand that on occasion even the presidential mansion can run into difficulties like the time, many years ago, a young Japanese prince was dining with the Sprouls. Dessert time came and our good lady heard much noise in the kitchen. It sounded like a meat cleaver being wielded. I fear it was, as the dessert for this important event was beautifully-made individual ice cream moulds of most elaborate design. Woe to the kitchen boy - he had forgotten until the last minute to extricate these delicacies from the dry ice. They were finally served, may I say ice cold, to the consternation of all present. Our young Crown Prince, unable to speak or understand English, spent a great deal of time attacking and chasing his dessert around the plate. I feel sure this is one dessert a certain young prince still remembers and one evening of entertainment Mrs. Sproul herself still remembers.

I also have heard rumors that sometimes at party time the young Sprouls were to be found in the attic, much to their mother's distress, as per usual they were having a wonderful time with Mrs. Hearst's clothes which had temporarily been left stowed away in the attic. So you see, there were lots of kinds of entertainment in the first lady's home.

We could not go on without mentioning a great addition to the president's home - the arrival of Robert Sproul's mother in 1932. As we all know, she has been a most gracious and lovely presence there, and as Mrs. Sproul will say, a most helpful presence for 24 of their 25 years of office.

I fear my tongue is carrying me away and the actors grow impatient, so let us open the curtains to an entertainment that we could not think of without our Mrs. Sproul: the college tea.

Song 6 (Tea for Two)

Tea for you and tea for me
That is what we have, you see
At a College Tea with you and me.
See all the fashions, and hear all the fun
Form in a line soon as it has begun
Chat with your friends and make new ones of those you see-ee
Tea for you and tea for me
Today's a special college tea
in honor of the one we hope to please
Many important guests are there
We love to notice what they wear
and to chat with them at college teas.

College teas always seem to me a time when we might here quote sayings and pick up one more choice motto that means a lot to Ida Sproul - "Live fish swim upstream, the dead float down." I think the college teas might be compared to the live fish, as in the 25 years they have gone upstream, increasing their members and having a more and more important role to the women of the University of California. I am sure we would all be interested in knowing that the first college teas were held in the Hearst Gymnasium, the Committee owning their own china, silver, and linen. Thus to this day there is a small fund available to the College Tea Committee because of the loss of these by fire, which of course the careful ladies had insured. From the Hearst Gym, the teas then moved to the Town and Gown Club, and finally to their present location, the Women's Faculty Club.

It truly is a very special college tea as today our guest of honor is Mrs. Cenega, who will sing an old, old song which I understand is a great favorite of Mrs. Sproul's. In fact, I believe she herself knows all the words and goes so far as to say most of us won't remember them. Let us see.

Mrs. Cenega - Song (Left at the Church)

Thank you very much for your wonderful rendition, Mrs. Cenega, I am sure it brought back memories to many of us. So this afternoon we have felt it appropriate to pay this special tribute to college teas, to Mrs. Sproul's important role in them, and to the fine work of all the officers of the last 25 years.

Song 7 (How can I leave thee)

How can we leave thee
How can we say good bye
For at our college teas time seems to fly
With friends so firm and true
This is a great ta do
Yes, yes for you and you
How time seems to fly
How can we from thee part
Yet let us make a start
We're all so full of tea
Yes even you and me
This makes it hard to go
But we love our husbands so
We sure must part
So friends a fond adieu
We all say to you.

SCENE III

As we well know, many times one leaves choice morsels to the last, so this afternoon it seems most fitting to end our show honoring Mrs. Sproul with her Section Clubs. And allow me to say we also honor the past and present leaders of the many fine, interesting, and stimulating groups which have been organized for the benefit of the college faculty women and, in many cases, the faculty itself. So the curtain opens on a galaxy of sections.

Poem

May I speak in tones so clear
Enunciate very well my dear
If at the drama section you do appear.
Then on my right we have the French
Parlez vous, comprenez vous my wench
Next the birds one called on high
And book reviewers we do spy
Contract bridge seems all the thing
And of course flower arrangements this spring.

Gardens too get their full share

Along with homemaking, quite a pair
Trip the light fantastic toe

Yes, it's dancing you surely know.

When one wants to be in the swim

Or perhaps badminton is their whim
Child development most important, too

Or maybe magazine writing for you.

When that lingo takes a hold

Mes amigos, let's be so bold

My brush in hand I make a sketch

And hope to be able newcomers to ketch
Or if you wish to park your child

They say those ladies are sweet and mild.

