

California State Archives
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

CYRIL C. NIGG

Regent, University of California, 1955-1957

March 23 and 24, 1993
Corona Del Mar, California

By Dale E. Treleven
Oral History Program
University of California, Los Angeles

RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None.

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PREFACE

On September 25, 1985, Governor George Deukmejian signed into law A.B. 2104 (Chapter 965 of the Statutes of 1985). This legislation established, under the administration of the California State Archives, a State Government Oral History Program "to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history."

The following interview is one of a series of oral histories undertaken for inclusion in the state program. These interviews offer insights into the actual workings of both the legislative and executive processes and policy mechanisms. They also offer an increased understanding of the men and women who create legislation and implement state policy. Further, they provide an overview of issue development in California state government and of how both the legislative and executive branches of government deal with issues and problems facing the state.

Interviewees are chosen primarily on the basis of their contributions to and influence on the policy process of the state of California. They include members of the legislative and executive branches of the state government as well as legislative staff, advocates, members of the media, and other people who played significant roles in specific issue areas of major and continuing importance to California.

By authorizing the California State Archives to work cooperatively with oral history units at California colleges and universities to conduct interviews, this program is structured to take advantage of the resources and expertise in oral history available through California's several institutionally based programs.

Participating as cooperating institutions in the State Government Oral History Program are:

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California State University, Fullerton

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University of California, Berkeley

Oral History Program
University of California, Los Angeles

The establishment of the California State Archives State Government Oral History Program marks one of the most significant commitments made by any state toward the preservation and documentation of its governmental history. It supplements the often fragmentary historical written record by adding an organized primary source, enriching the historical information available on given topics and allowing for more thorough historical analysis. As such, the program, through the preservation and publication of interviews such as the one which follows, will be of lasting value to current and future generations of scholars, citizens and leaders.

John F. Burns
State Archivist

July 27, 1988

This interview is printed on acid-free paper.

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer/Editor:

Dale E. Treleven, Director, UCLA Oral History Program

Interview Time and Place:

March 23, 1993

Nigg's residence, Corona Del Mar, California
Session of two hours

March 24, 1993

Nigg's residence, Corona Del Mar, California
Session of one and three-quarter hours

Editing

Janet Shiban, Gold Shield intern, UCLA Oral History Program, checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spellings, and with the interviewer verified proper names. Insertions by the editor are bracketed. Alex Cline, editor, drafted the table of contents and prepared the biographical summary.

Nigg reviewed the edited transcript and returned it with only minor corrections.

Papers

There exist no private papers which the interviewer was able to consult for this interview.

Tapes and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives at UCLA along with the records relating to the interview. Master tapes are preserved at the California State Archives.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Cyril C. Nigg served from 1955-57 as an ex officio member of the University of California Board of Regents as president of the Alumni Association of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). During his tenure he served on Audit, Educational Policy, and Medical and Health Sciences Committees as well as on the Special Committee to Consider Use of the C and H Tract in Los Angeles.

Nigg was born on March 12, 1905, in Mankato, Minnesota, but as a teenager moved to Los Angeles. After graduating from Loyola High School, Nigg attended what was then called the University of California, Southern Branch, earning his bachelor's degree in business administration in 1927 after the Southern Branch officially became the University of California at Los Angeles. He was manager of the UCLA yearbook, Southern Campus, in 1927. After graduation, Nigg eventually settled into a job with the Kellogg Company, and, stopping short of moving into its presidency, Nigg left in 1944. Nigg then co-purchased the Los Angeles Saratoga Chip Pretzel Company, converting it to Bell Brand Foods, Ltd., and served as its chief executive officer until he sold the company and retired from business in 1970. After retirement, Nigg continued to be actively involved in various charitable organizations.

The interview focuses primarily on Nigg's youth in Los Angeles, student activities at UCLA, business career, and his UCLA Alumni Association presidency and corresponding University of California regency.

Nigg and Edith Witkowski were married in 1929; they had one son, C. Peter Nigg, and one daughter, Nancy Nigg Doty. Nigg remarried in 1989 to Mary Lieb.

[Session 1, March 23, 1993]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

TRELEVEN: I think to begin with, I'd like to know a little bit about your personal background, your family background. Typically our first question is, where and when were you born?

NIGG: Okay. My name is Cyril C. Nigg. I was born in Mankato, Minnesota, March 12, 1905. Both my mother and father were born in Mankato. Mankato was the county seat for Blue Earth County in southern Minnesota, very rich farming land. It was settled by German immigrants. All the area were Germans. About half of those Germans were Lutheran, the other half were Roman Catholics. The Lutherans were just as devout in their religion as were the Catholics. My father was Lutheran, my mother was Catholic. Later my father joined the Catholic church. His mother thought it was best that we have one religion, not to be divided. So he joined the church. And

so I was raised as a Catholic, and that was a very important part of my background.

TRELEVEN: When had your parents, or their parents, emigrated from Germany?

NIGG: It would have to be the early 1800s, early 1800s. They came from Germany, different parts of Germany, but all gathered in that area. The farmers, the merchants, everybody, spoke German. Kind of an interesting little side-light, my grandmother, my father's mother, thought it was terrible that they weren't speaking German in our house, because how was I going to learn German if they spoke English? She made quite a fuss about it. So one day she was taking me--and I may be five or six years old--on a train up to some little Lake Madison vacation. As we're going along on the train, she points out, "See the pretty flowers?" I said to her, "Those aren't flowers, das sind Blumen." Well, she thought that was the greatest thing that ever happened. But that's the type of background that I come from.

TRELEVEN: Just to fill in some names here, your father's name was . . .

NIGG: Peter, Peter J., Peter Julius. And my mother's name was Rose Ulmen.

TRELEVEN: Okay. Brothers and sisters?

NIGG: I have one sister nine years younger than I am. Her name is Rita Armstrong.

TRELEVEN: So it was just the two of you. How long did you remain in Mankato?

NIGG: Well, let me tell you that part of the story. Until I was six years old, my father was in the cigar manufacturing business, had his own little business, he and a partner. And I suppose in those days you didn't have very good dustproof stuff. Anyhow, he got tuberculosis and nearly died. Nearly died. The doctor said my mother's care is what saved him. But now he had to be on the outside; he couldn't work in the cigar factory anymore. So he went to work for the American Express Company and was the station manager, working outside.

Then when I was six years old he was transferred to Minneapolis. And this is where I went to grammar school. I went to the parochial schools and lived there until the first year of high school.

Then my family decided they should live in Los Angeles. My mother had an aunt and uncle out here, and this was the nice place to be, and so they moved here. So then I went to Loyola High School. This is in March 1920. I went to Loyola. Loyola in those days was a small school, 250 students. I knew every student; I knew every teacher; I knew the gardeners; I knew the janitors. It was a close, small, little group. I was a good student. My junior and senior year, both years, I won the gold medal for the best grades in the class, those last two years. Now, I graduate from Loyola in 1923, and I'm going to go to UCLA. It's close by. It's "Go on the street car." We thought of Stanford [University], we thought of [University of California] Berkeley, but that's far away, so I go to UCLA. And it wasn't UCLA then, it was the Southern Branch of the University [of California].

TRELEVEN: Right, right. But before we get on to UCLA, let me back up just a bit. Did you find, as a youngster, that Minneapolis was quite different from Mankato? I mean, Mankato, I take it, was . . .

NIGG: Well, I was too young to know much about. . . . We would visit there all the time. It's only ninety miles away, so we would visit Mankato, all of our relatives there. But Minneapolis was, we thought, a lovely city. We enjoyed it very much. I went to the Incarnation School, and it was a lovely school. Lovely sisters, Dominican sisters, and they were so nice to me, and I did so well. So that's that part.

TRELEVEN: Right. Well, there's a stereotype that in Catholic schools you really learn the three Rs. Did you learn the three Rs well?

NIGG: Oh, I think so. I think my grammar school education. . . . Now, for a couple of semesters I went to public schools. I lived eighteen blocks from the Catholic school, so it was a pretty long walk on those winter days. But other than about two semesters, I was at the Incarnation School. That's where I started, and that's where I graduated. From there I went over to Saint Thomas's, which was a college but had a high school division. That's when we then moved here to Los Angeles, and I transferred to Loyola.

TRELEVEN: In terms of your family, or in terms of your

extended family that were back in Mankato, I know that during that World War I period, there was a lot of anti-German sentiment. Did your family have any of that?

NIGG: No, no, we didn't feel that at all. I think they were maybe aware of it but didn't feel it at all. No. First of all, there were so many of us. [Laughter] We were a dominant factor. They were hardworking people. German people were very industrious; they worked hard and did well, succeeded in whatever they were doing.

TRELEVEN: Did people of your generation--well, let's say, yourself--ever learn German or . . . ?

NIGG: No. No, my mother and father both felt that we're in America, English is the language, and that's what we spoke. So I never learned German, and I'm kind of sorry now. But I didn't. Never.

TRELEVEN: Do you remember the trip out to Los Angeles?

NIGG: Oh, very well.

TRELEVEN: How did you get here?

NIGG: See, my father worked for the railroad express company, so we were able to get free passes on the train. So when I was nine years old, my mother and I took a trip to Los Angeles. My

father came out and joined us. That's when they got their first feel of southern California and liked it very much but thought, no, Minneapolis is their home. So we went back. But after we got back and got going again, they realized, oh, no, Los Angeles is where we should have gone and stayed. So later we came here.

TRELEVEN: Have anything to do with those cold winters in Minneapolis? [Laughter]

NIGG: Well, I suppose, because they were terribly cold winters. Although we liked Minneapolis. I was great on a sled and all that kind of stuff.

TRELEVEN: What part of Los Angeles did you live in when you . . . ?

NIGG: Well, when we came out, this uncle of my mother's [Godfrey Ulmen] and his wife [Teresa Ulmen] and two daughters [Dorothy Ulmen and Julia Ulmen] lived on Forty-ninth Street near Western [Avenue]. So we found a little apartment close by at Forty-eighth and Western. That's where we lived to begin with. Eventually [we] moved up towards the Hollywood area and lived there while I was still in Loyola High School. But I'd say Western Avenue was kind of a street we were

always close to. Western Avenue in those days was a pretty important street, because it went across town.

TRELEVEN: So even when you moved up to Hollywood you were fairly near Western, that particular area?

NIGG: Yeah.

TRELEVEN: And your father continued to work for the same company?

NIGG: Well, no. We came out here, you know, [because] he had to do something else. He wanted to go back into cigar making, but my mother was very opposed to that because of his health. He lived, incidentally, to be in his nineties. So she did a pretty good job of taking care of him. But anyhow, he worked at various things. Eventually . . . My mother's brother was in the cookie manufacturing business, and my father joined him. Their plant was on Melrose Avenue near La Brea [Avenue]. And that's what my father did.

TRELEVEN: Do you recall the name of the company?

NIGG: Yeah. Calirox. "California rox" was the name of the cookie. They did very well with it. Then, when the Depression hit, they sold the business. So here is my father, now in his

fifties, out looking for a job. There weren't any; there just weren't any. An employer would not offer a man of his experience the low salary that he could get somebody else for. So my father just couldn't get a job. So I'm now with the Kellogg Company, and I knew a little store down on Third [Street] and Flower [Street] that was a good buy, so I said to my father, "Why don't you buy that store?" Well, he said, "What do I know about running a grocery store?" Well, I said, "You can surely do that. There's nothing to it." So to encourage him, I said, "I'll put up half the money, you put up half the money, and we'll be partners." So he did. And he ran that store way past retirement age and enjoyed it very much. Did very well with it.

TRELEVEN: At Third and Flower.

NIGG: Third and Flower, yeah.

TRELEVEN: And what was the name of that store, if you can recall?

NIGG: We had a name for it. I don't remember now. But it was right on the corner of Third and Flower. In those days, that whole area was apartments, so you did a lot of business. He was there early

till late. I'd come into the store and call him "Dad," so the clerks called him "Dad." Pretty soon the customers are calling him "Dad," and he became "Dad" of that whole area down there.

TRELEVEN: And your mother was occupied in the house?

NIGG: My mother just was at home, a housewife.

TRELEVEN: Did she help around the store or keep the books or anything?

NIGG: No, not at all. I helped a bit, but no, not my mother. She was at home.

TRELEVEN: Turning then to Loyola High School, it sounds like that was an awfully rewarding experience for you. You just stated a few minutes ago, you knew . . .

NIGG: It was. It was, because it was like a family thing. It was so close. I knew everybody. I knew everybody in the school. This is what was quite a contrast when I went to UCLA. The UCLA campus is three blocks this way and three blocks that way, all those buildings, three thousand students. I didn't know anybody, and it was quite a lost feeling. I mean, the contrast was so tremendous. So as I cast about, there were maybe ten students that had come from Loyola that

I knew. But ten out of three thousand you don't see very often. The one thing that I recognized early, up on the bulletin board, was the Newman Club. Now, that's Catholic. I knew I'd feel at home there. The Newman Club met at a lady's home on Heliotrope [Drive], right across from the campus. So I would go to the meetings. I would go early to help put up the chairs; I would stay late to help put away the chairs. If the Newman Club had a dance, I, of course, went to the dance. If they had a picnic, I went to the picnic. I did everything that the Newman Club did, because I felt at home. This was like going back to Loyola. I was close to this thing. As a result, the end of my sophomore year--I'm going to be a junior next year--I'm elected president. Now, normally you elected a senior the president, but for some reason or other, because I had been so active, I was elected the president. And then the start of the next year, 1925, Bishop [John J.] Cantwell built the first Newman Hall right across the street from the campus. Lovely, big, two-story building.

TRELEVEN: Right across the street from [North] Vermont

[Avenue]?

NIGG: No, on Willoughby [Avenue], the north end of the campus. Right across the street, though, from the campus. Beautifully furnished, just beautifully furnished: leather chairs, leather sofas, oak tables. It was a wonderful thing.

Here I am the president, got this beautiful place, so we think, "Well, we have to have a reception for the bishop." So we put on this lovely reception, and I stand next to the bishop. Now, prior to this, I didn't know the bishop from Adam, but now I'm standing next to him. And I know every student, so I introduce him to everybody, and he's very pleased. This is a big group, and he's very pleased. He's built this building. . . . He had been the chaplain of the Newman Club at [University of California] Berkeley as a young priest. So he had a feeling for this sort of thing. He knew the importance of the university. He could see this was going to be a big school. This is why he built this thing. So anyway, we had this lovely reception. It went very well.

It was so successful that we decided we

NIGG: should have a reception for the parents. So a few Sundays later we have another reception, and again I'm next to the bishop. I don't know the parents, but I know the students, so I'm the go-between and present everybody to him, and he's just so pleased. He just thinks this is so wonderful.

Then we thought we ought to have a reception for the faculty and the administration. So we have another reception. And again, I'm beside the bishop and I'm introducing everybody to him. And it was very successful. This was a lovely place, and the faculty thought this was pretty darn nice.

So then the bishop says, "You know, the people that gave me the money to build this thing, I ought to have a reception for them." So we have another reception. Again I'm beside the bishop, but this time he's introducing me to all of his friends who had donated money to build this building. We developed a very close relationship. I went down once a month to his office, which was at Second [Street] and Main [Street], and reported on the progress we were

NIGG: making. He was just so pleased. We became very good friends.

About six years later, and I think it was 1932, Los Angeles put on a convention for college Catholic clubs from all over the country, and he had me be the chairman. I'm his friend from way back and he knows me so well, so I was the chairman. This was quite an experience. Here we have a national convention, great program, held at the Ambassador Hotel. Students from all over the country came here and had this very successful convention, or conference, whatever you want to call it, that I was the chairman of. I presided over the meetings and all of that sort of thing. That was an excellent experience for me. I was maybe thirty years old and putting on a national convention.

The other important thing that happened to me in my freshman year, towards the end of my freshman year, I joined a fraternity, Beta Sigma. We became Kappa Sigma, but prior to the fraternities going national we were Beta Sigma. This meant a great deal to me. Again, I'm now close to people. I learned more from my student

activities and the fraternity than I did from any of my classes.

TRELEVEN: Really?

NIGG: Yeah, yeah. I learned how to get along with people, I learned how to be aggressive, I learned how to do things and get things done. So the fraternity meant a great deal to me. Two other students from my class at Loyola were members of the fraternity. We were very close; we worked very hard. The fraternity insisted we be in activities. So I got involved with all kinds of stuff through the fraternity.

TRELEVEN: Okay. I'm not that familiar with the fraternity system, but is that a so-called Catholic fraternity?

NIGG: No, no. In fact, Kappa Sigma, a scimitar and key is their crescent that you wear. One of my friends from Loyola said, "I wonder if this is all right for us." I said, "Oh, I think so. This is a great group." And we went ahead and It never was a problem at all.

TRELEVEN: Okay. Let me back up just a minute again. You had mentioned some other possibilities at that time: Stanford, Berkeley, maybe Pomona

[College]. What were the key factors in your deciding to go to what was called the Southern Branch at that time?

NIGG: It was right close to home. I could live at home. I could take the streetcar to school. This was so much better, in my family's opinion, than going off to school and being away and not knowing what. Being close to home was the key factor, the main factor. The decision was really based on that. And when the university became the Southern Branch, this took on quite a bit of prominence in this community. We were no longer a teachers college; we were now Southern Branch of the University of California. One of the great things about those pioneer days was that all of us students appreciated that this is really going to be a great institution. We had great opportunity. We were all for building the university. About my junior year, we have become UCLA, and we're going to have a new campus. So they're going to sell bonds to buy the campus.

