



ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

**An interview with
Herbert Kunzel, 1908-1999**

September 28, 1998

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PREFACE

Herbert Kunzel at the age of ninety is a repository of the economic history of San Diego in this century. Born in 1908, he will, hopefully, see the last of the 1990's which terminate a century in which San Diego grew from a small town of about 20,000 to the metropolitan area of today.

A distinguished attorney, Mr. Kunzel found his forte in his ability to salvage anything of worth from companies which were failing. His expertise was demonstrated in the Westgate and ITTEL matters. His philosophy was to turn around hopeless situations, so that they did not become the economic disasters they may have been, mindful always of the small business man, employee and small investors associated with and dependent on these companies.

Today, October 28, 1998, we are interviewing Mr. Kunzel in his office at the Charles Lee Powell Foundation where he is Executive Director. The office is located in the Crosby Complex, a charming 1930's California office complex at 7742 Herchel Ave. in La Jolla. The offices were built by Bing

Crosby's brother Bob.

Sally West

INTERVIEWER'S NOTE

We are interviewing Herbert Kunzel in his office. He is Executive Director of Charles Lee Powell Foundation in La Jolla.

SW: Mr. Kunzel, you probably have an idea, with all the newspaper articles, biographies and so forth down through the years, your public life is pretty much documented. We know you were born in 1908 and have grown up with San Diego. Some of your memories are richer than some of the youngsters arriving in town. We are going to dwell mainly today on some of the changes you have noted in San Diego. I want to go back. Do you remember the 1915 Exposition? Do you remember any of the so-called movers and shakers of that time?

HK: Don't forget. I was about 12 or 14 years old. What I do remember is my father taking me on a Sunday trip to the area that they were preparing in Balboa Park, making roads and planting trees in preparation for that exposition. My first memory was that day when my father went to the canyon where they built the first stadium. We went out that canyon and watched them excavate it. That was my first memory of San Diego.

I was born to parents who were immigrants and met on the immigrant ship coming over to the United States. My mother came from Vienna, Austria; my father from Bavaria, Germany. My father had been here before and was returning. He was the black sheep of his family, he ran away. Originally came over for the St. Louis Exposition just before the turn of the century. He was away at school in Switzerland and he ended up with a quartet of singers for the Swiss Exposition to entertain over there and then went back to Germany and then couldn't wait to get back to the United States.

He met my mother on the immigrant ship and they settled first in Buffalo where my brother was born, then moved out to California and they brought me here when I was six months old, so I'm told. I had a wonderful growing up. This was a great place to raise a youngster who was interested in the out-of-doors.

SW: I've often thought that -- when I read some of these older oral histories and I think "What a place for a child - it was magic".

HK: It was. On a historical note in that regard, the bay front was the thing that attracted me. When my mother couldn't find me, she would send someone down to the bayfront. On the bayfront there was clamming, small fishing. There was Benson Lumber Co. Now the Benson Lumber Co. was a sawmill. They brought their timber down in rafts. I watched them take apart the rafts and I could roll on those logs. So I really had fun down there.

SW: It must have been marvelous. I know to have children near a facility like that -- my boys luckily grew up in the Hudson Valley and I could always find them at the river. Wet and dirty but not in trouble. It's a wonderful thing. I'm sorry now that the children in San Diego don't have that - at least to the extent that you did in your generation and those coming after into the 20s and 30s.

This touches on something I wanted to ask you. Do you feel that the quality of life in San Diego, although we are booming economically and we've grown -- do you think that the quality of life has suffered for the residents?

HK: It depends on what the resident's background is. But it is a lot different. Of course, I have hunted and fished all over this county. I used to use my bicycle. Anytime I couldn't catch a gunny sack full of game fish when I was 12 or 13 years old, it was a bad day.

SW: Fresh water fish too?

HK: Mostly salt water. Later on, as I grew older -- the lakes were farther away -- later I was a fresh-water fisherman. But that was fun. The bay was relatively clean in those days. I could grab a bucket full of clams in an hour on the bay.

SW: I know in the oral history, Mr. Bonnon who grew up at Bird Rock and all that area in La Jolla, abalone. The boys would go out after lobster.

HK: I used to go after lobster. I started that when I could go that far on a bicycle. I fished and gathered lobsters and abalone, all from Pacific Beach on up to Carlsbad.

SW: Maybe that's what inspired you to become a gourmet cook. All that fresh sea food that is so difficult to get now.

HK: My mother was a wonderful cook, and I very much loved her and spent a lot of time in the kitchen with her. She was a fine cook and baker. All the women from Austria were great bakers; she was one of them. People used to wait for her Christmas raisin bread, strudels.