Informal teas are often given

So haste thee nymph and you shall be
Able to dance with the rest of the faculty.

Now please don't say that I've forgotten
And left no place I'm not so rotten

Just keep in tune for one moment more
And let the music join our score

Before we close this little rhyme
Let's introduce folk dancers so fine.

Folk dances

So now we would like our queen of eight campuses to join us on the stage while our singers sing one more song to her. Mrs. Kerr would you please escort Mrs. Sproul. Mrs. Sproul, we salute you, for giving us all your gracious hospitality, your lovely sense of humor, your charm, your love, and your great teamship as our Mrs. President.

Song 8 (Silver Lining)

Here's to your anniversary
and to your twenty-five silver years
May it remind you in future times you
are sure to find true and
happy days among your friends, we

Wish for your future always
The best of every thing life can give, so we say
Here's to your anniversary
Our queen of Cal, may lo-o-ong she live!

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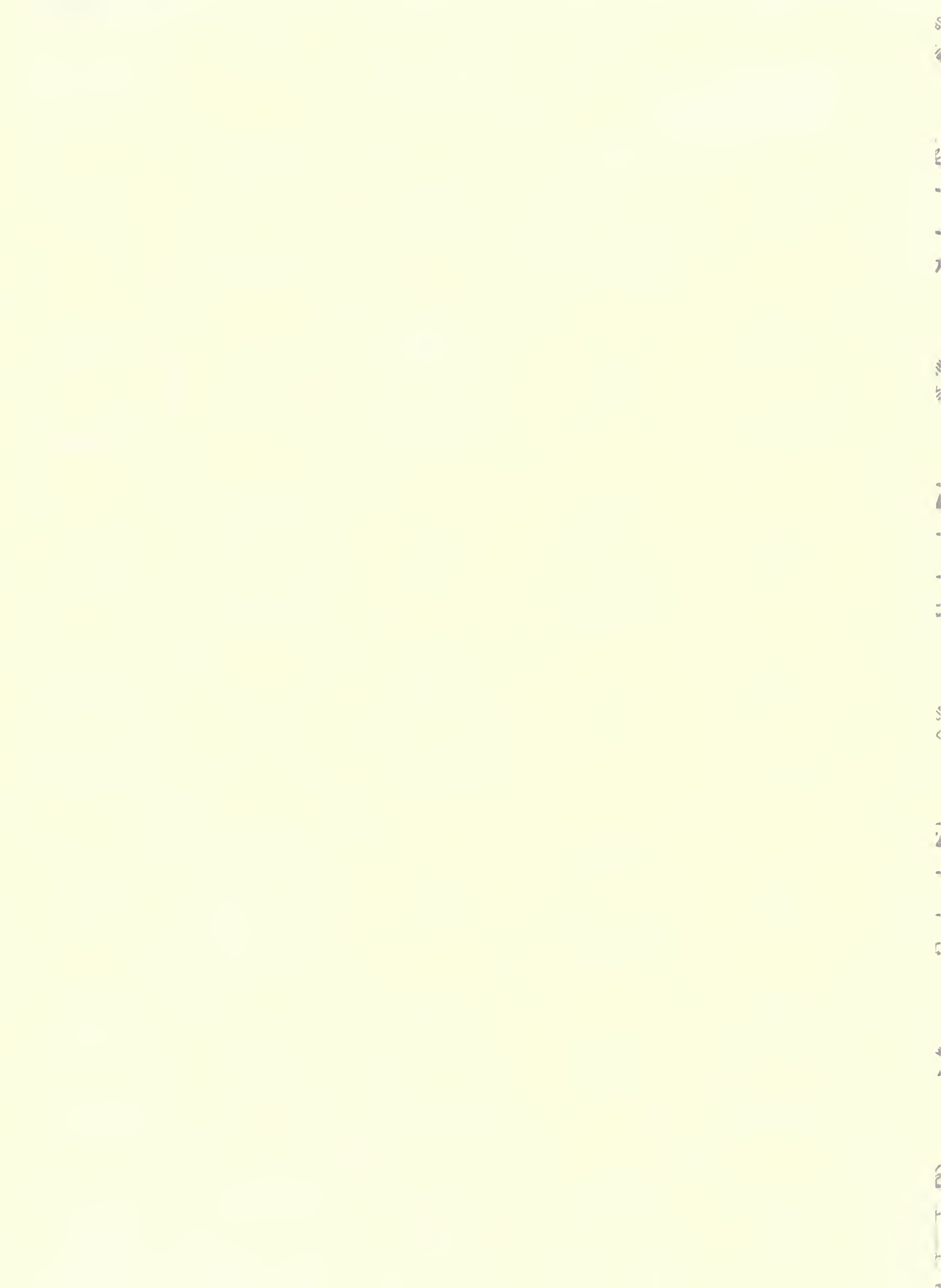
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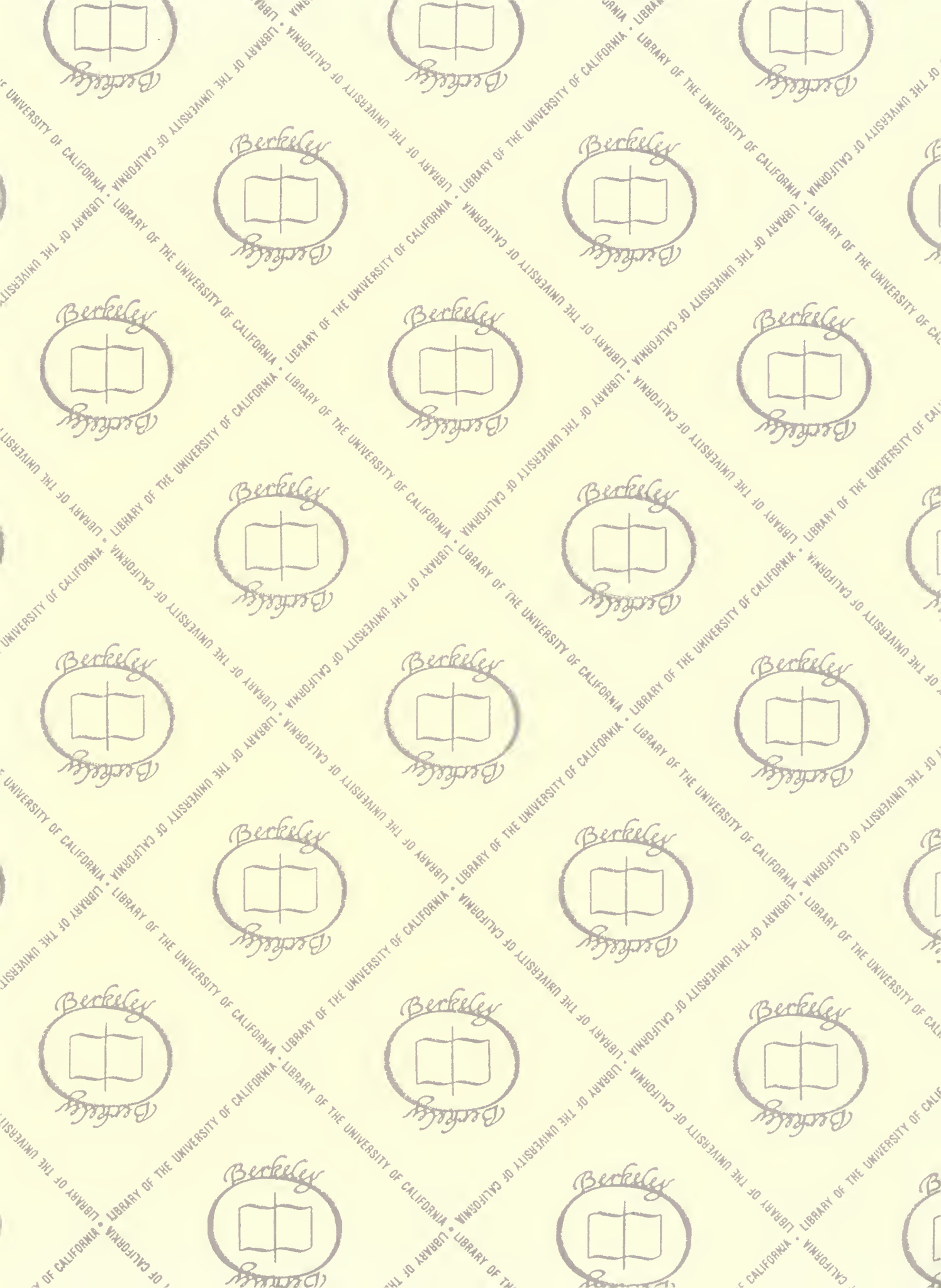
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