TRELEVEN: It was an election, right? A referendum [Proposition 2, May 1925].

NIGG: An election. This was an election. Now, I, as a student--and many students did this--was assigned a precinct that I was to work: Talk to all the people; get them to vote for our bonds. I was at my precinct before it opened. I literally talked to everybody that voted at that precinct, gave them the literature, asked them to vote for the bonds, stayed till the election closed, and then was so interested and wondering how we had done, I stayed until they counted all the ballots. That was the attitude of our pioneer students. They had this great, great interest in the university, this great desire to see it do well. That's how I, as one student--and I'm sure many did the same thing. . . . I remember what I did. And that's what I did. I worked at that precinct all day long. About the middle of the day, the lady in charge came out and said, "You know, we've had a complaint. You have to be fifty feet from the polling place." And I had been sitting right in front of it. So, okay, I stand up here. If somebody's coming the other direction, I run to get to my fifty feet on that side to give them the literature, to make my

appeal. But that was just typical of the attitude of our student body, of all the students, this great interest in the university. We're now UCLA, it's a big thing, and we wanted to be successful.

TRELEVEN: It's a charming campus. It still is, in fact-- now the [Los Angeles] City College. The new Newman Club built across the street, as you've described. Why, in your own mind, did you need a new campus?

NIGG: Because we were going to expand. See, we're now maybe four thousand students. But that's it. Now we're going to have thousands of students-- twenty-five thousand students, thirty-five thousand students--so we needed a new campus. That was the reason for the selling the bonds, for making the move. So we could expand and grow.

TRELEVEN: So you personally had no problem with a campus being built way out on the west side?

NIGG: Oh, no, no. This was wonderful. We worked for it, went out with the trucks to take stuff out there. No, this was a part of the progress we were making.

TRELEVEN: I know that you were also involved quite heavily in some activities relating to, first of all, the campus yearbook [Southern Campus] and, secondly, drama.

NIGG: Yeah.

TRELEVEN: Tell me a little about each of those and how you became interested in them.

NIGG: This is, again, part of the fraternity. The fraternity insisted that all the members, and we freshmen especially, had to be involved in activities. This is how you did it. They wanted to have good grades. I was never good. . . . At UCLA I was a disgrace to Loyola because. . . . At Loyola I worked so hard to have good grades. Here it didn't matter. I was good enough that at the end of the semester I could cram and get by, pass the tests. But during the year I was having a good time. The fraternity insisted that we be active in things. So another freshmen and I, Gael Rogers, went to the production department where they put on all these plays. And you got paid for it. We worked, got a salary for changing the scenery and all that kind of stuff. So I became involved in that. My senior

year I was production manager for a Greek drama. This was pretty big stuff in those days. Miss [Evalyn A.] Thomas was the drama coach and put on those Greek dramas and did it in a very big way. I'm the production manager, in charge of all the staging.

The other thing they got me involved in was the yearbook. I went to the yearbook and sold advertising--again, 15 percent commission on all advertising I sold. So my junior year I'm the advertising manager, and my senior year I'm the manager of the yearbook. Now, this was another great experience.

TRELEVEN: It's an enormous job.

NIGG: It was. Let me tell you about this. Up until this time, the student body lost money on the yearbook. They would just take it for granted; this was one of the expenses. You had to have a nice yearbook, and so it was going to cost you some money. We made money. We were very careful in our contracts, worked very hard. First of all, we got sixty dollars a month for ten months--\$600 to be manager of the yearbook. [John B.] Johnny [Jackson] got the same thing for being

editor. He got \$600. We started out with a big sales drive to sell what they called reservations. See, in the beginning of the year, you sold a reservation, and then that's how many books you produced. So we put on a big drive. I think we sold every student at school a yearbook reservation.

TRELEVEN: Okay. And they have to pay their money up front at that time?

NIGG: They had to pay their money up front. Not all of it, but, I forget, a dollar and a half or something. This is a lot of money in those days. We put on this great drive. I had a good group of people. I learned early in life you have to have people; you can't do all of this yourself. You have to have good people, and you train them. So I put together this great group of people to sell the yearbooks, and we sold them. Then I had a fraternity brother come in as my advertising manager for the advertising department. [Walter B.] Walt Furman was his name. He became the manager of the next yearbook, next year. But we worked hard. Then we worked at our contracts. See, we had. . . .

We were the largest publication in southern California.

TRELEVEN: Really?

NIGG: The largest publication in southern California at that time. So this is a big printing job; this is a big engraving job; this is a big cover job, a big book-binding job. So we worked on those contracts and got good contracts. We watched them like a hawk, and, as I say, made money. The first time the student body had made money on a yearbook. Prior to that they'd always just accepted that it was going to cost you money. My successor, Walt Furman, made money on his yearbook. So now we've got two years in a row we've made money. So all of a sudden the graduate manager--[Stephen W.] Steve Cunningham was his name--realized, "Well, this is a pretty important thing. We shouldn't be trusting a bunch of kids to do this." So he brought in a graduate manager of publications, and from then on the kids did not have as much authority as we had had. The 1927 yearbook is copyrighted by John Jackson and myself. [Laughter]

TRELEVEN: Copyrighted?

NIGG: Yeah, copyrighted in our personal names, because that's the way you did it. But that changed, you see.

TRELEVEN: Now, I think a key to this was you also had to sell advertising, right?

NIGG: Oh, yes.

TRELEVEN: Well, I know that you went into sales later in your career, and we'll talk a bit about that later. But at the time you're doing the yearbook, what's your sales technique? How do you convince people they should advertise in the Southern Campus?

NIGG: Dale, I don't know. [Laughter] We were so inexperienced. We were doing it by feel. And I thought this yearbook was such. . . . And it was. We won a national prize for our yearbook--I forget what you called it, but the best yearbook of the country. So we were all enthused about it. And we went out and sold local merchants, banks. They all have an ad in our yearbook. And they did. I got a 15 percent commission on every ad that I sold, and my salesman did the same thing, got a 15 percent commission. So it was something to work for. I made more money my

senior year than I made my first year out of college.

TRELEVEN: Really? [Laughter]

NIGG: Yeah. Now, the reason was I went into the real estate business, and in 1927 the things that were leading up to the Depression were already happening in real estate. So I worked like the dickens. Oh, I worked so hard, but didn't make a sale. But nobody else in the office made a sale. If others had been making sales, I'd say there's something wrong with me, but they weren't making sales either. So I said, well, you know, I wanted to get married, and I've got to have a job that pays a salary. So I go back to UCLA. . . . It's now called the Bureau of Occupations, and a girl was the manager. I forget her name. Well, I need a job, and I need a job where I can get a salary. So she got a job for me with U.S. Gypsum Company. U.S. Gypsum Company was just being put together by combining a lot of little independent plaster manufacturing companies. It became, eventually, the largest firm of its kind in the world. But I was in at the ground floor.

TRELEVEN: Well, going back to UCLA, you were also on

something called the Traditions Committee. Do you recall that? At least that's what's listed in the yearbook.

NIGG: Oh, we had all kind of committees and all kinds of activities. I enjoyed that very much. I was very active. I don't remember that particular one, but . . .

TRELEVEN: I take it by the name that this is a committee that would like to establish traditions at the time in a fairly young institution?

NIGG: We did that sort of thing. Again, I don't know how or why, but our group of pioneer students were really a great, great group of people. They were dedicated. They loved the university. I think the thing that took us was this opportunity for growth. We're just a little school, and all of a sudden we have an opportunity of being a great big, major university. And we took it to heart.

Our student leaders were terrific guys. A fellow by the name of Fred Moyer Jordan, [who] became a regent, was president of the student body. A great leader. Then we had [Frederick F.] Fred Houser. He was a terrific guy, just

terrific, student body president and a great leader. Then we had Ned Marr. My year we had Ned Marr. Ned was just a terrific guy, hardworking and a real leader. And they led us into this idea, "We're going to be a great university, and we've got to put it all together, and we have to do well."

TRELEVEN: Was part of the motivation already in '26, '27 to be as big as Berkeley?

NIGG: I think that was our vision. I think that was our vision. We had been the Southern Branch. When we were the Southern Branch, students in Berkeley would come down and call us the twig, and we kind of resented that. And now we're UCLA. We're not a branch anymore, we're a separate institution, and we had this great vision of this great growth. It went all through the student body.

TRELEVEN: I would like to ask you a little bit about your academic experience, and maybe let's include Loyola High School in this. I guess the question would be, in terms of Loyola High School, in terms of your instructors at UCLA, are there any who had a particular influence on you, who you

felt were . . .

NIGG: Well, as I said, at UCLA I monkeyed around. I was having a good time. I was in all these activities. I was smart enough that when it came time for the finals or for midterm exams I could get in and really work, study all night long, go to the library. Our library at Fifth [Street] and Flower [Street] was brand-new. It was a lovely, brand-new, big library. I learned to use that library. I'd go down there, and I knew every part of it. I could study like the dickens. I really learned how to work. But I'm sure as [far as] the administration and faculty were concerned, I was a big disappointment to them, because I did not get the grades I should have gotten. I always got passing grades, but being an A student, that didn't appeal to me anymore. I don't mean to imply that I didn't learn or that I didn't do well, because I did.

We had a good faculty even in those days. We had an excellent faculty, and they were good people. I wasn't close to them as I was at Loyola. At Loyola I knew every teacher in the school. We were friends. After school, stay and

NIGG: visit, all that kind of stuff. I didn't have that kind of relationship at UCLA. We had readers who read the tests and all that stuff, so it wasn't a close relationship.

Now, one thing I should say. . . . I'm now going to go to UCLA. What am I going to take? I didn't know. I liked math, and I had done very well in math. So somewhere along the line I got the idea "accounting." So I'm going to be an accountant. I go to UCLA--Southern Branch at the time--and take my first course in accounting. We've got all these credits and debits. To me it was the dullest stuff in the world, and I knew right now I don't want to be an accountant. I just came to that conclusion. I'm going to be an accountant; all of a sudden I don't want to be an accountant. Boy, I know that.

So what do I do? Law! That somehow stuck out. Be a lawyer. That's great. So I changed in my sophomore year to prelegal, political science it was called. I took a course in administrative law. You sat there and read these cases. You were looking for something that would stand out. I thought, "Of all the dull stuff,

this is the worst." [Laughter] So I don't want to be a lawyer.

So now what am I going to do? Well, I'll just take business. I took a bunch of courses in economics; I took courses in finance; I took courses in labor law. A guy by the name of [Gordon S.] Watkins became quite a famous professor.

TRELEVEN: Yeah, Gordon Watkins.

NIGG: He was our professor. [I] took courses in transportation. So I'll be in business. And that's how I wound up, and that's how it went.

TRELEVEN: Officially, I think your major was political science?

NIGG: That's when I went through the prelegal, and I didn't change it then, but I was really in economics. That was my what my major became.

TRELEVEN: In the course of your day-to-day activities on the campus, it sounds like what you're telling me is you sort of majored in extracurricular activities . . .

NIGG: I did.

TRELEVEN: And you went to class and . . .

NIGG: I did. I learned so much about how to get along

NIGG: in life, how to know people, how to work with people, how to get things done. That yearbook experience was as great an experience as a young man could have. It was just tremendous. I was the manager. I signed all those contracts. I saw that we made the profit. And making a profit when they had never made a profit before was a great experience. I realized what could be done.

The next thing I did as a senior, within our fraternity now. . . . A fraternity brother had gotten a job driving a car four afternoons a week for a Mrs. Pelletier. Mrs. Pelletier was a very wealthy lady. She had lived at one time at the corner of Seventh [Street] and Grand [Avenue]. Then her husband realized the city was going to be growing west, so he went out and bought a big ranch which was the corner of Western [Avenue] and Wilshire [Boulevard] and built a lovely big home on the corner of Seventh Street, because he thought Seventh Street would be the principal street going west. Well, the Ambassador Hotel was built so it blocked Seventh Street, so it became Wilshire. But it really didn't make any

difference to them, because he owned all the property along Wilshire, too. Anyway, he had died, and Mrs. Pelletier had two daughters: Mrs. Mitchell, who was married and had two young children who lived with her in this great big house, and Mrs. De Roulet. Her husband had died. She had a son, Henry De Roulet, who would go on to Berkeley, had been on the rowing team, and then had gotten infantile paralysis and was completely paralyzed.

TRELEVEN: The name is De Roulet?

NIGG: De Roulet, Henry De Roulet. Went into the real estate business at the corner of Wilshire and Western, his grandmother's property, you see, built that Pelletier building, the green building there. And that's who I went to work for then, because I wanted to be in real estate. He gave me a job. I worked like the dickens getting listings. I had listings all over that area but didn't make any sales. So I've got to get a job where I can make some money. That's when I go back to UCLA, go back to the Bureau of Occupations, talk to this nice girl that's there who's in charge. She gets me a job with the U.S.

Gypsum Company, and that's how I got started in that.

TRELEVEN: Let's pause for a minute.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

TRELEVEN: Okay, we're back on. In the course of these activities at UCLA, how would you characterize your relationship with, let's say, the provost, Ernest Carroll Moore?

NIGG: I did not know Ernest Carroll Moore well. He's the head man--I know him. I think he knew me, but we were not close. John Jackson, my friend at the yearbook, was the other way around. He was very close to him; he knew him well. It was just a difference in, I guess, what we were after. I had lost that incentive to be close to the administration of the school. I'm doing other things. He was a great man, I recognized that, but I was not close to him.

TRELEVEN: Were there occasions when you would see Regent [Edward H.] Dickson on the campus at all?

NIGG: No, because we were just getting started, and the regents I did not know at all, didn't know any of them at all. Now, Dickson became very active at UCLA as we made the move and all of that. But in

my day, 1927, he was not that close to us. That came later.

TRELEVEN: You've described how you began to want to get into real estate. Then . . .

NIGG: Well, my mother and father had built and sold houses. I kind of grew up in this real estate business, and so it was only natural that this was what I wanted to do. That would be my job.

TRELEVEN: Your mother and father?

NIGG: My mother and father.

TRELEVEN: But, wait, I thought they ran a grocery store.

NIGG: My father did, but on the side they had always built and sold houses, and that's how they made their money. So I had kind of grown up in this business and just wanted to be in real estate. And I knew this Henry De Roulet well, because I had driven for his grandmother and his mother. So I went to him, "I want a job." So he gave me a job.

TRELEVEN: Now, according to the biography of you in the Centennial Record¹, which was the University of

1. Verne A. Stadtman, comp. and ed., The Centennial Record of the University of California (Berkeley: Regents of the University of California, 1967).

California publication in 1968, you were at U.S. Gypsum from 1929 to 1945. Is that . . . ?

NIGG: No, that's not correct.

TRELEVEN: That's not accurate?

NIGG: No. I went to UCLA Bureau of Occupations and got this job with U.S. Gypsum. They sent me to Oakland to open up a warehouse. Now, this is a brand-new company, just getting going. So I go to Oakland and open up this warehouse, work hard. This was about October. February 9, I come back to Los Angeles and get married.

TRELEVEN: February 9 of . . .

NIGG: Nineteen twenty-eight. Take my little wife [Edith Nigg], and we got up to Oakland and have a little apartment and get everything fixed up.

The head man for U.S. Gypsum Company, the sales manager for the whole West Coast, was a man by the name of [William] Bill Hall, an awfully nice guy. So when he comes to Oakland, I invite him to our little apartment for dinner. And he accepts. Now, this is pretty unusual. Here's the top guy for the whole West Coast, and here's a young kid running their warehouse, and I invite him for dinner and he accepts. He came. My wife

NIGG: was a lovely young girl, didn't know anything about cooking, but she had prepared a meal. He thoroughly enjoyed the evening. It was evident that he thought we were great. So he becomes my good friend. He's the top guy, and I'm at the bottom, but he's my good friend. The next time he comes to Oakland, he takes us out to dinner. We became good friends. He didn't have children, so I think he looked at us as kind of his adopted kids. Anyhow, he took a great interest in us.

February of 1929, he comes to Oakland and says to me, "This company is losing money on every sack of plaster we sell. I don't see how they're going to go anywhere that way. I'm going to get out. You're a nice young guy, you ought to get out, too." Well, I said, "Sure, Bill. If you're going to quit, I'll quit." And right then I sat down and wrote a letter of resignation. We had wanted to come back to Los Angeles. We were from Los Angeles, and so that. . . . But the reason I quit is because the top guy says to me, "This company isn't going to go anywhere. They're losing money on every sack of plaster we sell. I'm going to get out. You ought to get

NIGG: out." So I got out. Well, I immediately wrote to all my friends in southern California, "I'm coming back to Los Angeles. If you know of a job, keep me in mind." Now, when I had graduated in '27, there were. . . . I could have had any number of jobs. There were lots of jobs. There was a demand for people. But this is now '29, and things have changed completely. Now, I don't know that. I'm just a kid; I don't know that. But I get back to Los Angeles. . . .