SW: Another thing I wanted to ask you, if you could give me just a short rundown of your education and training. You went to the San Diego schools?

HK: I went to Logan Heights Grammar School, and if you are interested in history, that principal, a woman -- and they were rare in those days -- she was quite a woman, Mabel O'Farrell. She coached the track team and she had everything in hand out there. I got into a fight once and had to report to her and she gave me a whack on the hand with a ruler. She said "Herbert, you come a family that are above these people down here. You can't be fighting like that." That hurt me. She became the wife of the Circulation Manager for the Copley Press, whose name was O'Farrell also.

SW: Now that you have mentioned Logan Heights and you know Logan Heights today, can you give me a description of the neighborhood back then?

HK: The homes were lower middle-class, working class, and the thing I remember most about our first home is it was about two blocks away from Cramer's Bakery. They had two German bakeries in town - one was Cramer's, the other was Pinkston's -- it was on Market St. Pinkston's son became an Olympic diving champion, and the reason he became that, he was taken over by a teacher of acrobatics at the Turnverein. Of course, I went there every Saturday and took German classes there. Well, this Robert Monsack was one hell of a gym teacher and he's the one that developed Clarence Pinkston into a fine Olympic diver.

SW: We had our share of athletes here in San Diego from early on and I do think that Turnverein had a great deal to do with that -- they emphasized physical fitness and so forth. Someday when you have time, come down and take a look at our photos that were in the Turnverein collection. In Logan Heights at that time, it was basically anglo. Were there many Hispanics there?

HK: There were quite a few. That's where they begin, in the lower end, toward the bay, what they now call Barrio Logan. There were a lot of blacks who lived around the Forty Acres. Forty Acres was a big play ground where we used to play baseball.

SW: Why was it called Forty Acres? Kunzel

HK: Well, I guess because it was a forty-acre tract. I wasn't allowed to play much there because my mother didn't want me associating with them.

SW: I have had so many references, but do you remember -- it was probably before your time in Barrio Logan, but in that area and also in Balboa Park there were rancherias of native Americans, urban Indians. I've been trying very hard to document these. One apparently was near Barrio Logan or in the area of K Street and the other was in Balboa Park. Do you ever remember. Probably they had gone but the time you were old enough to remember.

HK: I know nothing about it. I wasn't aware of it.

SW: Getting back to your training and education.

HK: I went to Logan Grammar School and I was transferred to Sherman Heights and then I went to Memorial -- I was one of their first students. They had some wonderful coaches there too; Morrow, Oliver. Then I went to high school. Unfortunately when I got to high school I had to work after school. So I became a Sunday baseball player and a night basketball player.

SW: Where did you practice basketball?

HK: At the YMCA and the Y had a wonderful director at that time. His name was Bill Van Dusen, (Lt. William L. Van Dusen), who took it upon himself to look after me. My brother was away and my family had passed away. He looked after me. He was a reserve flyer and he went into the Air Force just before we got into World War II and was killed.

SW: Did he take his training in San Diego?

HK: He had come from someplace else. Before World War II started. He was a leader, I saw a picture him yesterday when I went through some things to talk to you about. He was my friend. Really sort of a father. I have enjoyed helping to support YMCA ever since.

SW: Mr. Marston, George Marston was another supporter of the YMCA.

HK: Oh yes, he was. I remember seeing George Marston, later on I knew his grandson, Ham, and I became his friend.

SW: I just finished doing an exhibit of Balboa Park and what he did as far as encouraging the park and bringing it to life, was fantastic, but he would do something like that, then at the same time be active in the YMCA. It's a shame that we don't have that many gentlemen nowadays that are interested in so many factors of the life of the community, but he was extraordinary.

You haven't done too badly yourself, you know. As I read down your biography, you've been in just about everything.

HK: I have been a very fortunate man. I've had a very wonderful life. But let me tell you, talking about the old days. You know the guy who really should get credit for the San Diego Zoo is Harry Wegeforth. He gave up his practice. of course, he had the luxury of being married to an heiress. In fact he was a client of my brother when my brother started practicing law. He got Fred interested in the zoo and Fred became president of the zoo later on. But Wegeforth gets a lot of credit. He just about personally did that.

SW: Yes he did. And we have his son's oral history. and also Dr. But let me digress just a moment. You are probably aware of the movement to expand the zoo to provide more parking areas -- the pros and cons. How do you feel about the zoo expanding into more of Balboa Park rather than the Wild Animal Campus?

HK: I must confess to you, that's news to me.