Oh, another thing that I had done, my wife and I. . . . And she was a great help to me. We saved money every month. We got married. Our first months, we decided. . . . I was making \$135 a month. We decided we should save \$15 a month. So we took this \$15 and put it in a separate account in the bank and did that every month. At the end of our first month, my wife says to me, "We can't have meat anymore; we've run out of money." She could have said, "We've run out of money. We've got to eat, so we'd better take some of our savings." But she didn't. "We can't have meat anymore this month." So she made a big pot of beans. She had

NIGG: gotten a bean crock for a shower gift or something, and she made a big pot. That's what we ate. We saved every month. A few months later I got a \$15-a-month raise, from \$135 to \$150. Of the \$15, we saved \$10. Now we're saving \$25 a month. The extra \$5 let us eat at the end of the month. But we're just being that careful. And we did that all of our lives. So when I come back to Los Angeles a month later, I've got money in the bank. So we could make the move.

Got down here, there just aren't any jobs. All of my friends, "Cy, I don't know of a thing." Oh, this is awful. So again, I go back to UCLA Bureau of Occupations. It's now Ned Marr. Ned Marr, who had been my classmate, is now working in the alumni office as head of the Bureau of Occupations. He said, "Cy, there aren't any jobs." He said, "I've got one letter. It's from the Kellogg Company office up in San Francisco. They want a man two years out of college." Well, I'm two years out of college. This is now '29, and I graduated in '27. They want a man that's married. I'm married. They

NIGG: want a man that had majored in business administration. Well, I can make my stuff fit that all right, so I've done that. They wanted a man who had had some experience in selling. Well, with the gypsum company I had, of course, been doing selling. So I fit those things. So Ned says to me--now, he's my friend, good friend--he says, "I'll give you the letter, but for goodness sakes, get the job, because it's the only job I know of."

So I write to a Mr. West in San Francisco, giving all my background of qualifications: two years out of school, married, selling experience, business administration. So he comes down to Los Angeles, and we have a nice visit, and he hires me. Now, he said, "I'm surprised, I expected to have a lot of candidates from UCLA. You're the only one I got." "Oh," I said, "that's the service. They do the screening for you. You apparently gave them a lot of things you wanted, so they look around at who does that. I did it best, so that's why I'm the candidate." He said, "That's very good." [Laughter] So anyway, I got the job. Now it's April 1, 1929.

TRELEVEN: Before you go on, I want you to fill in the name of your wife.

NIGG: Oh, Edith. Her maiden name was Witkowski.

TRELEVEN: Sounds Polish.

NIGG: Yeah, it was. And she was Catholic, of course. We got along great there.

Well, anyway, April of 1929, everything leading up to the Depression is happening. Again, I am too inexperienced to realize that, but that's the situation. Now, what the Kellogg Company was doing. . . . At that time, a food manufacturer sold to a wholesale grocer, who in turn sold to the retail trade, who in turn sold to consumers. That was the process. Somebody back in Battle Creek [Michigan] was smart enough to recognize that that system was too costly--it was not going to hold up. We were going to have Certified Grocers, a cooperative type of thing. Whereas Haas-Barick, who were the big wholesalers at the time and had a staff of about forty salesmen. . . . Those salesmen went out, called on the retail grocer, wrote the order, and then delivered it. Well, you can see what a costly process that is. Certified Grocers, the grocer

NIGG: called in his order or mailed in an order, had his money up in advance on deposit, and could operate. . . . Well, Certified Grocers actually operated on the cash discount, which was 2 percent, and the warehouse discount or the carload discount, which was 1.5 percent. So they operated on 3.5 percent as opposed to maybe 20 percent that the wholesale grocers operated on. So the whole system was going to change. The Kellogg Company recognized that. They wanted to hire these top-flight guys with the experience to do merchandising.

So I get a bulletin on "You Are a Merchandiser." Another bulletin, "The Importance of Merchandising." Now, I had taken all of these economics courses; I had never heard the word merchandising. It's a brand-new word in my vocabulary. I don't know what it means. So I said to my wife, "I've got to find out about this merchandising." So I come home from work, we have our little dinner, do our dishes, get in our little car, and drive down to the library, Fifth [Street] and Hope [Street], park right on the street, no problem at all, go into the library,

NIGG: look up merchandising in the catalog. There are over three hundred books on merchandising, and I don't know. . . . I've never heard the word before, and here there are three hundred books. Now, not all of them are on merchandising. Some of them are just a couple of chapters, maybe. But over three hundred books in the library on merchandising. So from Monday through Friday, every week, my wife and I would have our dinner, do our dishes, get in our car, and go down to the library. And I read every one of those three hundred books. My wife helped me. She'd keep track of what I had read. If a book was missing, she'd watch for it and, "Here it is." But in six months' time. . . . We were expecting our first child, Peter, so it was a nice activity for us. We didn't have money to spend, anyway, so we get in our car and go to the library, and I read every one of those books. As a result, I thoroughly understood what my job was. My job was to get maximum consumption. Consumption was the key word. My job was to do all the things that would help to increase consumption.

Then we take the next step. In those days,

NIGG: everybody worked six days a week. That was just the work week, six days a week. But in the grocery business, you couldn't call on a retail grocery on Saturday, because that was his big selling day. He did 50 percent of his volume for the week on Saturday. Women, if they had a car, came in their cars. Most of them didn't have a car, so they took a child with a wagon, and they came to the grocery store and did all of their shopping for the week on Saturday. Now, they'd come back for a loaf of bread or a bottle of milk or something, but their big shopping was done on Saturday. So as salesmen, we couldn't call on a retail grocer on a Saturday. That was his biggest day. So the custom was established that you put on a trade promotion sale, TPS, trade promotion sale, on Saturday. And on Saturday, you worked in some market that was having an opening or an anniversary sale or something else. So on a Saturday there were maybe fifty salesmen at a store opening. Fifty! Like a circus going on, all with a premium or something to sell their product to the consumer.

Now, most of these salesmen were pretty good

NIGG: at this stuff and were extroverts, and talking to some lady about their product was easy for them. I am a kind of a shy guy, and it was difficult for me. I couldn't easily go up to a lady and say, "Here is my combination. Would you buy it?" That was difficult. I did it, but it was difficult.

So we start in the morning. Fifty men are there. It's like a circus going on, all this activity. I had been reading these books on merchandising. I am learning the importance of the location of the display. I am learning the importance of how the display is built. I'm learning the importance of having the price sign just right. So I am practicing these things that I have been studying. When I come to a store, I get a good location for my display, I build it right, I price it right.

In the morning there are fifty of us there, everybody working like the dickens. About three o'clock in the afternoon, a couple of people would slip away. They want to hit a golf ball, want to do some shopping, want to work in their garden, and they leave. Four o'clock, a lot of

NIGG: them felt they've done a day's work. Four o'clock, half of them are gone. They've done the day's work, you know. Five o'clock, everybody. They've done a day's work. They leave. There might be a couple of fellows that had come late or something and might be conscientious and will stay till six o'clock. But at six o'clock, nobody's left except me, because I discovered, after everybody else is gone, I can be kind of a hero around the place. I work in the store. I help the backroom boys. They've got to put up a case of peas or corn; I mark the prices on it and put it up for them. The checkstand is busy, I step in and bag for the checker. Just helped around the store. And I stayed until the store closed. Now, the store would close; nine o'clock, ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock. I was there till it closed. In those days, these were open-front stores, and you closed them by bringing across sliding doors or sliding gates, something like that. I was there till it closed. Before it closed, I had checked my stack carefully to see how many combinations I had sold.

NIGG: There was always a little mezzanine in the back, and up on that mezzanine was a little office, and that's where the manager or the owner of the store was. I would go up, stick my head in the door, and say, "Mr. Smith, you had a wonderful sale. I sold 213 combinations." He'd say. . . . Every Saturday was the same. He'd say, "I saw you working around here all day. I really appreciate your help. What's your name?" I'd say, "My name is Cy Nigg." Now he wanted to do something for me, wanted to write a letter to my boss and tell him what a good job I was doing. "Oh, you don't need to do that. No, my boss knows I'm working. That's all." "Well, what can I do for you?" "Would you run an ad for me?" Now, the owner or the manager wrote his own ad in those days. So that was simple. He said, "Sure. Bring me a cut and I'll run it next week." So next Monday I am back with a big smile on my face. I got this cut for the ad. I visit about something about the business. I did this for five years.

 Now, you've got to recognize the part my wife played in this. She's home alone. Now I've

got two little children. Never complained. When I'd come home she'd say, "How did it go?" "Oh, we had a wonderful sale." So at the end of five years I know every major grocer in the metropolitan area, and what's more important, every major grocer knows me by name. I'm this great kid that's working so hard and helping them.

TRELEVEN: Okay, let me ask. When you say you sold combinations, what exactly do you mean by that?

NIGG: Well, you would put together two or three packages of Kellogg's cereals with a premium: cereal bowl, muffin tins, rag dolls. You had a premium. Every grocery manufacturer was doing the same thing, would have some kind of a premium to help them on this. It was called trade promotion sale. We all had a premium, and you made up this combination. That's how these other salesmen were so good at talking to people about their premium and to buy Calumet baking powder or something. I've got my premiums to sell my combinations. So in the meantime . . .

TRELEVEN: Now, this is up in the Bay Area?

NIGG: Oh, no, no. This is right here in Los Angeles.

TRELEVEN: You're in Los Angeles?

NIGG: Yeah, I've come back to Los Angeles. We came back from Oakland to Los Angeles in 1929, and I'm working here.

TRELEVEN: Okay. So you kept this up for five years, which would take us up to about '34, I guess.

NIGG: That's right. Yeah. In 1934, I am made the supervisor. I am now going to be the top guy down here. Prior to this, it's the fellow that's calling on the wholesale grocers. I don't have anything to do with these wholesale grocers; that's his job, and he's very important. He's way over me. But I'm doing the work with the retailers, and I get to know them well. They are my friends, and I'm their friend. I've now worked up. . . . I'm always thinking of consumption. How do I get more consumption? Somewhere along the line, I knew you had to have complete distribution. So I worked for a complete distribution. Everything the Kellogg Company made I wanted to have in a store.

In those early days, they delivered the load from the wholesale grocer, and here's a spot up on top, vacant, so that's where you put cereal,

NIGG: and another thing went over here, all separated around. I'm trying to sell combinations of cereals. I know I've got to have them together, so I created the idea of a cereal department. I got my boss to make me some large neon signs, big Kellogg's script across it and on top of it, in green, "Cereal Department." So if a grocer would put together all the cereals, I'd give him one of these signs. So I was successful in creating the cereal department. Today it's the only way they would think of doing it, but prior to this they were all separate. So I got them together and called it the cereal department.

And I worked on those ads I would ask for. I started with one product, Corn Flakes. Now, I give them a Kellogg's script that says "Kellogg's Cereals," and we'd list every cereal we made. In those days, a good market would sell maybe six, eight, ten, twelve packages of Kellogg's cereals over the weekend. With these ads, I would sell six, eight, ten, twelve cases! We got this tremendous. . . . See, the Depression is on. People are trying to save money. They're following those ads. So if cereals are

NIGG: advertised, it was a bargain, and they bought them. So I just got such great results.

Now, again, I'm studying all that merchandising stuff; that's where I got these ideas. I'm always thinking about, how do I get more consumption? I work cooking schools. We had Kellogg's All-Bran; they made a lovely muffin. Sold All-Bran like you can't believe. Rice Krispies made a candy. Again, you made a batch of candy, it took a whole half of the box. That's the kind of consumption thing I was always thinking about, how to get more consumption.

In those days, the retail grocer would run a lead item in his ad that he'd lose maybe ten cents on--Crisco, margarine, sugar. Ten cents. Every package of sugar that went out on that ad cost him ten cents. So Kellogg's in those days made a lot off of cereals. Our principal items were Corn Flakes, Pep, Rice Krispies, Krumbles, Whole Wheat Biscuits, All-Bran, but they also made a Wheat Crispies, a Bran Flake, a number of items that were not advertised items, and these sold at a much lower price, wholesale price. So

NIGG: I conceived the idea. . . . Rice Krispies, Pep, those things cost ten cents a package. The grocer paid ten cents a package. I conceived the idea, your choice, three packages for a quarter. And I would be able to, by my display, sell enough of these off items so that the grocer would break even. Now, breaking even isn't very good, but it's better than losing ten cents.

So I presented this idea to a store by the name of E. F. Smith's, who was doing a big business. Had a store out in Watts. And I got this manager to do this. We displayed the full Kellogg line: your choice, three packages for a quarter. Now, we didn't sell three packages, we sold a dozen packages. Here's a consumer, comes in, three packages for a quarter. It's a big bargain, she buys three, and I'm there to help her. And she buys six, then she buys a dozen. Now, just think, that woman's going home with a dozen packages of cereal. The Depression is on. They don't have enough to eat, and she's got all of this cereal. So they eat cereal for breakfast, they eat it for lunch, they eat it before they went to bed. This is how I was

NIGG: getting this tremendous increase in consumption.

The next thing I did was I would work with a grocer. . . . The same E. F. Smith opens a store at the corner of Forty-third [Street] and Central [Avenue]. Forty-third and Central in those days was the heart of the black community, and they were opening this great big store. I'm working there, and the manager says to me, "Cy, would you price the store for me?" He's just too busy; he's got too much to do. This is opening the next day; there's nobody else he can trust. He knows me well enough to know I'll know how to do it. So he gives me his wholesale sheets, the cost of every item, gives me a couple of boys. We start in the corner. I look, Del Monte corn, costs so much. Mark it up 16 and 2/3 percent. I did that whole store. We worked all day pricing that thing for him. Now, you'd say, well, what does that got to do with selling Kellogg's cereals? The guy is my pal. I priced the store for him. If I want a display, if I want an ad, if I want anything, he's going to do it for me. That was the kind of relationship that I was

NIGG: building.

I had the same experience with inventories. In those days, the grocer took inventory. He didn't want his clerks to help on the inventory, because if they were cheating him, they could cheat on the inventory. So he and his family did the inventory--his wife, his children, if he had children, and me. He trusted me. He knew me. We'd work all night, all night long doing that inventory. The next morning we were finished, and then he takes us to breakfast. I'd go home to get some sleep. But he's my pal. Anything I want. "Sure, Cy." I come in, "I want a big display here." "Do it." That was the kind of a relationship that I was able to build, and it paid off in such a big way.

By 1934, Battle Creek says to Mr. West up in San Francisco, "We're doing too much volume in southern California. We've got to have an office there. We're going to divide your territory." Now, he had California, Arizona, and Nevada. That was his district. "We're going to divide it northern California, southern California. Clark County, Nevada, and Arizona will go with southern

NIGG: California. You'll have the rest of Nevada. Now, you could have your choice. If you want to stay in San Francisco, it's your office. You want to go to Los Angeles, you can have it." Well, we were doing the volume, so he decided he'd better come to southern California. So he came to southern California, opened an office here, and I'm his chief assistant.

In northern California they'd had a sales managers club, Food Industry Sales Managers Club. He thought we ought to have one down here. So he called some of his friends, and we started the Food Industry Sales Managers Club in southern California. This is 1934 now. I, being his chief assistant, am automatically a member. I know the retail trade like nobody else in the club, because those sales managers are still of that old school--the wholesale grocer was the key. But that's past, that's gone. The retailer is now the key to this thing. Each meeting I'd get up and tell who's opening a store or stores this weekend. They would go out and visit the store, you see. They didn't know about it any other way. I would tell them. So I became very

NIGG: active with the sales managers club.

As a supervisor now, I'm working outside of just Los Angeles. I went to Kern County, the guy we had up there. Here's Kern County, big farming community, not a single major store in the area. All little mom-and-pop stores. The whole county! So I come back and say to my friend [Phillip] Phil Raisin, good friend, operating some good markets. . . . And by now, in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, finding the location is getting tough. The good locations are gone. The major corners are gone. I said, "Phil, why don't you stop worrying about all the stuff down here. Go up to Kern County. It's wide open." Now, this is before the freeway. This is the old winding around to get up there, about a three-hour drive. So he goes up and looks around. Sure enough, here's all of these people, and there's not a major store up there. So he leases a bunch of stores on the main street, knocks out the walls, and makes a great big market. There's plenty of room for parking in the back. He's also facing the main street, so he has an entrance from the front and from the back. I go

NIGG: up and put in the cereal department.

On a Sunday night he calls me at home, "Cy, you've got to come up and write the ad for me." I said, "Phil, I can't go up there. I've got stuff I've got to do here." He said, "Cy, you got me into this. You've got to come up and write the ad for me." Well, he could write it just as well as I could, of course, but he wants that attention. I said, "Phil, I'll be there at nine o'clock tomorrow morning." So six o'clock Monday morning, I'm in my car. I drive up there, get there about nine o'clock. He gives me a big desk and a lot of paper. I'm kind of mad at him for making me come up there, but I'm going to write the ad. So it's his money.

I really write a hot ad. I wrote an ad that would have been hot in Los Angeles. Up there, it just knocked them over. On a Thursday morning And the ad came out Wednesday night. Thursday morning, the store is mobbed with people, just jammed. You couldn't move. So he goes to the police department, gets a couple of policeman to come over, puts one at the front door and one at the back way to keep people

out. When we finally got down to where they could move, if somebody came out, you let somebody else in. That's the way it was for the three days of the opening. People would congratulate him, what a great opening he was having. He'd say, "Cy wrote the ad." So I now get a reputation for knowing how to write a hot ad.

But that's the way it went. We did so well. We were so successful. Eventually I became the manager for this office. I had the highest per capita consumption of anyplace in the world.

TRELEVEN: Is that right?

NIGG: The difference was I had that background training in consumption. I was always thinking about "How do you get consumption?" I sold the full line. Some manager in some other office liked the big package of All-Bran, or somebody else liked the small package of All-Bran. In those areas, they sold the big package, or they sold the small package. I sold them both, because I had everything in there. New York sold Corn Flakes like you couldn't believe, but they didn't sell

NIGG: anything else. They'd have small stores, and they didn't have room for it. So they sold Corn Flakes. I was selling the full line, so my consumption was so much above anywhere else that it set quite a reputation.

Anyway, the president of the Kellogg Company is a man by the name of Earl Freeman. He's now my great friend. We're so close. It's a great relationship. In 1944 the war [World War II] is on, and he says to me, "Cy, you'll be the next president of the company, but you need more experience. You know this market so well, there's no question. But you don't know the rest of the country, and the rest of the country is different." He said, "Now, I'm suggesting you take two years, and then we transfer you to Chicago. Get the feel of the Midwest, be there two years. Then you go South. The South's like a different country--different culture, different everything. You go to Atlanta, you spend two years there. You get the feel of the business in that area. Then, Cy, the people are in New York. You go to New York for a couple of years, get the feel of that market. Then I'll be ready

NIGG: to retire. You'll be the new president. You'll come to Battle Creek and you'll be the best president we ever had, because you'll know the country."

Well, it sounded wonderful. But we had two children, our daughter [Nancy Nigg Doty] just entering high school, our son [Peter Nigg] in the second year of high school. We're going to take them away. Our families live here, my wife's mother and father and her sister and family, my mother and father and sister and her family. All of these friends we've got, we're so close to. I knew. . . . I'd been active now in the sales managers club, and I knew you had to transfer. I knew that was coming. But to go two years here and two years there and two years there, what's happening to our family, what's happening to our children? So my wife and I talk it over carefully. We decide that's all we want. Now, again, the war is on. I could have gotten another job the next day with no problem at all, I'm so well known in this area, but I'm not going to get a job as good as what I've got. And I'm going to be faced with the same problem:

NIGG: transfer somewhere else. So I thought, "If I could buy a company, now I set the precedent, now I decide where I'll be."

So I start to look. Well, anything that was for sale was junk, just plain junk. I looked at plants with rusty pipes and all that stuff. A business called Figco Coffee Substitute. Well, during the war you could sell it, but when the war is over with, who is going to want to buy Figco? We'll be back to coffee. So I'm desperate. I'm just desperate. I didn't know what to do. I ought to be telling Earl, "Transfer me," and here I'm hedging.

Now, I had been active in the food industry. I was a past president of the Food Industry Sales Managers Club. So a fellow by the name of George O'Brien--he was vice president and head of Standard Oil of Southern California, and he was the chairman that year, 1944, of the Red Cross drive--he and a guy by the name of [Thomas C.] Tom Dean, who I knew real well, who was head of the Bank of America, manager of the main office--came out to see me. They wanted me to be chairman of the food industry division of the Red

NIGG: Cross drive. Well, I had done a lot of this kind of stuff, and I knew everybody well, so I said, "Sure. Give me the cards, I'll put together a committee, and we'll do it." So they do. They give me the cards. I bring together my committee. I keep some of the cards myself, distribute the rest around, and we start the Red Cross drive. It was going real well.

I had one card, a guy by the name of Max Ginsberg, who I knew real well, who owned the [Los Angeles] L.A. Saratoga Chip and Pretzel Company. He was a member of the sales managers club. I knew him well. He had given \$500 the year before, and in those days \$500 was a pretty good contribution for Red Cross. I didn't want to miss him. I called two or three times, and he's not in. Finally I say to the girl at the telephone, "Well, when will Mr. Ginsberg be there? I'm working for the Red Cross drive." "Oh," she said, "Mr. Ginsberg is just home from the hospital. He's been very ill." Oh, I was sick. Here's my 500-buck contribution, and he's not going to be able to come in. So I thought, "Well, maybe I can go by his house." I knew him

NIGG: pretty well. I thought, "I'll go by his house and see how he is, and maybe I can say something about the Red Cross drive."

So I go by. He lived up in the Los Feliz area. His wife lets me in. He comes in, and he looks like walking death. God, it was a shock to me! I knew him, and here's this guy looking so terrible. I said, "Max, what's wrong with you?" "Oh," he said, "I go down to the plant, I get all upset. Nothing is going right." Now, again, the war is on. You can't get help, you can't do this. So he gets all upset. He was the kind of an owner-manager who had to be in on everything. [If they] bought a new typewriter, he had to say what one they'd buy. So he goes down, and he gets all upset. He says, "My doctor says get rid of the business or get a new doctor." So he said, "I guess I'm going to have to sell my business." Without thinking, I said, "Max, I'd like to buy it." And he said, "Cy, everybody wants to buy my business, but my wife and I worked so hard to build it. They'll ruin it, I know. There's nobody I'd rather have than you."

NIGG: So just that easily I bought that business. We came to an easy agreement. I paid him \$100,000 for the business, plus the inventory, plus the accounts receivable. Inventory and accounts receivable were each about \$25,000, but I could finance that easily. So my only thing was the \$100,000, and I made arrangements. It was easy to get the money.

 The first person I told was a boy by the name of [James P.] Jim Hickey. [He had] been in Loyola High School with me, same class. He'd gone on to studying medicine back at Saint Louis and ran out of money. He was running a Standard Oil [gas] station at Olympic [Boulevard] and Fairfax [Avenue], kind of a training station, and working like the dickens. Oh, he was good. So I said to Ted Von der Abe, my friend whose office was right across the street, "You ought to hire that Jim Hickey. Boy, he's good." But Ted didn't do anything, so I hired him, and he came to work for the Kellogg Company. By now he's my assistant, he's my supervisor. So we're still working Saturdays, and Jim and I go to lunch, and I tell him, "Jim, I'm leaving the company. I'm

NIGG: going to buy out Max Ginsberg." He said, "I'll go with you." I said, "Jim, are you crazy? You'll get the job. This is what you've been working for. I'll recommend you." "No," he said, "we've always been together. I'll stay with you." Well, I said, "Jim, that wouldn't be right. I can't hire you. I'm taking a gamble. For you to come to work for me, that would be crazy. You stay with Kellogg's." "No," he said, "we've always been together. I like working with you. I'll stay with you." So I said, "Jim, I would love to have you, but I just can't hire you. I'm paying \$100,000 for this business. If you could raise \$10,000, you'll have a 10 percent interest. Then you have the same chance I have." He said, "I think my Uncle Tom would help me. Will you go with me to see him?" I said, "Sure."

So we go out to see Uncle Tom. Uncle Tom is Tom Hickey, Hickey Pipe and Supply Company, who's been very successful. He likes Jim; they're very close. So we go out, and I tell Tom what I'm going to do, and Jim wants to buy a 10 percent interest and he needs \$10,000. Tom says to Jim,

NIGG: "Is that what you want, Jim?" And Jim says, "I think it would be such a great opportunity." Tom says, "I'll arrange it." So Tom got Jim a loan for \$10,000 from the bank, and so he's my partner. I'm going to be the general partner, and he'll be a limited partner.

The next week, a fellow by the name of [Charles] Charley Fuller, who had worked for me, who is now the general manager of a little honey company. . . . And, of course, in those. . . . War's on. You can sell all the honey you can get. The job was to get it and get it bottled, that sort of thing. So Charley comes to see me. He said, "I hear you and Jim are buying out Max Ginsberg." I said, "That's right." He said, "Well, look. I don't know much about production, but I know more than you guys do. How about taking me and letting me be the production manager?" I said, "Charley, I'll give you the same deal I gave to Jim. You raise \$10,000, you'll have a 10 percent interest." Well, Charley didn't have an Uncle Tom. [Laughter] So he had to work awfully hard. But he went to all of his friends, and he'd borrow \$100 here, \$1,000

here. Ted Von der Abe gave him \$5,000. That was his big one. He borrowed on his insurance; he borrowed on his house. Finally he gets his 10,000 bucks. So now it's the three of us.

We took over February 1 of 1945. The war's still on. We have all these friends in the food industry who know us and love us, want to help us. The first month, we doubled the volume. The first month we did twice as much business as Max had done in January. The next month, March, we almost doubled it again. So we had this rapid, tremendous growth. By about May, it was evident we would . . .

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

TRELEVEN: Okay, we're back on.

NIGG: Yes. We recognized that we needed the money in the business. We're expanding so rapidly, we need all the money we can keep in the business. And as partners, individuals, at the end of the year we'd have to pay out all this money in taxes. So I go down to see my friend Tom Deane at Bank of America, tell him the problem, where we are. He gets on the phone and calls upstairs

NIGG: to the eighth floor to Claude A. Parker Company and says, "Cy, go up and visit with them. They're real experts." So I went up to see a man by the name of Theo Parker, and I told him the whole situation. "Well," he said, "are you building this business to sell it?" I said, "Oh, no, no. We just want to build a business." "Are you building it to maybe sell stock?" "No, we want to keep it. It's our business. We want to keep it." "Oh," he said, "okay, then this is how we'll do it. We'll expense everything we can. Rather than buy something, we'll repair something. You own it, so it doesn't make any difference. If you're going to sell the business, you want assets. If you want to sell stock, you need assets. But that isn't going to be your situation. You're just going to own this thing, it's going to be yours, so we'll expense everything we can." So that's the way we did it. We built that business, had great growth.

The war ended, men came out of the service, and we were able to have such a great choice of young men for our sales department, for our

production department, for everything we did. We put together this great organization. Now, as we put together this great organization, that freed me so that I could be out in other activities, be active with UCLA alumni. When I became president [of the Alumni Association] and became a [University of California] regent, I gave five days a month to the university. For two years I gave five days a month. One of those days went to committee meetings, the second day was to regents meetings, the other three days were just to university activities. There were all kinds of things I had to be active in, but I was free to do it because I had this great organization.

TRELEVEN: Okay. Now, the name of the company remained the same or . . . ?

NIGG: No, no. His name was L.A. Saratoga Chip and Pretzel Company. His trademark was a mission bell. We liked the bell, so we called our company Bell Brand Foods, Limited--Limited because it was a limited partnership to begin with. We never changed that. We kept that name, Bell Brands Foods, Limited.

TRELEVEN: Where does Tom Sawyer come in? Your regents

biography said you were chairman of the board of Tom Sawyer Foods, Incorporated.

NIGG: Tom Sawyer was a competitor, and, I don't know, five, ten years down the line we bought them out. So we now own Tom Sawyer Foods. Tom Sawyer Foods was a competitor in potato chips. They had a big nut meat department and a big candy department, so . . .

TRELEVEN: So that's what you did. And that's not all you did, but in terms of the business in which you were engaged, that you kept at until what year?

NIGG: Let me give you the background of that now. We were successful from the day we took over, highly successful. It grew and it grew, and we built this great organization. I put Tom Deane, the manager of the head office of Bank of America, on our board of directors. He saw how successful we were doing, how great the thing was going. So he gets me, and he said, "Cy, I got a loan with Ben Hur [Coffee Company]. I'm scared of it. I want you to go on their board. It will be a good experience for you." So "Sure, Tom." I went on his board. Well, he put me on a dozen boards, all of them bank problems. He never lost a loan

NIGG: on any one of those boards I went onto. Now, most of the companies I liquidated. But this was a great experience. I'm really learning how to do things.

We had an orange drink company, international, was founded here in southern California. The guy that had founded it discovered he could buy cull oranges at five dollars a ton. At five dollars a ton he could make the concentrate and sell this orange drink, franchise it, Orange Crush. It was highly successful, but about 1950, '55, orange groves are disappearing. Subdivisions are taking over. Also, frozen orange juice is becoming popular. So here the market of cull oranges disappears. From five dollars a ton we went to forty-five dollars a ton. At five dollars a ton it was very profitable. At forty-five dollars a ton you're just breaking even. So this owner of this business had died. Tom has a big loan out to them and he's scared to death, so he says to me, "Would you go on that board?" So I go on that board, they make me chairman of their executive committee. I liquidated the business but

NIGG: liquidated because they owned a lot of stuff. It all had value, so I was able to liquidate it. We paid off the bank loan, the stockholders all came out very well, and so I'm a kind of a hero. And that's the way it went with I don't know how many businesses. By now I've got a reputation as a director.

Security Bank gets me to go on the Weber Showcase board. That business had been a family business over three generations, but by now they've got about twenty-seven cousins involved in the business, and they're not doing well. So the bank steps in and says, "Look, you need some outside help." They got three or four of us, I being one, to go on that board. And again, we straightened the company out. We finally sold it, but everybody came out smelling like a rose. I didn't make money on any of those things except Weber Showcase. When I went on with Weber Showcase, the Security Bank said, "To get these people, you've got to give them some stock options." I did very well on Weber Showcase, but the others, it was just a matter of service.

I had joined Rotary [Club International]--I

don't know, I was still with the Kellogg Company-- and became president of the Vernon Rotary Club and became very interested in Rotary. Rotary had a slogan, "He profits most who serves best." This idea of service really fit in with my own philosophy. I learned to serve. You get satisfaction out of serving. I became president of so many different organizations. I never sought the job. I just served, and pretty soon I was president. I learned to serve, and it was a great, great asset. I enjoyed that very much. Among the various groups that I worked with was, of course, the UCLA [alumni] group. I enjoyed that group very much. There were friends from school days on, so we are close.

TRELEVEN: Before we go on to that, though, just to round out your business career, your successful business career. . . . You look like the type of person to me who has never really retired. But was there a date when you began to drop away from your active business association?

NIGG: No. I'll give you the background of that. By now I had made my son chairman of our board and my son-in-law [Leon Doty] president of the company.

They were a couple of young, dynamic guys. They went to the UCLA School of Business Administration that, you know, you worked in. . . . What do you call that program?

TRELEVEN: Well, is it an internship program? Or is it the MBA [masters of business administration] program, perhaps?

NIGG: Well, you went to school nights. You worked daytimes. In other words, they stayed on the job but went through that whole program. Harvard [University] had started the thing. They did it, and then UCLA took it up. Anyhow, they did that program. They're sharp young guys. They really are sharp, working hard, really know their stuff. So I said to Peter, my son, "Now, your job as chairman is to see that we continue the rate of growth we've always had." "I understand." "Leon, my son-in-law, you're going to be the president. You just run this company like you. . . . Just make it go." And he did. He was a terrific guy. So we're growing, we're very successful.

But about 1967, my son comes to me and says, "You told me to keep it growing. We can find new

NIGG: products, we can find new territory, we can maintain the growth, but we're going to run out of money. We won't generate money fast enough to keep up that rate of growth." Now, at that time, everybody wanted to buy us. It was a time of mergers. Every month I just had somebody coming and wanting to buy us. And I'd always say, "We're just not interested at all. Forget it." Well, a friend of mine [Harry Bleich] at Sunshine Biscuit [Company]--and they had quite a few plants around the country--had said to me, "Cy, if you ever want to sell, come to see me. I know you don't want to now, but maybe sometime in the future, come to see me." So when my son said to me, "This is what I recommend," we held a board meeting. He explained the situation, and everybody agreed, well, maybe it's the time to look around. Let's see what we can do.

So I go back to New York and talk to my friend at Sunshine Biscuit. I said, "Maybe now is the time. We're at least ready to talk." He takes me into the president of the company, and the guy says, "When will you be back in Los Angeles?" And I said, "Tomorrow." He looks at

his calendar, and he said, "I'll be there next Tuesday." This was the American Tobacco Company. They later changed the name to American Brands, but it was the American Tobacco Company. They've got to diversify; they know this. They're in the tobacco business. All this talk against tobacco companies and the tobacco industry, they've got to diversify. And they had Sunshine Biscuit.

So this fellow comes out. I show him around, tell him what we've got, what we can do. He's very impressed. They want to buy us, but they want to buy us for cash. Well, we couldn't sell for cash. We start with zero, and now we're up into the millions, and the whole thing would be taxable. So I said, "No. I want common stock. If we can't have common stock, there's nothing to talk about." Well, this was a big concession for them, but they made it. So they bought us for common stock. I agreed to stay on, which I did.

TRELEVEN: On the board?

NIGG: On the board and as. . . . They now are making me in charge of all of their snack food businesses

around the country. So I got in, and I worked pretty hard, did pretty well. But then in a big company like that you've got all these internal politics going on, and somebody else was coming up into power, and I didn't like it.

TRELEVEN: Yeah, and you were about in your early sixties.

NIGG: No, I'm sixty-five. So I said, "I'm sixty-five. Time to retire." So I retired. My son quit immediately. My son-in-law stayed on, but by now you've got to report to New York, and then you. . . . Before, he could just do anything he wanted to do. Now you've got to get permission. So he got tired of it, and he left. We were fortunate; we had that American Brands stock. It paid a good dividend year after year after year. It doubled, I'm going to say, six times. So we did very, very well. I still own a bunch of it, and now it's going down, but over the years it did very, very well. So that's that.