SW: Well, at first they had planned to build a multi-level parking structure in the area, in Florida Canyon. Florida Canyon has had a rather sad history. It was set aside to be a natural preserve. Helen Chamlee and Steve Halsey, during the 70s, worked to provide nature trails -- there were native species there. Perhaps San Diegans were not impressed with a coastal canyon and the native chaparral, but it's one of the first places visitors go. They are here for a week and can't see the desert. Anyway, we lost a lot of it with the Naval Hospital and they are still going back and forth on that. There is a small area now that dedicated to nature trail. Unfortunately, a lot of the native species has innudated with other species of plants.

The zoo now wanted to build a parking structure there with an overpass over Park Blvd. There was quite a bit of discussion about that. There were plans to extend into Park Blvd. and use the parking area, the carousel and the War Memorial Bldg. as part of the zoo. This has caused a lot of dissension among people who had thought of the park as their own backyard so to speak. So many people had voiced the opinion that it was going to encroach terribly on the park itself, the use of the park. Of course, the Expositions did that originally, but they are there and we have learned to live with them. There are still about 200 and some acres of open space in the park, but most people feel that this is going to be encroached on and lost. I was wondering how you felt about that.

HK: Well, now in hearing it now for the first time, I would be opposed to it. Everyone who becomes a director wants to expand everything so his salary goes up, and he is more important. That's probably what is behind this.

SW: Well, it's justified somewhat in that the zoo is a tourist attraction.

HK: It's a wonderful attraction. But why spoil it?

SW: In my own opinion, they forget that the zoo belongs to the citizens of San Diego by ordinance. Although many of us cannot afford to go visit our animals, but it is a part of the citizen's heritage here in San Diego. However, the campus at the Wild Animal Park is wonderful. Perhaps they could work out some way of shuttling people there. Get them out of the urban center and see that marvelous attraction.

HK: You know what really made that zoo? First, hiring Belle Benchley. She was outstanding. In addition, she was a close friend and animal providers, Osa Johnson and his wife. That really made that zoo.

SW: They had good press. They were recognized nationally and internationally.

HK: Oh yes. That Belle Benchley did a wonderful job.

SW: Have you read her book? I ran across, in our collection of sheet music, I ran across a little song, "Meet Me at the Zoo". It was written in the early 30s I believe. It had her picture on the front and was dedicated to her. It's charming.

HK: That's the background of the zoo.

SW: I wanted to ask you something else. Could you give me a little idea of the rest of your education?

HK: I graduated from San Diego High School, then I was out of school for several years and was offered an athletic scholarship to USC. My brother was just finishing at Stanford. I knew I had to work and that Stanford was out there in the boondocks and USC was in the city. By then I had some

experience at service station operations. I got a job for the weekends at a Standard Station. It was wonderful work to have if you were in school, because you were out of doors and met a lot of people. It was quite nice work. I played baseball. I was pretty busy, but I got to class and got a degree and also a law degree from USC.

SW: Then you came back to San Diego?

HK: I came back to San Diego. My brother had gone into the office of Luce, Forward and Swing. Swing was congressman who, along with Hiram Johnson, was responsible for the Boulder Dam. I remember meeting Hiram Johnson in our office when I was visiting my brother. My brother went into that office and I went in when I finished school. Pretty soon it became Luce, Forward, Kunzel and Scripps. My brother was a first partner and I became a partner later on. About 1946 or 47 my brother was nominated to the Federal Bench. He was a fine lawyer and a fine man. He was 8 years older than I was. He was practically my father as well as my companion. He was appointed to the bench and I was offered a job by Solar who were clients. I went down there and set up a legal office for them and became Corporate Secretary, then they wanted me to stay and go into Administration, which I did. And, by good fortune, I became President of Solar in 1956.

SW: You also brought it into the modern age after the war? That is a fascinating story of Solar and how it changed and is still going strong.

HK: I gave it a thousand-to-one shot and it paid off one-to-one.

SW: It's very obvious that you had made your name here in San Diego, basically cleaning up other people's messes.

HK: That's the way it turned out.

SW: We all know the story of Westgate and Itel and the tuna fleet. Of course, no fisherman will ever say a word against C. Arnoldt Smith. That man did do so much for the tuna industry, ship building and so forth. How do you think all the trouble evolved with Westgate - over-extension?

HK: Well, I tell you. Arnoldt Smith was not the man that appeared on the surface. Arnoldt Smith was a long-time hedger of the law. Let's put it that way. That's what started it. I remember Andy Borthwick and Al Sutherland telling me the guy was not a good banker - you couldn't trust him. They were competitors, of course, but I learned, after taking over that job, that he was less than appeared on the surface. I've known him for many years. He was a great athlete. I played basketball against him and I played golf against him.

SW: Mr. Borthwick was another mover and shaker in San Diego.