TRELEVEN: That's your essence, at least of your business career.

NIGG: Yeah.

TRELEVEN: Let me ask, then, to begin with. . . . You're a

graduate of UCLA in '27. You've described how hard both you and, by then, Mrs. Nigg were working. How did you at first maintain connections with UCLA? Let's say in '27, '28, '29, right from the start.

NIGG: First of all, with the Kellogg Company I averaged a raise every six months. I was with them sixteen years, and I got thirty-two raises in those sixteen years. This was through the Depression, so I did very well with the Kellogg Company. And again, my wife was so helpful to me. Never did she complain. Other couples were going out on Saturday nights to have a party or something. I'm working. She accepts that. I worked all these nights taking inventory and stuff. She's home alone with the children. She accepts that. She was a great help to me, great help to me. She was the one that really insisted we must save. We saved money every month. There was never a year that we weren't worth more at the end of the year than we were at the beginning. And then the Depression hit, and we were able to make tremendous buys. We bought an oriental rug for \$800. My son still has it in

his dining room. But, you know, it was worth thousands, but because of this Depression, and they can't do anything, we bought that rug for \$800. We bought a house in Hancock Park for \$8,900. That house today would sell for a half a million. We were able to make those good buys because we had saved, we had money.

TRELEVEN: Now tie this into your UCLA ties after graduating.

NIGG: I was always close to UCLA. An interesting experience: When I came back from Oakland and got established here in Los Angeles, I'm doing pretty well. My friend Walt Furman comes to me and says, "Cy, you've got to help us." Now, the fraternity. . . . When they moved to the new campus, the fraternity. . . . Everybody was assessed one hundred dollars and with all these hundreds of dollars it came into some thousands, and we were able to buy a lot from Janss [Investment Company] and build a house which Janss helped us finance. Now, that was Janss's business; they're developing the area. They did this for all the fraternities and sororities, and they did it for us. The [Delta Mu chapter] house

NIGG: was owned by the Kappa Sigma Corporation, which was formed just to buy the property and build the house. The corporation owns the house, rents it to the fraternity, and rents it for what their costs are, their costs of interest and payments. That's how you determine the rent you charged.

Well, in 1932 Walt Furman comes to me and says, "Cy, we need help. You've got to come out and help us." So I go out to the fraternity house. The poor guys that are running the corporation are just worn out. Values had dropped so much, the interest charges and all are so high, that the rent they're charging the fraternity, the fraternity is just rebelling. They're saying, "We can't pay these kind of rents. Our members can go out and rent a house from somebody for half the price. You've got to cut our rents." "We can't cut the rents because these are our costs." These poor guys are just worn out, so they make me the president of their corporation. I talk to the house manager. He's explaining, "Get rid of the house. Give it back to Janss. We can go out and rent something else

NIGG: for half the price." "But we've got an obligation." "To heck with the obligation. We can't afford these prices. We're going to lose our membership. They can't pay this kind of rent."

So I, by myself, go down to the Janss corporation. 'Thirty-two, I'm twenty-seven years old, not too much experience, but I go into Janss and ask for the head guy. Well, they turned me over to. . . . And I don't remember his name, but he was the corporate secretary. So I introduce myself and tell him my problem. "We own this house. We owe you a lot of money, \$25,000." And I said, "The fraternity is just rebelling. They want us to give the house back to you."

"Oh," he said, "don't let that happen. If one does it, they're all going to do it. What am I going to do with twenty-five sorority and fraternity houses?" "

Well," I said, "I don't have the answer. I'm just coming to you with the problem. I'm telling you what they're telling me. I'm the president of the corporation. We own the house, but the boys are going to leave us, and if

NIGG: they leave us, there's nothing we can do but give you back the house." I said, "That's the problem. I don't know what the solution is."

He said, "Is there any way you could raise \$10,000?"

I said, "I don't know. Maybe parents would want to spend. . . . I don't know. What's the answer?"

He said, "Janss bonds are selling at forty cents on the dollar. If you could raise \$10,000, I could buy bonds for you on the open market, and we would accept them at full value on your mortgage. So for \$10,000 you could pay off a \$25,000 mortgage. You would reduce your costs less than half."

I said, "Let me see."

I go back to the fraternity and tell them, "This is what we can do. This is what Janss will do." Well, they were able to get a loan from the national fraternity, Kappa Sigma, the national, of the \$10,000. With the \$10,000, we paid off the loan. We still had \$400 or \$500 left, which we used in repairing tile work and leaking faucets and a little painting and that kind of

stuff. [We] fixed the place all up, reduced our rent by more than half, the fraternity booms, and I'm a hero. [Laughter]

This is what Janss now did with all the other fraternities. They went to each one of them, "Look, here we can help you in reducing your rent and your costs." I don't think they took back any houses at all. I think they were able to change the whole thing around. But that happened in '32, and I was the one that went to Janss and said, "This is the problem, and you've got to do something." And they came up with this answer.

TRELEVEN: That's an interesting period, because that's also the time that the Associated Students at UCLA was broke or in the hole and had to arrange financing--a loan from the regents, a bank loan--to get out.

NIGG: That Depression was so rough, so tough. Unless you went through it, you just can't realize it. It was that rough. Values just went to nothing.

So here we've got this lovely big house. Now, \$25,000 was a lot of money, but the value dropped to where it wasn't worth anywhere near

that. Janss arranged to cut it to \$10,000, a little less. Nine thousand something was what we actually paid them, and then we had that money left to do that repair work. It just came out smelling like a rose.

In the meantime, I've always remained close to UCLA alumni. They're all my friends. These are our friends. In those days, the [UCLA] Alumni Association put on a weekend party once a year. We'd go to Lake Arrowhead to the camp they had up there [Bruin Woods]. We'd go to Santa Barbara, we went to the Ojai Valley Inn, and we would have a lovely weekend. Oh, these are all close friends now.

TRELEVEN: This is for one particular class? Or for all the . . . ?

NIGG: Oh, no. This is the Alumni Association.

TRELEVEN: Anyone who's ever graduated from UCLA.

NIGG: Yeah, Alumni Association. We had these lovely weekend parties, and all the alumni old-timers would come, and we'd have such a good time together. That's how I kept up contact. Then, I knew John Jackson so well, and John kept me involved in things, the [University of California

Alumni] Council and all that kind of stuff.

So after my business was successful and I had this great organization, I was able to get around and be active in a number of things. I was active in the United Way Community Chest to begin with, United Way. I did everything you could do in the United Way: president, campaign chairman, all that kind of stuff. I was in a number of organizations and would become president. Rotary is a good example. I worked awfully hard in Rotary and enjoyed it. I was also active with UCLA, worked with the alumni, was on the council, and then became president [of the UCLA Alumni Association].

TRELEVEN: Well, I think we'll leave it there for today, and tomorrow we'll get together and we will delve into more particulars about the Alumni Association and move on to your term on the [University of California Board of] Regents. So for today, thank you very much.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Session 2, March 24, 1993]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

TRELEVEN: I had a few follow-up questions I wanted to ask you on the basis of what we discussed yesterday. Early in the interview, you said your Catholic background was important in your life. Would you elaborate on that, what you meant by that? Were you linking it to the service responsibilities that you took on later? Or what did you mean by that?

NIGG: Well, I think religion is terribly important in life for everybody. My Catholic training, teaching, means a great deal to me. I think honor and integrity are so important in life, and within our church they stress that pretty strongly. In addition, I think the thing maybe I was referring to at the time was that the Newman Club experience was a great experience for me. I learned so much. I made such good friends. That's the type of thing I was referring to.

Speaking of the Newman Club, I didn't mention, but I will now, a couple of years ago Cardinal [Roger M.] Mahoney called me, wanted to see me. So I went in, and he said, "I've been reviewing your past, and you were so important in those early days at UCLA as president of the Newman Club, and you were so close to Bishop Cantwell." He said, "We've got to build a new Newman center at UCLA, and the logical one to name it after is you." So he said, "We'd like to name it the Cyril C. Nigg Newman Center, and we'd like a contribution for the construction from you of \$2 million." [Laughter] I thought it was a pretty good approach, so I said okay. I made the contribution. John Griffin has purchased the site. The present site apparently isn't very good, and it's too small, and everything's wrong with it. John Griffin was able to negotiate for some land with some lady that's close by. It's going to be a great site. They have that, so now they're going to start the construction. But the new Newman Center will be called the Cyril C. Nigg Newman Center.

TRELEVEN: Wonderful! I hadn't realized that. And you

committed \$2 million.

NIGG: Two million dollars, yeah. [laughter]

TRELEVEN: That is terrific. In a way, that's repaying the church for all that you've done for it in the Newman Club.

NIGG: Well, I think that's right. I believe. . . . I've been a fund raiser all my life. I believe you've got to give back. I think I have to support UCLA, which I have done pretty well over the years. I think you've got to support your church, our parish. I think you've got to support hospitals, medical causes, the Red Cross. I've been a major contributor for United Way for years. I believe. . . . That again is a part of Catholic teaching. I believe you've got to do these things. So I try to.

TRELEVEN: Great. Well, I'm glad you mentioned that. Another follow-up question was that you mentioned the retail grocer E. F. Smith yesterday, first in terms of the store that he had in Watts and then another that he was setting up on Central Avenue. Was he African-American?

NIGG: No, no. He was a butcher and was very successful, opened a group of stores and was big,

big volume and was very, very successful. Now, whatever happened, I don't remember. He's no longer here, no longer in existence. But E. F. Smith's stores were very successful. There was another Smith, C. S. Smith, who operated a chain of stores. C. S. Smith was headquartered in Compton, and E. F. Smith was headquartered at about Forty-third [Street] and Figueroa [Street].

TRELEVEN: I see. You talked a lot about your business career and getting started. I wanted to ask, how important in all of this were the contacts you made at UCLA? In other words, UCLA graduates, members of fraternities.

NIGG: I got my first job with U.S. Gypsum Company through the [UCLA] Bureau of Occupations. I got my job with the Kellogg Company through the Bureau of Occupations. So both of the jobs that I had came from UCLA. Again, I felt very indebted to UCLA always because of that.

TRELEVEN: As you're developing your business, is it helpful to have contacts who went to UCLA or who were fraternity members in the same fraternity?

NIGG: I've always thought and said it's important to go

to school where you're going to live. These fellows that go east or go north, they're missing something, because they get out of school and all the friends that I had they aren't going to have. Their friends are going to be where they went to school. I think that's very important, and, yes, all of those early friends were so important, so helpful, encouraging. My closest friends were the friends I made at school.

TRELEVEN: Okay. When we stopped yesterday, we had just begun discussing the [UCLA] Alumni Association, and you mentioned the annual parties. I take it these were largely social affairs, but were they fund-raising functions as well?

NIGG: Purely social. But it kept our group together. It kept our group close.

Now, to start today's session, I would like to talk about President Sproul, Robert Gordon Sproul, because he's very important in what's to follow.

TRELEVEN: Yes. And if I have the year correctly, he became president in 1930.

NIGG: But going back before that, Bob Sproul graduated from [University of California] Berkeley with a

NIGG: bachelor's degree in the early twenties and got a job with the university in the business office. A very natural thing. Bob Sproul was a tall guy, deep voice, great personality, big smile. He could remember names like no one I've ever known. So in the business office he did very well. They gave him the job of working with the legislature on the budget. He was a master at it. He knew how to get along with these legislators. He knew how to encourage them and how to sell the university, and so he did very, very well. But all he ever had was a bachelor's degree, not a master's, not a doctorate, just a bachelor's degree.

Now the Depression hits. Oh, it was rough. So the [University of California Board of Regents]--and I think this is an example of how great our regents were--realizing the financial problems that were to come, didn't pick an academician to follow [William W.] Campbell, who was retiring; they pick Bob Sproul. Here is a young man with a bachelor's degree, and they make him president of the University of California. Well, the faculty were up in arms. To the

NIGG: faculty, you had to have a great scholastic. . . . You had to have somebody with many degrees who was an outstanding scholar, and here we got a guy that's got a bachelor's degree. They would have resigned en masse except the Depression is on. They resign and they're not going to get another job. No university is hiring anybody. They're just so pressed. They've got all of these professors that have tenure, and to meet those salaries, they're terribly pressed. No one, no school anywhere, was hiring anybody. So if our professors became too upset that they've got Bob Sproul with a bachelor's degree as the president of the university, they retire or they resign. They aren't going to get another job. They know that, so they don't resign, but they're just beside themselves to think here's, this great university and we've got a guy with a bachelor's degree as the president.

Now, Bob Sproul's a smart young guy. He recognized this feeling right away. What's he going to do? He can't go back to school and get a master's degree and then a doctorate. He's got to run the university. So he changed the pattern

NIGG: of what a university president does. Prior to Bob Sproul, the greater the scholar, the better the president, because as a great scholar he could attract other scholars. Scholars like to be together. Here's Bob Sproul, he's [got a] bachelor's degree. What's he going to do?

So this is what Bob Sproul did: He became a fund raiser. He was a great fund raiser. Bob Sproul would go to the head of one of his departments, say to the guy in charge, "What can I do for you? What kind of help can I give you?" Well, the guy would fumble around a bit and say, "Well, you know, we've got this great team of scholars here. They can do such great work, but we really have to have a laboratory. We have to have some additional equipment. If we had that, this is what we could do." Well, Bob would say, "What's all that going to cost?" "Half a million dollars." Bob would say, "Write it up. I'll get it for you." So the guy writes up his program. He tells about what they need: new laboratory, the equipment. It's going to cost a half a million dollars, but if they had this, with this great team that he's got, this is

NIGG: what they could do. Bob would look it over, maybe make a few changes.

He was a great salesman. Now he calls one of the foundations: the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation. "I'd like an appointment. I'd like to see you. I'd like to talk to you. I've got a great program for you." Well, this is a whole new approach. Foundations didn't have a president of a university come to them; they had to go out and search for things. So here's Bob before the board of the foundation. He explains this great team of scientists that he's got, the best there is. "This is what they'd like to do, but this is what they need. If you will give them that money, this is what they'll be able to accomplish." Well, the foundations are bowled over. They've never had this kind of approach before. This sounds wonderful. They've got this money; they've got to give it away; here's a good place to give it.

So he just got one program after another after another after another. Not only foundations, the federal government, all that

NIGG: Atomic Energy [Commission] stuff. Bob Sproul is the guy that got the money to do all of that. All of that stuff that we have over in New Mexico [Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory], all the original experimental work on the atomic bomb. . . . Bob Sproul got that money. He was so successful that all of a sudden, instead of being against him, he's the most popular president that ever was. He's getting them what they need, which is a whole new thing. They needed the money, and it went to millions of dollars. If they needed the money, he could sell it. And he could sell it so well that, in my opinion, Bob Sproul is perhaps the greatest university president there ever has been, because he changed that pattern of scholarship to fund raising.

Now, it didn't take very long for Harvard [University] and Stanford [University] and other schools around the country to observe what he was doing. He's getting money, and they're sitting there with nothing. So all of a sudden all of these universities changed their formula for a president. They still held pretty much to scholars, but they wanted a scholar that can

NIGG: raise money. So the whole pattern of what a university president does was changed. Stanford, Harvard, USC [University of Southern California], all of them went out and changed presidents to guys that knew how to raise money. Bob Sproul is the one that set that pattern. So, as I say, in my opinion, Bob Sproul was just a terrific man as a president of a university. He changed the pattern of what a president does.

Now I come to our group. He's the president of the university, doing a great job, but Bob Sproul believed--this is a part of his philosophy--that the University of California at Berkeley should be the greatest university in the world. He didn't want any competition to Berkeley from our southern California schools. He didn't want us to have graduate programs. That would detract from Berkeley. He was all for anything in the undergraduate field. The best you can be, that was what he was for. But when you graduated from UCLA or from [University of California] Santa Barbara or from [University of California] Riverside, you'd go to Berkeley for your graduate work, for a master's degree, for a

doctorate, whatever you wanted. But it would be at Berkeley. It wouldn't be down here. He just wouldn't concede at all to our [UCLA] Pioneer [Alumni] group, who were after some graduate schools. We wanted to be as great as Berkeley. Well, that isn't Bob Sproul's idea. And with this he was sincere. He just felt that his job as president of the university was to make Berkeley the greatest school in the world, and he didn't want competition from our southern California schools. He wanted everything to be focused into Berkeley. And he believed that so strongly. I think maybe there was a little bit of a northern California feeling against southern California that was involved, but principally it was he wanted Berkeley to be the great school. So here's our group down here in southern California . . .

TRELEVEN: Okay, now, "our group," you mean the alumni association?

NIGG: The alumni association, the Pioneer [Alumni]. . . . You see, the administration couldn't go against him.

TRELEVEN: You're talking about Ernest Carroll Moore . . . ?

NIGG: Moore and [Clarence A.] Dykstra and those that followed him.

TRELEVEN: They couldn't go against him?

NIGG: He's the president. They can appeal, but if he says "absolutely not," that's the end of it, period. They couldn't fight him. But our pioneer alumni group didn't have that feeling. If he's not going to give us graduate schools, we're going to have to fight for it. This alumni group, the early past presidents, the guys in '25, '26, '27, '28, were determined. This is UCLA. This is our great school. This is southern California. We're going to have some graduate programs. But we got nowhere, just got nowhere. He would not concede at all. He tried to avoid the question, but it was pretty clear to all of us that we're not going to get a graduate school as long as he's president and running the thing.

So here's [M. Philip] Phil Davis. Phil Davis is a practicing attorney; his brother [W. Thomas] Tom [Davis] is a practicing attorney. They're partners. They both married very wealthy girls, so they're wealthy. They're in the

produce business. They raise citrus fruit, they pack it, they sell it, and they buy it. And very successful, very successful. Here is Phil Davis, and he's a dynamic guy, kind of brutal, but dynamic. When he went after something, he'd get it.

TRELEVEN: Brutal?

NIGG: Brutal.

TRELEVEN: Verbally?

NIGG: Verbally. I've heard him bawl out [Raymond B.] Ray Allen as the chancellor till I cringed. But that was Phil. Phil sees the only way we're going to beat this thing is through the legislature. So Phil--now, he lives in Bel-Air--runs for the [California State] Assembly for the Westwood area and wins the election. Now he's an assemblyman.

TRELEVEN: I can't remember the date he was elected.

NIGG: I don't remember that either.

TRELEVEN: Are we talking about the thirties or the forties?

NIGG: I think forties. [Davis was elected in 1945 to represent the Fifty-sixth Assembly District]

TRELEVEN: We're into the forties now. So if I can interrupt a minute, efforts in the thirties to

discuss with Sproul the development of graduate programs at UCLA went for naught?

NIGG: Just for naught, just for naught.

TRELEVEN: Okay. Then came the war [World War II], of course, and much was placed on hold, and I think . . .

NIGG: Now, Fred Houser was the lieutenant governor at this time. Fred Houser is the lieutenant governor. Phil Davis is the assemblyman from the Westwood area.

TRELEVEN: Can I interrupt once again? Was there any hope after [Edwin W.] Ed Pauley was named to the board in 1940 by Governor [Culbert L.] Olson? I mean, having a southern California regent in addition to [Edward A.] Dickson, Pauley himself being a fairly imposing figure, did that make an immediate difference in terms of UCLA?

NIGG: No, because Sproul was so strong in this belief. This was his job. In his opinion, his job was to make Berkeley the greatest university in the world, and he didn't want any competition from the southern schools. He wanted them to contribute.

TRELEVEN: Okay. Phil got elected . . .

NIGG: All righty. Phil gets elected. He and Fred

Houser, as the lieutenant governor, called together all the assemblymen from southern California. There are more votes in southern California than there are in northern California. So Phil says to this group, "This is the craziest thing ever. We control the vote, and yet we allow the University of California to spend far more money in Berkeley than they spend in our southern California schools. This is our money, and we're sending it all up north. We should refuse the university budget until they agree to spend as much in southern California as they are spending in Berkeley." That's the proposition they gave to a guy by the name of [James H.] Corley.

TRELEVEN: Jim Corley.

NIGG: Jim Corley. Jim Corley is the vice president of the university, handling the budget affairs. Well, Jim couldn't believe it, just couldn't believe it! He's always had these fellow doing what he wants, and now they're telling him that they will not pass the university budget until they spend as much money in southern California as they're spending in Berkeley. He goes to

Sproul, "Hey, I'm really having problems."

Sproul is this great salesman. He'll change it all. He visits with them and finds they're adamant. They're not going to pass his budget. It's going to be defeated completely until he redoes the budget and is spending as much money in southern California as he's spending at Berkeley. And we want graduate programs down here.

TRELEVEN: So we got people like Phil Davis and [William H.] Bill Rosenthal and [Ernest E.] Ernie Debs and Julian Beck, I suppose, at that time. They're all in the legislature from southern California.

NIGG: Yeah, yeah. What Phil did was sell this idea that here we're in southern California, it's our money, and we're sending it all up north. We need graduate schools down here. So Sproul had to give in. I think it killed him. It was just terrible for him. He couldn't believe it. He had to give in. And that's how we got our School of Medicine . . .

TRELEVEN: School of Law.

NIGG: School of Law followed. The tough one for him was the engineering school. [Laughter] That was

one of the things that certainly had to be at Berkeley, but we got it here. That's how it happened.

TRELEVEN: Now, during these discussions that Phil Davis and other legislators were having, what was the role of the Alumni Association?

NIGG: We're behind them 100 percent, including going to Sacramento, all that kind of stuff. We're 100 percent behind them.

TRELEVEN: So you had an organized lobbying effort?

NIGG: We had an organized lobbying effort, exactly. Exactly what it was, with Fred Houser as the lieutenant governor--now, this is a pretty key job for us--and Phil Davis in the assembly, a member of the assembly.

TRELEVEN: Did you have any sense, either yourself or from people you talked to, how Governor [Earl] Warren felt about this?

NIGG: That's a kind of a key question. Fred Houser and Governor Warren were not close. Fred Houser was an ultra-conservative; Warren's quite a liberal, as you could know. They were not close, but Warren was smart enough to realize the bulk of the people are in southern California. This is

where the votes are. So he did not oppose it in any way. He was perfectly willing. Let UCLA have a school of medicine, a school of engineering, whatever else they need down there; that was all right with him. And this is the mistake that Sproul made. Sproul should have recognized earlier that the people are here, the money is here. He should have been willing to do something down here instead of being so adamant that everything must go to Berkeley.

TRELEVEN: In terms of that kind of activity on the part of the UCLA Alumni Association, what contact did you have, if any, with the UC Berkeley Alumni Association at that time?

NIGG: Well, we started out as a part of the Berkeley association. That's the way our alumni association was . . .

TRELEVEN: Overall UC Alumni Association?

NIGG: We were a branch of it. But early, early thirties, we broke away and had our own alumni association. The Berkeley association is a great big thing. A guy by the name of [Robert] Sibley is their manager, and they do big things. We're just small. We're just struggling. I don't

think we had open conflict with them. I don't remember that at all. We always seemed to be friendly. Sproul was our problem. Sproul was the one man that dominated. . . . And he was a dominant man. He was the dominant figure that just says, "No, everything must go to Berkeley. All the graduate work will go to Berkeley. Your graduates will come to Berkeley."

TRELEVEN: Now, Article IX, Section 9 [California State Constitution] gives the composition of the board of regents of the university, and it includes a member of the alumni association, if I recall, that had always been a member of the UC Alumni Association, which means Berkeley, right? By the time you served as a regent, it was alternating. How did that come about?

NIGG: I don't remember that. That's really before I was involved, and how we accomplished that, I don't know. See, Phil Davis was very close to the regent down here . . .

TRELEVEN: Let me pause for a minute.

[Interruption]

Okay, we're back. You were saying that Phil Davis was close to . . .

NIGG: Phil Davis was very close to Ed Dickson. Again, that's the kind of a guy Phil Davis was. He could see that Ed Dickson was a power, and we needed him, so he worked with him. I'm sure Ed Dickson was very encouraging to Phil Davis to put on this fight. He was not able to accomplish it himself, so if the alumni could get in and do it, he was all for that. He was very helpful to us. I'm assuming that somewhere along the line he's the one that said, "Well, look. We've got two alumni associations that are pretty big. They both ought to be on this board, so we'll alternate them." And that's how that came about.

TRELEVEN: In fact, in the period we're talking about, late forties on until his death, Regent Dickson was the chairman of the board [of regents], so in a position of some influence.

NIGG: Oh, yes. And, as I say, was very. . . . He's from southern California. He was for us all the way through. He was instrumental in getting us the campus out at Westwood. He was very influential for UCLA.

TRELEVEN: I was going to ask you another question, but I think first I'll get the chronology straight.

Through the association you are aware of all these things going on. You described last time how you were building your business until the post-World War II period, right after that. When did you become much more active in the Alumni Association at UCLA?

NIGG: I was always interested, always interested. I always did things with the Alumni Association: went to these summer weekend affairs we had, knew the alumni people well, supported them. I became real active in the late forties, early fifties. That's when I now had the time. I bought the business [Los Angeles Saratoga Chip and Pretzel Company] in February of '45. It must have taken about three years of real difficult, hard work, and now I've got a great organization. I can relax a bit. I can do these outside things that I'm interested in. So I would say the very late part of the forties or early first part of the fifties.

TRELEVEN: Before you were elected vice president-president elect, had you served on the executive council?

NIGG: Oh, yes. I was on the council.

TRELEVEN: Okay. That's what I was looking for.

NIGG: Oh, yes. I was on the council.

TRELEVEN: Because that's where the policy emanates or the thrust of the Alumni Association . . .

NIGG: Yes, that's right. And prior to being on the council, I was on committees. I was working on committees for the university Alumni Association. So, yeah.

TRELEVEN: I think I've got the year right. I think it's 1952 that Edward [W.] Carter is named to the board of regents by the governor. Was there an effort by the alumni association to have more southern California regents?

NIGG: Oh, yes. We worked very hard for that always. You mention Ed Carter. Ed Carter was a great man, but he was not a strong UCLA alumnus. He had gone to Harvard. You went to his home and there were Harvard glasses, not UCLA glasses, that type of thing. So we were not opposed to him in any way, but we didn't feel, "Here's one of our strong guys going in there." John [E.] Canaday, [William E.] Bill Forbes, they were our candidates.

TRELEVEN: Those were your people.

NIGG: But we didn't think of Ed Carter in that light.

- TRELEVEN: How about Mrs. [Dorothy Buffum] Chandler?
- NIGG: She turned out to be a great friend, but she, of course, was a Stanford graduate, and to begin with, we didn't know how she would be. Catherine [C.] Hearst the same way, but they both turned out to be very helpful to us.
- TRELEVEN: I'm thinking of people who geographically come from southern California and on the board might theoretically better represent southern California UC interests.
- NIGG: Well, when I was on the board and we had this terrible fight with the athletic association [Pacific Coast Conference], they were both very supportive for me.
- TRELEVEN: Okay. So about 1955 you agreed to be vice president-president elect of the alumni association, and included in that responsibility is going to board of regents meetings. And the setup is while you're vice president you attend. You do not have a vote apparently.
- NIGG: That isn't quite correct. The presidency was a two-year term. My first year as president, I'm on the board as a . . . Sit-there-and-watch type of thing. Although it wasn't really that way.

They were very nice to me right from the first day I ever went. I was included in all the discussions and all that thing, but I did not have a vote the first year. The second year I had the vote, and a guy by the name of [Olin C.] Majors from the Berkeley association sat there and watched.

TRELEVEN: Okay, right. And the year that you watched, at least my notes indicate, that [Edwin L.] Ed Harbach was the voting Alumni Association regent. Even in 1974, when Article IX, Section 9 was changed, an alumni association representative continued to be on the board. There were some other changes made in the constitutional amendment, but the alumni association representative stays on the board of regents and is a member to this day. Why is that a good idea to always have a voting regent be an alumni association member?

NIGG: I think it's good because they're interested people. They are people who have a real, sincere interest in the university and want to see it do well. I think it made great regents, as I think the university feels, because they. . . . David

[P.] Gardner invited me once a year to a regents meeting and dinner. They knew we had done a good job.

TRELEVEN: Is this the annual affair where all former and present regents come together?

NIGG: Yeah.

TRELEVEN: Right. So anyone who ever served on the board is . . .

NIGG: Yeah. Well, again, that interest carries over, you see.

TRELEVEN: In terms of you and your predecessors, is the routine to also report back to the alumni association about what's . . . ?

NIGG: Well, in my day, my chief advisers were the past presidents of the alumni association. They were organized. Fred Houser was the chairman. Every time I had a problem, that's the first group I went to.

TRELEVEN: Was that called the Past Presidents Council?

NIGG: It was just called the Past Presidents.

TRELEVEN: Past Presidents Association.

NIGG: Yeah.

TRELEVEN: Yes, I know. There is a group like that to this day, of course.

NIGG: Well, there is to this day, but it's no longer a potent group. They meet once. . . . The current president invites the past presidents to a dinner once a year. They meet at the West pavilion [James E. West Center]. They have a nice dinner. The chancellor is there. The chancellor gives a report of how things are going. But in my day they were powerful. Today they're not.

TRELEVEN: Okay. In your day, the association was powerful in terms of what we might call lobbying or for positive changes relating to the UCLA campus. What else did the association do in the fifties?

NIGG: We tried to raise money for scholarships. I forget the name we had for it, but we tried to raise money for scholarships. And were pretty successful at it. It was one of the first of those drives that were successful. Now you've got all kinds of stuff going on.

TRELEVEN: Yeah. So it's to build a pot of money for individual scholarships for individual students.

NIGG: Yeah. And we awarded them. We awarded those scholarships. We'd have a committee that would visit with all these candidates and select who we should give the money to.

TRELEVEN: Now, going back to the first year that you were recorded as being in attendance at regents meetings, you said that you are included in all of the deliberations of the regents.

NIGG: All of the deliberations, yes. They were very nice to me, including Sproul. Now, I'm sure Sproul was nice to me because he wanted my vote, [Laughter] but they were all very nice to me. So I became active right away.

We talked about getting the medical school. [Stafford L.] Staff Warren was the dean. How Staff Warren was picked, I don't remember. Staff Warren had worked for the university when they exploded the first atom bomb out in the desert. He was the doctor in charge of the . . .

TRELEVEN: The monitoring of the . . .

NIGG: Yeah, of the medical . . .

TRELEVEN: Radioactive. . . . Yeah.

NIGG: So he was associated with the university at that time. How we got him, I don't remember, but we got him, and we have a great medical school today because Staff Warren planned it that way. It didn't just happen; he planned it that way. He

NIGG: drew up his plans of how he was going to do all of this, then he took his plans around the world to medical schools, and he'd sit down with them and say, "Now, I'm planning this great medical school. Here are my plans. Tell me what you think of them." They'd give him ideas, and he'd change them. So his plans, when he finally was completed, were just great. This is how you build a great medical school. Now, he creates blocks. This is the first building, and the second block is the second building, and it will go here. This is the third block, and this is what that will do. And here's the fourth block. He had it all laid out so well.

When he retired, [Sherman M.] Sherm Mellinkoff followed him. Sherm did a great job of carrying out the plans. Sherm didn't even change the office furniture. This is the way Staff had it. He just got in and sat at the desk. Didn't change anything. Kept the same office arrangement. That's how close Sherm was to carrying out the plans that Staff had created.

Now, I'm a regent. Staff is still trying to

sell all this stuff. So I kind of take him under my wing. Deans were not supposed to attend regents meetings. He attended them all.

[Laughter] I would kind of lead him around and help him and. . . But this is how he sold the regents on what we must do. The great school we have today is because of Staff Warren and the way he planned it and the way he got it executed.

Now, that little squabble you mentioned in your notes with Ed Dickson over the . . .

TRELEVEN: The [UCLA] Neuropsychiatric Institute [NPI]?
That was with Ed Pauley.

NIGG: Oh, no, no. Ed Dickson.

TRELEVEN: Oh, wait. Yeah, we're going back to the earlier fifties, then, because . . .

NIGG: Yeah, this is Ed Dickson.

TRELEVEN: Over the location of the Neuropsychiatric Institute.

NIGG: For some reason or another, and it's almost silly. . . . This was a very important department for Staff Warren, very important, so he's got it up here. Well, when Ed Dickson saw these plans, he in his own mind could see people that are out of their minds up there on the balcony shouting

out. He just thought, "That's terrible. We can't have that there. We're going to put that over across in another area of the campus, not right on the main campus."

Staff Warren really handled it well. He didn't argue, he didn't plead. He just let it lie quietly. Finally Ed Dickson dies, there's no more opposition, and it went just the way he wanted it. It was almost silly, the little dispute. I was quite involved with it, because I'm with Staff Warren, and Dickson is my great friend, and they're arguing about something that really isn't that important. Staff Warren knows how to run the school, how to build it, and Ed Dickson is just a layman. But that's how it ended. It never came to a point. . . . And that's because Staff Warren was smart. If he had gotten in and started quarreling with Ed Dickson about it, he'd have lost, because Ed Dickson is the regent, and he would have put the power on. So he just remains quiet; he doesn't do anything.

TRELEVEN: Well, I know that there was some apprehension, too, that in the operation of NPI that it would

be run with the Department of Mental Hygiene of the state of California, and in that sense there was a little uneasiness over the possibility that the state funds would get cut for that department and there would be undue control over a campus department by a state agency and so on, at least according to some of the regents' minutes I've read. And that was another factor. But that doesn't ring a bell, I guess.

NIGG: It doesn't ring a bell with me, and I don't think it really was a key problem. Staff Warren had his plans. They were so complete. He knew just what he wanted to do, just the order in which it would be done, and eventually he won. As I say, he attended all the regents meetings, [Laughter] which I think bothered Sproul quite a bit. But Sproul was smart enough to see that he was popular and he was doing a good job, and so he left him alone.

TRELEVEN: Probably bothered Chancellor Allen a little bit, too?

NIGG: No, see, Allen was a doctor, M.D.

TRELEVEN: That's right, that's right.

NIGG: So I think he was in full accord with what Staff

was doing. This was one of his good points.

TRELEVEN: Okay.

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

TRELEVEN: My recollection from the regents' meeting minutes is something about NPI being located on the C and H tract, because Pauley in particular really wanted that possibly developed with Los Angeles County as a county hospital, and then the Neuropsychiatric Institute would be connected. Do you remember?