HK: Oh, he was. He really was. I used to play golf with him every Saturday morning. But the Smith thing - none of his business enterprises ever really made any money.

SW: He was a visionary but he didn't seem to know how to go about it right.

HK: No, there were other things in his mind, other than making a profit. For instance, he bought a huge produce business in Los Angeles, principally because his brother had gotten into the produce area in Bakerfield. His brother's name -- they called him Blackjack.

He did things like that. He wanted to be in baseball, and he found ways of tunneling money into a baseball team after there were no profits from the game itself. That was what he did. He did anything, all sorts of machinations. In the days, almost at the end, he would meet every Saturday morning

with 3 or 4 of his trusted employees and they would make transactions involving all these companies - they had 79 corporations active when I took over that job. They would have these sessions where property would pass off and dropping in Smith's own pocket during the way. So much so, that when we took over the operation we hired Auther Anderson, the accounting firm. Their first job was to look at every transaction for a period of three years before the bankruptcy - every transaction of \$100,000 or over and you don't know how many of them were screwed up. So much so that -- he wouldn't file the papers -- he would slide them in over a period of time. What we finally had to do, because of this transgression, and the keeping of the records -- see he would meet when his chief accountant or other operating people were off for the weekend -- he met with this inside group. They would transfer around the ownership, but they wouldn't be recorded. We had to record the history of these transactions. We had to inspect the records of every business that they were involved in throughout the State of California. Over 79 active corporations. They utilized them for his purpose. We recovered huge numbers of property that way, lots of it in San Diego County.

SW: I heard it said that you did manage to save so many people's investments that it was not the economic disaster that it could have been.

HK: We reorganized it. He had one corporation that we wanted to salvage, which was Air California. I stepped in to become Chairman of that because I didn't like the way it was being run.

SW: Air California was bought later?

HK: Later, by a group. I sold it to an Orange County group of developers. Gen. Lyon was one of them and an investor who bought the Seattle Mariners too. In those days, when people got rich they wanted to be either a sports figure or they wanted to buy an airline. Of course, the airlines have all gotten big now, but in those days these small airlines like Air California were money makers. We were in close combat with PSA. In those days I got \$63 million -- it was appraised at about \$40 million. That made that reorganization possible. We sold the tuna fleet and the two canneries -- we had one cannery in San Diego, the other in Puerto Rico.

SW: Tell me a little bit about that. So many oldtimers in San Diego go on and on about the tuna fleet and how we lost it. We will be getting the archives of the Tunamen's Association. Do you know Mr. Ferlando?

HK: Is he still around?

SW: Yes, he is. Augie Ferlando. We have a wonderful oral history of his. He is going to help us, and Harold Carey. He's going to finish a book about the tuna industry. But that is a great time in San Diego history.

HK: I knew a great deal about it because my brother was legal counsel for many of them. He would counsel for the Madruga family. You could organize a boat and investors took shares in a boat. It could be paid off in a year or a year and a half.

SW: It was fascinating when they did run into so much trouble with legalities and restraints on the tuna, that the women went to Washington to push through some sort of legislation.

HK: There is a good story there on that tuna industry. Smith wanted to be big in that, and he bought a fleet of these tuna vessels, when the thing had started to go down already. The corporation that bought those started losing money right off the bat. They were the big purse seiners. And then he bought the old Westgate company which was put up by the Ambrose. They had established that cannery. I know all about those canneries, because Solar took over one after of them.

Then it became desirable to have a cannery close to the central Pacific because then they didn't have to come clear back on every trip. Westgate started a cannery in Puerto Rico. They would just come back here when they had to make repairs on the boat. Most of the tuna were caught in the eastern Pacific, down off Central America. I used to fish, when I was a boy, at these canneries because they would clean the fish and wash the offal off into the water and that would attract sharks. We did have sharks in the bay.

When I took over the fleet he had 27 vessels in it, all of them were mortgaged over the hilt. Bankers are not too smart. San Diego has a history of producing bankers.

My brother played football in high school and on the team was Kenny Zwiner of the Zwiner Electrical people. He later became President of the Harris Trust Co. in Chicago. He also played with George Champion and Champion became President of Chase under the Rockefellers. When I went to Solar, Solar was headed by Chase in New York -- owed them about \$20 million, which was big dough then. I made a name for myself at Solar because I went back to see George Champion who had visited in our home when he was in high school and had kept very close track of my brother. I visited with him. He told the people to get off of Solar because Kunzel thought he could get this paid off and they took it off. Solar thought it was wonderful.

SW: Do you think that the climate here in San Diego still exists where friends and mutual acquaintances are helpful to each other or do you think it's become a society where everyone is out for their own thing and very few of our big businesses and companies are owned by San Diego people.