NIGG: There was a lot of discussion about it. It didn't come to fruition, and at the time it didn't seem that important to me.

TRELEVEN: Have you any insight at all into why Pauley was such a stickler about that C and H tract? He really . . .

NIGG: Yes, I remember that. [Laughter] I don't remember why or how. First of all, Ed Pauley was a great regent. He really was. He was dedicated; he worked hard; he did a great job. He was involved in our community and had ideas of how things should be done, and so he was all for his way of doing things. But he was a good regent,

and he did not push for things that. . . . I can remember Ed Pauley saying to me when Mrs. Chandler was trying to build the Music Center [of Los Angeles County], Ed says, "She'll never do it. But," he said, "we can't oppose her. We've got to go along with her." [Laughter] Just the way he felt. Well, of course, she did do it. [Laughter] But at the time he said, "She'll never do it. But," he said, "we can't oppose her. We've got to go along with her." That's the kind of man that Ed Pauley was. He could feel power here and be careful you don't oppose it. That's why he got along so well with people. That's why he accomplished so much. He had that ability.

TRELEVEN: Well, in terms of southern California regents-- that's appointed regents--of course southern California was embodied in Regent Dickson. Dickson passes away. I know that Pauley was elected chairman of the board after that, in fact was chairman when you served, but does that mean Pauley sort of became the heir apparent to Dickson in terms of southern California interests in the university or . . . ?

NIGG: I would think so. I would think so. It wasn't outright that, but that was the feeling underneath. Ed Pauley had a plane, [Samuel B.] Sam Mosher had a plane, and those two, when the meetings were up north, would fly us in their planes up there. I sat beside Ed Pauley in his plane going to Berkeley, to Sacramento. And you visited. It was a close feeling, you see. Sam Mosher was the same way. Sam flew us all over. Going to New Mexico. It was a close group. Although the northern regents were always friendly, and I got along very well with all the northern regents.

TRELEVEN: Does political party persuasion make a difference on the board of regents?

NIGG: It didn't appear to in my time. Ed Pauley was a liberal Democrat.

TRELEVEN: That's right.

NIGG: But, no, we didn't have any problems that way at all. We were interested in the university and what's best for the university, and that's the way it went.

TRELEVEN: Can you remember, were you really prepared for the amount of paper that you were going to have

to deal with by being a regent of the university?

NIGG: I don't think so, but, as I've mentioned before, I gave five days a month to the university.

TRELEVEN: Yes, right.

NIGG: Five days a month. How many people can do that? This is one of the handicaps of being a regent, appointed or an alumni member. This is the kind of time they have to give. There are committees that are important; you have to attend. You don't attend, you're not much of a regent. The regents were all dedicated people. They all gave that kind of time.

TRELEVEN: So, going into it, you knew already that . . .

NIGG: Pretty well, I understood that. Again, my business was such that I could do that. That was not a problem for me. I think some of these attorneys we've had find it pretty rough. If you're an attorney, it's the amount of time you put into your own practice that you get paid for. I had people working for me that could do the things, so that I didn't have to be there. But when an attorney gives up five days a month, that's money out of his pocket.

TRELEVEN: You had served on any number of boards of

directors of companies--you were talking about that a bit yesterday. How did serving on the board of regents compare with serving on a board of a company or a corporation?

NIGG: Well, I think the board of regents under Ed Dickson and under Ed Pauley were better organized than any board I have ever served on. They really had it down well. That committee system was so good. For example, there is a Committee on Committees.

TRELEVEN: Yes, there is.

NIGG: Now, this is a pretty smart approach. You aren't appointed to the committee by the chairman. There's a Committee on Committees that study everything, that come up with "This guy would fit well here, this person fits well there." The board of regents in my day was well organized.

TRELEVEN: And probably Marjorie [J.] Woolman was there already at that time.

NIGG: Yes, yes, she was.

TRELEVEN: In fact, was there for many more years after you left. According to the regents' minutes, you were named to Audit, Educational Policy, Medical and Health Sciences. . . . [Laughter] I see

something there. Now, in these assignments being made, in terms of you going into your first year as a voting regent, were you necessarily asked which committees you'd like to serve on?

NIGG: No, no, no. The Committee on Committees made the assignment, and I accepted them, and that was that. I think they had a pretty good feel of where somebody would fit. They watched that closely, and I think in all of their assignments they did a good job.

TRELEVEN: You are also on the Special Committee to Consider Use of the C and H Tract, which was established in August of '56. Not much is coming back to you at this point, I take it.

NIGG: No, no. That was an assignment. . . . I wasn't that involved with the C and H tract. I didn't see where it was any problem. I thought we were better to keep the medical center where it was.

TRELEVEN: Okay. I think it's the year you're recorded as being in attendance that the Atomic Energy Commission contract came up, what's now called the Department of Energy. And probably, as you know from the newspapers, every time this comes up to be renewed, there's a rather loud protest

from certain groups, faculty members and so on. But going way back to the forties this has been a contract that the university has had with the Atomic Energy Commission and its successor agencies. Why is it a good thing for the University of California to be involved in this kind of activity?

NIGG: Well, first of all, Sproul's the one that put all of that together.

TRELEVEN: Right, as you mentioned.

NIGG: It was a terribly important era, and the university did an outstanding job. I can remember flying to New Mexico with Sam Mosher.

TRELEVEN: To Los Alamos [Scientific Laboratory].

NIGG: Up on the hill there and going through that thing. Tremendous laboratory, tremendous, that Sproul had gotten the money from the government to execute. I think the whole thing was in better hands with the university than if it had gone anywhere else. I think the university did a good job with it. I still think it's important, and the university should be involved. This opposition is a kind of an environmentalist type of thing that doesn't appeal to me at all.

TRELEVEN: So it's in better hands in the university . . .

NIGG: Than anywhere else.

TRELEVEN: Because . . . ?

NIGG: Because you've got knowledgeable people! These are the . . . You've got [Edward] Ed Teller. Now, just think over the years what a great scientist he's been. To have that kind of a man working on it is certainly better than going out and hiring "Joe Blow."

TRELEVEN: So better the university run it than maybe a private concern?

NIGG: Than anybody else.

TRELEVEN: My reading is that the overhead funds were rather important, too, to the university. In other words, there's an overhead fund which is under the control of the regents, and it could be used for, I guess, outright grants to build buildings and . . .

NIGG: Well, again, this was Sproul. Sproul as president did such a great job in the fund-raising area that nobody will ever touch him.

TRELEVEN: It was interesting for me to also note that there was established, in principle, while you're on the board, a university development program for

encouraging gifts. And while there had been donations to the university from individuals and alumni associations and scholarship programs, this struck me as being almost the beginnings of a step in a direction that we now know as the modern development program. On the other hand, I don't get a sense that it really got off the ground too quickly.

NIGG: Well, because it was brand-new. But over the years it was so highly successful. And that was the start. That was the start.

We've got three other things that are very important that I think we ought to get to if we can. One was that athletic problem.

TRELEVEN: Okay, let's talk about the issue that consumed a lot of time at regents meetings for a period, '56, '57, and that was the Pacific Coast Conference situation, I guess. In your own words, why don't you tell me what that was all about.

NIGG: What it was, because. . . . Here it is. Obviously Sproul. . . . I won't say ill feeling, but a feeling against our UCLA group. We had forced him to change his budgets and all of

this. Sproul is a member of the president's committee on athletics, the Pacific Coast Conference. Sproul says to Ray Allen, our chancellor, "There's been an awful lot of monkey business going on, spending money that shouldn't be spent, giving athletes money. We're going to clean it up. I want from you exactly what UCLA does. I'll get the same thing from Berkeley, Stanford will do the same thing, USC will do the same thing, the Oregon schools will do it, and the Washington schools will do it. And we're going to clean it up." Well, this sounded pretty good. UCLA is the newest school with the least number of alumni that can make big donations, so we're struggling. This is a struggle for us. Berkeley's got many more influential, wealthy alumni to contribute. Stanford has. All the schools have. So we kind of think this is a pretty good thing. The Bruin Bench were the ones that handled this money that paid the athletes, that sort of thing.

TRELEVEN: And the Bruin Bench is what?

NIGG: Bruin Bench is an affiliate of the [UCLA] Alumni Association but concentrating on athletics. I

NIGG: can't remember the boy's name that was the chairman. I knew him well. When the chancellor came to him and said, "I've got to know just exactly what you're doing; we're going to open it all up; we're going to correct it," he gave me information. But he said, "Chancellor, are you sure this is right? Are you sure we're not exposing things that we shouldn't be exposing?" "Oh, no. Everybody's going to do this. We're all going to do it. Every campus is going to put out all the paperwork."

So Ray Allen writes up this report and gives it to Sproul. Sproul gives it to the conference, Pacific Coast Conference. We're the only school that did it. No one else gave them anything. They said, "Oh, we used to do that, but we've changed all that. We're corrected now. We don't know anything." Well, of course, that was complete hoey. As a result, the athletic conference, the Pacific Coast Conference, penalized our players. It was awful. Here our boys can't do this. Can't do this. All of these things happened to us. In the meantime, there's no other school being penalized at all.

NIGG: I'm on the board of regents. This is so bad that I think this should be an issue that the regents should get involved with. So I made my appeal to the regents that this was unfair, every school is participating. I can remember Ed Pauley saying, "Well, I know Berkeley does, because I've contributed for years." [Goodwin J.] Goodie Knight is the governor; he's on the board. He says, "I know Stanford does, because I've contributed to their fund year after year." But they don't report anything.

Our past presidents group got together a group of players at Stanford. These kids are all friends from one school to another. They didn't think it was right. So they reported--Fred Houser is now a judge--in his chambers what they were receiving with the agreement that we are not going to reveal it if it's going to hurt them. They reported that they all were on the payroll of the Palo Alto Fire Department. They didn't do any work, but they were on the payroll of the fire department.

Fred Houser calls [John E. W.] Sterling, the president of Stanford University, and says, "We

can tell you exactly what you're doing, if you want to know, but we want to be assured that the students aren't hurt." Sterling says, "If I find any student taking money, he's out of the school." He just didn't want to know, you see. So we were just getting nowhere. 'SC was so violent, and the things they were doing were way beyond anything else. Ed Pauley put together a meeting for me with a group of trustees of 'SC, but they were pretty cautious. They didn't want to be involved. We were just getting nowhere.

So, again, I go to the . . . My big helpers are the past presidents. I've gone to them, and they're telling me what to do and what not to do. So I brought this thing up to the regents, and I said, "This is almost crazy. Here are the Oregon schools, with much lower standards than we have, now telling us what we have to do and this, that, and the other thing. It's crazy."

TRELEVEN: By standards you mean academic standards?

NIGG: Yeah, academic. Ours were much higher.

[Students] could go to an Oregon school and get in and play that we couldn't take, Berkeley wouldn't take, Stanford wouldn't take. But the

Oregon schools, they just took anybody. So anyway, Clark Kerr, who was the chancellor at Berkeley, came to me and said, "Cy, you're 100 percent right. We're for you all the way. We'll back you." With that kind of assurance, I was able to push through the regents that we would withdraw from the Pacific Coast Conference, we would create a new conference including the Arizona schools, and that's how we would defeat it. And we did. When Berkeley and UCLA withdrew, Stanford withdrew, 'SC withdrew, and this is how we finally defeated it. But, oh, it was rough. And, of course, Sproul is just beaming. [Laughter] He's got us over the barrel with this. He was enjoying it no end. But we finally defeated it, and that's how it came out. The new conference was created, and we put down the rules and the regulations, and the old conference penalties were done away with.

TRELEVEN: Actually I thought Berkeley was penalized a little bit, too, for . . .

NIGG: No, no. No, they were not. They said, "We aren't doing anything." Their faculty representative was the great nuclear scientist

[Glenn T. Seaborg], one of our graduates. He called me on the telephone. "Well," I said, "you're a great alumnus. Here we are with all these problems, and you've got the same kind of problems up there, but you're not helping us." Well, he was kind of shook. [Laughter] So I think he maybe encouraged Clark Kerr to say, "Let's support them." So we eventually won it, and it all came out fine.

TRELEVEN: Whose idea was it that the past presidents show up at the board meeting? And I think it was Bill Forbes who ended up reading the statement.

NIGG: Oh, all of them, at my invitation.

TRELEVEN: At your invitation.

NIGG: Sure. Paul [R.] Hutchinson spoke. They all spoke, because it wasn't right, it wasn't fair. We were being singled out because we were honest enough to report what Sproul asked for. No other school, no other school, including Berkeley, had done that. They had all said, "Oh, no, no. We won't do any of that for them." I had great moral support all through that fight. And, as I said, we finally won. But, as I reflect back, it was Clark Kerr who really was the savior.

- TRELEVEN: He guaranteed that if UCLA . . .
- NIGG: He guaranteed, "We'll back you up."
- TRELEVEN: That if UCLA left the conference, Berkeley would also leave.
- NIGG: He'd back us up all the way. And he did, he did. I was always very fond of Clark Kerr, because he did it in such a quiet way. You know, he didn't make a big splurge out of "We'll do this" or "We'll do that." He came to me quietly and said, "Cy, I think you're right. We believe in you. We'll back you."
- TRELEVEN: It's kind of interesting. This occurs after. . . . Well, it's in the early stages of this, I guess, that Sproul announces that he's going to retire June 30, 1958. Is that another one of the areas we wanted to be sure and discuss, Sproul's successor?
- NIGG: I don't know that there's too much. . . . Oh, yes. Yes, we will. But before we get there, let's talk about the Lake Arrowhead Conference Center.
- TRELEVEN: Oh, yeah. I guess we're talking about the North Shore Tavern.
- NIGG: North Shore Tavern.

TRELEVEN: Which was at Arrowhead, and it was operated by the Los Angeles Turf Club. And what happens?

NIGG: Let me give you the story. I have mentioned these summer meetings that our alumni association had. They were always lovely affairs, and we enjoyed them very much, but we all thought that UCLA should have a summer camp. Berkeley had the Inn of the Bear. Stanford had a summer camp. We did not, didn't have a place where our alumni would all come for a summer vacation. So when I became president, one of the first things I did was appoint a committee and charge them, "Find us a site for a summer camp." I don't remember who the committee were, but they were a potent bunch. The chairman was Dorothy Houser, Fred Houser's wife. She was a potent gal. Her husband had been the vice governor [lieutenant governor], so she knew how to operate, and she knew how to get things done. She had a good committee.

So they go out and search. They're searching for a place where we can have our summer camp, and they run onto this Lake Arrowhead thing with the Turf Club and got the

NIGG: Turf Club to agree to give it to us. Now, the one catch that the Turf Club put into it was that they couldn't give it to the alumni association. They want a tax deductible thing, and they're not sure that giving it to the alumni association would carry, so they wanted to give it to the university. Well, what's wrong with that? But to give it to the university, of course, I had to get the clearance of the board of regents. I take it to the board of regents, and I don't get a single regent. They laughed at me. "Cy, if the Turf Club can't operate that thing at a profit, why do you think the alumni association could? That will be a millstone around our necks." No, no way were they going to accept this. I was so disappointed. This was going to be such a wonderful thing. Their fear was, of course, it's year round, and we're going to just use it in the summer months. What's going to happen the rest of the year? We're just going to be paying out money to maintain it. So they turned me down 100 percent.

I go back to my past presidents group, lay out the problem. "They aren't going to take

it. We're not going to get it. What do I do?" I don't remember who it was, but somebody came up with the idea, "Well, look, the university, UCLA, needs a conference center. This is a thing most universities have. We don't have one. This will be great for the university." So I go to Ray Allen, and he right away says, "Oh, yeah, this will be great. Sure." So I go back to the regents and say, "UCLA needs a conference center. This is a great spot. We can have all kinds of conclaves and conferences and everything else up there. It's a great thing." Reluctantly, they accepted it. That's how we got the conference center.

Now, it was always thought that eventually our alumni association will have it for summers, and we do now, but I got the thing through, not with the alumni involved at all, but as a conference center for the university. That was my project all the way through, and today it's a pretty good thing, and everybody likes it. But that's how that happened.

TRELEVEN: I guess the name for several years was the University of California Conference Center, and

then it evolved into a UCLA name. For instance, the . . .

NIGG: I don't remember that. The regents accepted it, so maybe they accepted it as the University of California. I don't know, but it was always for UCLA. There was never any thought of any other way.

TRELEVEN: Well, it's a going operation.

NIGG: Oh, yes, very successful. And now the alumni have it the summer months, you know.

TRELEVEN: Right, right. And it's called Bruin Woods.

NIGG: Yeah, that's it.

TRELEVEN: Well, we mentioned that it was during your year in attendance as a regent that Sproul announced that he was going to be retiring. So he certainly provided lots of lead time, two years, in fact, for the regents to set up a selection committee and go through the process of finding a new president. How were you involved in that process?

NIGG: Let me give you the whole story. First of all, Ray Allen wanted the job, and he played politics all over the place. He was cozying up to regents. He didn't get it and for good reason:

he wasn't that strong a man. Clark Kerr got it, and I was all for Clark Kerr.

TRELEVEN: You were?

NIGG: Oh, yes. Clark Kerr was my savior in this big fight we were having, and so I was for Clark Kerr all the way. But as we went along, and we. . . . It was decided every campus would have a party for the Sprouls--thank you, twenty-five years of service, that sort of thing. As the president of the alumni association, I was asked that the alumni association do the party for UCLA. So I go to Tom Davis and ask him to chair it. Well, he said, "Cy, I couldn't chair a program for that guy." I said, "Look, Tom. He is the president of the university. We've had our quarrels with him, but he is retiring. Every campus is being asked to put on a party. I think UCLA should put on a party that is better than any of them. Let's really show them what we can do." And it appealed to Tom. He said, "Okay!" We put on such a glorious party, you can't believe. Ida, Sproul's wife, said to me afterwards, "Of all the parties, yours was by far the most elegant." And it was. Tom used Gold Shield [Alumnae of

UCLA]. They had a member, and I forget her name, but she was in the jewelry manufacturing business, so she brought her inventory of silver. We had it on each table. We had to have police--the value was so great--to watch it for us. We put on this beautiful party, and Sproul and Ida were both very, very pleased. So that's the way we said good-bye to him.

TRELEVEN: That's good. Right up to the end, although in terms of graduate schools, you've described how Sproul had to face reality finally due to pressure and so on. Did you and others have thoughts at that time about the president's office still having too much power, too much influence vis-à-vis UCLA?

NIGG: I don't think so. Certainly I didn't ever have that feeling. I think any organization has to have a chief executive, and certainly the University of California needs that. What we needed was somebody that was going to be fair to us. Now, when Clark Kerr took over. . . . It didn't last very long, but when he took over, all that feeling against the south was gone. He was perfectly willing that our departments grow.

Now, this brings up Franklin [D.] Murphy.

TRELEVEN: Right. And to make sure whoever listens to this and reads it is clear in the record, Allen left, and there was a three-person committee, you might say, running UCLA during a search process for a new chancellor. Why don't you pick it up there then, because no doubt there were lots of candidates, one of them being Franklin Murphy.

NIGG: Well, our past presidents group met for dinner at the home of Phil Davis. We had Bill Forbes there as our new regent, and we had Franklin Murphy come. So we all visited with Franklin Murphy. When we finished that meeting, we were in accord that this is the man we wanted. He had the things that were necessary to make it grow. We gave Bill Forbes the charge of steering, getting it going right, and Bill did a great job. He took Franklin in hand and steered him right, and the university just grew. But it was Franklin Murphy that really understood the things we needed. Prior chancellors didn't do that. Now, prior chancellors were always under Sproul, and under Sproul, you know, he was putting a hand on them, and they didn't know what to do. We had a

meeting at my home, the past presidents. Ed Pauley was there, Franklin was there, and Clark Kerr was there. To my great chagrin, there was animosity between Franklin and Clark Kerr. I thought Clark Kerr's suggestions were right, but Franklin resented it. Anyhow, under Clark Kerr we had the freedom to go after the things we wanted, and he was not putting a stop to us. So under Franklin's leadership we really grew and grew fast. Gradually our alumni group had less to do. There were not the problems anymore. And we got older. [Laughter] So we no longer wielded the great power that we did prior to that. And then, I think I mentioned yesterday, [James A.] Jim Collins became the alumni president. Jim Collins was also head of the [UCLA] Foundation. Under his leadership we kind of transferred the power from the alumni association to the foundation.

TRELEVEN: To the UCLA Foundation.

NIGG: And today the foundation is, of course, the big power.

TRELEVEN: Right, right. I take it there were other candidates that you met with for the

chancellorship, not only Franklin Murphy, but others as well.

NIGG: There were others, but we were. . . . I think I told you yesterday, I had met Franklin when he came with [University of] Kansas to southern California for a football game. That's one of the first times I met him. And I was impressed with him then. I'm comparing him with our chancellors. [Laughter] He was just an outstanding man. His background was medicine. He was administrator of a hospital; that's how he got the experience and became the chancellor at Kansas. And when he came to us he was a potent guy. He really knew how to get things done. As you know, Mrs. Chandler finally stole him from us. [Laughter]

TRELEVEN: That's right.

NIGG: But that's how outstanding he was. She recognized a great leader and got him for the Times [Mirror Company].

TRELEVEN: I certainly get the impression, looking at that other area you were discussing, the development of the UCLA Foundation, that the origin of that, to a large extent, was this first big funding

drive, and that was to build Pauley Pavilion.

Does that square with your recollection?

NIGG: Oh, sure.

TRELEVEN: In other words, the first real big drive to . . .

NIGG: And the chairman of that was Tom Davis. Tom Davis is the one that did that. I'm a founder. Tom Davis came to me and said, "Cy!"

TRELEVEN: In terms of putting together the structure of what would become the UCLA Foundation, [Harry Robbins] Bob Haldeman, whom I did an extensive interview with, indicated that he worked very closely with Franklin Murphy in putting together that structure.¹ Does that square with your recollection?

NIGG: I would think that would be correct, yeah. Bob Haldeman, before he went to Washington, was a very active, strong guy. He lived across the street from me. When he became president of the alumni association, my wife and I gave a luncheon party for the Haldemans. Had all the past presidents there. So it was a close relationship. Bob Haldeman was a terrific young guy.

TRELEVEN: So . . .

NIGG: But I think it was the [Franklin D.] Murphy

1. H.R. Haldeman, Oral History Interview, Conducted 1991 by Dale E. Treleven, UCLA Oral History Program, for the California State Archives State Government Oral History Program.

Associates that was the start of all of this. Franklin Murphy started that. I've got a little plaque down at the California Club that says Murphy Associates. I was one of. . . . Well, I was at the first group involved in that.

TRELEVEN: We have a little more tape here. I wanted to ask you if you remembered this situation about Howard Wilson during your year as a regent. He was appointed to be Dean of the School of Education at UCLA, and then there was a storm of protest from various quarters--letter writers, newspapers--implying that Wilson was too much of a left-winger and associated with members of the Communist Party and organizations and so on. Do you recall?

NIGG: Well, vaguely. But that was a problem we went through at UCLA. After my time, [Charles E.] Chuck Young, in his first years. . . . It was a real problem for him.

TRELEVEN: You mean the Angela Davis situation?

NIGG: All that kind of stuff. That was just. . . . Angela Davis is one of a number of things. But we finally overcame them. I can remember saying to Tom Davis, "I'm disgusted with the whole

thing. I think I'm going to drop out." Tom said to me, "Cy, it's rough, but if we drop out what do we do, just turn it over to them? Isn't it better that we stay active?" I said, "Yes, Tom," and I stayed active.

TRELEVEN: You mean during the Angela Davis situation or . . . ?

NIGG: I don't remember if it was Angela Davis or. . . .
There was just a whole lot of . . .

TRELEVEN: Like a whole student rebellion and . . .

NIGG: Yeah, yeah. It just seemed we were going so far to the left. But it finally straightened around. Today I think Chuck has done a great job.

TRELEVEN: Well, one thing that occurred to me is that this Wilson thing comes up in '57, and this, of course, is long after one thinks of the whole loyalty oath issue being over. I mean, [John F.] Neylan had left the board by then: it's been quite a while since the whole loyalty oath controversy. And it seemed like almost a hangover from that period. I just wondered what your sense of that was.

NIGG: I don't remember that much about it. The loyalty oath thing hung on.

TRELEVEN: It did hang on.

NIGG: Into my period, yeah. Hung on. But gradually it was changing.

TRELEVEN: Okay, I think I'm going to put on a new tape. Just a minute.

[End Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

TRELEVEN: Okay, we're back on with a new tape. You have talked consistently about the past presidents, and I think that you wanted to make sure that we have the names of these individuals for the record. So why don't you go ahead with that.

NIGG: That's right. Because they were such a loyal, hardworking, active group. We start with Fred Houser. He was one of the original ones. He was active. He was a lieutenant governor, always active. And then there was [Jerold E.] Jerry Weil. Jerry Weil was the class of '25, an attorney, and a very active guy in the early days. Frank Balthis [Jr.], Paul Hutchinson, [Francis M.] Frank McKellar. Frank McKellar was in the publishing business and didn't ever do great things in that area, but he was a mighty loyal, hardworking past president and supported

the group very well. John Canaday. John was an early alumni association secretary and went to work for Lockheed [Corporation] but always stayed active and became a regent and did a great job for us. Warren Crowell. Warren Crowell was class of '27, very active in the alumni association and a strong supporter. Phil Davis we've talked about. Tom Davis we've talked about. Ned Marr. Ned Marr, if he had lived, would have been one of the leading candidates all the way through with everything. He died, but prior to that he was very active. When I got my job with the Kellogg Company, it was Ned Marr who was the association secretary and who got me the job. I don't know if we talked about Wilbur Johns or not.

TRELEVEN: We did at lunch yesterday, but I don't think on tape.

NIGG: I just would like to point out that Wilbur Johns was the class of '25, played basketball, graduated, got a job as the assistant basketball coach, then a few years later was appointed as the athletic director. Pretty big job. Wilbur Johns, as athletic director, hired John [R.]

Wooden, as great a coach as ever came in that field, and he hired [Henry] "Red" Sanders, who was as great a coach as there was in the football field. Great. So I think we've overlooked Wilbur, as we go back, and the great things he accomplished, those two coaches.

TRELEVEN: That's interesting. What influence did the alumni association have in the selection of athletic directors, coaches, at that time, say, forties, fifties?

NIGG: Oh, just active interest. I don't think any real power there. But we knew Wilbur Johns. He's one of our alumni, and we support him. I mentioned Red Sanders. Red Sanders is a great football coach, great. Under his leadership we were beating everybody. So when we came to this terrible Pacific Coast Conference problem, I was told on the side, "If you'll get rid of Wilbur Johns, we'll drop the charges against the players." Well, that was like blackmail, and we just rebelled on that one. That made us all the stronger to defeat this thing. That was the spirit. Under Red Sanders we beat everybody. Now, they're accusing us of buying the players

and all of that. We weren't doing nearly as much as everybody else was doing. Okay, that's Wilbur.

I should mention Gold Shield, because the girls in Gold Shield were such a terrific group. Whenever I had a social event, I'd call on that Gold Shield group, and they really came through. They were just great. They'd assign a girl a time, and when her time was on, she was there at the door greeting people. Next group came in. . . . They were just a great, great group of girls.

Offsetting Gold Shield is Blue Shield. Prior to Blue Shield, in my undergraduate days, was Thanic Shield. I was a member of Thanic Shield, but right after I left southern California to go north, Thanic Shield was disbanded. Now, the reason was our group was so potent, so strong, the administration rebelled and said, "Hey, forget it," and they disbanded us. Then we formed Blue Shield, and Blue Shield carried on. Blue Shield was always, and still is, an active group of men.

TRELEVEN: Support group for UCLA.

NIGG: Yeah, support group. Oh, here's another one. CICR, California Institute for Cancer Research. We got the medical school going well, and we're into cancer research, got a good department. This was important for Sherm [Mellinkoff], especially, after he took over. He thought that was an important thing. He had an assistant dean, [A. Frederick] Fred Rasmussen [Jr.], who kind of helped us run it. Phil Davis, Tom Davis, John Canaday, and I were real active in the California Institute for Cancer Research. What we did was we raised money to help some young researcher get a project going. After he got it going he could go for federal money. But until he got it going, he was stuck. So under Fred Rasmussen, he'd tell us, "Now, this is an important project. This is good. This guy is good." We then would give them money. That's the early days. Now it's a pretty big organization, and they raise millions of dollars. But we started it in a small way. I'm a past president. Tom was a past president. Phil was a past president. I don't think John Canaday ever was president.

TRELEVEN: So this is going back into the sixties, I

suppose, after Mellinkoff became . . . ?

NIGG: Yeah, early sixties, I'd say.

TRELEVEN: Yeah, okay.

NIGG: In the early days of our alumni association, [William C.] Bill Ackerman was very active in getting it organized. And, of course, Bill Ackerman became the graduate manager of the student body [Associated Students]. [He] was very active. To begin with, we're just forming our alumni association. We had Pioneers, and that was really going to be so great. And then they went along a little further, and they had charter members. So now I'm a Pioneer charter member. Then they discovered this life membership thing, and they really put the pressure on for that. Bill Ackerman was the leader of all this. All he would tell us, you know, "Fifty years from now you'll have the best seats in the stadium for the football games" and all that kind of stuff. He forgot all of that. Twenty years later, he's the top guy in the Associated Students, and he forgot all the things he promised us. [Laughter] So it didn't mean very much. But I was a Pioneer charter life

member from the beginning.

We've talked about Franklin [D.] Murphy Associates. That was a very important group from the very beginning, and it was the start of all of our chancellor associates.

One other thing, when I was on the board of regents, a General Dynamics [Corporation] president--General Dynamics was the big airplane manufacturer in the San Diego area--came to the board of regents and said, "We've got this great company. We need all these Ph.D.s, and we can't get them. They won't come to San Diego, because there's no university affiliate for them to be close to." And he said, "It's shocking. Here's a great guy that we need, and we're offering him all kinds of money. He's saying, no, he wants to be close to a university affiliate." So he petitioned the regents to change the oceanography thing down there in San Diego . . .

TRELEVEN: Scripps [Institution of Oceanography].

NIGG: . . . to a campus of the University of California, and if we would do that, they-- General Dynamics--would contribute a million dollars. Well, now a million dollars isn't

anything, but in those days, a million dollars was quite . . .

TRELEVEN: A lot of money, yeah.

NIGG: And we accepted it. We opened the University of California, San Diego, on his petition and his gift of a million dollars.

TRELEVEN: I know there's quite a bit about that in the regents' minutes, and it's interesting. It develops almost first as--I don't want to say exclusively a graduate center--but a very strong emphasis on technology, on engineering . . .

NIGG: Well, because that's what he wanted, you see. That's what he needed.

TRELEVEN: What General Dynamics needed?

NIGG: He was so frank with us. He said, "Here we've got this great company. We have to have these highly educated, top-flight scientists, and we can't get them. They won't come to work for us because they want to be close to a university." It was quite an appeal, and, as I say, we accepted it. We did it.

TRELEVEN: Right. And you were on the Educational Policy Committee that would have looked at the curricular plans for the San Diego campus.

NIGG: We would have been a part of that. Yeah, that's right. I've mentioned the five days a month that I gave to the university, and I kind of stress that, because it's quite a commitment. When you take five days out of the month to give to the university, this is quite a commitment. I've always marveled at those that followed me.

TRELEVEN: Yeah. It's an interesting time, though. According to the regents' minutes. . . . We always think about the planning and real explosion in building and growth as taking place in the sixties, but what I'm impressed with in '56-'57 is the amount of planning going on already for the number of students that are going to be entering the university.

NIGG: Yeah. Oh, yes. Well, the demand was so great. The demand was so great, and we could see it. Again, our committees that worked on that kind of thing could forecast how many students we were going to have and the importance of it. It was a wonderful experience. I've always enjoyed it.

TRELEVEN: Let's see. Your one year ex officio regency ended in '58, is that correct?

NIGG: 'Fifty-eight, yes.

TRELEVEN: Goodwin Knight was still the governor. Had there been a permanent regent's seat open, let's say a full sixteen-year term, would you have been interested in taking that?

NIGG: I don't think so. I think I felt at that time that I had given to the university as much as I could give, and to take on another sixteen years, I don't think I would have wanted to do it. Maybe if I had been pressured I might have, I don't know. We got Bill Forbes. Now, again, as I think we talked about yesterday, Bill Forbes had been East all these years that we were fighting for the university, so he was not a part of that. But when he came back, he remembered his old days at UCLA and remembered all of his friends, so he was willing to become involved. So we got the seat for Bill. It was Frank Balthis that got it. [Edmund G.] "Pat" Brown [Sr.] was the governor, and Frank Balthis was a very active Democrat, so he went to Pat Brown and said, "Here we need this seat on the board of regents, and I've got just the candidate. He's a UCLA graduate, he's interested in the university, he's worked for the university." And Pat Brown

appointed him.

TRELEVEN: Yeah. What's interesting about that politically is that Forbes is a Republican.

NIGG: Oh, yes.

TRELEVEN: At least he was at that time.

NIGG: Yeah, well, I'm sure he still is. But Frank Balthis was able to convince the governor that here's a good candidate. This is the kind of people we need. And he appointed him.

TRELEVEN: Well, I'm not sure that I have much more to ask you. Usually, maybe at this point in the interview, I kind of point it your direction and say, "I guess I've covered everything that I felt I wanted to, and is there anything else that you'd like to add for the record?"

NIGG: I think we've covered it all pretty well. I think we've covered it all pretty well. The main thing I wanted to get across in our visit was the importance of that early past presidents group of the alumni association, because they were such hardworking, dedicated people.

TRELEVEN: Well, you've certainly emphasized that. And I think in part because of this interview that we've done, that group and the individuals in

that group are going to definitely be part of the historical record. They will not be forgotten, and neither will you, Mr. Nigg.

NIGG: Oh, well . . . [Laughter]

TRELEVEN: This has been very enjoyable, and I appreciate the time that you've spent with me.

NIGG: I've enjoyed it, too. It's fun to reminisce, and that's all I've been doing. [Laughter]

TRELEVEN: On behalf of UCLA and on behalf of the California State Archives, I'd like to thank you very much for this interview.

NIGG: Thank you.

[End Tape 4, Side B]