HK: Because of the rapid growth of San Diego, all these businesses came in later -- they didn't grow up in the community and the heads of the companies did not grow up with each other. That has to represent a change.

SW: It's so easy to see it in San Diego because we were a very small town -- still in many ways has a small-town attitude. So it's not easy to see those changes. Do you think it's going to continue that way or do you think that these new managers, the new bankers, the new corporate heads and so forth will become the movers and shakers that your generation were? Will they ever have that loyalty?

HK: It's not possible. These people are not San Diegans, even when the company has their corporate offices. They are businessmen. They could change tomorrow.

In Des Moines, Iowa, Solar had a plant there and I used to spend a lot of time there, so I got to know the people of the community and those midwesterners, not only were dam fine businessmen, but they were loyal and they knew each other. Their businesses had all started there. I was very much impressed by those people.

SW: Those were the same types who came to San Diego at the turn of the century and before -- there was Marston coming from Wisconsin. A lot of midwesterners became the movers and shakers of San Diego. I guess they brought that feeling of loyalty with them. I was just wondering if you thought it really existed today. What I am trying to do is get an idea from you as to where you think San Diego is going. Before we go any further I want to ask you about your wife, Minerva. I know she was very interested in your business and very bright and they have named an aardvark for her. Tell me something about her.

HK: I was a long-time bachelor. I think I was 37 when I got married. Minerva was brought down for a date for me by a Pasadena girl who Bill Booth, a doctor in Coronado married. She was a date for me and I became acquainted with Minerva. She was born in Pasadena and I brought her down here and she immediately became one of the active young women here, active in civic and cultural affairs. She was an artist too.

SW: Did she ever exhibit here in San Diego?

HK: No, she wasn't that kind. She turned her art into interior design. Took a course at Chouinard's in Los Angeles. She became a wonderful corporate wife and fine mother. I ran across a clipping about her and I will make a copy for you. I took it out, because she has a file of her own -- I took it out of some of my files.

SW: And then the charming story of the aardvarks.

HK: That started with a director of the zoo, Schroeder. Anyway, General Victor J. Krulak had been to the Washington zoo and in Washington they had an organization of local business people who would meet for a gourmet dinner once a month and who promoted the Washington Zoo. So he started a little organization - and that was a gourmet deal.

SW: And you did a lot of the cooking, didn't you. It was called The Aardvarks.

HK: Yes. That was Harold Chernoff, Krulak, myself and Ed Busse. We had a real gourmet dinner once a month. It is still going. The direction has changed a little. I quit when the zoo organization decided to make it a money-making thing and that was opposed to our principles. Anyway, it's still going. I go up once in awhile.

SW: I did have a few questions about your looking into your crystal ball to give us a few more ideas about San Diego now. We've noticed the expansion of Sea World, they want to expand, go up in height. Do you envision most of that part of the bay being Sea World eventually, or do you think the bay will still hold its own as being a recreational area not only for tourists but the residents.

HK: I'm a poor man to be asked this question. I have divorced myself my city politics and what goes on in this city. I should tell you some things that occurred that you would be interested in. I went to law school with a guy named Tom Kuchel. What we had in common in school was we sit next to each other - they seated you alphabetically, and the Prof couldn't pronounce either of our names correctly. So we became good friends. He became State Senator from Orange County. He was then appointed by Warren to be Comptroller of the State and then later on was appointed United States Senator. I used to do his campaigning for him. We were good friends. Two instances of his intervention here in San Diego affairs.

The first one was when Hopkins was setting up a base for UCSD and they needed an area where Camp Matthews was, a Marine Camp, and they were having trouble getting the Navy to let loose of it. Although they had promised to do so, they were not getting it done. The Mayor of San Diego then was Frank Curran, who called me. He said "Can your friend Kuchel help us?" I said, let me ask you something "Do you want this to occur?" I trusted the guy. He said "Yes, we need it". I said I will call Kuchel. I called him, and he said if there was something that would do us some good he would do it.

Then, before that Charlie Dail -- all those people weren't top intellectuals but they were great mayors. Charlie Dail called and he said "Herb, we can't spring lose that money for Mission Bay development". It was \$15 or \$18 million dollars which was big money in those days. I called Kuchel, and he said "Send me some literature on it. Are you for it?" I said yes and he spun money loose.

SW: It's wonderful to know that your opinion is so highly valued.

HK: Especially by this friend who had not known me since school days. Kuchel was a wonderful senator who was a little too liberal for the Republicans, so they beat him. He was a Republican but he was a liberal Republican. So they got rid of him.

SW: Tell me about your job now with the Powell Foundation. Who was Charles E. Powell?

HK: Alright, that's an interesting story. Charles E. Powell was a self-taught engineer who came here from the south and he was distantly related to Lee. He came out to Los Angeles to practice his trade, which was underground concrete construction. He built most of the good construction patents for that type of work. He built most of those tunnels in Bunker Hill in the Los Angeles area. Another big job he had, he put the old Los Angeles County sewer system underground. It took about 10 years and made him a bunch of dough.

In those days it was good tax business for these people of means to form a non-profit corporation. They could funnel a lot of their personal living out of that. Powell was one of those and got involved in San Diego where he owned the Guejito Ranch, just north of Julian -- a big cattle ranch, 10,000 acres. He got involved in a law suit down there and someone advised him to go to Wes McGinnis. Wes McGinnis was a close friend of mine. McGinnis set up all these corporate things for him and then when he died, they formed this foundation and he asked me to come aboard.

The Community Chest was the big philanthropic organization. It is now United Way. Charlie Ramsey and I formed The United Way. That was my connection with United Way, and I was involved with the Red Cross, too. So. McGinnis said, you come on my Board and help me. Soon after he joined our Board McGinnis died. Then his law partner, Fitzgerald got cancer and died within a year. That left it for me to handle. We had had about \$10 million. We needed the cash to invest. I was working part time, I had a part time secretary and that's all. I was the only director we had. We had a little office, but we had lots of money to invest when the time came.

SW: That must be a wonderful position to be in. Absolutely marvelous. So the Foundation has really been around here in San Diego since 1968. I must confess I had very little on it.

HK: It wasn't advertised. The reason we don't advertise because most of us when we started were in other businesses. So we decided two things. We were interested in education in engineering and science. From the very start we supported universities, Stanford, Cal Tech, USC, and UCSD and they have all performed beautifully. We have been giving them more than a million dollars a year apiece.

SW: Do you have any other comments about San Diego and what you feel has been accomplished here? Do you think that the center of San Diego -- I mean the heart, will ever move to North County? That's where all our bright young executives, our biotech people, our high tech people are. They've made it very comfortable for them to move in there - - not only residentially but office wise. Do you think more of those communities will break apart from San Diego at some time?

HK: It's hard to say. Now you read a lot about philanthropic institutions trying to do everything to lure out executives who are making a fortune to do their charitable giving, as they should. You want to know a source of good information about things like that? Do you know a former Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Jack Borchers. He has a lot of background. He didn't grow up here - he came here but he learned it when he got here.

SW: I do have a feeling that the young executives - Bill Gates, etc, are not going to be the philanthropist, that somebody else would have been a few years ago. I don't think this generation of young executives and corporate people and our new billionaires have that idea of serving that previous generations have had and don't know why it's not obvious. I don't know why that is so. They love the glitzy things, but they don't seem to give that sustaining support that organizations have had in San Diego for so long.

HK: The last one that had big means - Hewlett Packard. Those two people both gave at Monterrey, that aquarium up there. The Packard family gave that.

SW: They are not this young generation.

HK: One of the reasons they became community minded was a great dean of engineering at Stanford who just about made Silicon Valley. They are all graduates of this school and he induced them to get together and develop that valley and become involved with Stanford and the community. The educator, Turner was his name.

SW: I will have to do that. I will go down and spend one of his mornings. I think this attitude of young executives is going to have a great deal to do with how San Diego survives, intellectually and culturally. I personally feel that we are becoming a bread and circus town. I hope I am wrong. I don't see the atmosphere that I find reflected in the old records and the old biographies. I don't see that. The idea that we have needed a library for so many years and they are going to play baseball down there. They have the audacity to say that you don't need a central library. They have no idea of the archives that the library has down there. You can't move those around to branches. There are some very peculiar attitudes here in San Diego. I just hope it is not going to persist. I don't think we have enough of the old families left.

HK: No, they are gone. Do you ever read the New York Times? Did you read the story about Beverly Sills getting a new billionaire. He gave Lincoln Center \$25 million the other day in honor of his wife, Josephine, who came from San Antonio. She's my goddaughter. It was quite a front page story about him donating that.

SW: You pick amazingly interesting godchildren. How many do you have?

HK: Oh, I have five or six of them. I have eight grandchildren.

SW: I want you to know how much we appreciate your taking your time with us.

HK: I have lots of time these days. I talked to you about Cramer's Bakery. I used to be sent up there to get hot bread in the afternoon and one of their sons worked behind the counter, I got to be good friends with him. He left the firm after he got a pretty good size and went to the great cooking school in France. He came back and for a long time was Chef for the Canadian railroads. He came back to San Diego to take over the bakery. It was a big local bakery but he sold it to Langendorf, which was a big bakery chain. And then moved out to build a house in Point Loma. After he built his, we built a house out there. Across the street from him on San Gregorio.

When I first started fishing in the bay and my mother would let me go, I would go on my bicycle around what is now the Naval Training Station, where there was no road. Then I would head south to where the Yacht Club is now. There were two canneries there, one was Italian-run cannery, the other a Portugese at La Playa.

SW: That's something I don't remember from any of the other oral histories. I didn't realize there were canneries on that side of the bay. Near Roseville.

HK: They were there. They organized there because the boats didn't have so far to go. It was a long time later that they went down to the waterfront. I used to fish what is now San Diego Yacht Club. There was a man who had all the boats, tugging, towing, sightseeing, Oakley Hall. He had a fishing pier which was primarily a pier - he had at the end of it a dancehall. He would take these parties up there for an evening of dancing - and that's where I fished.

SW: He was quite something. He lived well into his nineties. I find it fascinating that there were so many fish in the bay.

HK: It was clean don't forget. It hadn't started to get dirty. There wasn't much traffic in it.

SW: Well, I hope they will at least be able to maintain it. They have tried several ways of cleaning it up, but with the nuclear subs and more and more traffic.....

HK: It's the nuclear carriers. I had a wonderful experience in the Navy. I catch hell from my wife for saying it, but it was one of the most wonderful periods of my life. I had just made a big fee in law, so I had a pocket full of money. I had no close relatives, other than my brother, and I had wonderful duty. I can talk about it now, I was with Intelligence.

SW: Let me ask you something. Did you know Gene Muehheisen?

HK: Very well.

SW: Gene was in Intelligence.

HK: I got tired of chasing phantom spies, and I applied for sea duty. I got ordered to a school in New York - Henry Hudson Motel on 57th St. I was there for four months. I couldn't make out what they were teaching me about sea duty. I was the first Operations Officer at the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Miramar and I had never been in a flight in my life. When I finished that school in New York I came back here and they were trying to figure out what to do with me until I got my permanent orders. They were very short of personnel in those days and they saw on my papers the word "operations." I was going into operational intelligence, but they saw that operations and they said, here's a pigeon. They sent me out there about a week before the station was to open to work for an officer. The guy was unstable, he went off his nut about two days before the station opened. They called me in and said what do you know about this. I said I don't know a damn thing about operations of an airport, so I became Acting Operations Officer.

I was living at the University Club at the time. I decided I would move out there. So I went out there to live - that was in 1943, and I had a wonderful time because what they were doing there was taking delivery of transport planes and organizing the crews and sending them overseas.

The Marines also had a practice bombing range just over the hill in the Imperial Valley near the Salton Sea. There was a Marine Major there who found out I liked to hunt ducks. He had a helicopter at his disposal and we would fly over the Salton Sea, get an evening shoot and get a morning shoot early the next morning and come back and be there in time for work.

SW: I suppose the Salton Sea was a little less smelly than it is now.

HK: That's before people started moving in there.

SW: That's a wonderful story. I never saw that in any of your clippings or anything. So you were the first "Top Gun"?

HK: The only thing that made me sorry about them sending out a permanent replacement was I was going to miss this duck hunting. Oh, the other thing about it was, the General who commanded this service group who were taking delivery on these airplanes, had been to the factory as a Navy representative. The factory was in Patterson, New Jersey. He apparently had a girlfriend there, so he figured out the best way to put a crew together to take the transport overseas - a crew of four or five. I think for the purpose of satisfying his own desires, put together three or four of these crew members, and they would practice their navigation at the sea or across the country. Just before they were to ship out he would see that they got 3 or 4 days at their home. Meanwhile he was doing the same for the gal in New Jersey. I got to go on any of those trips I wanted to go on.

SW: These were transports, right? Would they bring the personnel to Miramar and load them up?

HK: No, they would take them from the Marine stations - Marine Recruit Depot and Camp Matthews. They would take them. That was a fun assignment.

Then I go out to go to this school and I couldn't figure out what they were doing at this school -- the school in New York. Do you want to know my opinion of New York during the war? I can tell you very quickly. There were no military depots in New York, in the city. You would walk down the street and if you were in uniform you got the eye from a cashier or a waitress or an heiress and you were popular. You never bought a drink. You would go into a nightclub or restaurant and somebody was always wanting to buy you a drink. They welcomed the service men. In places like San Diego they got tired of them.

Because of this school I got to Brisbane. I went over with Howard Turrentine, the Federal Judge. We've been close friends for many years. We went out there together and he was assigned to Admiral Kincaid. We would go into this big war room -- the first inkling I got of what we were going to do - go into this war room at McArthur's headquarters. Here's a bunch of reports coming in every few minutes from all the coast watchers. They were great heroes.

The other section was put together by the people who broke the Japanese secret code (which the Japanese didn't change during the war) and we then could keep track of where the Japanese were.

SW: I suppose that the coast watchers did more for reconnaissance up and down all those little islands than air cover could have done. Did you Captain a PT boat?

HK: No, I was an Intelligence Officer. I was a Staff Officer. I rode them. I went on patrol with them. I became one of them.

SW: So you were actually working with encryption or code work.

HK: No, only the results of it. You see, the Navy decided to keep a wall around that discovery. They were very careful. Someone wrote a book about it - called The Two-Edged Sword. Sometimes we could not use the information because it would give away the act that they had broken the code. They wanted someone in every sizeable command. My skipper said "Kunzel, you're going to be my Signal Officer". I don't want to see anything about your code.

SW: Tell me, did you spend much time in San Diego during the war?

HK: Oh yes, that's where I got tired of chasing phantom spies. I was attached to the 11th Naval District. I was down at the Navy office down there.

SW: There were rumors of spies in Mexico and so on. Did you think there were any serious problems at that time? Say, the Italian gentlemen over at the Hotel Del Coronado (Alberto M. Campione).

HK: If I told you the whole story you would turn red. Can't tell you that story. He liked the boys you know and his contact was his sailor boys.

SW: Was he the manager or a cook?

HK: No, he was the Social Director. He was damn good at his job. Did a good job. That was the social center of San Diego in those days.

SW: It was, particularly, for young officers.

HK: I played baseball with the City of Coronado. I had to work, so I couldn't play school baseball and they had a County league here. I played every Sunday afternoon. An interesting piece of history. I would pick up my friend, Jose (Joe) Hernandez. Jose was the son of a railroad section hand. He had an affinity for sports. He was a good ball player and track man.

There was a well-known English teacher at San Diego High School. He wanted to write. He got on the paper called The Russ. He would write sports and she made him -- she gave him a group of words. For every day he would take one of those words, learn how to spell it and how to use it in a sentence. And she did that maybe for a year, and this boy when he graduated became the Sports Editor on the Union Tribune. And then he got caught passing information on the race track at Aqua Caliente and he became pretty knowledgeable about what was going on there, so they fired him because he got caught letting some bookies know information he shouldn't have. They decided he knew enough about horse racing that he could help there and someone who was running one of the stations there suggested he take some diction work. He became very famous as a racing announcer. He announced at Del Mar and up at Santa Anita. He became racing announcer, and then he established a sales outfit called Bloodlines or something like that. This son of the section hand.

I was counsel for the racetrack here for 8 or 9 years. His booth was up on top where my office was. He would also invite me to have lunch. The newspaper people had a going bar - on the house - he would invite me up to have lunch. He and I played baseball for the City of Coronado. I told these guys out at Coronado Jose was a good ballplayer. I would pick him up on a Sunday and take him over - that was the old Polo Field. Spreckels' old Polo Field.

SW: How did you get to Coronado? By car?

HK: I had a Ford Roadster, put it on the ferry. You see I was working at the time at various gas stations. I had to have some transportation.

Oh I will tell you another story. Prior to going to college I played the saxophone - not very well - played in the high school band and Cliff May organized an orchestra. He became the top architect. He played the piano. He organized a 5 or 6-piece band to play at dances. One of our members was a banjo player who was pretty good and very handsome. An orchestra came down from Hollywood to open the Mission Beach Ballroom but their Banjo player - every orchestra had a banjo -- their banjo player took sick and they auditioned for a banjo player and took him on. He played in Mission Beach in the summer and then he went back to Hollywood with them. That was Lew Ayres.

SW: Well, what was wrong with your saxophone playing?

HK: Oh, I wasn't musical. I made time with my mother when I leaned to play the Blue Danube. But I wasn't up to these guys.

SW: There were a lot of musicians in San Diego who had marvelous orchestra and the bands - marvelous music here in San Diego. Amazing for a small town.

HK: I wasn't any help in taking up this saxophone. Soon after I graduated from high school a group wanted me to play with them who had been playing in Tijuana. That's where the action was.

They wanted to open the first "Ten Cents a Dance" hall and they did it. Anyway, we opened the Orange Ballroom on the second floor at First and B or C, which later on became the Lee Cadillac place. First sailor's dive down there. This was in 1928. I got fired from this orchestra, and they should have fired me, but what I did was I hocked my horn for \$150, took the money and went to USC. What made me think about that - I used that Ford roadster to go up there.

SW: A loss to the musical world but that's a wonderful story. I've enjoyed this so much. I really have.

END OF INTERVIEW
